Graduate Student Motherhood: How Female Ph.D. Students Resist and Perform Idealized Norms of Work and Mothering

Catherine Mutti-Driscoll

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Reading Committee:
Dr. Margaret L. Plecki, Chair
Dr. Michael S. Knapp
Dr. Rebecca Aanerud

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Abstract

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Catherine Mutti-Driscoll

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Margaret L. Plecki, Associate Professor

College of Education

The current lack of women in tenured academic positions has been recently attributed to issues of gender discrimination, maternal discrimination, and work-family conflict for women. Survey research shows that women who have children in graduate school have negative tenure-track outcomes when compared to men. Utilizing a qualitative case study method with a poststructuralist theoretical framework, this study interviewed, observed, and collected documents from seven graduate student mothers.

This dissertation is presented as two independent articles that draw upon aspects of a common data set. The first article investigates the work and mothering identity performances of three mothers who desired academic careers. The second article focuses on four mothers who sought "alternative" careers outside academia. This study found that all seven mothers resisted, enacted, internalized, and self-policed conflicting norms related to work and mothering. Results additionally revealed that the mothers were empowered and disempowered by their multiple statuses. Finally, mothers' identity performances were often shaped by the location of women in dual career partnerships. This research has implications for future research and doctoral education practice.

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Introduction

Broadly, this dissertation focuses on understanding the career paths of women who combine professional career training with parenting. My conceptual framework assumes that the lives of individuals are shaped by contexts and relationships and, as a result, this study seeks to view women in their homes, departments, geographic locations, partnerships, economic contexts, and childcare arrangements. Because previous literature has revealed that mothers tend to experience parenting differently than men (e.g., Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Connelly & Ghodsee, 2011), I have selected women as the focus on this research.

The literature describes a variety of reasons that parenting, and balancing work and parenting, tends to differ for mothers versus fathers. First, there are few women, and even fewer mothers in top professional positions. While past explanations for the lack of professional women in leadership positions have focused on gender discrimination, recent scholarship has highlighted the compounding impact of issue of discrimination against mothers. According to Crittenden (2010), frequent maternal discrimination represents the unfinished work of the women's movement. Female professionals have advanced in the workplace insofar as they have mimicked the male career trajectory by delaying, opting out, or spending little time with their children. Crittenden asserts that society does not recognize the parenting efforts of workers, discriminating against those who devote a significant amount of time to their children, especially those who serve as primary caregivers. Because women conduct the majority of childcare in the present day, they are forced to choose between career and family in ways that most men are not.

Research supports the work of Crittenden (2010), observing that high-achieving women tend to be childless due to the overlap between key career and childbearing years. A nationwide survey of high-achieving women (Hewlett, 2002) illustrated the tension between work and

family that many women experience. Sampling the top 10% of female earners, Hewlett categorized her sample as *high achievers* who earned $55,000 – 65,000 yearly versus *ultra achievers* who made over $100,000. Hewlett found that 33% of high achieving women and 49% of ultra achieving women were childless at age 40. Hewlett learned that these women did not choose to be childless – a quarter of high and 31% of ultra achieving women between ages 41-55 indicated a desire for children. Nevertheless, survey results showed that women were unlikely to marry after age 35 or have a child after age 39. Men at similar levels of achievement were significantly more likely to be married with children.

According to scholars, the primary reason why women may postpone having children is the spike in a woman's workload once the baby arrives. Such a workload increase makes it difficult for women to balance work and family, leading some women, like many in Hewlett's (2002) study, to delay having children. The following factors produce a shift in the workload for female professionals: the demands of the *second shift*, culturally elevated expectations for mothers, and maternal discrimination in the workplace.

Hochschild (2003), a prominent sociologist, coined the term *second shift* while studying the lives of 50 career couples. This term describes Hochschild's observation that, after working a *first shift* at their jobs, women frequently pulled a second shift consisting of childcare and housework when they arrived home. In contrast, men did not conduct such a second shift, resulting in the reality that women completed significantly more hours of work per year. According to Hochschild's findings, men banked more leisure time than their female partners, creating a *leisure gap* between the sexes. More recently, Crittenden (2010) provided an explanation for Hochschild's findings. Crittenden observed that, even if couples had a fairly equitable division of labor prior to having children, the arrival of the new baby swayed couples

toward a more traditionally gendered balance. As a result, even if a woman did not expect to conduct the second shift when she decided to have children, she often did.

A second issue that impacts women's ability to manage career and family are the elevated cultural expectations for mothers. Douglas and Michaels (2004) describe these elevated expectations as the "new momism," a concept that identifies the cultural beliefs that women are not "real women" if they are childless, that females are naturally the best caregivers for children, and that being a good mother requires a complete and total commitment. Such visions of mothering are demanding of a woman's time and energy, consequently rendering the balance of "good" parenting and a successful career challenging (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Compounding these challenges are the long hours required by increasing workplaces (Crittenden, 2010; Hochschild, 1997). Such long hours render cultural ideals of "good mothering" unattainable, placing the identities of good mother and good worker in tension with one another.

High expectations for mothering are layered upon maternal discrimination in the workplace, further complicating a work-family balance for women. While women are wrestling with mixed messages and conflicting demands, they may also be experiencing a special brand of gender discrimination. Research shows that mothers receive fewer callbacks for jobs, lower starting salaries, and fewer opportunities to advance (Crittenden, 2010; Williams, 2005). Just as a woman's workload spikes in the home, she may also be experiencing increased discrimination at work.

Broad, cross-professional studies such as those conducted by Hewlett (2002) and Crittenden (2010) provide a useful perspective regarding the tensions that mothers frequently face in the working world. However, such studies leave salient gaps in the literature because

they overlook key variation across particular career paths. Garey (1995) provided a useful look at the field of nursing, investigating how night-shift nurses navigate the tensions of work-family balance. Garey found that women downplayed their work identities at home, presenting themselves as "stay at home moms" in their off work hours during the day. Like Garey, this particular study increases understanding regarding a specific career path, that of academia.

The academic career path is unique for several reasons. Not only does an academic career path provide a satisfying intellectual life that may appeal to ambitious women who succeeded in school, it can also provide some degree of scheduling flexibility, which can be attractive for women who desire to start a family (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2011). The academic career path additionally requires lengthy career preparation, demanding years of schooling in addition to postdoctoral work and the need to climb the tenure ladder. Due to the length of career preparation, advancement in academe frequently overlaps with the timing of important life events such as family formation (Hewlett, 2002).

While I focus on women in academia, the results of this study have implications for men as the rates of dual career couples increase (Moen & Yu, 2000). As Sallee (2012) found in her study of twenty- two faculty fathers, many men in generation X are more concerned with maintaining their spousal partnerships and co-parenting than logging the long hours that are required for tenure. Though men's situations differ in terms of cultural expectations and career-related gender discrimination, males may also experience parenting-related challenges that impact their work-life balance.

Finally, my motivation for engaging in this line of research stems from my own personal experience as a graduate student, seeking to blend academic and family life. I knew that I wanted a career and children, but I was not sure how to manage both. As I looked around at other

graduate students who had children, graduate school seemed like a better time than others to pursue family-related goals. However, when I made this decision, I did not fully realize the challenges of pregnancy and parenting, or the rigors of the academic career path.

Conceptual Framing of This Dissertation

This dissertation draws on a key set of framing ideas from the poststructuralist theory of identity. This theoretical framework emerged from the field of gender studies, but can also provide a useful frame for thinking about multiple kinds of identities. I used this theory to guide my analysis of the lives, actions, interactions, and statements of the graduate student mothers. By situating my work within this broad theoretical framework, the proposed research is poised to contribute to the literature about academic mothers, providing a deep understanding of how particular discourses about work and mothering shape mother's identity performances in Ph.D. programs and early career contexts.

Use of the poststructuralist framework is strategic for the context of academe. According to Denker (2009), the concept has the potential to increase understanding regarding how women navigate academic organizations. Denker (2009) asserts that by understanding how women perform their identities in the academy, opportunities for diversifying the faculty in the future can be illuminated. This framework makes a unique contribution because, outside of a few exceptions (e.g., Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2008; Fellabaum, 2013; Lester, 2008), scholarship about gender in higher education has typically taken a more modernist stance (Fellabaum, 2011). By looking at the problem of women's advancement in academia using this innovative perspective, new answers to existing problems can be revealed.

Unlike modernists, poststructuralists do not view identity as a static individual attribute or a role that a person plays in specific contexts, but rather as performances that are fluid,

overlapping, and emerge across multiple sites (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1990). Poststructuralists also critique modernist notions that equate sex with biology and gender with culture, describing how individual traits can be perceived as natural and biology can be interpreted and labeled culturally. West and Zimmerman (1983), pioneers of the doing gender concept, first identified *sex* as the biological body that is categorized by cultural norms. However, an individual is not *sex categorized* as this or that *gender* unless he or she *repeatedly performs acts* that are recognized as masculine or feminine. Poststructuralists view identity as *performative*, as actions that are created in social interactions. Theorists who utilize such terminology view gender as a verb, as a process that emerges through what people do and say (Martin, 2003).

Individuals construct their performances out of the *normative social discourses* that are available to them. Discourses are ideas and talk that circulate both locally and on broader societal levels. This particular study probes prominent discourses about what it means be an *ideal mother* and the *ideal worker*. According to Williams (2005), academic mothers frequently become caught between these two ideals. These idealized norms are unattainable by themselves, but are even more unattainable for individuals who are attempting to accomplish both. Poststructuralists describe how discourses such as these are internalized and enacted by individuals. Bartky (1998) describes this process in the following way: "Something is internalized when it gets incorporated in the structure of the self" (p. 105). A discourse is incorporated in the structure of the self when an individual performs that which he or she is and is not. For example, an individual might say the following: "I am a good mother. She is not."

Power is attached to discursive norms, encouraging individuals to perform their identities in socially acceptable ways. Bartky (1998), drawing on Foucault's concept of the *Panoptican,*

describes how modern power operates through the process of becoming internalized. The Panoptican represents a modern prison, a setting in which a guard is stationed in the center, constantly revolving and observing inmates in their isolated cells along the perimeter of the circle. Because the inmates never know when they will be observed, they take on the role of *policing* themselves or enacting *self-surveillance.* As Bartky (1998) describes, "The gaze which is inscribed in the very structure of the disciplinary institution is internalized by the inmate; modern technologies of behavior are thus oriented toward the production of isolation and self-policing subjects" (p. 106). Bartky (1997) applies this concept to lives of women, describing how many have internalized the gaze of the male observer and, as a result, engage in isolated behaviors of self-discipline in order to perform normative conceptions of feminine beauty.

An individual can only perform the identities that are made available to them through discourse. To be *intelligible* and recognizable to others, individuals must perform discourses in socially acceptable ways. Butler (1990) explains this notion:

> To enter into the repetitive practices of this terrain of signification is not a choice, for the "I" that might enter is always already inside: there is not possibility of agency or reality outside of the discursive spaces that give those terms the intelligibility that they have. The task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat or, indeed, to repeat and, through the radical proliferation of gender, *to displace* the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself (p. 127).

The primary consequence of not performing one's identity in a manner that supports the status quo is that an individual may cease to be understood by others. A second consequence is that individuals may *punish* by themselves and others. Exemplifying how men may punish women if they do not enact standards of beauty, Bartky (1998) cites the case of modern women. In a world

where men are privileged, a woman is expected to become "a body designed to please or excite" (Bartky, 1998, p. 108) them. Bartky describes how women who fail to submit to discursive norms about beauty receive negative consequences: the loss of male support. In addition to being punished by others, a woman may self-punish by experiencing guilt when she does not conform to expectations – of beauty or otherwise. While discursive norms are powerful, individuals have the *agency* to *resist* social conventions. *Resistance* involves breaking up the cycle of repetitive performances that support that status quo (Butler, 1990). However, interrupting identity performances is not as simple as it sounds (McWhorter, 2005) due to the pervasiveness of particular identity performances and how discourses can morph in order to serve power structures in new ways (Collins, 1998).

In conclusion, the poststructuralist framework used in this study builds upon emerging scholarship in higher education to provide a unique perspective about the contexts and identities of graduate student mothers. By viewing identity performances as multiple and fluid, new understandings of academic mothers at differing points along the career continuum can emerge.

Study Design

I have selected a qualitative case study design because I sought to more fully understand a particular phenomenon – how graduate student mothers perform identities related to work and family. As Merriam (2009) stated, "a case study might be selected for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge to which we would not otherwise have access" (p. 46). Because I desired to answer how (Yin, 2006; Yin, 1994) and why questions (Merriam, 2009) and relate local contexts of family and academic departments to nonlocal forms of social organization (Erickson, 1986) regarding motherhood and work, the interpretive nature of qualitative research was particularly helpful for this study.

As a result of research that highlights negative tenure-track outcomes of mothers with young children in graduate school (Mason & Goulden, 2002), I entered the field seeking *representative* cases: mothers of young children on the academic career path. I initially planned to sample in education and engineering fields due to their contrasting gender ratios. Finding that it was significantly easier to recruit mothers in education than in engineering, I broadened my criteria. Assuming that it might impact the supports available to graduate student mothers, I decided to sample across multiple departments with a variety of male and female student ratios (August & Waltman, 2004). I sent recruitment emails to anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, political science, engineering, chemistry, physics, and earth sciences.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the presence of women in social science fields, I found it easier to locate mothers who were pursuing an academic career path in the social sciences. Mothers who volunteered for my study from the sciences tended to be older, had decided against an academic career path, and were less interested in participating in my time-intensive study. As a result, I modified my approach to capture this variety. I conducted a first round of interviews with all interested graduate student mothers. After the first round of interviews, I then selected the seven case studies from this group based on participant availability and departmental variation. The first round of interviews helped me refine interview questions and observation protocols for the case studies. In the following table, I present key characteristics about the participants.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Name	**Department**	**Age of Children**	**Preliminary Interview (PI) or Case Study (CS)**

Lisa	Biology	Charles, age 6	PI
Cate	Science Education	Francesca, age 2	PI
Laura	Engineering	Hazel, age 9, & Adam, age 5	PI
Lynn	Earth Sciences	Mia, age 11, & Rachel, 7	PI
Carol	Biology	Mark, age 7, and Brian, age 10	PI
Kerry	Education	Gina, age 5, & Morena, age 2	PI
Julia	Engineering	Ann, age 8, & Naomi, age 6	PI
Jennifer	Education	Sadie, age 6, & Krista, age 4	PI
Katherine	Science Education	Beckett, age 9, & Emerson, age 7	PI
Madison	Education	Thane, age 2	CS
Jane	Anthropology	Emilia, age 1	CS
Emma	Archaeology	James, age 2, and Sarah, 6 months	CS
Leigh	Sociology	Adian, age 2	CS
Robin	Engineering	Alejandro, age 9 months	CS
Rebecca	Science Education	Tyler, 1 month	CS
Vivian	Special Education	Johanna, 3 years	CS

Another way my sample did not conform to my expectations was in terms of participant diversity. My goal had been to sample mothers of diverse racial backgrounds and partnership statuses in order to understand the experience of graduate student motherhood from the vantage point of multiple intersecting identities. Sixteen of the 17 participants were White and all but one was married to a man. All of the case study mothers were White and in heterosexual marriages. In the conclusion section of this dissertation, I interrogate some of the implications regarding the homogeneity of my sample.

Once the case studies were identified, I sampled across diverse settings that are relevant to the lives of my participants, pursuing a strategy of *maximum variation* (Patton, 2003). I followed the participants as they engaged in work meetings, classes, and study groups. Over the course of 6 months (March 2012 – August 2012), I observed during dinnertimes, naptimes, and parenting-related classes and activities. I additionally interviewed case study participants a second time each and collected documents that would provide windows into the mothers' work-parenting identities. Use of these multiple methods enabled triangulation of data sources. As Patton (2003) highlights, triangulation "…strengthens a study by combining methods" (p. 247).

Throughout the study, I engaged in continuous reflection in order to avoid the kind of "autobiographical study" that could result should my "untamed sentiments" rule the process of data collection and production (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20). My continuous reflection was imperative because I am an insider to this research in many ways. For example, not only am I a graduate student mother, I am also a white woman in a heterosexual marriage. The fact that my experience both places me at the center of my topic, and causes me to reflect key identity characteristics of my participants, was both positive and negative at times. Because I am navigating the challenging terrain of motherhood, academe, and whiteness as I study this issue, I brought some already formed ideas and hunches. Throughout the dissertation process, I had to reflect upon how my experiences might be shaping the conclusions that I was forming. I critically questioned my positionality in an ongoing manner by writing memos to myself.

Interviews, observations, and documents produced a rich written record for analysis. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed in full. Following data collection and transcription, I completed an initial data analysis by reading through the interview data and coding it *line by line* (Charmaz, 2001). This process enabled me to identify themes that had emerged over the

course of the study "…no matter how varied and disparate" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 143). Following this preliminary process, I engaged in a second process of *focused coding* (Charmaz, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) in which I applied a revised set of codes to large chunks of data across the entire data corpus, testing whether the codes captured what my data seemed to be saying. This high-level coding and generalization work was supported by a process of *memo-writing* (Charmaz, 2001). After coding the entire data corpus, I began a process of case analysis within each of the seven cases. A second process of cross-case examination followed. Finally, I completed a third round of data analysis in which I looked more in-depth at the role of career aspirations, seeking to understand similarities and differences across career-related groupings within my case study participants.

During memo-writing sessions, I directed my attention back to guiding research questions (Yin, 2006) and the conceptual framework that supported those questions. My findings ultimately dialogued with my conceptual framework by adding to and expanding earlier theorizing. When my initial conceptual frameworks and framing questions no longer seem to represent my data, I sought out new theories that could provide better explanations. As Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) describe, the emergent nature of the interpretative analysis process is like "someone who is simultaneously creating and solving a puzzle, or like a carpenter alternately changing the shape of a door and then the shape of the door frame to obtain a better fit" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 144). In order to extract a deep level of meaning from the data corpus, my analysis continuously sought to find the best fit between research questions and conceptual frameworks.

Approach to the Dissertation

Given the differing career aspirations present within my case study participants, and my desire to publish this work in academic journals, I wrote the dissertation as two articles and a conclusion. The first article focuses on the three mothers who desired an academic career and the second article investigates the mothers who decided not to pursue academia. Even though these two groups exemplified some of the same issues across a continuum, they emerged as distinctly different. While these findings share a conceptual framework and emerged from a parent dissertation study, they will likely interest differing readers. In the conclusion section, I discuss the connections between the two articles, proposing new frameworks and questions that could support future research in this area.

Article One: "I Am Always Pulled In And Out": Graduate Student Mothers On The Academic Career Path

This research presents three qualitative case studies of graduate student mothers who were pursuing doctorates in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, and education. Results showed that the three mothers internalized conflicting norms of the ideal worker and the ideal mother. The mothers enacted and resisted these competing discourses, and engaged in acts of self-surveillance. The pull of these competing discourses impacted the time women could allocate to graduate school tasks and shaped the academic career paths that the mothers could envision.

Article Two:" I Am A Happier Mom When I Am Working": Female Ph.D. Students Pursuing Alternative Careers

This article presents a qualitative case study of four graduate student mothers who were pursuing part-time work and mothering strategies. The mothers resisted norms of the ideal academic by pursuing the Ph.D. for non-academic career paths. While crafting careers outside of the tenure-track, the mothers drew on work norms that functioned in broader workplace contexts.

The women had internalized a view of success that incorporated a vision of earning their Ph.D. degree, but had also internalized a negative view of their academic work. The mothers performed discourses of idealized mothering, and several policed themselves around issues of childcare and prioritizing children in their lives. The consequences of balancing work and motherhood part-time included being content with parenting, loss of professional identity, and negotiations with spouses.

Conclusion: Seeking Work-Family Balance in the Context of Partnerships

The conclusion chapter summarizes key themes that emerged across the two articles. This piece describes how all seven graduate student mothers were engaged in a process of seeking work-family balance. Though strategies for enacting this balance varied based on career aspirations, the desire to be a good mother and have meaningful work was common across all participants. Because the seven women were situated in heterosexual marriages, the mothers' quests for work-family balance were framed by conversations, negotiations, and guilt related to male spouses. Finally, this chapter discusses the limitations of this study and possibilities for future research and doctoral education practice.

Article One

"I Am Always Pulled In and Out: Graduate Student Mothers on the Academic Career Path."

Introduction: Academic Outcomes for Mothers

At the end of our first interview, Vivian, a Ph.D. student in education, made an astute observation about the work-family balance choices of female faculty in her academic area:

> Vivian: But, you know, we have a number of female faculty in our area and— I mean, they don't all have kids and they've all been child bearing age and married— you just got to wonder why.
>
> Catherine: So they are married?
>
> Vivian: Yeah. So. And you know, I don't know. Most married people seem to have kids.

Vivian recently began her doctoral work at State University (SU), a prominent research institution in the Western region of the United States. In contrast to the female faculty in her area, Vivian has a 3 year-old daughter. Throughout her first year, Vivian has wondered why the faculty women in her area do not have children. The research literature provides some insight into Vivian's interesting question. Numerous scholars have provided evidence of a *maternal wall* in academe. This concept highlights the lack of mothers in tenured positions, especially at elite universities (Williams, 2005).

According to scholars, the maternal wall is a central contributing factor for the *leaky pipeline* for women in academia. For example, statistics show that in 2003, women received 47% of doctorates but composed only 35% of tenured and tenure-track faculty that year (Wolfinger, Mason, & Goulden, 2008). While some argue that time will correct this imbalance between female Ph.D. recipients and professors, Mason and Goulden (2002) assert that these numerical data trends have remained consistent overtime. According to Williams (2005), the

maternal wall originates from maternal discrimination, a form of bias that is distinct from, and yet compounds, gender discrimination against women.

Work-Family Balance Conflict for Faculty Mothers

Supporting the maternal wall in academia is the *work-family balance conflict* that many academic women experience. Numerous qualitative studies about faculty mothers have documented the challenges that women face when they have children in academia on the academic career path. Work-family conflict occurs for women for two reasons: 1) the overlap of family formation and academic career clocks and 2) the prevalence of traditional gender roles.

The years of academic career preparation overlap with a woman's most biologically productive years (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2011; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Goulden, Mason, & Frasch, 2011; Hewlett, 2002). In the past, women have delayed or modified family plans in order to succeed in academia. For example, women with children prior to tenure timed their babies for the summer months (Armenti, 2004). Other women postponed their family plans because as Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2009) assert, "The unique career structure of academia offers women no good opportunity to take time out for children" (p. 1596). While the academic schedule may seem flexible, there are clear milestones that workers must attain (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2011). The flexibility of the academic schedule can lull individuals into thinking that they will have extra time for their home responsibilities. However, several authors warn that time must be invested in a successful academic career (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2011; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Despite increasing female participation in the workplace, gender roles continue to operate in somewhat traditional ways (England, 2010), rendering the balance of work and family for women in the academic profession difficult. The literature confirms that academic women tend

to perform more childcare and housework than their partners (Suitor, Mecom, & Feld, 2001; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004; Gunter & Stambach, 2003), have access to few supports from their spouses as members of dual career couples (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005), and also lack key supports from their academic institutions. Though policy supports such as parental leaves exist in some academic departments, parents have reported feeling that they will be penalized for using them (Finkel, Olswang, & She, 1994; Fothergill & Feltey, 2003; Fox, Schwartz, & Hart, 2006).

Due to their heavy workload, women frequently lack personal time (Suitor, Mecom, & Feld, 2001; Acker & Armenti, 2004; Gunter & Stambach, 2003). These competing demands encourage women to seek out contexts such as community colleges that seem more family-friendly (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Twombly, 2007) than Research I universities are perceived to be (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). While this is not a problem per se, it does reveal that women who are mothers may at times restrict their career options or may make decisions that seem to be at odds with the promotion of their scholarly work.

Graduate Student Mothers

Though some conceptualize the academic career path as beginning upon receipt of the Ph.D. (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), there are three central reasons why graduate students should be considered in a discussion of motherhood in academia: 1) particularly poor outcomes on the tenure-track, 2) few supports, and 3) graduate school as a time of decision-making.

Poor academic career outcomes. Groundbreaking research by Mason and Goulden (2002) illuminated the *early baby phenomenon* – the trend that women who had babies during their Ph.D. years were rarely represented on the tenure-track. This research utilized the Survey of Doctoral Recipients, a longitudinal survey of 30,000 tenure-track faculty members. Mason and

Goulden (2002) investigated data from 1973-1999, focusing on faculty in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. This research additionally found that mothers frequently attained careers working as adjuncts and lecturers. In contrast to graduate student mothers, graduate student fathers exhibited a tenure advantage over graduate student mothers and males who remained childless or had children later in their careers. Moreover, these authors found a tenure gap between men and women in the sciences (24%) and in the social sciences and humanities (20%) twelve years after graduation. According to Mason (2006), "Men with "early" babies are 38% more likely than women with "early" babies to receive tenure" (p. 5).

While there is not a lot of research about graduate student mothers, Springer, Parker, and Leviten-Reid (2009) provide survey evidence that graduate school represents a key leak in the academic career pipeline for mothers. Similarly, Lynch (2008) asserts that graduate student mothers are a group that has a high amount of risk for attrition during their Ph.D. years. Further underscoring the particularly poor outcomes for this group, Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2009) found that women who had children in graduate school were more likely to exit the labor force or find work off the tenure-track. While one in 4 women who graduated with their doctorates returned to the tenure-track after working as adjunct instructors, the authors caution against such an uncertain approach. In their survey study of 69 top sociology departments, Kennelly and Spalter-Roth (2006) confirmed that graduate student mothers in sociology are less likely to be represented on the tenure-track than other groups. Clearly, this literature reveals that graduate student mothers have had not had successful outcomes on the tenure-track.

Few supports. In general, women in graduate school have less access to high quality mentoring and within-departmental funding during graduate school. They also tend to take a longer time when earning their doctorates (Sallee, 2010). While women frequently have more

negative experiences in graduate school than men, mothers experience even fewer professional supports in graduate school. Kennelly and Spalter-Roth (2006) found that many departmental contexts failed to provide family friendly events or space, dissertation support groups, or trainings for parents. Their data additionally showed that women with children seem had fewer opportunities to advance, either because they opt out, are pushed out, or were not provided with opportunities (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006). Because funding was not always guaranteed or was inadequate for supporting a family, graduate student mothers had to rely on spouses to provide support both financially and emotionally. This reliance sometimes led to negative power dynamics with spouses (Lynch, 2008).

Decision-making. Another possible reason for diminished academic outcomes is that graduate school is often a time of career and family decision-making, especially for women who have partners and desire children (Kurtz-Cortes, Andrews Helme, & Ulku-Steiner, 2006). Factors related to children and partners frequently cause women to consider departing from the academic career path in order to balance work and family (Mason & Goulden, 2002; van Anders, 2004). Studies additionally show that academic women take the availability of parental leaves (van Anders, 2004) and concerns about a steep parenting workload (Mason, Goulden, & Frasch, 2009) into account when making a career decision. Moreover, open-ended responses of women additionally revealed that they often perceive the lives of their faculty mentors negatively and desired more who could help them envision work-family balance role models (Mason, Goulden, & Frasch, 2009).

Adding to this scholarship, Quinn and Litzler (2009) conducted a survey of 238 doctoral students. These scholars learned that the decision to opt out of academia is complicated - it was not just being female that caused women to change their minds about the academic career path,

but also "…being family-focused, experience with teaching, perception that the department is hostile toward work-family balance, lower levels of confidence in career preparation, and the perception that there is a bias against work-family flexibility in academic careers" (p. 78). As this literature reveals, women are often making key work and family decisions during their graduate years, a time when they may be experiencing few departmental supports.

While women are making long-term choices about their careers in graduate school, findings from the literature hint that they also may be making important short-term decisions. For example, Kennelly and Spalter-Roth (2006) learned that graduate student mothers in sociology were least likely to publish, attend conferences, and win grants in graduate school – necessary experiences that would promote receipt of a tenure-track job. Such findings raise questions about the daily actions and decisions that mothers are making, and how such decisions relate to their stated career aspirations. However, we know very little about these important questions, and rarely do authors reveal the intended career goal of graduate student mothers in available studies. To address this gap in the literature, this article responds to following central research question: How do graduate student mothers enact and resist the ideal worker and the ideal mother? How do these resistances and enactments shape mother's daily lives and long-term career goals?

Theoretical Framework

The poststructuralist theoretical tradition provides key tools for understanding the choices of gendered individuals and how cultural norms can shape decision-making. Six key concepts are necessary for understanding individual's identity performances in context: discourse, internalization, performance, self-policing, resistance, and punishment. Complementing this

larger framework, I have additionally marshaled an understanding of the concepts of the *ideal mother* and the *ideal worker*.

To highlight key postructuralist concepts, I utilize an example provided by Bartky (1998). Bartky's discourse of how women interact with feminine norms of beauty reveals the ways that women internalize, self-police, enact, and resist a variety of norms. Individuals enact their identity *performances* based upon culturally available discourses (Butler, 1990). Discourses are ideas about the nature of what it means to be something, (i.e., what it means to be beautiful). According to Bartky, society delineates ideals of beauty that are circulated in the media as well as in social interactions. Power encourages women to represent normative ideas of beauty in socially acceptable ways. If a woman does not perform these ideals, thereby *resisting* them, she may cease to be recognized as a woman and be punished. In Bartky's example, a woman may be punished with the loss of male backing. Insofar as a particular woman has *internalized* socially acceptable norms into the "structure of the self," and identifies with them by making statements that associate her self with those norms, she may also *self-police* or *punish* herself through guilt and shame. The fact that this project of beauty is unattainable does not prevent a woman from engaging in this work of *self-surveillance*. When something is internalized, it becomes part of the self, and can appear *natural* to outsiders as well as to the self. For example, a woman spending time engaging in beauty practices such as tweezing her eyebrows or shaving her legs may appear to be natural or a "given," when in fact it really is a performance.

To understand the discourses that graduate student mothers might use to create their performances, I drew upon the concepts of the *ideal mother* and the *ideal worker*. Williams (2005) described the ideal mother as one who commits herself to the parenting task 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Hays (1996), a frequently cited sociologist, similarly highlighted the current

ideology of *intensive mothering*. According to Hays, today's mothers are expected to be the primary caregivers who devote themselves fully and constantly to the task of mothering. Modern-day mothers must be attuned to the needs of their own child, consult with experts, and invest labor, time, and financial resources in the task of parenting. Raddon notes that discourses about mothering are neither "fixed nor universal" (Raddon, 2002, p. 390). For example, research shows that African-American women may utilize differing visions of good mothering than White women (Collins, 2011; Blair-Loy & Dehart, 2003). Even though they create a standard against which all other mothers are measured, discourses of motherhood are heavily shaped by race and class factors.

In the United States, the ideal worker concept highlights a set of expectations about committed workers. This image describes a worker who is wholly committed to his or her job, never allowing a personal life to interrupt his or her work commitments (Williams, 2005). Recent scholars have applied this notion to academic workplaces, settings that are unique as a result of their inherent flexibility and the variety of tasks required (Fothergill & Feltey, 2003; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

According to the literature, the ideal academic worker is constantly productive – teaching in the college classroom, mentoring advisees, pursuing a research agenda, procuring grant funding, speaking at conferences, and publishing in academic journals. During graduate school, a student demonstrates his or her ability to engage in academic work through teaching, research, networking, engaging in departmental events, and supporting their advisor's research agenda (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009). The ideal academic worker does not have any family commitments, or if he or she does, *avoids bias* for this identity characteristic by having someone

else care for the children away from the department (Drago, Colbeck, Stauffer, Pirretti, Burkum, Fazioli, Lazzaro, & Habasevich, 2006).

Method: Understanding Identity Performances of Graduate Student Mothers

I utilized a qualitative case study method (Merriam, 2009) because I wanted to deeply understand the contexts and identity performances of graduate student mothers. Because the case study method enables an in-depth examination of issues within authentic social contexts (Yin, 2006), it represented a strategic choice. This section highlights my sampling, data collection and analysis procedures, and provides contextual background for the three case study participants.

Sampling

Providing a strong foundation for this study, the people and places involved were intentionally chosen. I selected the setting of the State University (SU) because it is a premier research I institution that provided me with access to graduate students in Ph.D. programs. SU is located in Greenridge, a medium-sized city in the western part of the United States. Like August and Waltman (2004), I purposefully recruited from academic departments that exhibited contrasting ratios of male and female students, assuming that gender ratios would impact supports and resources available to mothers.

I conducted a first round of interviews with 17 women who met my sampling criteria (Patton, 2003) – graduate student mothers with young children. I then identified 7 case study participants based on participant availability and my goal to maximize *participant variation* (Patton, 2003). By selecting available participants based on predetermined criteria and seeking variation amongst them, I was able to investigate a range of experiences that characterize graduate student motherhood (Merriam, 2009). In this paper, I present case studies of three

mothers who desired an academic career. Since this combination came up infrequently during my recruitment, I wanted to focus on how the academic career goal shaped graduate student motherhood and vice versa.

Data Collection

I conducted two interviews with each mother because they enabled me to understand past behavior, participants' emotions and "…how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam, 2009, p. 88). Interviews lasted 45-90 minutes each and were guided by a semi-structured interview protocol. I asked questions about work and family decision-making, experiences in their department, day-to-day life, co-parenting, parenting supports, and childcare. During the second interview, I delved more deeply into issues that had arisen in the first round of interviews and the observations. This approach allowed me to triangulate across multiple copies of the same kind of data source, thereby increasing the validity of my research (Merriam, 2009).

Because seminal work-family balance scholars have revealed that work and parenting activities can occur across home and work contexts, I decided to observe women both at work and at home (Hochschild, 2003). I observed each mother 3-5 times for an hour each time. While observing, I sought to depict the environment in rich detail, highlighting the tasks that the mothers engaged in and how they performed those tasks. This data collection strategy thereby achieved maximum variation, providing me numerous contacts with each of the participants also allowing me to triangulate data from interviews and documents.

Finally, documents composed the third data source that I collected. As Merriam (2009) describes, documents represent a strong data source because they were not produced for the researcher. As she states, "Unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied" (Merriam, 2009, p. 155). I gathered documents such as

Facebook sites, resumes, and Curriculum Vitas in order to help me to understand how participants enact work and motherhood.

Table 1

Data Collected from Graduate Student Mothers

	Department	**Interviews**	**Observations**	**Documents**
Jane	Cultural Anthropology	1). Interview in a coffee shop close to home 2). Interview at home with Emilia	1). Dissertation presentation 2). Office hour in coffee shop 3). Home observation 4). Home observation	1). CV 2). Job market plan 3). Facebook 4). Dissertation outline 5). Fellowship proposal 6). Funding essay
Vivian	Education	1). Interview in a private classroom in her department 2). Interview in a private classroom in her department	1). Research group 2). Coaching at K-12 school 3). Dinner observation 4). In-class stats presentation 5). Swimming with Johanna	1). CV 2). Grad school admission statement 3). Facebook 4). Website
Emma	Archaeology	1). Interview in a private classroom near her building 2). Interview in a private classroom near her building	1). Dinner observation 2). Outside job observation 3). Gymnastics with James 4). Office hour observation 5). Lab session 6). Guest lecture	1). Resume 2). Facebook 3). List of activities completed with children 4). Proposal for dissertation research

Data Analysis

Following transcription of the audio-recorded interviews, the three data sources provided a substantial written record. I began my analysis process by reading through the entire data corpus and engaging in a process of *open coding* (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I then refined this initial set of codes, and conducted a second process of more *focused coding* (Charmaz, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). To assess the fit of my data with my emerging coding scheme, I engaged in *memo-writing* (Charmaz, 2001). During memo-writing sessions, I journaled about tentative findings produced by the categorization of the data.

After completing this early analysis work, I developed a deep understanding of each case study participant in relation to my guiding research questions and frameworks. Next, I looked across multiple cases to understand key themes and trends in the data. I tested the findings that I saw in the data, constantly seeking disconfirming evidence as well as refining my research questions and conceptual frameworks when necessary (Yin, 2006; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). As key differences emerged between mothers with differing career aspirations, I completed a third round of analysis within groups of case study mothers.

In order to ensure the high quality of my findings, I created an audit trail and continuously reflected on my positionality (Merriam, 2009). I noted key moments when I made decisions about the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as well as reflected on my positionality (Peshkin, 1988). Because I am graduate student mother myself, it was imperative to monitor my emotions and thereby guard against writing some kind of "autobiographical study" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20). To this end, when I had a hunch about the data that overlapped with something I experience, I critically asked myself, "Do I really have data to support that?" and then engaged in

a process of seeking confirming and disconfirming evidence, investigating whether my hunch was correct or whether I was simply projecting my own experience onto the data.

Case Study Participants

There were some similarities across the three focal women. All were White and married to men. All three met their husbands in college, and had been partnered with their spouses for 4-12 years. They were each pursuing academic careers in the in the female-dominated fields of education and anthropology.

Jane is a cultural anthropologist who is married to Michael. Jane and Michael met 12 years ago at a liberal arts college, Midwestern College. Emilia, their daughter, was 9 months old when this study began. Emilia was born in East Asia, where Jane conducted her dissertation research. During their time in East Asia, Michael taught English as a Second Language. When I first met Jane and Michael, they had recently returned to Greenridge. Until something more full-time became available, Michael was working temporary jobs.

Vivian is a first year student in education who is married to Sam, a software engineer. Vivian and Sam met 10 years ago when they graduated from SU. In the interim years, Sam and Vivian moved to Arizona where they were working and had their daughter, Johanna. Johanna was 3 years old at the start of this study. When Johanna was born, Vivian quit her job as a K-12 teacher, because she felt that it was not possible to be a good mother and a good teacher at the same time. Because Vivian had always wanted to pursue a Ph.D., and she and her husband had always wanted to move back to Greenridge, they returned to the SU area.

Emma has two children and grew up in Greenridge. Emma is working on her Ph.D. in archaeology. She met her husband, Glen, when they were attending college in Alaska. Glen was

willing to move back to Greenridge after they graduated, and Emma wanted to attend a Ph.D. program here. Glen is working in environmental consulting and they have two young children.

Table 2

Key Participant Information

Name	Stage	Department	Husband	Child(ren)
Jane	Dissertation writing	Anthropology	Michael	Emilia, 9 months
Emma	Dissertation proposal	Archaeology	Glen	James, 2 years Sarah, 6 months
Vivian	First year Coursework	Education	Sam	Johanna, 3 years

Enacting Work-Family Balance by Internalizing, Policing, Resisting, and Performing Conflicting Norms of Work and Motherhood

I present this results section in four parts according to the themes that arose in the data. In the first section, I discuss how the women internalized competing discourses and policed themselves. In the second section, I show how the mothers performed the ideal worker and resisted the ideal mother. In the third section, I describe how women enacted the ideal mother and resisted the ideal worker. Finally, I discuss how, even though these women enacted a work-family balance of sorts, they experienced that balance in both positive and negative ways. All three women pursued an academic career path that would enable them to respond to the conflicting demands of work and motherhood.

Internalizing and Policing Norms

All three mothers had internalized the notion that academic life and mothering required an intensive time commitment. Not only did these activities require a steep amount of time, they also required intellectual focus. Vivian, Jane, and Emma expected themselves to make constant progress on their academic work and to devote significant time and energy to mothering when

they were with their children. The mothers policed themselves when they were not fully present in their work or parenting activities.

Internalizing work and mothering norms. In the following example, Jane shows how she, like Emma and Vivian, has internalized norms related to work and motherhood. Jane discusses how she has to "put in the time":

> I just I really need, like a schedule, and regular time. And I know he'd {Michael} rather have time together in the evenings and watch movies and things and we do that some days of the week but I think he's really understanding and supportive that I need to go out often in the weekends to continue writing something that I was working on earlier on that day. Not lose that train of thought...I just need to put in the time.

In this instance, Jane has clearly incorporated the notion of academic work requiring time in to the structure of her identity, owning this particular idea with her use of an "I" statement.

Related to this idea of "needing to put in the time" was the expectation of constant academic progress. Emma expressed this in her emotional response to time periods that she was not making the kind of progress that she expected:

> You know, there have been a few— there are periods like where there will be a few months where I don't really make progress. So it feels like you kind of disappeared into the woodwork a little bit and you are just kind of sitting there. So, I mean, as long as you are continually moving somewhere or doing something, that's success enough.

Like Jane, Emma made the identity of constant progress part of herself – there are time periods where she has not made academic progress, and has "disappeared in the woodwork." In so doing, she has in some ways ceased to exist as an academic worker.

While all three mothers had internalized the time commitment that academic work required, they also experienced the time commitment of graduate school to be unclear. Vivian described how she typically works while Johanna is in daycare, and declined projects that would take more time. She wondered if this will have implications for her future career path. As she stated,

> If I can demonstrate that my body of work is good and I can do that in 35 hours a week like, that would be great. And then it's hard to know going forward if I'm always going to be able to say no to things without there being some sort of professional repercussions so in that I don't, if I don't take this opportunity, there's not another opportunity, that type of thing.

As this data shows, the mothers internalized the time requirements of academic work and expected to be making constant progress – in the time available.

The mothers had also internalized a competing notion – that mothering required time and quality. To invest time in both activities, "balance" was necessary. Expressing this view, Jane identified a member of her committee as a role model because she divided time between her work and her children.

> I see her as a role model in that I feel like she is actually balancing things really well. She seems like she is spending a fair amount of time with her children and her family. She has childcare for both of them but she doesn't have childcare on Friday…she just brings her you know, the 8 month old to work for the time being on Friday. So if anyone has meeting with her, she doesn't teach with those days, but if anyone has meetings, they need to be fine with her having a baby there because she and the baby are doing what needs to be done.

By describing a role model who divides her time, Jane identified the balance that she wanted and sought for herself. She also demonstrated her commitment to investing time in both work and family. All three mothers organized their lives in ways that provided their children and their academic work with their focused attention.

Policing norms. All three women policed themselves around the notion of spending intensive time with work and family. They described this idea in their expectation that they should be present in the moment at hand. The mothers were disappointed with themselves when they could not easily switch from one task to another and maintain a consistent level of engagement and focus.

Data revealed that Emma had an unarticulated amount of time in her head that felt she should spend with her children. This tension between time for work and time for school played out in her allocation of childcare time. Emma had a flexible nanny share that could be 20 hours or 40 hours depending on her needs. In interviews, it became clear that her "need" was determined by complex factors – a feeling she should save money and spend time with her children in addition to her school schedule and workload. Emma discussed how her decisions about childcare in the fall would depend on how much time she spent with her children in the summer:

> Depending on my school schedule I'll probably try to make it {childcare} not full-time. Also probably depends on how much time I get to spend with them this summer and how much you know because if I get to spend a lot of time with them this summer I won't feel quite as guilty about doing full-time all next year but if my work this summer is really overwhelming then I'm going to try to have at least one or two days where I'm home with them but again it depends on school schedule here.

Emma discussion of guilt reveals that she was policing herself in regards to how much time she spent with her children.

In relation to work, Emma additionally described feeling guilty when she would become distracted by thoughts of her children during work time:

> Even things like— I guess I shouldn't be— but when I am like sitting in lecture— you know, obviously not lecturing and oh my gosh, I have look up the phone number for the preschool so I can call and get on their wait list. And like I jot down my to-do, like, and look up the phone number real quick. I am always pulled in and out. Or in between classes, like— called the nanny and see— "Oh, did I leave enough milk for you today?" or stuff like that. So it's constantly back and forth.

Emma articulated an expectation that she should be focused and present in a high quality way both at work and at home, an expectation that Vivian and Jane also held for themselves.

Vivian described how it was "a hard transition" to switch from working to going home for dinner and parenting and then going back to work:

> So I think that even if there were nights I would have wanted to work until 11 and not go home and not have to because it was just so hard to go, to transition from like being on the mom thing to then having to go then do work. Like that's, for me, that's a hard transition.

Due to "various levels of guilt" related to her husband, child, and her work, Vivian would force herself to return home and engage in family time and then continue working after Johanna was in bed. Jane also experienced guilt when she completed work during time spent with her daughter. As Jane stated, "Unfortunately, when I am home, a lot of the time, I have a tendency to be trying to check my email and then quickly read an abstract or something, so I feel like I'm not in the

moment as I should be." In contrast, Jane defined being a good mom as being in the moment. "I feel like for me, successful parenting is thinking in the moment as much as I possibility can. So reacting to her {Emilia's} emotions that day, or how she is feeling or kind of doing what's best in the moment." Clearly, the mothers had internalized the time requirement of mothering and work, and experienced guilt when they could not provide intensive and quality focus to a particular situation.

Enacting Work and Resisting Motherhood

Because the women had internalized conflicting norms of work and motherhood, resistance and enactments of both norms were inevitable. In performing one set of norms, women resisted the others. The mothers frequently switched back and forth between resisting and enacting differing sets of norms.

Enacting the ideal academic worker. The majority of the academic work completed by the mothers was conducted when children were in daycare or with a nanny or family member. The mothers' research, teaching, and service work activities during the time of the study differed based upon their stage in the program, funding and outside job commitments, and amount of childcare.

Teaching, research, & service. Emma, Vivian, and Jane pursued their desire for academic careers by enacting research, teaching, and service. When I met them, all three had made key progress on their research agenda. For example, Emma had just been awarded funding for conducting her summer research in Greece after working on a grant proposal with her advisor for several years. Jane had collected her data and was now tackling the challenge of writing the dissertation. Vivian was looking forward to the first milestone for her degree, seeking to begin the process of carving out a research project that aligned with her long-term research agenda.

All three women had mentioned experiencing challenges with writing. Emma had a hard time finding chunks of time to write, Jane felt like the writing was slow, and Vivian wanted to work on her ability to develop writing in an in-depth manner. While her ability to write concisely served proposal writing, she felt like she would need to work on in-depth writing for future degree milestones and publications.

Other key aspects of research were networking at conferences, winning external funding, and gaining research experience. Both Jane and Vivian mentioned attending conferences as part of their activities. After returning from her data collection activity in East Asia, Jane attended several conferences in the fall quarter. Jane seemed to have an understanding that conferences are key in terms of promoting one's academic work, networking, and conducting interviews for jobs. Vivian also discussed the importance of conferences, and by the end of her first year, had submitted three conference proposal presentations. Finally, in terms of impressing potential search committees with their ability to attract external funding and research experience, all three had relevant experiences. Jane had won several fellowships and grants for her work, Emma had also earned funding and served as a research assistant, and Vivian, while she had not attracted grant funding, would be serving as an research assistant on her advisor's grant for the next several years.

All three were mothers were engaged in teaching activities related to their funding when I was conducting the study. Jane served as a teaching assistant for a cultural anthropology course, a job that she perceived as having a low time commitment that would help her devote time to the dissertation. Jane planned to serve as a writing tutor for undergraduates and an instructor for a course in the East Asian program. Emma served as a teaching assistant for an archaeology course and lab, a role that held a steep time commitment since she was working with another

teaching assistant to re-write "outdated and boring" lab assignments. Emma also met frequently with students to facilitate their learning, and at times served as a substitute lecturer. Finally, Vivian served as coach for students who were training to become teachers.

In terms of service, Emma, Jane, and Vivian were not engaging in a great deal of this activity during the time of the study, however Vivian hoped to accomplish more in her second year. Emma had a history of working to recruit women into science and Jane had served on graduate student councils. In addition to enacting the ideal graduate student to varying degrees, the mothers were engaged in other kinds of graduate activities. For example, Emma planned to complete her comprehensive exams and Jane presented her research at a department colloquia series. Vivian was still in the coursework stage, and was moving forward with that, as well as participating in a cohort with other students in her field.

Few family commitments & lack of intelligibility. All three women at times presented themselves as having few family commitments or family commitments "within limits" in the department and with their advisors. In social situations with students or peers, the mothers felt as though their situation was not always intelligible to others around them.

Departments. Jane sometimes felt unsure or awkward in social situations or at departmental events because not many other students were bringing their children. As she described,

> It's just kind of like, there's not like there's a lot of other students who are bringing students to meetings on campus so this is sort of that desire to, it seems like sort of unspoken rule about bringing kids to academic meetings.

Related to this point, Jane mentioned an instance in which a graduate student colleague without children did not understand why Jane was missing a dissertation defense because she did not

have childcare. Jane said, "Maybe it'd be fine, but it's just like I don't think she'd be quiet for the whole thing and I feel like it's gonna be distracting to have a baby sitting there while you're trying to talk about your dissertation." In this quote, Jane revealed her uncertainty regarding social norms in addition to how her child will act.

Emma and Vivian felt like they could at times bring their children to campus. For example, Emma discussed about how when she had first had James she was taking a class and would have a friend watch him in the department during the sessions. When he was there, she was very conscious of him making noise. She felt like children were welcome in the department "within limits." Emma does not think that anyone would say anything if she brought her children but she feels like,

> You know everyone's offices are down there and they're trying to work and there's like a screaming baby down the hall. Before I had my own screaming babies, it would probably annoy me so I am conscious that it would probably annoy most people there.

Vivian also felt that there were departmental contexts she could bring her child to and others that she could not. Vivian stated that, when Johanna was sick, there some classes she would have taken her to. Statistics classes were large enough that they could have sat in the back "and we would have been okay."

While Vivian did not feel like discussing children with her advisor was necessarily taboo, she mentioned not looking forward to sharing the news of a possible second pregnancy, if and when it occurred. She did not plan to share this information until she was absolutely certain that a possible pregnancy would be viable. Similarly, Emma described how she downplayed her parenting status with her advisor because she thinks that he will have more confidence in her ability to complete work if she does not mention it.

Social contexts. Vivian described a time when she mistakenly brought her daughter to a graduate student gathering. She thought other graduate students would be sitting in the restaurant, but they were sitting in the bar, so then everyone had to move for Johanna. Vivian felt that situation was "…kind of less than ideal." Jane noted how being a parent did not fit with undergraduate students ideas of graduate students, recalling an embarrassing moment when she ran into a student at the mall with Emilia and how both she and the student were surprised. While the student may or may not have been surprised that Jane was a mother, Jane interpreted the interaction in that manner.

Resisting the ideal mother. All mothers repeatedly resisted the discourse that a good mother is a full-time mother. Emma, Jane, and Vivian resisted these discourses through their employment of a "good enough" mentality and sharing responsibilities with their spouses.

Good enough mothering. For Vivian and Jane, the "good enough" approach was revealed in their use of daycare. Both mothers were not seeking the absolute best care for children, and were instead satisfied with "good enough." Jane and Vivian leveraged background knowledge about childcare and child development to support their resistance to ideal mother norms. Jane compared herself to other parents who are seeking a cross-cultural language experience for their children:

> All the ones that we're on the waitlist for, we would be fine with her going…It's funny, I was talking to some people in my parenting group, I was telling them that she was on the waiting list for a bilingual daycare and they said "oh whoa, I guess that's great, if you want to go to the bilingual route" and I said "I don't actually care, I just want her to get into a daycare. They could teach her Farsi, I don't care. They could teach her any language or you know math, it doesn't matter. It's just I need somebody to - I need a

daycare." A daycare that I can feel could about but I'm not obsessive about the kind of curriculum they use at this time, you know? Just a space that feels fine.

Similarly, Vivian contrasts herself with other parents who are overly concerned with academics when their children are two years of age:

> We found— we really like having daycare. It's close to campus. It's small. You know, it's not going to win any awards for being like pre-academic or, you know, raising tomorrow's future leaders, but they like the kids and the kids do interesting stuff, and they follow the kids' lead and they have a great outdoor area, and they take the kids outside a couple times a day. And they like my child, and I have never seen anything that makes me feel like she is not in a good place. One of the parents commented to me at some birthday party, well, I just don't know. There is just not enough academics. I think we are going to have to take our son out and put him someplace a little bit more focused next year. It's like, dude, they are 2. These are 2-year-olds, right? They should be playing and being friends with each other and should have some support in that. And they should be reading books and talking about words and letters and stuff, but that's kind of the extent of it at that age. And that's what they do.

While Emma did not feel as relaxed about childcare as the other two, Emma expressed the "good enough" mentality in relation to how her parenting has changed with having a second child. Contrasting her current approach with her previous one, she now felt that her children will not "combust" if she "does something wrong." Emma described this approach:

> Every time everyone asks me, so how are things going— I am just like, well, we are all alive, and that's a success. But more seriously, I mean, I guess, just if they are happy and fed and, you know, content, then I feel like I have done a good enough job. It's always

> nice if they still like you at the end of the day, which fortunately, they do, because that changes when they are teenagers. But— so, yeah, it's more of a survival thing, I think, in the early years. And then it will probably change significantly.

As this section shows, these three women at times employed a good enough mentality to resist and discourses of idealized mothering.

Spouses. Spousal emotional support and co-parenting enabled women to additionally resist the norms of the ideal mother and enact norms related to work. Emma described how her husband was planning on accompanying the family to Greece for her data collection trip, and encouraged her to keep going even when she felt like quitting:

> He's (Glen) never mentioned me not finishing my program or ever asked me to get another job anytime that I've done that thing, sometimes I've mentioned not finishing my program, and his response is generally like "well, you'll regret it," which is true.

In this example, it is clear that Glen has supported Emma in her data collection trip, using his flexible job to make her work more possible.

Similarly, Vivian described how Sam encourages her to continue with her Ph.D. and desire for an academic career, even though it has meant that he has had to help out more at home. The difference in her fulfillment and happiness has been so clear to both of them that they are both "considering an academic career." As she stated,

> Pretty quickly we started to see that it was so much better for me and now he's like "There's no way, you're gonna get this done. You're gonna finish this. There's no way, we're not going to go back to you being home all the time." I mean, I guess if I wanted to, but I was not a successful situation.

Vivian has also resisted the ideal mother by using her spouse to provide her with more time on the weekends to complete work. After she realized that she had been trying to "do it all" in the home and "turning in crappy work" as a result, she started asking for more time on the weekends. In addition to working during Johanna's two naps, Vivian would ask Sam for two additional work hours on the weekend.

Jane's spouse supported her, but the fact that her career was less flexible than his required him to make sacrifices. Jane described how she had "put him through years of a relationship" with a Ph.D. student and she expressed awareness that he has been "following her everywhere." Perhaps because of this, she sometimes experiences his support as pressure. As she stated,

> It's hard to put it into words. I feel like, I appreciate that he has confidence in me to finish and to get a job that I want and I also feel a certain pressure to get a job because I've, you know, put him through these many years of a relationship with Ph.D. student. And so I think it's helpful to have that sort of pressure in some ways, I know it's not just about me, it's about my family and finding a job…I feel like sometimes he brings it up too often that I will that I will be in a really good job and supporting our family. I just feel like I hope that's true…I think he sees it as him being supportive but I see it as being kind of stressful... It's hard to explain. He, I think he, his focus is really on the end goal of having a job and a dissertation but at the same time, he doesn't, he doesn't really understand sort of my stress about going on the job market and sort of all these big things I have to do in the next year.

In this quote, Jane expressed guilt about the sacrifices that her husband has made in the past years for her career. She experienced that guilt as pressure to make uncontrollable things like the job market work out for them. Vivian also described feeling guilty in regards to the time that her

husband spent with her daughter while she was working, describing how she would go home in the evening to help out because "He misses me. He misses our time as a family."

Clearly, spousal support, and using spouses as a resource to resist norms of motherhood was helpful to the mothers. However, relying on spouses could also be complicated, promoting feelings of guilt and stress for Vivian and Jane.

Enacting Motherhood and Resisting Work

The mothers performed motherhood by organizing many aspects of daily life, including childcare for their children, finances and housing, and preserving time for family. One key aspect of daily life that the mothers organized was childcare. The mothers' performances of the idealized mother mediated the resistance value of their childcare time.

Enacting motherhood. Mothers, perhaps because they had more flexible schedules, enacted the ideal mother by attending daycare tours, placing their children on wait lists, and keeping abreast of preparations for future childcare scenarios. While spouses were often involved in the final decision-making about care, the mothers frequently worried about care and executed significant legwork to arrange it. Vivian discussed how she attended tours and then invited Sam along when she was nearing a decision. Emma did the same when she was seeking a nanny who would accompany the family on their summer data collection trip. After meeting both candidates, she had her husband weigh in. In general, Emma talked about childcare as involving "looking everywhere" and requiring her to "get on the waitlists." While Jane often discussed parenting in terms of "we," her central role in organizing childcare was conveyed when she says, "I did a tour there" and "I am on that waitlist." Even though childcare represented a key form of resistance for Jane, its impact was mediated due to the legwork involved in arranging that care. Though sometimes she resisted the ideal mother by advocating a

"good enough" mentality, other times Jane backed off this position when engaging in an intensive childcare search as well as being selective about possible options.

Another way that the mothers mediated the resistance value of childcare was by picking up their children early or requesting less care. As described earlier, Emma frequently arranged part-time care to save money and also to have more time with her children. Similarly, Vivian would pick her daughter up at 4 p.m. on days she did not have class because she felt that her daughter would be more "ornery" otherwise. Finally, even though Jane was stressed about her workload in the upcoming year, she planned to pick Emilia up at 4 p.m., two hours before closing in order to "spend time with her." As she described,

> I think I will like I'd like to spend a few morning hours with her and then drop her off at daycare sort of between 9 and 10 and be on campus and then pick her up again and then around 4:00ish, 3:30 and 4:00ish and then have time in the afternoon with her. And I feel like then I'd be able to get more done.

This section reveals that the mothers limited the resistance value of childcare by organizing the resource and not using all the available time.

Resisting work. The mothers resisted the norms of the ideal academic worker in different ways by adopting a "good enough" mentality, reserving weekends and evenings for family time, and presenting mothering identities in particular work situations.

Vivian was unique in her description of a "good enough" mentality about her work. She realized that not everything she does has to be perfect; it simply has to be good enough:

> Initially I was like everything I write needs to be, you know, the next greatest thing. And that's not quite the case. I need to be doing good work and good scholarship. But my review last quarter isn't going to change the world. And that's OK. And I don't need to do

> all the research I am going to do, because in theory I will have a long and expansive career where I will get to ask all the questions I want to ask and study them in a variety of different ways. And I don't need to do that all this week.

Here, Vivian describes how he does not have to subscribe to ideal work norms in order to be successful – she can do what she is able to do in the time available and develop her work further later.

All of the mothers enacted parenting commitments, and resisted work norms, by reserving weekends and evenings before children went to bed for "family time." To this end, women were more likely to use their children's naptimes for working than ask their spouse to watch their child. Jane's summer schedule provides an impressive example of using naps and post-bedtime hours strategically to supplement her 8 hours of nanny care. Jane described how she would use the short morning nap to do "less involved" administrative tasks such as email or organizing her bibliography. After the nanny arrived, she would go to a coffee shop and immediately begin "focused writing" on her dissertation. Three hours later, Jane would return and continue more "focused" reading or writing during the afternoon nap. After dinner, she would watch a movie with her husband or, if she felt the need to continue working, she would go out to Starbucks to work "because it was open the latest."

Finally, women resisted the ideal worker by selectively presenting their parenting identities in departmental contexts. For example, Vivian brought her daughter to a party hosted by her advisor, Emma discussed parenting with young faculty member in the department, and Jane mentioned her daughter during her dissertation symposium. During Jane's dissertation symposium, she both enacted and resisted ideal work norms. Jane posted a picture of her daughter on a slide that was entitled "dissertation challenges." Here, she resisted the ideal

worker norm of presenting herself as having no family commitments, but she also enacted the notions that her child is a problem, which supported ideal worker ideals at the same time.

The Sum of These Resistances and Enactments: Balance?

These resistances and enactments resulted in a sort of "balance" for the women. The flexibility of graduate school represented a double-edged sword because it could flexibly adapt to the demands that the mother was responding to at that moment. For the mothers, occupying the space in between these discourses was both positive and negative. Emma and Jane described how having a child made them more efficient with their time they had and provided them with more of a balanced life, but they also felt like it also slowed them down academically. As Jane expressed,

> I feel like I have better— like I am able to prioritize what's important to me better now. And I think it's given me sort of— what's the word I am looking for? It's given me a kind of balance. Like it's made me think that even though, of course, my dissertation is important— like there is always something more important. And that's sort of reassuring somehow. Like I have friends that are working on their dissertations and getting really frantic— like they didn't format something correctly— I just feel like, of course it is important, you do need to hand it in, but I think some of my perfectionistic tendencies have diminished a little bit with a baby. And I think that's actually healthy. And it might actually be kind of conducive to finishing a dissertation because your dissertation is not your life's work, or you magnum opus— it's just like the first step to your academic career.

Similarly, Emma stated that she is more efficient than she used to be, but has less time now that she has children. If she was this efficient and had more time, she felt it could be a winning combination.

Finally, Vivian is jealous of men in her department who can work until late at night. Vivian compared herself to a father in her department whose wife would let him stay at work late rather than having him work from home. Unlike him, she felt that working late would never "cut it" for her or for other mothers. Vivian stated, "That would never cut it for me. And never cut it for the other mom." She supported this statement by citing the factors of 1) mothers not being able to "turn off" thoughts of children, 2) missing her daughter, and her daughter missing her and 3) her husband missing her and their time as a family. As she described,

> I think it would have been a big combination but I miss seeing her, Johanna. So that would have been hard. She misses seeing me. And we can, I can kind of tell, Sam doesn't pick up on it, and says it doesn't matter, and she doesn't do it with him, but I can tell when we haven't, she and I haven't spend a lot of time together because she's a little more ornery and a little harder to manage. She very much talks about missing me if I'm not there in the evening and there's and then that's a big deal...Sam wouldn't have...he I think he has come a long way this year in how much parenting he does and how much he's comfortable with and what he knows and what his skills are and things like that. But that, he misses me. And he misses our time as a family.

While having children provided efficiency and a balanced life, sometimes the mothers wished for more time. However, because the mothers had internalized conflicting norms, they also had internalized barriers to accessing more work time.

Enacting and Resisting Norms in Desired Careers

Just as their graduate school lives reflected the mothers' conflicting resistances and enactments, the academic careers they envisioned for themselves also did. In their desired careers, all three resisted the ideal worker norms that dictate that an academic worker should not have personal commitments. In these desires, the mothers also performed commitments to including to spouses and family members in these decisions. In each case, these responses to conflicting pressures took contrasting forms.

Emma was hopeful that she would be hired in her own department and tried to be "on her game" and "overqualified" so that she might have a chance to have both her academic life and family life in the local context. She grew up locally in the city of Greenridge, and she wanted to be close to her family as well as pursue her academic dreams.

> I feel a lot more pressure personally being in the department because my goal would be is if there's an opening in this department that I would be applying for it. I'm very conscious of these people that I'm taking courses with and working with now may in the future be the ones that I want to have hire me. It seems a lot more, seems like I need to be on my game a lot more than if I were just taking classes and I didn't have that added concern and even more so to be hired in a department you graduated from you need to be like significantly overqualified compared to the other applicants for people to justify why they're hiring you.

This desired career outcome is interesting because it is fairly rare in academia to be hired by your own department, and Emma seemed somewhat aware of this. However, she remained hopeful and placed significant pressure on herself towards this end.

Vivian hoped to find an academic career in a location that was a "day's drive from family." She and her spouse were considering an academic career where they would move

within a particular geographical area. As she stated, "We are considering an academic career…I think that we will kind of limit our search somewhat, geographically. But it's a big deal to even be thinking that in four years that we could be moving." This quote revealed that Vivian's decision to pursue an academic career is responding to her spouse's needs as well as her own. "They" are considering an academic career within a range of geographical locations.

Finally, Jane wanted to teach at a liberal arts college since her perception was that those smaller, teaching-focused institutions would enable her desired balance of work and family. Jane was less interested in pursuing a job at a research institution due to her perceptions of the work-family balance of her academic advisor. She described,

> In terms of her work-life balance, I don't think I want what she was has. I feel like she's quite stressed out by that, not being able to achieve that balance. Or maybe she's finally, maybe she's finally achieving now, but for most of her career, she's seemed pretty stressed out, and talks about being quite stressed out. I think she's a role model in some ways but I'm not sure about that work-life balance part.

In addition to seeking an academic life that would provide work-family balance, she wanted to make sure that Michael was involved in the decision and that they kept talking about "places that he wouldn't want to be."

As this section highlights, each mother sought work-family balance through their careers in different ways. All mothers desired careers that would enable them to be responsive to the needs of their spouses, children, and extended families.

Discussion: Career Paths of Graduate Student Mothers

To summarize, this research found that all three mothers had internalized the notions that academic life and mothering required intensive and focused time commitments. To this end, the

mothers policed themselves when they were not fully focused on work and parenting tasks. Because the women had internalized conflicting norms of work and motherhood, resistance and enactments of both sets of norms occurred. In performing one set of norms, women resisted the other. There was a frequent back and forth "pull" between resisting and enacting conflicting norms.

The mothers performed work when they had daycare or nanny support, during times that their children slept, and while their spouse or another family member cared for the child. Women selectively performed the ideal academic worker by determining when they would bring their children to the department. Spousal emotional support and co-parenting enabled women to additionally resist the norms of the ideal mother and enact work. The mothers performed the ideal mother by organizing aspects of daily life such as childcare. However, the organizing work that the mothers invested served to mediate the resistance power of their childcare time. The mothers resisted ideal worker norms in different ways by adopting a "good enough" mentality and/or by presenting mothering identities in particular work situations.

A sort of "balance" existed between the resistances and enactments of conflicting discourses. The mothers felt that the space they occupied in between conflicting discourses was both beneficial and challenging. Just as their daily lives reflected their multiple commitments, the academic careers they envisioned for themselves also did. In their desired careers, all three resisted the ideal worker norms that dictate that an academic worker should have few personal commitments. Responding to the needs of their families, these career preferences also enacted the ideal mother.

This study has answered the guiding research questions by revealing that the three graduate student mothers alternated between enacting and resisting competing discourses about

work and motherhood both in daily life and in anticipating long-term career decisions. Women enacted and resisted competing discourses frequently - sometimes in the very same moment. The findings of this study reveal the complicated nature of resistances and enactments – because power can morph, what may first appear as an example of resistance to norms of idealized motherhood/performance of work can contain elements of a performance of idealized mothering/resistance of work. For example, when a graduate student mother utilized a childcare or spousal support, she resisted the ideal mother and performed work. However, when a mother experienced guilt related to her spouse and terminated her work time, or picked her child up early from daycare, she enacted norms of the ideal mother and resisted the ideal worker.

This research contributes to the literature by increasing understanding about the experiences and performances of graduate student mothers on the academic career path. Like Lynch (2008), I found that spousal support was a key element in the lives of the mother's lives. However, my study complicates Lynch's (2008) findings. Spouses provided key emotional supports, but for Vivian and Jane, they also represented sources of guilt that constrained women's access to daily work time and desired career paths. As this study shows, the mothers clearly took the needs of their spouses into account when making decisions about when to stop working and where to look for academic jobs.

As a result of these findings, my research speaks to other literature that examines the decision-making of graduate students. The literature has previously revealed that women take spouses and children (real or future) into account when making decisions (Mason, Goulden, & Frasch, 2011; Quinn & Litzler, 2009). My study confirms this finding, and helps explain why. As this study shows, women respond to competing demands day to day. Long-term, mothers

seek work-family contexts that will enable them to resolve the tension that they feel between the conflicting pulls of work and family.

The decisions that women are making to pursue work environments that they perceive as more family-friendly or located close to family are not unlike the choices that faculty women make when they pursue a liberal arts college or community college over a research institution (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2008). According to Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008), part of reason women are guided to these kinds of seemingly traditional choices is that the ideal work norms of many institutions, especially research institutions, appear unattainable for women who plan to have children. When looking at these choices of my participants from the perspective of their academic career goals, decisions to curb work time and spend time with children seem illogical, but when informed by knowledge of prevalent discourses of work, mothering, and family, such choices begin to make sense.

By using a poststructuralist lens, I address the critique of the academic motherhood literature that academic mothers are often portrayed as victims (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). The mothers in this study are not simply victims – they are both empowered and disempowered by their statuses as mothers and graduate students. Because of this, the women are negotiating seemingly conflicting discourses, sometimes successfully and at times less successfully. This contribution resonates with findings of previous authors who have utilized poststructuralist lenses to analyze faculty mothers. Mothers are not simply empowered or disempowered by their status as academic mothers – they are empowered *and* disempowered (Raddon, 2002; Acker & Armenti, 2004).

This research contributes not only to studies of mothers in academia, but also to studies of mothers who are trying to balance work and family in a variety of careers. Like many women

today, these mothers were balancing a desire to pursue an academic career and parent within dual career couples (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). Because of the profound shaping influence of a dual career partnership, some lines of work-family balance research investigate the couple as a whole, seeking to understand the breakdown between paid work and unpaid work in marriage (e.g., Moen & Yu, 2000). Given that spouses were so instrumental in shaping day-to-day activities as well as long-term career visions in this research, future studies of mothers in dual career couples might focus more on the powerful influence of the spouse. The tension of work-family balance is not simply juggled by a woman, but negotiated within a partnership.

Extending these findings, future studies might investigate performances of the ideal spouse alongside performances of the ideal mother and the ideal worker. The poststructuralist frame could helpfully analyze the couple in future research, seeking to understand how their work as a co-parenting unit enables or constrains an academic mother's career and mothering enactments and resistances to a variety of work and family norms. To fully understand this aspect of participants' lives, it would be useful to investigate the concept of the ideal spouse alongside the ideal mother and the ideal worker.

Clearly, the lives of graduate student mothers are complicated, involving competing performances and resistances. This study has implications regarding how the academic workplace could promote graduate student mothers' participation in the professoriate. These findings suggest that supports that could enable pure resistance to mothering norms could be helpful to mothers on the academic career path. A support that would meet this definition would promote a woman's access to time and ability to focus on work. For example, if universities could help provide childcare that was high quality, affordable, and accessible, and did not require significant amounts of effort to arrange, then that would represent a significant support for

graduate student mothers. Another strategy could be to provide professional development that equips mothers with negotiation skills so that they could advocate for themselves at home and in the workplace. To the extent that academic contexts can help a mother leverage her resistance to idealized mothering and enact valued work norms, it may be possible to increase their participation in the professoriate.

Article Two

I Am A Happier Mom When I'm Working: Female Ph.D. Students Pursuing Alternative Careers

Introduction: Motherhood and Early Academic Careers

There is increasing attention being paid to motherhood in academia. The study of motherhood has emerged from recognition that mothers tend to have poorer academic outcomes than academic fathers on all academic levels (Williams, 2005). In contrast to fathers, mothers are more likely to drop out of graduate school (Lynch, 2008), exit academia after receiving the Ph.D. (Wolfinger, Mason, & Goulden, 2009), frequently serve in part-time, non tenure-track roles in the academy (Perna, 2001), and often select institutions that seem to be more family-friendly, such as community colleges over research I institutions (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). Given that women are currently receiving their doctorates in rates equal to men, these outcomes for mothers are surprising.

Such outcomes lead to the following important question: Why do mothers advance in academia differently than fathers? Several bodies of literatures provide partial answers to these questions. First, women experience gender discrimination in availability of opportunities, resources, and networking, and mothers experience a special brand of discrimination because they are mothers, further curtailing their access to advancement opportunities. According to Williams (2005), maternal discrimination contributes to the negative outcomes for women.

Second, women experience work-family balance conflict in academia. The literature shows that despite change in gender roles over time, women continue to receive more pressure to invest in the home – both from themselves and others (Gunter & Stambach, 2003). Numerous studies have documented how working mothers conduct the *second shift* of housework and childcare at home after working a *first shift* at their jobs (Hoshchild, 2003). Even though

academic women performed less housework than women in the general population, research shows that they complete more than men (Suitor, Mecom, & Feld, 2001). In contrast, fathers do not tend to experience the tension between work and parenting to the same degree, even in the current generation in which fathers are investing more in their parenting roles (Sallee, 2012). Lynch (2008) documented how graduate student mothers, like faculty mothers, frequently perceived a tension between the demands of their mothering and work roles.

A lack of support for mothers in the home is frequently exacerbated by a lack of support from academic institutions. In interviews with 120 women on the tenure-track with children, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) found that there were three different types of policy environments among academic departments: 1) institutions that had no or limited policies; 2) campuses that had policies, but faculty feared using them; and 3) campuses that had implemented policies but only a few people took advantage of them. A survey by Finkel, Olswang, and She (1994) similarly documented that faculty were hesitant to make use of work-family policies such as maternity leave. Though faculty supported such policies, they were unlikely to utilize, typically acting out of their fears when making a decision regarding how to manage work and family.

Research further reveals that female faculty members hesitate to take advantage of departmental polices due to concerns regarding negative collegial perceptions (Fothergill & Feltey, 2003). Faculty members' fears may be warranted: Fox, Schwartz, and Hart (2006) found that when faculty in academic medicine utilized policies such as part-time status, they were less likely to obtain a tenure-track position. This study also indicated that men and women select part-time status for differing reasons – women pursued part-time status to provide childcare while men were more likely to engage in non-university income generating strategies.

Contrasting with mothers on the tenure-track, graduate student mothers have paltry resources available to them. Springer, Parker, and Leviten-Reid (2009) conducted an online survey of graduate directors in sociology departments and found that very few departments provided resources for graduate student parents. These authors learned that while 75% of departments had family-friendly events, less than 15% provided access to family-friendly space, dissertation support groups, or training for faculty, and only 17.5% offered training regarding for how to look for a job while pregnant or caring for a young infant.

Another issue present in the literature is the overlap of academic career and biological clocks. Academic workers are expected to be constantly productive, and as a result, a good time to have children does not typically present itself (Mason, Goulden, & Frasch, 2009). This leads women to try to strategize when to have their children. In the past, faculty mothers have tried to time their children for the May months, or for post-tenure (Armenti, 2004). However, at times this post-tenure strategy has resulted in an inability to have children (Hewlett, 2002). In addition, women sometimes feel that they will be discriminated against if they discuss their parenting status at work and as a result engage in *bias avoidance strategies* (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004) in order to survive in work environments. A recent study revealed that graduate student mothers also feel pressure to time their babies carefully (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006) and avoid bias (Lynch, 2008).

More than academic fathers, academic mothers are frequently situated in dual career couples (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). Related to this point, O'Laughlin and Bischoff (2005) found that academic women were less likely to have supportive spouses than academic men, though the presence of a supportive spouse decreased family stress. These researchers also learned that academic men were more likely to have spouses who worked less than full-time and

could therefore provide childcare, whereas academic women tended to have husbands who also worked full-time. When their spouses worked full-time, female faculty often worried about the quality of childcare that their children received. The available literature suggests that the spousal relationship seems to be an important, yet complicated factor for women. For example, O'Reilly (2012) found that traditional partnerships could de-rail a woman's academic career, while supportive partnerships could promote success. In analysis of interview data with graduate student mothers, Lynch (2008) learned that women appreciated emotional and financial support from spouses, but that reliance on a spouse financially also produced problematic power dynamics. Perhaps due to their relationships to spouses, women often list geography as a factor in their career decision-making (van Anders, 2004).

The literature has provided ample understanding of particular groups of mothers, mainly mothers on the tenure-track. The available research reveals significantly less about graduate student mothers, and the literature on graduate student mothers fails to discuss how mothers with differing career aspirations experience work-family balance in Ph.D. programs. This study sought to address this gap in the literature by investigating the experiences of four graduate student mothers - three who are in Ph.D. programs and one who has recently graduated - who do not plan to pursue a traditional academic career.

To address the aforementioned gaps in the literature, I present four case studies of mothers who were not interested in the academic career path. This study is focused upon answering the following questions: How did the mothers perform, resist, and internalize graduate school and the tenure-track? How did the mothers internalize, resist, and enact discourses of motherhood? What were the consequences of the mothers' performances?

Theoretical Framework: Interacting with Discourses of Mothering and Academic Work

Poststructuralists view gender as a verb, as a process that emerges in what people do and say (Martin, 2003). Individuals create their performances based upon the *discourses* that are made available culturally. Cultural norms can be those of the large dominant culture, but can also be more specific, constructed out of local community contexts (Butler, 1990). Even when individuals are alone, they engage in identity performances that they have *internalized* (Bartky, 1998). Individuals frequently receive negative sanctions if they do not perform the discourses that are supported by *power* and the *status quo*. For example, a woman who does not conform to gendered expectations for what a mother should do may be labeled as a "bad mother." By *resisting* gendered expectations, a woman may cease to be *intelligible* or recognizable to those around her (Butler, 1990). A woman may also *punish herself* through shame or guilt for failing to do what she "should" do (Barkty, 1998).

There are two predominant discourses of "good motherhood" (Raddon, 2002). First, there is the ideal of the full-time mother, typically constructed as the *ideal mother.* The ideal mother is committed to the task of mothering at all times (Williams, 2005). This idea is conveyed in Hays' (1996) discussion of the modern ideology of *intensive mothering.* Hays describes how ideal mothers are significantly invested in the task of the parenting - they serve as primary caregivers, respond to the needs of their children, seek out expert resources as guides for their childrearing, and invest time, energy, effort, and money in mothering. A second discourse that exists alongside the notion of ideal motherhood is that "best of both worlds" mother discourse. According to Raddon (2002), this discourse has become more popular as women have entered the workforce in greater numbers. The best of both worlds mother contrasts with the ideal mother because she has "…a measure of independence by 'juggling' a career with part-time mothering" (p. 394). Because these visions of motherhood conflict, they create spaces for

ambiguities and ambivalence for individuals. Mothers navigating these contrasting discourses must ask themselves, "Is a good mother a selfless woman who puts her child first and lives through her children in some sense, or is she economically active, productive as well as reproductive, and forging some sense of identity outside of her mothering role: or can she be both?" (p. 395). According to Macdonald & Merrill (2002), the ideology of intensive motherhood has intensified in recent years, promoted by ideas that children can be perfected and that mothers are the ideal ones to perform this perfection work. Some working mothers manage these tensions by "hiring a mother-surrogate" in the form of a nanny "to take their place during the working day" (Macdonald, 1998, p. 31). While this approach is frequently pursued in ways that uphold the intensive mothering ideal, Macdonald & Merrill (2002) conclude that this shared mothering work is not without challenges.

Norms of work also guide the performances of individuals, just like norms of gender and parenting. The *ideal worker* norm depicts a person who is entirely committed to his or her job, never allowing his or her personal life to interrupt his or her work commitments (Williams, 2005). Ideal workers are expected to meet the demands of their jobs by working long hours and managing outside commitments effectively. The sum of these behaviors signals commitment to one's work (Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, & Moen, 2010). While these norms generally guide the lives of workers in the United States, particular kinds of workplaces may hold conflicting norms. For example, the ideal worker concept has been applied to academic workplaces, settings that offer workers some degree of flexibility as well as a variety of tasks to complete. Resonating with the ideal worker concept, academic workers are expected to be always working, even during their summer break or when they are at home (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

The concept of the ideal worker has also been tailored to the lives of graduate students. Because the Ph.D. has primarily served to train professors in the past, the predominant vision of the ideal graduate student requires a professor-in-training to engage in teaching, research, service, networking, and supporting their advisor's research agenda (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009). Even though many Ph.D. students will not work in academia due to declining job opportunities (Golde & Dore, 2001), a set of norms has not yet been elaborated to describe the expectations for that experience. I drew upon a recent career guidebook to receive some insight into possible norms that might govern the performances of Ph.D. students seeking non-academic careers (Basalla & Debelius, 2007). According to Basalla and Debelius (2007), the successful Ph.D. holder who transitions to non-academic work should select their preferred academic activities, network outside of academia, and conduct internships to conduct relevant experience.

Method: Understanding Work-Family Performances for Graduate Student Mothers

I have selected a qualitative case study (Merriam, 2009) because it is well suited to the kinds of explanatory and descriptive questions (Yin, 2006) that I ask. A case study helped me more fully understand *the case* (Yin, 2006) of graduate student motherhood as it relates to career decision-making. As Merriam (2009) states, "A case study might be selected for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge to which we would not otherwise have access" (p. 46). The strength of this approach is that it provides an in-depth examination within authentic social contexts (Yin, 2006). A further strength of the qualitative case study method is that it can answer questions about practice. As Merriam (2009) describes, a qualitative case study examines "an applied field's processes, problems, and programs…to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice" (p.51). In this study, my research

questions address how graduate student mothers perform and resist norms related to work and family.

Data Sampling

During this study, the people and places involved were strategically chosen. In this section, I highlight my sampling choices regarding settings and participants.

Sampling: sites and participants. I selected an *information-rich* (Patton, 2003) programmatic site, State University (SU), a research I institution. I selected a research-intensive institution because it provided me with access to graduate students in Ph.D. programs. Within SU, I recruited across several different departments that held contrasting male-female graduate student ratios. This study utilized *purposeful* and *maximum variation sampling*. Like August and Waltman (2004), I assumed that higher numbers of women within a department might result in more parental supports, and therefore provide a rich contrast for my study. I also sought departmental variation because, as noted in the literature, gender parity can manifest in divergent ways across departments (Aanerud, Morrison, Homer, Rudd, Nerad, & Cerny, 2007). I utilized *criterion-based* sampling (Patton, 2003) by seeking graduate student mothers with young children.

Interviews. I conducted interviews because my research questions seek information that I am not able to observe. Merriam (2009) summarizes this rationale: "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (p. 88). More specifically, I selected *semi-structured interviews* because they allowed for flexibility, enabling me to adapt my protocols as I learned more (Glesne, 2006; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999; Wolcott, 1997). I utilized an *interview guide* (Patton, 2003), a protocol that enabled me to ask participants similar questions in a comparable order. I asked questions that

helped me understand the meaning of work and motherhood in the context of participants' lives. For example, I asked questions such as, "What factors informed your decision to go to graduate school?" and "What factors influenced your decision to have a child?"

Participant observation. Participant observation represented a second source of data for this study. Over the course of this study, I observed participants 3-5 times each across multiple home and work sites. While observing, I produced thick, rich descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Geertz, 1973) of the programmatic context in my handwritten *fieldnotes* (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). This thick description involved a "highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting" (Merriam, 2009, p. 227). By collecting rich details of home and work sites, I enhanced the potential of my findings to be transferred and applied to other relevant settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, participant observation was necessary in this study because the participants were not always "able or willing to discuss" aspects of "the topic under study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 119).

Document analysis. Because it provided another opportunity for triangulation of data types, I utilized document analysis as a third data source (Patton, 2003; Merriam, 2009). I analyzed documents such as Curriculum Vitas, Facebook websites, information about parenting activities, and academic work samples. As Merriam (2009) describes, document analysis further aided me in the process to "uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 163). In combination with observations and interviews, document analysis provided a rich database for this qualitative case study design.

Data Analysis

These three data sources produced a high-quality written record for analysis. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed (Charmaz, 2001; Richards & Morse, 2007). Documents and

fieldnotes comprised the remainder of the textual data record. I began the analysis process by reading through the entire data corpus (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). I engaged in an initial process of *line by line* (Charmaz, 2001) or *open coding* (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) through which I identified emergent themes (Charmaz, 2001). This process enabled me to "identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 143). Following this preliminary process, I engaged in a second process of *focused coding* (Charmaz, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) in which I applied a refined set of codes to portions of the data, questioning whether the codes encompassed the breadth of my data. This high-level coding and generalization work was supported through *memo-writing* (Charmaz, 2001). Following this early process, I conducted a within case analysis of each mother, seeking to understand how each case answered my research questions. I then looked across cases for similarities and differences. Finally, I engaged in a third round of analysis that focused on groups of women who held differing career aspirations.

To strengthen the quality of my findings (Merriam, 2009), I also created an audit trail and charted the decision-making moments in my study. This activity was approached with the goal of enabling an outsider to follow my research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because I shared gender, race, and parenting status characteristics with the majority of my participants, I continuously reflected on my positionality by writing memos to myself (Peshkin, 1988). In summary, strategic data sampling, collection, and analysis supported a strong inquiry into the relationships between work and family for graduate student mothers.

Contextual Information: Rebecca, Madison, Robin, and Leigh

There were some similarities across the groups of women. All four women were White and married to men. All had been partnered with their current spouse for a lengthy amount of

time. They differed in terms of stage of graduate training, the age of their child, and departmental location.

Rebecca is 33 and she recently passed her exams in her pursuit of a degree in science education. Rebecca has been funded as a member of a larger research group throughout her time in graduate school. Her son, Tyler, was only a few weeks old when this study began. Rebecca is originally from another western city. Rebecca would like to pursue a non-academic, research-based, program evaluation or grant writing career.

Leigh is a ninth year student in sociology. She is married to Andrew and she has one son, Adian, and became pregnant with her second child during the course of the study. She has pursued her Ph.D. in different places where they have moved for her husband's job. She is now working on her proposal and would prefer not to apply for an extension for the 10-year limit. Leigh began graduate school because she did not know what she wanted to do, and though she still is not sure, she is starting to conduct some consulting work to explore the available options.

Robin is an engineering student and she is married to Jose who is originally from Spain. They have had a son, Alejandro, who was approximately 9 months old at the onset of the study. Robin is at the proposal stage and is attending conferences and building connections to secure a job once she finishes. Robin attended graduate school with the goal of obtaining skills so that she could be a project manager for a consulting firm in the area. While she could enjoy being a professor, she has ruled that out because she feels that she has not demonstrated an ability to publish.

Finally, Madison graduated recently with a Ph.D. in education and is now pursuing a career in adjunct teaching and higher education administration. Madison originally wanted to be a professor since she loves teaching, but has ruled that out due to her husband's job and her

perceptions of the stresses that assistant professors face. Thane was born before Madison graduated. After taking 8 months off for maternity leave, Madison sought to find a path in higher education that would enable her to stay in the Greenridge area.

Table 1

Key Participant Information

	Department	**Stage**	**Husband**	**Child(ren)**
Rebecca	Science Education	Proposal	Colin	Tyler, under 3 months
Robin	Engineering	Proposal	Jose	Alejandro, 9 months
Madison	Education	Graduated	Devin	Thane, 2 years
Leigh	Sociology	Proposal	Andrew	Adian, 2 years & one due in Feb. 2013

Results: Interacting with Norms Of Work and Motherhood

In this results section, I describe how the four mothers engaged in graduate school/early career and mothering part-time. The mothers resisted norms of the ideal academic worker by pursuing the Ph.D. but selecting non tenure-track careers. The mothers drew on work norms that functioned in broader workplace contexts, such as networking and prioritizing academic tasks they preferred. The mothers had internalized a view of success that included receipt of their Ph.D. degree. However, the mothers had additionally internalized a negative view of their academic work. The mothers performed elements of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996), and policed themselves around issues of placing their child first and ensuring that their child had a high-quality care experience. The consequences of balancing both work and parenting included contentment regarding parenting, loss of professional identity, and negotiations with spouses.

Part-Time Graduate School/Early Career

This section is divided into two parts: career paths and experiences in graduate school/early career. This discussion reveals how and why the mothers forged career paths that resisted norms of the ideal academic worker, and how the mothers at times replaced academic work norms with norms from broader workplace contexts. The mothers had internalized the norm of finishing their Ph.D., but at times struggled to make progress. All the mothers had internalized negative perceptions of their work. In particular, Leigh engaged in regular self-policing related to these ideals.

Career paths. The mothers forged career paths that included the Ph.D. but did not include the tenure-track. Some resisted norms of ideal academic work by beginning graduate school with goals outside of the professoriate and by prioritizing place and spousal relationships. Case study mothers also enacted broader work norms by resisting the academic career path and pursuing non tenure-track careers.

Resisting the academic career path. Three mothers – Leigh, Rebecca, and Robin - entered graduate school with goals other than becoming professors. Madison changed her mind over the course of graduate school. Both Robin and Rebecca entered graduate school because they were motivated by applied research and wanted to increase skills and knowledge that would enable them to pursue leadership roles in research projects.

Robin had enjoyed her previous work as an engineer in another city, but wanted to advance: "I wanted to sharpen some skills— technical…" and "…if I wanted to steer what cool stuff we worked on, I needed another degree." Rebecca described how her experience working for a grant foundation similarly formed her desire to gain some skills that would allow her to design research projects that could assess science learning. As she described,

> So I got really excited about that and decided that if I wanted to continue doing work like that, then I needed to get a doctorate in order to be able to be the person who actually designs the studies and decides what would be useful.

In contrast, Leigh attended graduate school because she did not know what she wanted to do. She had previously conducted applied education research and stated that she had not enjoyed that work. However, she hoped her career path would emerge over time and all her work colleagues were pursuing graduate training. As she stated,

> I decided that I would go back to school because it was the only thing I could figure out to do. And basically being a research assistant at this company, everybody was on the path to go back to grad school. I mean, that was kind of what you did. And so that was what I did.

Finally, Madison applied to graduate school because she wanted to be a professor. Madison was motivated to become a professor as a result of her passion for teaching and her love of students. Madison stated:

> I wanted to be a professor. And you can't have your professor without a Ph.D. I had no clue what the tenure-track actually was and how complicated it was and what it entailed. I just saw if you wanted to be a professor, you needed a Ph.D., and I wanted to be a professor.

Over time, Madison's career goal moved away from the professoriate.

Ruling out academia. Madison's reasons for changing her career goal away from the tenure-track resonated with the concerns of the other three mothers. By being in graduate school, all the mothers had opportunities to observe the lives of professors at a research I university and learn about the academic career path and requirements of tenure-track jobs.

Geography, desire for work-family balance, and work-parenting conflict motivated the mothers to rule out or not consider the tenure- track.

Madison described how she observed the work-family balance of professors. She perceived them as being "constantly stressed." When I asked Rebecca if she had any work role models in her department, she voiced a similar concern about the work-family balance of faculty. She viewed the faculty members she worked with as role models in terms of work quality, but not in terms of their work life balance: "In their ability to do really good work that they do…I think that, in that sense, they're role models for me but in terms of what their day to day to lives are like, that's not really what I want." Here, Rebecca aptly summed up the feelings of all four mothers – they respected the quality of their faculty members' work, but did not envy their work-life balance.

A second reason that the mothers ruled out academia was geography – all four women planned to remain in the city of Greenridge. For Madison and Leigh, they felt that moving their spouses to undesirable places such as "Utah" or "Kentucky" was unfeasible for them. As Madison stated,

> Practically, you know, I'm in a partnership. And everyone I know moved to, like, Kentucky to be a professor. Not moving to Kentucky. My husband would divorce me before he moved to Kentucky. He would if I really wanted to, but I don't.

For Robin, she found that she loved "the life I have here in Greenridge as much as any particular technical pursuit" associated with graduate school. Finally, Rebecca had applied to her Ph.D. program with the intention of remaining in Greenridge, and she and her husband still preferred to stay in the area.

Madison and Robin also voiced the perspective that being a professor conflicted with their goals of becoming a parent. Madison had read some articles about being a woman in academia and she did not agree with the idea that,

> These first six years out of our Ph.D. programs are supposed to be our most productive. Yet most women I know, that's when they want to have at least one kid. And so I found that very discriminatory and frustrating. I knew I wanted at least one kid in those six years - so the idea that I would be most productive I just found hypocritical - you know, a system clearly created by men.

Robin also felt that the tenure-track conflicted with parenting. She no longer felt motivated to invest the long hours that such a career path required. As she stated, there were more interesting activities occurring at home:

> At this point in my life, I am not interested in 20-hour days. There is too much other stuff going on at home. And plus, I have gotten lazy in my old age. That was fine when I was an undergrad. I was really good at turning the crank and doing interesting things in a frenzied deadline rush. But yeah, that doesn't excite me anymore. I would rather have the life I want with interesting work to support it, but not having work by my end all, be all.

As this section reveals, the mothers desired a career path that would enable them to live where the wanted to live, work what they perceived to be a reasonable number of hours, and have the family that they wanted to have.

Pursuing non tenure-track careers. The mothers further resisted academia by pursuing "alternative" career paths. Two of the mothers, Robin and Madison, had thought more about their future career paths. The mothers pursued these career avenues through networking and presenting themselves as constantly available and as possessing few family commitments.

Networking. All the mothers engaged in networking outside academia. Madison attributed her success in obtaining teaching and administration opportunities after graduate school to this relationship-building work:

> My philosophy is it's all about the relationships. And I think part of that is my personality— I'm a, you know, a people person. But I think I've treated people really well, and as a result, people have treated me really well. I don't think it's so much to do with your skill set or anything quantifiable like that. I put a lot of time and effort into maintaining relationships and checking in with people and making sure I know the right people and the right people know what I'm thinking about professionally. And that takes a lot of work. But then when push comes to shove, it always pays off. And a lot of— some of that's brown-nosing— for sure. But, you know, that's— this is a game.

Since graduating with her degree, networking has clearly formed the backbone of Madison's work activities.

In our second interview, Robin reported that networking at local conferences had provided the opportunity of possible future career options:

> Catherine: Yeah, that was the question, thinking about the different aspects of your work, what's going well.
>
> Robin: Oh yeah, and being funded with folks that are interested in what I'm doing. You know, wanting the results of it, and wanting to hire me afterwards.
>
> Catherine: Oh really?
>
> Robin: Not like explicitly, but like the conference I went to basically had like a lot of folks we're really looking for people doing what you're doing, give us a call when you're done...

Catherine: That's awesome.

Robin: So Yeah. The fact that it looks like there are some prospects for later is encouraging.

Like Madison, Robin was using networking as a way to promote her career path. Rebecca had also seen some postings with a nearby granting foundation that she might be interested in. Perhaps because she was still finishing up her maternity leave, Rebecca was not thinking about her future career a lot during the study. She planned to start conducting "informational interviews" in the future in order to pursue local opportunities with grant foundations.

Though Leigh had hoped to figure out what she wanted to do while in graduate school, she still felt uncertain about her path. Networking with a group of sociology graduates who were mostly mothers had provided her with opportunities to do research consulting work. As she explains:

> All these sociology grads all know each other and they all kind of work in a similar field and then through all this networking they are all giving each other ideas and jobs, and, you know, there are several people from our department who do consulting work that I didn't realize because they were so far behind in cohorts— so they all knew each other. So it's a really small family in Greenridge. And it's nice because it's, you know, all these women in particular, helping each other work and networking, and they are all mothers— so it's been good to see how they are balancing their career with their kids and all that kind of stuff.

Leigh was not sure if she would like to make a career out of this consulting work, but for now, she liked that the work was flexible and that it helped pay for daycare for Adian.

*Being available & few family commitments***.** The mothers also enacted broader work norms by accepting opportunities and presenting themselves without parental responsibilities in particular settings.

Madison believed that it was essential to accept to part-time projects in order to build her career. In this way, Madison enacted one of the core values of the ideal worker who is constantly available. When opportunities to teach or serve as a program administrator arose, Madison always took the opportunity even if it would be really stressful for her to make it work. As she stated, "Once you say no, you say no and they will find someone else to do your work." Madison eventually hoped that this part-time work would lead to something more permanent.

Robin enacted the ideal worker in networking settings by not mentioning her parenting status. As Robin explained,

> For like funding considerations and things, I don't want to tell potential employers and things. I don't want to cloud the issue with anything outside of my professional life. I don't want it to weigh into anyone's hiring decisions or funding decisions anything like that so I try to keep it out but you know, once I know people individually, even if they're in these roles, that kind of comes out. But no, by the first passes, I don't want anyone to know. It's none of their business.

Madison also discussed how being a parent could provide her with access to the "secret club" with work colleagues, but she was more cautious discussing parenting with them then she would be with friends:

> Yeah, I think you can sort of let it all hang out a little bit more with friends. But I think I definitely you know, I still have those moments with moms, like you know when you know you have baby, you're kind of in the secret club, even with colleagues, it's like

> you're in, you can all talk the same sort of things. Even if their kids are 17 now, you have that in common. But I wouldn't say I look to them for support per se, whereas I get my friends to support me. Because I can be upset. And you know you don't want to come to your colleague crying because you're really tired. Like that's unprofessional, right? So you're part of the secret club and may comments every now and then but I wouldn't say it's actually support per se.

To remain professional, Robin and Madison revealed only parts of their parenting identities at particular times.

As this section shows, mothers resisted the academic career path by networking outside of academia, and strategically presenting themselves as parents in particular settings. By doing so, they performed norms of outside work contexts.

Internalizing dissertation progress. To gain the degree, mothers who had not yet graduated needed to make progress on their dissertations. These three mothers had internalized the notion that finishing the degree was important. However, progress on their dissertations sometimes competed with self-care, and other work activities that they preferred, such as collaborating. At times, work activities and parenting could be combined for Leigh and Rebecca, preserving daycare hours for dissertation progress.

Finishing. Robin and Leigh were both focused on finishing their degrees. Leigh succinctly summarized what constituted success for her in graduate school: "Finishing. I mean, basically just getting it done. That's all I have to say about that." Robin felt that "being done" was a clear milestone. She would not mind having a broader impact, but that was less important. Robin described her view of a successful graduate school experience:

> One clear thing is finishing— leaving with a degree in hand and doing enough with making enough of an academic contribution that you are— not only do you have the degree, you have the respect of peers in your industry to take forward and do the things with— to a lesser extent I would say the work you do should matter in that it is either elegantly innovative or has some positive impact on the world. But sadly, that is second to just being done.

Rebecca agreed that meeting all the milestones was important, but that she would not feel successful simply finishing – she wanted to do a project that mattered to herself and others:

> I don't know, I mean, I guess at this point it is actually meeting all the milestones…I think for me the most important thing is to do a project that I care about and that actually matters to me. And then to feel like you are actually doing something that makes a difference somehow, to somebody— that it's not just totally— I mean, that's the thing about dissertations, right? Is nobody ever reads them and nobody ever cares, but to do something that hopefully makes a difference to someone in some way would be nice— that would be kind of the ideal.

Finishing was key for the three mothers who were working on dissertations. Some additionally desired a broader impact for themselves or others was.

Progress. The goal of finishing was challenging for several reasons. First, there was a lack of time. Second, there were distractions and activities outside the dissertation. During the time of the study, all the mothers who were working on their dissertations held 1-2 days of childcare. Robin hoped to eventually afford 4 days of care. During her maternity leave, Rebecca had 8 hours of care, and planned to increase to a 3-day nanny share in the fall.

The mothers frequently discussed being distracted by lack of time for themselves and for some household-related projects. As Robin described, the "business of life" crept in during the hours that she had childcare. According to Robin, there was little time to attend to projects such as setting up a college fund for her son and as a result, she would sometimes complete such tasks during childcare hours. Little time for herself also caused Robin to become distracted when she was working by herself. During childcare hours, Robin was able to be her "old self." Robin explained how she could focus in her office working on her proposal, but she could also have time to be,

> My old self – like I can do the work, but I can also jump on email and read all the new messages at the same time instead of one every couple of hours. I can reply to people. I can follow up on things.

Similarly, Leigh discussed how the days that Adian was in childcare provided her with her only days to do things for herself, resulting in a tension between taking care of herself or getting work done. During this time, Leigh attended doctor's appointments, met a graduate student friend for lunch, or went grocery shopping on her own.

All three dissertating mothers described a preference for collaborative work and activities over the isolation of the dissertation. Robin agreed that she preferred to collaborate with others, and in these moments she was less distracted by other life-related tasks. As she described,

> When can I concentrate the most? Probably when there are - when I am in meetings or conversations with my colleagues. If I am talking with another grad student about the problem we are solving, then I am entirely in that moment. As much as I have the instinct to kind of shy away from other people because of the implicit accountability - that implicit accountability in progress is what is most helpful for moving forward - talking

> with other people about my work is the best way to move forward on my work…When you are collaborating there is nowhere to go, but forward.

As Robin stated, when she was working with others, she was less likely to be distracted by self-related or Alejandro-related tasks.

Similarly, Rebecca was happy to have received funding to complete her own dissertation, but she missed collaborating with other members of her research team. She would often compare herself to others in the group who she perceived as having a collaborative experience and interacting with her advisor more. As she discussed,

> I feel like if I was working more directly with other people or had more formal writing groups or whatever…If I had those things I would probably feel like I know more than I do or be able to make more progress than I have but on the other hand, I have a lot of freedom and a lot of flexibility and especially now, that's really good. So you know I'm not the one that's getting texts from my advisor at 2 a.m. or whatever...So I mean I think that happens. So it's a tradeoff for sure.

Here, Rebecca provides an interesting insight into her experience in graduate school – while she has flexibility, which is good for parenting, she also experiences isolation that she perceived as slowing her progress down.

Leigh was trying to "get back in" to her dissertation work by participating in a journal editorial board. Leigh liked working with others on the editorial board because it was interactive, she liked the reading, and she could interact with friends in the department:

> I mean I think I like the board meeting…I was thinking about that cause that's something I'd to like continue it's not very hard. I mean it doesn't take up a whole lot of time and I get to read some interesting stuff. So I like that.

While these collaborative activities sometimes competed with making progress on the dissertation, Rebecca and Leigh were also able to integrate Tyler and Adian into their work, preserving their hours of childcare for the dissertation, and allowing them to socialize as part of their work.

For example, Rebecca's advisor was very open about clarifying that she could bring Tyler to research team meetings. During a visit with a famous author, he told her, "don't leave unless he has an absolute meltdown." Similarly, Leigh frequently participated in editorial board meetings over Skype while watching her son. To manage this, she left her computer on silent unless asked to speak and responded to Adian when he needed her. She told her colleagues about this arrangement, mentioning over Skype colleagues that her was that her 2 year-old son was running around during the meeting.

Internalizing negative views of their academic work. Even though the mothers resisted norms of ideal academic work, and sometimes performed broader workplace norms to connect themselves to other careers, they had also internalized a negative view of their academic work.

In our second interview, Robin described her perceived shortcomings as a graduate student:

> Yeah, I've switched paths too often to even really and I'm still figuring out, figuring out how to publish, right? So you know, I'd like to think that I could be that grad student that can show up, crank out the Ph.D. in 3 years, and have 3 publications to show for it but instead I'm that grad student who's still working on drafts of many things that I've been working on over the years and I haven't submitted any of them yet.

Being a parent has helped Robin focus, but she feels like, overall, it has magnified her existing strengths and weaknesses:

> I mean, I'm fine, I'm good at school or I wouldn't still be here, but I don't think I can even, even with the contrasts of parenthood, I can't point to something and say if I could be more like that, that time in the past. No, there never really was that time in the past. In some ways I'm getting better at it and in some ways it's a hurdle.

Robin took responsibility for her current lack of progress with her work – she felt that she needed to work more and that more time was the key lynchpin that was preventing her progress.

Rebecca rarely felt good about her work and frequently needed reassurance. Even before Tyler's birth, she had felt negative about her work:

> I think I tend to stress, I don't know if I stress more than other people but I definitely stress a lot about everything and assume that it went poorly no matter what. I'm probably pretty pessimistic most of the time. I usually walk out of things going "that was really crappy." I have to be reassured that it wasn't and I still don't really believe people.

While Robin and Rebecca had clearly internalized negative views of their work, the data did not show evidence of significant self-policing in this area. The exception was Leigh, as I will discuss in the following section.

Leigh: Self-Policing. Leigh policed herself in relation to work much more so than the other three mothers. This may have been the case because Robin had re-organized her life to make some progress and also attributed lack of childcare to her delayed progress, and Rebecca was still on maternity leave so perhaps excused herself from a need to make progress. Leigh described how she felt about the dissertation after 9 years:

> It's just kind of hanging over my head, I just feel like I'm not good enough, I'm not doing enough, it's so slow moving, it's just really defeating. So yeah, all the time. Which is part of the allure of just stopping because then I wouldn't feel like crap all the time.

However, Leigh also felt like it would be embarrassing to drop out, and so she policed herself around that. She had internalized her father's view of her academic work:

> I mean it's kind of embarrassing, you know. To drop out? And I think it would be one thing if I had just finished my master's and cut my losses and said, that's enough, I got the one degree, but I took two exams, I have the data, I've almost finished the proposal. It's like really? I've done so much. I got my master's in 2005. It's been seven years. And so it's like I feel like I need something to show for it. But there's just so much work left to be done. And I think also part of it, I think my Dad would be really disappointed, he's always been, like I came home with an "A" and he would say, "why didn't you get an A+?" And I know he was kidding but it was always kind of like...ugh. So I feel like he'd be very disappointed and I don't, I don't like to leave things unfinished.

Since Leigh had become pregnant and did not want the dissertation to "disrupt" her time with the new baby, Leigh was not sure if she should quit or file for the 10-year extension, take a year off, and return to the program later.

Internalizing, Enacting, and Policing & Resisting Conflicting Norms of Mothering

This section is divided into two sections: 1) internalizing and enacting intensive motherhood and 2) self-policing norms of idealized mothering.

Enacting motherhood. Mothers enacted several tenets of intensive mothering including 1) prioritizing mothering and 2) investing time and energy. The mothers resisted and enacted

idealized mothering through their use of childcare and policed themselves regarding norms related to childcare.

Prioritizing motherhood. The mothers decided to have children at the particular times that they did because of their age and the flexibility of their career stage during graduate school. The four women also took others into account in making these decisions. For example, Leigh and Madison considered the age of the grandparents and their desire to participate in the lives of the grandchildren. Rebecca factored in that her husband had recently transitioned to a new, more flexible job and could also help out at home after Tyler was born.

Robin voiced how for her and her husband, they were more certain of wanting to be parents than other life goals like climbing the tenure ladder. She contrasted their approach to others that she knew:

> There are other couples we know that seem have been very good at setting everything else in their lives in place first and then having the kid – bought the house, got tenure, they did this, that, and the other thing, and then right on track, had the kid. Why now? Why not? When we looked at our long-term goals, this was the most pressing. So this is the thing we were more sure about wanting, so why marginalize it to pursue other things that we were less certain about? I think it kind of go to the point where we had done the things we wanted to pursue with clarity and it just – there was no reason to push this aside since it was something that was so important to both of us. And then we will let the rest of the pieces of our life kind of build around it.

While not everyone phrased it in this way, Robin articulated the common desire of the four mothers to build their lives in a manner that would accommodate motherhood. As this section will show, women devoted time, energy, and resources to the task of mothering.

Time & energy. All the mothers agreed that spending time and energy on parenting was important, and devoted a significant amount of time to their children on weekdays when their spouses, who all had less flexible jobs, were working. During their time with their children, they tried to meet basic needs, pay attention, and be available. They additionally consulted experts and peers for mothering advice.

Basic needs. Rebecca, because her child was so young, was fairly focused on meeting her son's basic needs. She described her sense of successful parenting as the following: "we are still alive at the end of the day. I heard someone else say that – I think that's kind of a terrible thing to say. But it is just kind of moment-to-moment – as long as he is eating and growing…" According to Rebecca, meeting basic needs involved perceiving Tyler's needs and making decisions about how to address them:

> You are constantly making decisions about – like everything is a constant decision – should I feed him now? Is he hungry now? Does he need to take a nap? Do I need to change his diaper? It feels like I am constantly negotiating – there are constantly things to think about that I didn't have to think about before.

Basic needs were also an issue for Leigh. Leigh described her child as a picky eater and the fact she could not always get him to eat made her "stressed." While Madison felt that her son was a good eater, Madison's worry was the care she received for Thane's health. She felt that the doctor's were too rushed at check ups. Since Thane did not drink milk, she wondered if she needed a calcium supplement, and she considered if consulting with a naturopathic doctor would provide her with the kind of holistic care that she sought.

Spending time. After basic needs were met, mothers thought that time spent with children, and the nature of that time, was central. Leigh indicated that it was important to spend

significant amounts of time with her child, taking him from place to place with her. She questioned: "You know, why would I have a kid if I didn't want to take him everywhere with me?" Similarly, Robin considered her mother a role model because she made her and her siblings "part of her life rather than keeping us pinned in little places in the corner of her world." Finally, Rebecca enacted the value of spending time by taking Tyler to work, to her parenting group, and out socializing while she was on maternity leave.

Taking your child with you and spending time resonates with Leigh's notion of being available. Leigh emphasized how her mother, a role model for her own parenting, was always present. Leigh explained her value of availability by contrasting it with another a working mother who she knew:

> A friend of mine…she has two little girls, a 4 year old and a 2 year old and she works and she posted something about Facebook about how she now understands why her mom used to come home from work and would just say "just give me 5 minutes" before the kids would come up to her. And I remember thinking that I wouldn't want to do that, with my kids because my mom was just always available. And not that, you know, that that's a bad thing that she does, it just doesn't fit with I guess my idea of what it's like to be a mom cause I feel like I'm just supposed to always be there, and always put their needs first.

By describing the importance of placing a child's needs first, Leigh is enacting a key discourse of idealized mothering.

Seeking supports. All the mothers additionally invested time and energy in seeking supports for their parenting through participating in parenting groups and local resources. Rebecca, Robin, Leigh, and Madison were involved in parenting groups that provided them with

parenting supports as well as time for their children to socialize. Rebecca talked about how she views other parents as resources and is always asking questions. While Leigh does not have a group, she has a lot of people who she asks for advice when she has a question. She avoids child comparisons that occur on "mommy blogs," but she enjoys talking with her mom, Louisa, her daycare provider, doctors, and others peers that she trusts. Madison also discusses parenting and parenting articles with her own mother.

Just as Rebecca viewed others as resources, Robin and Madison described the process of selecting "bits and pieces" of what others have done that "seem to work well." Madison frequently discussed identifying parenting strategies to integrate into her personal style. In a particular case, Madison was impressed with how a teacher at her pre-school co-op encouraged creative thinking. She realized that instead of asking questions like "do you want to dig with that shovel?" to a child, she should ask open-ended questions like "what should we do with that?" that would spark her child's imagination. Madison tried to be open to strategies as well as develop a deep understanding of Thane. This strategy fit with Madison's parenting style that was "intentional." Madison explained that this work took time, but that is what being a good mother meant for her, "And it takes a lot of time to be an intentional mom. But I think being a good mom means I'm thinking about all those things."

Paying attention. During the time spent with children, mothers emphasized that paying attention to their children was key. Leigh explained that it was hard to accomplish work tasks when Adian was around because "he requires so much care right now, and attention. And honestly when I am with him I would rather focus on him anyway." Madison recalled a time when she had been home for a couple weeks in the summer and was texting on her iPhone under the table while spending time with Thane:

> I pulled it out and Thane goes, "Mommy, no." (We laugh). And that, that's a really good reality check. You know, I think I'm being like super stealth like under the table, but they realize everything…I'm just communicating to you that you're not important to me, whereas if I need to answer an email I should just say "You know what Thane, I have to answer an email, just a minute" And do it, and then put it away. Rather than constantly trying to cover under the table which just means I'm constantly on my iPhone.

Similarly, Robin felt like her son had a detector that went off it they ever even tried to sit down with him. She described how he has a,

> …Sitting down detector that would go off if we would, you know, soothe him in a bouncing way – no, no, no our full participation needs to be here and we would get up and walk him around and he'd be happier now.

Like Robin, the other mothers enacted ideal mothering by spending time with their children, placing their needs first, consulting with experts and peers, and paying attention.

Childcare

All four women employed nannies, in home, or family member care. When discussing these decisions, their enactments of idealized mothering emerged. All women held preferences for care providers who were like them, was a family member/was like a family member, and was recommended by someone they knew. The mothers sought a good fit between their child and their care provider and utilized networks of other parents to locate care.

When asked what she was looking for in a childcare situation, Robin voiced the preference that the nanny would be like her and free.

> Catherine: Can you tell me a little bit about what you were looking for in your childcare situation?

> Robin: Yes. Someone to be just like me, and free. So that I could spend my time doing something else. Turns out that there's no market for that. So I am looking for somebody that would certainly be really loving and have good boundaries, speak with him a lot, we wanted someone that spoke Spanish to up the immersion a little bit because he gets a lot of English and not as much Spanish as we'd like him to have. Those things. Those are the priorities I guess.

In this quote, Robin's preference to have care similar to the kind that she would provide is revealed. After trying a nanny who did not have chemistry with her son, Robin and Jose found a second nanny who worked well with Alejandro through work networks.

Madison and Leigh utilized family and care providers who were family or "like family." Leigh said that her in-home provider whom she had selected through networking reminded her of her mother, who she viewed as a role model for her own parenting. Leigh described her impressions of Louisa, her care provider:

> The only other person we have used is Louisa who is this daycare lady and she is just like six blocks from the house, she is probably 70 and she has run this daycare for almost 50 years. She is like a hardy, you know, western type. So she is very active, still. So she takes care of Adian on Wednesdays from 8:30 to 4:30. So she has been really good because she is inexpensive. She is no nonsense— you know? So, she is kind of like my mom. So Adian, I think, really enjoys it. He freaks out when we go, but he obviously loves it there.

Madison felt good about her care situation because she was able to avoid daycare and piece together days and half days from her parents, her husband, and a nanny who felt like part of her family. The stress for Madison involved the fact that her work schedule changed every

quarter and as a result, she was constantly re-arranging the childcare schedule. When I asked Madison what was the most stressful thing about parenting, she immediately said:

> Care. Totally. And you know I could just put Thane in full-time care and maybe the second time around we'll do that but I'm still really happy that we haven't had to do that with Thane and I love our village model. I mean Thane loves our nanny and I love our nanny, she's part of the family. I like hanging out with her and Thane loves her and she really knows him, which I like.

As this quote suggests, even thought it causes her stress, Madison is committed to having family and those "like family" provide care for her son. As this section shows, the mothers resisted the idea that they needed to always be with their children to be good mothers, but sought mother-like or family-like environments to support their children.

Self-Policing Motherhood. A central area of self-policing was in relation to placing the children in childcare and making sure that the care context represented a high-quality mother-like situation for them. This issue arose in narratives of three mothers: Madison, Rebecca, and Leigh. For example, Madison usually felt good about her "patchwork" care but needed more coverage when her workload increased, so she signed Thane up for preschool. This topic arose in the following discussion, when Madison was describing how she was looking forward to having the summer off:

> Madison: Very excited to have the whole summer off. I have worked a lot this year. Super excited to have all day, every day for the summer, but I know, come the fall, I'll come back to work. I think that's the best of both worlds for me. Nothing is more important. I made one decision a couple weeks ago where I put my job over Thane—never again. I feel horrible for having done that.

Catherine: What happened?

Madison: The whole preschool thing. I was so anxious to please my supervisor that I transitioned him way sooner than he was ready. I mean, it— not to say it damaged him, you know? It won't damage him forever, but for the short-term it definitely damaged him and he won't let me go to work now. Now it's better because that was like three weeks ago. But—

Catherine: That you were trying to put him in preschool so that you could—

Madison: So I could work. Yeah. Which was an unreasonable expectation to have of me in the first place. It didn't come from a place of reason, but that was not the right decision for me to make as a mom. If I am ever in the position where someone says to me, do this or else— good, then I quit. Nothing is more important than Thane. Not doing that ever again.

In this exchange, Madison revealed that she experienced shame and guilt because she made a decision to put work over her son's needs. Madison has clearly policed herself around this idea of placing Thane first in her life.

For Rebecca, she felt that when she first left Tyler with someone she did not know, she was both proud of herself and at the same time felt like a bad mother. Rebecca stated that having a babysitter was a success, but she had to work on feeling good about it:

Rebecca: I got over having a babysitter...mostly (she laughs). So I feel successful about that, and like that's worked out really well.

Catherine: Did you have to work on that?

Rebecca: I totally did. But like so I stayed home the first couple times that she came and then I was close by and then I went to work and I've gotten to work out and stuff and for

awhile I mean like a second or third day she came, we had a miscommunication about the time and she was a half hour late and like I said, I spent that whole half hour thinking "maybe she won't come and I won't have to do this." You know, like I can, I'll just stay home and it'll be fine and I don't need to get any work done, I just don't want to leave him with somebody else, with someone I don't know that well. And all of that so I've totally gotten over that part of that. She's been great, that part of that's been fine. I don't think about it constantly while I'm away anymore, I don't check my phone constantly. That's been, that's been really big for me to do.

Catherine: Is there, has there been a time where you felt like a "bad mom"?

Rebecca: In that same situation, leaving him alone with someone I don't know very well. And it wasn't so bad, I guess.

As we can see from this exchange, Rebecca felt conflicted about leaving her son. On the one hand, leaving Tyler was hard because she felt it was something she should not be doing. On the other hand, Rebecca also felt proud of herself, which suggests that at the same time, she also felt that leaving her child was something she also should be doing. Finally, her statement that "I don't need to get any work done" also hinted at a possible conflict regarding her work, another layer that might fuel her desire to stay with her child and delay progress.

Similarly, Leigh felt "conflicted" about care for Adian, but in her case it was because she felt that she should be a full-time mother. Switching from one day a week to two days a week of care to accommodate her consulting work brought this issue to the fore for Leigh. As she stated,

I just kind of on the spur decided to bump to two days so I had the second day completely free. But I kind of, I kind of still think I have the mindset that he's my full-time job so I

kind of feel like I shouldn't be foisting him on somebody, that he's my number one responsibility and he's my primary job and so I really should be home with him.

Even though her own mother reassured Leigh that her son was fine, she felt guilty about daycare, both for financial reasons and because she felt that she should be watching him. As she described,

> Like today I really missed, I really wanted to go pick him up, I was really having a hard time getting work done but you know on the other hand, my mom will say, "He's fine, two days is fine. It's no problem, he's enjoying it. You need to get your stuff done." I know he's fine but on the other hand it's $70 a week now instead of $35 and I don't know have, I haven't yet billed for my consulting job so I don't know yet how much work I'll get done to offset that so that's kind of a concern. And I thought he wouldn't like having two days in a row, I thought he was gonna just flip out. He's always cried for his drop offs, but today he didn't cry at all. He started to get sad right when I was leaving but he got into her lap and cuddled with her and that was fine. I don't think he has a problem, I think I have a problem (she laughs).

Leigh tried to speculate why this was so challenging for her and she said that perhaps it is because Adian is not with a family member:

> I mean when he was with Andrew or with my parents, I don't think I have a problem at all but I think because it's not a family member, I just feel kind of weird about it. I don't know.

In this example, Leigh policed herself in relation to her internalized view that 1) Adian should be her full- time job and 2) that the best care for her child would be provided by herself or another family member.

Having it all? Consequences of the Best of Both Worlds/Part-Time Approach

In this section, I discuss the outcomes of taking a part-time or "best of both worlds" approach to motherhood in graduate school and early career. The mothers discussed that they were happier working part-time and overall, they seemed to be content with their mothering. On the other hand, they all mentioned experiencing a loss of professional identity. Finally, they also described challenges related to negotiating with husbands.

Good part-time moms are happy. Several of the mothers defined good mothers as those who worked part-time and provided financially for their children to some degree. Madison and Rebecca expressed the view that a good mother is a happy mother, and if working and being a mother makes a woman happy, she should do that. Madison described what being a good mother meant for her:

> I am a happier mom when I'm working. I also know lots of moms who work all the time and don't see their kids and I don't approve of them. So we are all judgey, but I know that if I were home full-time, all the time, that I would not be happy. I'd be a little bit frustrated. Then I'm not a good mom if I'm not happy – poor Thane.

According to Madison, a good mom is a happy mom – and a happy mom works part-time.

In terms of being happy as a part-time mother, the mothers seemed to be content overall with their parenting. For example, Rebecca felt that she had "turned a corner" with Tyler:

> I do feel we've sort of turned this corner where I'm getting better at reading him and like and knowing, I mean it was really it's only just recently that I've been able to put him down for naps and put him down in the evening and before…That's, that's pretty new in the last two weeks I would say. So that makes me, and the fact that I've successfully

> gotten him to do that fairly regularly now is making me really happy especially because he'll have to be able to do that.

Similarly, Robin and Madison felt fairly confident in their parenting, and therefore could be more relaxed than other mothers. As Madison described,

> I've really gotten over being stressed out about being a good mom. I have a lot friends who are very stressed out about being good moms. I'm pretty grateful to have those friends because it's made me way more relaxed to see that.

Robin felt like she gives Alejandro the "time, love, and resources" he needs and so she rarely felt like a bad mother save for sometimes,

> When he bonks into things and you're just not, not there fast enough or you think you're there but you're not really there and a couple times taken headers when he's been practically in my arms, not in them, but you know I'm right behind him and he'll fall over, "ah!" But not to the point of beating myself up too much.

Robin feels content overall, and "doesn't beat herself up too much" as a mom. Leigh also felt her balance was good overall, though she would rather work one day a week than two. When asked about her ideal balance, Leigh said,

> I like the work schedule, I like actually it's you know one night a week to do the editorial board stuff and then I would really, ideally like to only work one day a week. Right now. So I would ideally cut back to one day a work with him in childcare. But otherwise things are actually pretty good (she laughs). It's a good question; it makes me think that things are good.

As this section shows, the mothers were fairly content with their parenting piece of their best of both worlds/part-time approach to work-family balance.

Loss of professional identity. All mothers discussed a loss of professional identity that they experienced with the part-time approach to work and family. For Rebecca, she noticed how her relationships were becoming more personal than professional. Part of her worried about this development:

> I would say that's true for all of those relationships; they're all more personal at this point than professional. Which might be a problem (she laughs). I was thinking about that the other day, I don't think I'm really having, I think all my professional, the few professional conversations I was having are being replaced with personal (she laughs). Like baby talk. So I need to do something about that, because it's probably my fault.

For Madison, it was the loss of her tenure-track identity and wondering if she could find another career path outside of that track. Because she had found a more permanent teaching and administrative position when I saw her for the second interview, she felt more hopeful. However, there were ups and downs as she forwarded her alternative academic path. As she stated,

> You know, this year has been a tremendous learning experience professionally. And I have definitely had ups and I have definitely had downs of feeling really hopeless about, oh, my God, am I going to get a career and where I am going to go— because we are trained to do one thing. We are trained to be research faculty at our own institutions. Not even faculty at liberal arts colleges. We are trained to be faculty at similar universities. And here, that is here. That is pretty much the option. So, feeling like, you know, did I do the right thing? Did I prepare myself? Oh, my God, not following the tenure-track, am I missing out on the whole opportunity of career…? To the complete other end of the spectrum feeling really hopeful and excited and great opportunities. It runs the gamut. I

think I've now come sort of full circle and feeling much more confident, you know, having gotten a lot of work this year makes me feel pretty good.

As this quote shows, by losing her goal of becoming a professor, Madison had been unsure if another career would emerge that she could be proud of.

Similarly, Leigh found the decision to drop out very painful because being a graduate student was part of her identity:

> So I think part of its identity, too. I've been a student for so long, I've only worked for close to three years before I came, otherwise I've been a student my whole life. I mean if I lost that connection with SU, I wouldn't go to the conference in November in Chicago even though I really like attending the conferences, I think it's really interesting, why would I go then. So I feel like I would kind of lose this whole part of me and I don't know what would fill it. So I've thought about this a lot. This is all the stuff that goes through my head at midnight when I'm tossing and turning.

Like Madison, Leigh also wondered what might replace the part of her identity that was a student.

For Robin, she felt that working two days a week did not suit her view of herself. She envisioned a balance where she worked four days a week and had three days with family. This excerpt shows this view:

> Robin: I think the right balance for our, you know, my self-definition, and productivity would be four days a week of work and 3 days a week of family.
>
> Catherine: When you say self-definition, what do you mean by that?

> Robin: Sometimes I feel like I get lost a little bit in those days when I can't make any progress on the other parts of me, working towards my degree or staying in touch with people. Just kind of get lost playing blocks on the floor or going to the park.

Robin effectively summed up the loss of professional identity that the mothers were experiencing or anticipated experiencing. The mothers hoped that the future would provide them with opportunities to be the person they felt they were.

Negotiating with Spouses. A final complication for the part-time approach to graduate school was negotiation with spouses. While this theme played out for different mothers in contrasting way, negotiations with spouses represented a commonality across the mothers' experiences.

Leigh and Andrew agreed that he was the breadwinner. For this reason, she did not anticipate pursuing a career with geographical constraints. As she stated,

> Andrew— Andrew is the breadwinner. I am fine with that. He is a lot more interested and passionate about his work— he loves it. And he's really good at it. So we are going to go where his work is.

While Leigh described how this balance of roles typically worked for them, there were times when she told Andrew that he needed to change his life to accommodate parenting since she had changed her life dramatically. Leigh said, "I always tell him in moments of anger that his life has not changed at all." Leigh has also insisted that he spend time with Adian without her because she thought that that it was important and also because it provided her with a break.

Madison held a view of herself as more of a primary caregiver, and of her spouse as a breadwinner. Because her spouse was the breadwinner, she viewed her work as a "luxury" that

enabled her to be able to place Thane first in her life. She also performed more care and housework because she had a way that she liked tasks to be accomplished. As she described,

> I am very lucky— I mean, we could live off Devin's salary. Not everyone is in that position. I absolutely realize that. So I have the luxury of saying things like, "Well, great, then I'd quit." Because, you know, there is a luxury— I mean, my working is a luxury. I have my parents and we have Devin's income, which allow me to work. I recognize that not everyone has that luxury. I just do. Some people have to work full-time. Both parents.

However, Devin expected that they would share parenting and did not view this relationship in a primary caregiver vs. breadwinner way. As Madison described,

> I have also had some difficulty sharing parenting with my husband. I am sort of, you know, always wanting to be a mom. More of a natural— enjoy being a mom. Devin has found it very hard transitioning to being a father. So I think I take on more of the responsibility, yet we both have the expectation that it is shared, and so that's caused some conflict.

Here, Madison talked about how she took on more responsibility, and expected herself to do that, but then both of them also expected to share parenting. Clearly, Madison and her spouse navigated some conflicting norms around parenting roles.

Robin expected parenting to be shared, but after a few months, it was not. She felt that her spouse assumed he was the breadwinner, even though Robin felt that her breadwinning potential was more likely. This interview excerpt highlighted the tension that Robin perceived:

> Catherine: So you mentioned that in the beginning it was more symmetrical, and Alejandro got older it was less, what do you think accounts for that?

Robin: As the novelty wore off. Or that's a little cynical. I would say you know, he maybe bent over backwards to be more accommodating, and he was you know, getting the baby to go to sleep, and feeding him, and wanting to spend a lot of time with him, and then, as reality took over, the work still had to be done (she laughed) that hadn't been done. You know, both of us felt that. We both felt, "Oh gosh, professionally we really need to get some hussle to do what we need to do and it was just kind of understood by him that he would do his hussle and mine could wait."

Catherine: Do you think that's related to the stage of the career you're at, like you're a graduate student?

Robin: Maybe, he's a post doc. I don't think that's a whole lot different. And the career path forward is clearer on my side, like more obvious how I will be winning bread in two years then how he will so. I'm sorry - I think it has more to do with old timey gender roles, which I thought we were over with.

As this example shows, Robin and her husband had different ideas of the parenting and work roles that they would play after Alejandro was a few months old.

Finally, Rebecca and her husband both had an expectation that parenting would be shared, but Rebecca struggled with the fact that she had spent more time with Tyler and had begun to develop more expertise related to him. She wrestled with how to provide time for her spouse to learn what she knew. As she stated,

So this has come up a little bit recently. Feeling like I spend a lot more time with the baby and I know more about him which sounds kind of bad. But like I think I do, I think I know more of the nuances of like what he, when he's getting tired and I'm really, I feel like I'm really starting to figure some of that stuff out, like how to tell when the baby

needs to go down or whatever, to figure out how to read him better and I don't think Colin's as good at that as I am. And he would, I wouldn't say that in front of him (she laughs) because he probably wouldn't think it was a fair statement but I really feel like there are some times when like the baby's crying and Colin has him and he doesn't know what to do and he's trying but he's not like, he doesn't necessarily, I say well okay, have you checked his diaper and he's like okay, I guess I should do that and I'm like, okay (she laughs) like go through the list, and try all the different things and so that's a little bit, a little frustrating, a little stressful right and not only is that situation stressful and the feeling that I have that I know more and I don't want to say that to Colin, like the tension, like I don't want to create tension there that says, Dad doesn't know what he's doing because that's, that's definitely, I'm wary of like disempowering him, and I'm really trying to figure out how to make him feel like he knows what to do and how to do it and I'm really trying to be as hands off as I can be, like I have a tendency not to be that, so I'm trying to figure out how to let him like learn himself (she laughs) like the good educator that I am (laughs). It's terrible, but it's really just a matter of that I spend more time, way more time with him. Its just sort of one of those things. Yeah.

As this quoted showed, even though Rebecca felt that she was becoming the more skilled parent due to time spent, she did not want to challenge Colin's expectation that they were co-parenting and equally skilled. Even though Colin wanted Rebecca to be a co-parent, he deferred to her expertise in ways that suggested he also felt she was the more primary parent. As Rebecca discussed,

I think he's just always trying to ask me what he can do or like what will make things easier or whatever. And it always, there isn't always a solution but he's definitely trying

to take things off my plate that I'm trying to hold onto even when I probably shouldn't. He's pretty good at pushing me to delegate.

This is an interesting example of Colin deferring to Rebecca as the expert mother – as this quote shows, Colin views Rebecca as the one who has parenting tasks to dole out.

By virtue of the time they spent with their child, all mothers were positioned by their husbands or positioned themselves as the primary, or more expert, caregiver. This clearly caused clashes in expectations and a need to negotiate with spouses.

Discussion

The findings of this research reveal that the four mothers engaged in graduate school/early career part-time and mothering part-time. The mothers resisted ideal academic work norms by pursuing the Ph.D. while working towards non tenure-track careers. While building careers outside of the tenure-track, the mothers drew upon work norms that functioned in broader workplace contexts. The dissertating mothers had internalized a view of success that incorporated a vision of earning their Ph.D. degree, while at the time they internalized a negative view of their academic work. All mothers performed elements of idealized mothering, and policed themselves around issues of placing their child first and ensuring a high quality care experience for their child or children. The outcomes of balancing both work and motherhood in this manner included being content with parenting overall, loss of professional identity, and negotiations with spouses.

This research contributes to past findings about graduate student mothers by revealing that access to childcare may not solely about money. As these cases show, there are other internal barriers that women experience when selecting childcare. This study also highlights the complicated nature of a mother's relationship to their spouses. When divvying up the work and

parenting roles in a household, this data reveals that there are numerous complexities. O'Reilly (2012) asserts that this issue of spouses should be investigated in the literature more, and this study supports that notion. However, O'Reilly's thesis is that "traditional" marriages prevent women's progress and that "egalitarian" marriages do not. This study suggests that couples can integrate elements of both egalitarian and traditional marriages, and even egalitarian marriages may not enable men or women to work long hours. Finally, mothers' perceptions of the tenure-track and their critiques of it resonate with the survey data and open-ended responses collected by Mason, Goulden, and Frasch (2009) when these authors investigated the reasons that graduate students opted out of the tenure-track. Like graduate students who participated in that survey, these four mothers perceived the work-life balance of their faculty members negatively, and desired to pursue a career more locally.

As this data shows, these non-academic career Ph.D. mothers inhabited many conflicting spaces that provided them with differing sets of norms – academic work norms, broader workplace norms, idealized mothering norms, part-time mothering norms, breadwinner/homemaker norms, and co-parenting egalitarian norms. Pieces of these discursive norms clearly surfaced in many different parts of the women's lives. While the mothers resolved the classic tension between work and family by performing multiple sets of norms, they frequently inhabited several conflicting worlds at the same. The complex discursive locations in which the mothers resided overlap with Butler's (1990) notion of the conflictive discursive field. As Butler describes (1990), individuals utilize multiple discourses to construct their identities in ways that are not coherent over time.

The statement that Robin made about "cobbling" together "bits of pieces" of parenting strategies that work well can be further applied to what the mothers were doing in relation to

mothering and career. In this conflicted field, women were picking and choosing aspects of academic lives, non-academic lives, idealized full-time motherhood, part-time motherhood, and egalitarian and traditional relationships. Just as the mothers in Hays' (1996) study "sorted the mail" by selecting strategies that worked for them, the mothers in this study were "sorting the mail" on numerous fronts.

Given the nature of the current literature, it is easy to construct a narrative whereby women are disempowered by gender and maternal discrimination, spousal power dynamics lead them to geographically based choices, and as a result, mothers have negative career outcomes. However, this study shows that mothers both resist and enact competing norms – while constrained by social norms, the mothers utilize their agency. These mothers are not constantly empowered, nor are they always disempowered. As Bartky (1998) describes, power is complex and shifting.

A limitation to this research is that it did not maximize the use of observations. Viewing the mothers in the context of partnerships and departments might have been helpful to understand more about the interaction between mothers' identity performances and the shaping influences of significant others. Future case study research might substitute time journals in order to more completely understand how women spend their time day to day.

Finally, this study raises important questions and suggestions for doctoral education practice. First, the mothers' desire to collaborate raises questions about making Ph.D. more collaborative. Including collaborative learning opportunities while completing the degree might play to women's strengths and preferences. This study also raises key questions for future research: Given that the number of tenure-track jobs are declining, how can the Ph.D. be utilized to support the career paths of people who want to pursue careers in the local area? How can the

dissertation be more useful and less of a hurdle to those who do not want to pursue the professoriate? How can Ph.D. programs support the kind of networking that these mothers were engaged in? By seeking answers to important questions like these, doctoral education may be better able to support mothers and Ph.D. students who desire a breadth of career options.

Conclusion

Seeking Work-Family Balance Within Partnerships

There are some descriptive differences between the mothers who desired an academic career and those who did not. In general, the mothers who desired academic careers were willing to move, had more childcare, were more open to center-based daycare, and tended to have more egalitarian relationships. In contrast, the women who did not desire academic careers were place-bound, participated in more traditional marriages, had less childcare, and the childcare that they utilized was in-home, family-based, or provided by a nanny. There were also many descriptive similarities between these two groups. All of the case study participants were White and situated in heterosexual marriages. Perhaps because of this demographic similarity, several themes cut across the groups. In this conclusion, I highlight two significant themes and their implications for the mothers in both groups: seeking work-family balance and relationships with spouses.

Seeking Work-Family Balance

Regardless of career goal, all of the mothers desired and sought work-family balance. The mothers strived to be parents and workers in the present and in the future. This pursuit involved moments of resistance, enactment, internalization, and self-policing in regards to conflicting norms. The mothers who desired academic careers pursued this balance by working primarily during childcare hours and while their children slept. They also pursued this "balance" by seeking careers at particular kinds of universities in desired locations. In contrast, the "alternative" career mothers sought work-family balance by pursuing careers locally. Like the academic mothers, these mothers also worked during childcare hours and when their baby slept,

but they additionally arranged their childcare to enable part-time parenting and part-time work. These mothers were committed to utilizing family-like or home-based care.

Through their actions and statements, the mothers reveal that for all of them, a good mother does not work long hours. While there is variation is how much time a mother was comfortable spending on her work, no mother was willing to fully enact the image of the ideal worker who is constantly working. Madison articulates this preference most clearly:

> I also know lots of moms who work all the time and don't see their kids and I don't approve of them. So we are all judgey, but I know that if I were home full-time, all the time, that I would not be happy. I'd be a little bit frustrated. Then I'm not a good mom if I'm not happy – poor Thane.

In this quote, it is possible to see how Madison is presenting herself as a good mother who works, but still spends significant time with her child. She contrasts herself with other mothers who work long hours.

Childcare represented a key resource in facilitating present-day work-family balance for all the mothers. However, this was not an uncomplicated resource for the mothers. All the mothers played a central role in organizing this resource and oftentimes in determining the boundaries of it. The academic mothers were concerned about long wait lists, cost, and the amount of time they spent with their children. The non-academic mothers were also concerned about cost, the nature of the experience, and the amount of time they spent with their children.

Maintaining a "balance" between work and family was not always easy. Due to multiple demands, all of the mothers struggled with remaining focused on their work, especially when they needed to engage in writing by themselves. While the impediment to writing for academic mothers included juggling various components of academic life, the alternative mothers desired

collaboration and time for their "old selves" and the "business of life." All mothers described how they could be more focused on their work when they were collaborating or teaching.

As a result of these differing approaches to work-family balance, mothers with differing career aspirations faced uncertainty in contrasting arenas of their lives. While the academic mothers worried about the tough decisions to leave Greenridge that would lie ahead, the alternative career mothers were concerned about finding a career path locally. Since a Ph.D. is not required for many careers outside of the academy, networking and transferring academic skills would be necessary for them. Madison's questioning of whether or not she prepared herself with a Ph.D. exemplifies the nature of the uncertainty that the non-academic mothers faced.

Negotiations With Spouses

Quests for work-family balance occurred within partnerships. The academic mothers were able to leverage their resistance to ideal mother norms through the support of their spouses. However, the mothers at times experienced guilt about the support that spouses were providing for their careers. Since they were spending multiple days of the week with their children and their commitment to work was less clear, the non-academic career mothers had to negotiate their work-family roles with their spouse.

In all cases, the spouse had a meaningful shaping influence on the careers and the mothering of mothers. On the career side, women made decisions or anticipated making decisions with their spouses regarding where to live and the locations of careers. Spouses also shaped how much time women had access to – either by supporting the mothers' goals emotionally and financially, enabling resistance to the ideal mother, or by performing the importance of their own work vis a vis the mothers' work. As Madison's case shows, some

mothers were invested in their performances of the ideal mother and did want to share with a spouse at all times.

Larger Meaning of the Findings

This study contributes to the literature in several ways – by offering a unique qualitative case study, through utilizing a nuanced framework, and by shedding light on the varied career aspirations of an understudied group, graduate student mothers. The findings of this study speak to many themes in the broader literature about academic motherhood.

This study overlaps with the literature that highlights the negative outcomes for women in academia. First, as the literature shows, gender roles continue to operate in somewhat traditional ways despite women's increasing participation in the workplace (England, 2010). All mothers enacted and resisted traditional gender norms related to work and mothering at different times. Clearly, such norms are powerful. As my study shows, these gender roles are negotiated in the context of a partnership.

The literature also discusses that women are located in dual career partnerships more than men (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). This study reveals some of the challenges that are embedded in dual career couples. Both mothers and fathers are navigating conflicting gender, parenting, and work norms in the context of a partnership. Decisions about who completes which tasks are frequently complicated, especially given the fact that norms are internalized as guilt and shame and individuals police themselves in relation to gender role expectations.

Finally, this study also speaks to the literature that discusses career decision-making of graduate students. Moving beyond surveys that only identify factors that influence career-decision making such as geography, spouses, and family-focus, this dissertation study shows how all these factors work together and are situated in larger contexts of departments, families,

and spousal relationships. This rich and nuanced data set shows how mothers are pulled in multiple directions by competing normative discourses.

This research provides further support for the theory of poststructuralism (Butler, 1990; Bartky, 1998). The theoretical framing utilized in this study revealed that mothers are constantly engaged in performances and resistances of competing discourses. These findings complicate notions of power that often circulate in the literature. Women are not simply empowered nor disempowered, have agency or lack agency. All of the seven women were active agents while being constrained by social norms. Since power frequently morphed, enactments and resistances to discourses represented moving targets. For example, mothers neutralized the resistance of childcare and spouses by experiencing guilt about use of care and terminating their work time. Narratives that view women solely as agents or victims do not adequately capture complexity of women's choices.

Limitations of the Study

Like any study, this dissertation is limited for several reasons. In this section, I discuss limitations related to the homogeneity of the sample and the use of the observational data.

Despite my recruitment efforts to the contrary, this study employs a homogeneous sample. All of the case study women were White and located in heterosexual marriages. As a result, there are considerable aspects of the experience of being a graduate student mother that my study cannot speak to. I lack data that would shed light on how being a mother in a same-sex partnership or marriage, a mother of color, or a single mother might shape the identity performances of graduate student mothers. Research literature suggests that women of color employ visions of good motherhood that include rather than conflict with work (Collins, 2011; Blair-Loy & Dehart, 2003). Similarly, single mothers and mothers in same-sex partnerships may

employ alternative parenting and work norms that may not be employed by these mothers who are situated in heterosexual partnerships. Insofar as traditional elements of the heterosexual relationship constrained women's resistance to ideal mother norms, investigating the impact of participant diversity further might have revealed different findings.

This data also cannot address the topic of departmental variation given the fact that most mothers were located in different departments or in contrasting sub-fields within the same departments. The majority of my participants were graduate students in female-dominated fields and, as a result, my data cannot speak to experiences of being a graduate student mother in a male-dominated field. Since gender issues can manifest in differing ways across departments (Aanerud, Morrison, Homer, Rudd, Nerad, & Cerny, 2007), this represents a limitation of the present study.

A final limitation of the study is data sources and participants. The observational data could have been more useful if I have observed the same events multiple times. Because I was often observing the mother and a child, the observations tended to be a time for informal chatting rather than enabling me to understand what the mother does in the context of her relationships and contexts. While multiple contacts with participants strengthened the quality of the data that I was able to extract over time in the interviews, the observations did not provide me with a sense of how the women allocate their time, what they do day to day, or how they interact with others. In retrospect, I may have learned more about the experience of graduate student mothering if I had asked participants to record their activities in time journals. Because the issue of time emerged as central to mothers' performances of mothering and work, a more comprehensive record of mothers' tasks could have helped me verify or disconfirm some findings that can only currently be tentative hunches. Based on interviews and observations, I pieced together a general

schedule for the women and a division of labor with their spouses. However, documentation of these time allocations could have produced more robust findings.

The observations could also have been increasingly helpful if I had sought less variation across types of observations. If I had observed multiple times at home and multiple times in the department, I could have possibly seen performances that were less constructed for me as the observer and therefore had a greater ability to understand the meaning of what I was seeing for the participants. A deeper understanding of the relationships of the participants, especially with their spouse, could have additionally been helpful. While I have data about the participant's accounts of their negotiations with spouses, interviews with spouses, and multiple observations of the partnership, could have provided some additional insight into the participants' lives.

Future Research

These findings and limitations identify several key arenas for future research. First, an understanding how motherhood is mediated by race and partnership factors is sorely needed in the literature. Studies that provide insight into mothers of color, single mothers, and mothers in same sex partnerships and marriages would help the field understand how contrasting identities shape academic motherhood.

Future research could further explore academic mothers situated in dual career couples utilizing qualitative case studies and poststructuralist frameworks. Such studies could focus on the negotiations between partners to understand how those factors shape women's access to time for work and parenting. To address this aspect of mothers' experience, it would be helpful to add the element of the ideal spouse to the current conceptual framework.

Future research might also address the field's lack of knowledge about how Ph.D. recipients experience career routes after the Ph.D. Knowledge of how individuals constructed

careers outside of academia could provide useful insight into how individuals use their doctorates to build meaningful lives outside of the academy.

Finally, this research begs questions about the experience of graduate student fathers. In the past, graduate student fathers have been a very successful group in academia. However, research suggests that academic fathers face increasing pressures to play a more significant role in the home (Sallee, 2012). Future research might engage how young fathers navigate these conflicting demands, and whether they perceive these demands as conflicting or not.

Possibilities Raised For Doctoral Education Practice

This research raises important questions about how mothers can be best supported in academia and how the academy can best prepare students (including mothers) for academic and non-academic careers. As mentioned earlier, this research can only speak to the experiences of White women in heterosexual partnerships.

Despite its limited scope, this research shows that childcare and spousal supports are important, and that professional development could be helpful for graduate students. In this vein, universities might consider supporting access to high quality, affordable childcare that could support mothers and fathers in their career paths. Graduate schools might also consider offering professional development in spousal negotiation that could also help students with partners work with family members towards their goals. Finally, counseling that helps parents talk through issues about work-family could help women navigate the seeming conflicts between these issues.

Finally, doctoral programs would be wise to provide accurate and explicit expectations regarding academic and alternative academic career paths. Students should be encouraged to think about their career goals in the context of their family goals and have opportunities to leverage their doctoral training to launch them on their career path, whatever that path may be.

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