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CENSURED MOTHERHOOD: COMMUNICATING THE DOUBLE BIND BETWEEN MOTHERHOOD AND THE PROFESSORiate

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**CENSURED MOTHERHOOD: COMMUNICATING THE
DOUBLE BIND BETWEEN MOTHERHOOD AND THE
PROFESSORiate**

by

SARAH J. FULLER

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, ENGLISH, 2013
MASTER OF ARTS, COMMUNICATION, 2015**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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MAY 2015

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Mom.

You are my inspiration, the poet in my heart, and my best friend.

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To my committee chair, Dr. Patricia Covarrubias: You are a pillar of strength, determination, and unwavering bravery. Thank you for sharing your own mother professor experiences and legitimizing my desire to pursue this topic as a research avenue. When others lowered their eyes and closed their mouths to censor, you raised your head, sang to the heavens, and inspired me to tell a story that is often overlooked and forgotten. Thank you.

CENSURED MOTHERHOOD: COMMUNICATING THE DOUBLE BIND BETWEEN MOTHERHOOD AND THE PROFESSORiate

by

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ABSTRACT

This study revealed the interpersonal networks and communication resources available to women who are both mothers and professors in a large university in the southwestern United States. The current study was an inquiry using approaches from the ethnography of communication (EOC), which holds that culture and communication are inseparable and synonymous (Carbaugh, 2007; Covarrubias, 2002; Philipsen, 1997). Therefore, by interviewing nine women who are mothers of at least one child living at home and are also full-time professors, I accessed utterances that explicate cultural enactments of motherhood in the academy. During the course of this study, I asked the professors who are mothers what nomenclature they preferred to explicate their roles: unanimously participants answered “mother professor”. Therefore, honoring research participants’ preferences, I refer to women who are full time professors and mothers as mother professors.

In addition to the EOC, this study used border theory (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004; Nippert-Eng, 1996) and double bind theory (Bateson et al., 1956) as theoretical frameworks. Border theory operationalizes the experiences of individuals into domains, or spaces and places which govern specific behavior, rules of conduct, and cultural expectations. This study found that women who are mother professors engaged their lives in two separate domains: the professoriate and motherhood; domains that are at

odds with one another from an occupational standpoint. Oftentimes, the borders of the two roles overlap and even collide, affecting the mother professor's cultural enactment and communication resources in each domain. The nature of the border often forced mother professors to divide their roles into parceled-out enactments: that of mother at home, and that of professor in the workplace. Mother professors cope with this communication border crossing and role enactment in two ways: by hiding the fact that they are a mother when in the professoriate domain through self-censorship regarding motherhood, or by seeking mentors and colleagues in the professoriate who are also mothers to gain interpersonal network support, in particular to serving as sounding boards.

Keywords: Ethnography of Communication, Double Bind Theory, Border Theory

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I sat in the hard plastic chair nestled in the back corner of Carol's office. Her walls were spotted with bright posters and academic certificates. Her bookshelves were filled with textbooks. I did not notice any family pictures or photos of her son. However, it was not Carol's office that captured my focus, but her seemingly overwhelming emotional response to talking about motherhood. I was shocked by her accounts of suffering and stress and her demonstrative utterances of sadness and anger. I asked Carol if she was open to being a role model to women, mothers, in her department. Her immediate answer was, "Yes!" But as I watched Carol rub her hands up and down the stainless steel coffee mug she clutched, I could tell she was holding back tears. Carol said she wanted to do more. She wanted to change the way motherhood is viewed in academic culture. Carol softly spoke:

"Um... so it's aggravating that I can't [change academic culture]... and yet, because of what I'm doing and because I am behind, I can't do anything at this point to get into the [academic] administration where there might be one of the voices who tries to change it... to make this profession more humane."

Inspired by Carol, making academia, and particularly life as a professor, more humane became a goal of this study; perhaps not to directly change policy, but to raise awareness about the need to express oneself more fully for mothers in the professoriate. I entered into research with a goal of understanding communication resources and inadvertently stumbled upon a lesson in humanity, caring, and compassion for fellow women. This research accomplished goals: uncovering the communication resources, cultural enactments, and interpersonal networks of women who are both mothers and full-time professors. However, this study also uncovered the need for humanity in a world punctuated by an acute emphasis on mental productivity. A domain that largely ignores the heart of occupational matters. My work led me to the conclusion that the

academy must welcome both mind and heart to welcome mothers and develop a humane communication environment.

My passion for understanding how motherhood was viewed in the academy stemmed from my own experience as a graduate student at a research university in the southwestern United States. While a few of the women in the department where I studied had children, very few ever openly discussed the topic, fewer had pictures or keepsakes of their children in their office, and even fewer brought their children into the workplace. As I questioned my peers, colleagues, and professors about the topic of motherhood, an inevitable intense fear strangled the conversations: thou shall dare not speak of children in the academic workplace. This fear was evoked through both nonverbal and verbal communication: shutting of office doors and hushed whispers when discussing children. Finally, in my preliminary research for this study, I encountered a professor so concerned that her status as a mother would affect her career trajectory (and promotion chances) that she requested I “keep it to myself” regarding her status as a mother. This fear and desire to hide a part of one’s self prompted my study.

This inquiry using ethnographic approaches broke the tradition of conservative academia; one often unwelcoming to personal feelings, emotional experiences, and motherly insights. My research work was a consciousness raising and a campaign to embrace motherhood, and the emotional experiences motherhood evokes, in the academy. Individuals engage in many social roles throughout their daily lives – son or daughter, mother or father, student or teacher, in group member or out group member. Another interest in studying motherhood was my personal interest in social roles that originally sparked my drive to study motherhood. Through my experience with my own mother, friends who are mothers, and mentors who are mothers, I noticed that parents, and particularly mothers, were constantly forced to enact multiple roles, oftentimes

concurrently. From my own experience of observing my mother and females in the academic workplace, it appeared to me that society often judged harshly for decisions mothers make: mothers are never fast enough when it comes to fulfilling schedules, mothers are never caring enough for a child, or supportive enough for their professional responsibilities. Mothers were trapped in a world of ideals: ideal mother and ideal professor were cultural roles these women fight to fulfill daily.

Through my personal observation of my own mother and colleagues in the professoriate, I noticed the mainstream United States white construction of the ideal mother becomes more complicated when a mother decides to leave the home domain and venture into the professional workplace domain. Working mothers were forced to balance the identity of a 21st century professional woman and an ideal, often traditional, role of mother. This dual-role fulfillment of mother and worker resulted in a social and emotional dialectic that many women continued to battle in today's society, despite many decades of presumed feminist advances.

When I entered the academy to pursue a Master's degree nearly two years ago, my natural inclination to observe women, particularly those who identify as mothers, became my main academic endeavor. The academy, for me, represented the height of intellectual achievements; nonetheless, it is in academy that I witnessed some of the most blatant discrimination and undue judgment of mothers.

In one particular case, I observed verbal and nonverbal reactions of professors and students when a female professor openly identified as a mother. During one of my courses, a professor disclosed that she was a mother of twins. During a break, I overheard one of my classmates say, "She's a mom just like any other woman. I thought she was smart, but she's just a mom." To this individual, the professor was no longer regarded as a high-achieving

intellectual, but instead took the predominant label of mother over professor. For this student, the professor's academic legitimacy was altered forever and she was treated as a baby-producing female body rather than an intellectual individual. This utterance showcased the privileging of the head over the heart, and the intellect over motherhood, creating a dichotomy of roles observed in the current study. Also inspired by this personal experience in the classroom, this study focused on the social construction and understanding of motherhood in the professoriate by examining the social networks and resources mother professors use to navigate between their professional life and home life.

Purpose

This thesis explored how professors who are mothers use communication to navigate oppositional interpersonal domains that force them, and often keep them, confined to the margins of legitimated professional lives. I used three conceptual theories to ground my argument. First, the ethnography of communication (EOC), which is informed by the concept that speech and culture are inextricably intertwined (Covarrubias, 2002; Philipsen, 1997; Carbaugh, 2007). Second, I incorporated double bind theory to explore the effects conflicting social messages have on communication outcomes (Bateson et al., 1956). Double bind also informed my exploration of emotional experiences of motherhood in the professoriate, often as a tabooed topic or a culturally marginalized role (Bateson et al., 1956). I also used border theory, which is fundamentally informed by the concept that people cross physical and/or abstract borders in everyday experiences; for example, the border between work life and home life (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). Border theory helped explicate how experiences of contemporary mothers who are college professors enact their professional lives along geographic and existential borders that, oftentimes, result in unnecessary and hurtful social and emotional stress.

I used Nippert-Eng's (1996) concept of overlapping borders to explore the experiences of women stuck in the in-between space of roles; where many professors who are mothers are forced to bring work life home and vice versa. By incorporating border theory and the ethnography of communication, I was able to understand that the professoriate as a site of culture that is characterized, in part, by the censoring of personal matters, particularly motherhood.

The problem I addressed in this thesis was illuminating the bordered experiences mother professors experience routinely. I identified the communication resources mother professors have at the border and shared this information with other mother professors and the professoriate culture across sites and contexts. I discussed the issue of work/life balance through border theory, a family studies theory that structures everyday rituals as border crossing, or, commuting between the home and work. I use this theory alongside double bind theory to produce a new, emergent approach for observing, evaluating, and understanding the borders women cross and negotiate on a regular basis. By uncovering the patterns and cultural expectations of mother professors the border, I expanded and informed the broad similarities of this particular group for public understanding to act as a resource for other mother professors outside of my specific research context.

Methodologically, this study used approaches from the EOC as a methodological framework to collect analyze data (Hymes, 1974; Philipsen, 1992; Covarrubias, 2010). The EOC was a useful approach for this particular study because it allowed for in-depth description and in-depth analysis of the experience shared in interviews and textual online comment data. The EOC enabled analysis by focusing on the participants own words rather than relying on *a priori* researcher categories. Because the EOC holds that communication and culture are intertwined, the data utterances explained how mother professors culturally enact motherhood in

a particular setting. The academy serves as a site for a cultural communication by giving professors a place to share and shape systems of beliefs, values, and cultural practices; which includes the practice of silencing topics such as motherhood and family life. With the above motivations, methodological, and theoretical approaches in mind, the present study follows the following research questions:

RQ1: What communication resources do women at a major research university in the US Southwest have available to express their experiences in their dual, and potentially conflictive, identities as mothers and professors?

RQ2: How can women's expressed experiences as mother professors be understood as cultural enactment?

RQ3: How do mother professors use their available communication resources to shape interpersonal networks in their work-family lives?

The key concepts of the study are based in theoretical frameworks and methodology, predominantly the ethnography of communication, border theory, and double bind theory. These key theoretical concepts will inform the research structure and methods discussed in Chapter 3, as well as the analysis of research data discussed in Chapter 4.

Context

The research context for this study was divided into two domains. First, the domain of the home, where mother professors fulfill the role of mother, and in some cases, wife or significant other to a domestic partner. The home domain was characterized by participants as their space away from the university setting, most often, their physical home. Responsibilities of the domestic domain, as discussed by participants, include, but are not limited to: getting children ready for school, dropping children off/ picking children up from school, driving children to

extra-curricular activities, preparing meals, participating in family vacations, and helping children with homework. In brief, the panoply and collection of activities that involved helping children move from childhood to adulthood.

All participants in this study were all mothers to at least one child under the age of 21 living at home while working as full time professors in a United States university setting. Four of the nine participants had two or more children living at home during a professoriate position, while the remaining five participants had one child at home.

For the purposes of the current study, the domestic domain emerged as a topic in interviews only when the mother professors explicitly mentioned the home, and their roles in the home, as a data point. Instead, all interview instrument questions focused on the participant's experiences in the professoriate in relation to their status as a mother.

As a contrasting domain, this study defined the professoriate as any roles or responsibilities directly related to the mother's profession as a full time professor at a large research university in the southwestern United States. Therefore, the context of that domain falls within the physical confines of a large public research university with a student population of approximately 35,000 students. The main university campus, where all of the current study's research was conducted, spans roughly 600 acres. The main campus was considered an urban environment, for the purposes of this study, and employs 6,900 administrative staff. The university in this study is funded by a \$503 million endowment and was home to 18 varsity athletic teams. In 2013, the university was ranked 185th in the world for popular research universities and 82nd in the United States by US News and World Report.

Every mother professor interviewed in this study was an employee of the university for at least two calendar years prior to participation in the current research. Each participant carried a

full load (twelve hours) of teaching and/or administrative duties at the university. All mother professor participants are full time employees and are required to work 40 hours per week, though they all qualify for university-sanctioned academic session breaks (spring recess, summer break, fall break, and winter holiday).

Two of the nine mother professor participants were not in tenure track professor positions. However, the remaining seven participants were tenured faculty, which placed significant emphasis on writing, researching, and publishing academic articles and books on a regular basis. Tenured faculty were typically evaluated yearly by a tenure review committee. This committee analyzed the mother professors based on a point system in which points were awarded for publication, teaching, service to the department, and research. In most departments, such as those at the current study's university, professors are given exceedingly high points for book publication and articles (e.g. 30 points) and very menial points (e.g. 0.5 points) for teaching, community service, and book reviews. Therefore, the reader must remain aware of the strong emphasis the professoriate placed on tenure and academic publication; thus placing intense pressure on tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Assumptions

This research study of mother professors accepted the assumption that communication is central to the construction of interpersonal networks and resources available to mother professors at the border between work and home. There was an assumption that the navigation between the work and home border is one of conflicting expectations, stressors, and communication rules and/or codes.

This study accepted the EOC approach that culture and communication are braided as one; therefore, by accessing the communication needs, techniques, and networks of professors

who are mothers, we can better understand their communication process in way which allows for a broad application of current findings to multiple contexts. Consequently, the utterances from voluntary participant interviews were exact quotes from professors who are mothers and are examples of communication in context, thus constituting relevant research data.

This study also operated under the assumption that mother professors have agency in the professional academic environment. In other words, mother professors could choose whether or not they utilize communication resources or access interpersonal networks, if made available. With this assumption of agency also comes the supposition that the women who identify as mothers in academia are aware of their marginalized experience and loss of legitimacy as a result of motherhood.

Preview

For twenty-two years I watched my own mother balance her dual-roles as a mother and a full-time professional. I saw her pass on professional opportunities to cheer me on at a soccer games and attend school events. She moved her schedule around to punctually drop me off and pick me up every day from school and I never once heard her apologize or hide the fact that she placed family first. She was, what I called, a working-mom-warrior, and she inspired me to be the same. However, when I entered the academy, I uncovered warrior-women in censorship. I witnessed talented, smart, fierce professors hiding their status as mothers; fearful of professional consequences if they missed a meeting for a soccer game. The academy, and particularly the professoriate, did not welcome children: no discussing motherhood, no discussing children, and certainly no children in the office.

In this chapter I shared my personal drive for researching motherhood as a result of my own witness of marginalization of mother professors in the academy and my own experience as a

child of a working mother. I stated a purpose for research as well as three research questions that guide my study. This section gave a brief overview of theoretical and methodological informants, as well as assumptions and rationale for research. Chapter 2, will offer an extensive overview of literature that informed and guided my study. Chapter 3, methods section, will explain my methodology, instruments, and sequence for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4, displays and explains the results and findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5, will review implications, limitations, and future research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Ethnography of Communication

The EOC was originally developed by Dell Hymes for the “analysis of discourse centered on the role of speech in human behavior” (Covarrubias, 2010, p. 356; Hymes, 1974). The EOC primarily focuses on how communication, both verbal and nonverbal, forms, sustains, amends, and predicts human interaction. The EOC is an etic, micro-oriented inductive way of observing and understanding a culture. By focusing in on particular elements of discourse that humans use to express and constitute their experiences, by listening to what people can and cannot say, researchers using the EOC can observe, record, and understand specific cultures through inductive thought and examination. Culture is the site of communication speech exchange. By intimately observing and recording how speech is intertwined with culture, one can better understand the points of view and realities within the specific culture.

The EOC is both a qualitative research method and a theoretical perspective. The EOC is fundamentally informed by the idea that communication and culture are inextricably intertwined. This means, when people communicate, they display their culture. The EOC views culture as the web-like system of beliefs, values, and social practices which people use to live their lives via

communication. Therefore, because culture is displayed via communication exchange, the culture is inspectable or hearable – a researcher can observe and listen to certain verbal and nonverbal cues of people, and then extract, study, and describe the culture being observed. For example, by attending to particular words and phrases women use to express their experiences as mother professors, a researcher observing and listening to these expressions can extract given patterns of meaning-making to describe and explain how the mother professors constitute a particular culture.

The EOC focuses explicitly on “(1) the linguistic resources people use in context, not just grammar in the traditional sense, but the socially situated uses and meanings of words, their relations, and sequential forms of expression; (2) the various medias used with communicating... (3) the way verbal and nonverbal signs create and reveal social codes of identity, relationships, emotions, place, and communication itself” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 1). The language resources and strategies for action individuals use (e.g., organizational terms, word choice, and nonverbal actions) shape their relationships with other individuals and the possible sequence of future communication interactions. The media used to communicate, such as verbal or computer-mediated comments, also affects how speech is understood between interlocutors in specific settings.

Verbal and nonverbal interactions are fundamental in understanding the cultural ethos and pathos, particularly in organizations. By observing the interplay of verbal and nonverbal communication within large groups or organizations of people, the researcher gains access to salient cultural role enactments and accepted ways of speaking in that particular organizational context. For example, with reference to the present study, by verbally identifying that she is a mother, a mother professor chooses to adhere to particular speech actions and relationships

within the specific academic context. However, if a woman does not identify as a mother, and instead uses silence as a communication resource, she is also producing a particular speech interaction in a specific setting which results in particular consequences. To fully understand the EOC, the next section will define culture and subsequent cultural meanings of speech.

Culture. The EOC focuses on how speech shapes personhood and reality. The concept of culture is vital in understanding how speech solidifies membership in various contexts. Culture, or code, according to Philipsen (1992) focuses on how symbols and patterns make all human communication meaningful. This means the words individuals choose to form a message ultimately determine the meanings and cultural context of understanding. This cultural context is formed around a system that includes four main components: symbols, meanings, premises, and rules. These four communication functions establish basic interaction understanding among members of one culture and can be interlocked to form an understanding of multiple, co-occurring cultures. This concept of one individual understanding multiple speech cultures, and having membership in each culture, is called multicodeity (Covarrubias, 2010). This means that one individual can use, interpret, and share one or multiple codes in various contexts so long as there is one other person who understands the same code in the communication exchange. To understand the formation of speech in a culture, the next section will discuss the use of codes as well as symbols, meanings, premises and rules.

Codes and speech resources. Covarrubias (2010) states, “whenever community members communicate, they display the verbal and nonverbal elements particular to their society while simultaneously creating (and recreating) the value systems that structure that society” (Covarrubias, 2010, p. 355). In other words, by becoming a member in a specific community, the individual utilizes the elemental resources (symbols, meanings, premises, and rules) to form and

give particular meaning to a communication interaction with another member of the community. By choosing to adhere to the culturally expected codes, the members are concurrently forming the communication code and sustaining the existing code.

Codes, as defined by Covarrubias (2010), are the “sets of precepts and rules by which different societies inform and interpret their ways of life” (p. 356). These rules, and adherence to the rules, shape social relationships and interactions within a given culture. Philipsen (1992) defines codes “as a system of meanings about communicative conduct” (p. 124). Both Covarrubias (2010) and Philipsen (1992) define codes as a systemic understanding and organization of communication in a specific context. Codes are scripts for socially acceptable behaviors. A cultural code of speaking, then, consists of “a socially constructed and historically transmitted systems of symbols and meanings pertaining to communication” (Philipsen, 1992, p. 8). Historical meanings and symbols affect contemporary social understandings because codes of speech are inherently linked through the constant formation and adherence of existing codes. While codes are dynamic, they take extended periods of time to change, and can be modified by code users in small interaction exchanges over an extended time.

Symbols are a “vehicle of conception” (Geertz, 1973, p. 91) that members of a cultural group mutually understand and incorporate into daily communication exchanges. Symbols can be words with connotations and denotations (e.g., mother, professor) or physical symbols (e.g., pregnant ‘belly’, a mother carrying an infant, professor lecturing). Because the EOC believes meanings are distinctive across cultures, symbols are intimately tied to meanings in particular contexts. Meanings are shared understandings of cultural beliefs and ideas (Philipsen, 1997). These meanings, understood by members of a given culture, are vital in understanding both verbal and nonverbal symbols of interaction. A clear conception of the system of symbols and

meanings, and the web of communication they create, is necessary to fully understand a cultural group.

Rules inform acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in specific cultures, directing communication behavior by providing explicit terms of interlocution (Philipsen, 1992). Rules are part of a system of exchange – informing how certain individuals in social roles should engage in, exchange, and exit conversations. Philipsen (1992) states that premises inform rules. Premises are, “beliefs of existence (what is) and of value (what is good and bad). A rule is a prescription, for how to act, under specified circumstances, which has (some degree of) force in a particular social group” (Philipsen, 1992, p. 8). In other words, certain contexts of communication interaction call for certain acceptable behaviors – such as saying ‘goodbye’ to co-workers before leaving the office as a social rule of consideration and politeness. By enacting the expected rule and premises within a given cultural context (e.g., a baby shower, announcing pregnancy, and obtaining tenure) individuals in that culture assert membership and understanding with fellow cultural members. Covarrubias (2002) also points out that there are certain consequences for not adhering to the rules. Bonvillain (2008) discusses speech rule norms in terms of taboo or accepted topics in which “...choice of topic also depends on the speaker’s awareness of cultural and individual expectations” (Bonvillain, 2008, p. 84). These consequences can result in social aloofness, exiting the group, or confusion during interlocution.

Patterns are “culturally organized ways of speaking” (Phillipsen, 1997, p. 143) that allow interlocutors to interact with one another in culturally appropriate ways across behavioral norms (Bonvillain, 2008, p. 82). The organization of how certain words are placed in a sentence, for example, proper names, terms of endearment, or descriptives, informs norms within a certain culture. The EOC specifically focuses on “the situations and use, the patterns and functions, of

speaking as an activity in its own right” (Hymes, 1962, p. 101). Ethnographers or researchers who use the EOC as a methodology, observe speech as a function of culture. To ethnographers speech constitutes and reflects the norms, rituals, relationships, and beliefs of the specific culture.

Speech Codes Theory. Gerry Philipsen expanded Dell Hymes’ perspective on the ethnography of speaking by integrating speech codes theory (SCT) into understanding how speech is intertwined with cultural realities. Philipsen (1997) defined a speech code as “something that is and can be learned by all who might have an interest in it” (p. 142). This concept of learning codes is central to understanding how speech codes of conduct affect membership and communication in specific role domains, such as the professoriate and motherhood. Speech codes theory “offers a communication-based analytic framework designed for describing, explaining, and/or predicting cultural communication within the context of speech communities” and consists of six propositions (Covarrubias, 2010, p. 356). Each speech code contains the six SCT propositions at varying degrees.

Six Propositions of speech codes theory. Because SCT and the ethnography of communication both believe that culture and communication are inextricably woven together (Covarrubias, 2009), the core propositions of SCT, developed by Philipsen, provide guideposts for examining specific cultures. The first proposition states, “*wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code*” (Covarrubias, 2009, p. 921). In other words, because the EOC believes speech codes inform cultures, they are inseparable and representative of one another.

The second proposition of SCT argues that each speech domain has multiple speech codes. This means that at any point one speech context is simultaneously using more than one

speech code (Covarrubias, 2009, p. 922). For example, a professor who is a mother speaking to her child on the phone while in her office is prescribing to both the workplace speech role (in the speech context) and the mother speech role while engaged in conversation with her child.

The third proposition in speech codes theory states that, “*a speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric*” which informs social communication exchange and personal experiences (Covarrubias, 2009, p. 922). For example, by engaging in the academic speech code, an individual concurrently adheres to the academic culture’s social relationships, conduct rules, and individual states of personhood or being.

Speech codes theory proposition four reads: “*the significance of speaking is contingent upon the speech codes used by interlocutors (communicators) to constitute the meanings of communicative acts*” (Covarrubias, 2009, p. 922). In other words, for a speech code to be relevant in a given communication context, all interlocutors involved must share a common understanding of the deployed code; however, the meaning may mean sometime entirely different to individuals in a different speech community.

The fifth proposition of speech codes theory states that, “*the terms, rules, and premises of a speech code are inextricably woven into speaking itself*” (Covarrubias, 2009, p. 922). As stated in previous sections, this means that the words an individual chooses to employ in a speech exchange are inseparably linked to the social rules and premises of that specific culture.

Finally, the sixth proposition of speech codes theory discusses the functionality of speech codes in that, “*the artful use of a shared speech code is a sufficient condition for predicting, explaining, and controlling the form of discourse about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communication conduct*” (Covarrubias, 2009, p. 922). This concept emphasizes that each interlocutor has the freedom and agency to control communication codes. It is important to note

that the concept of predictability does not imply predicting certain word choice; instead, SCT aims to predict sequential communication exchange through speech codes.

SPEAKING. The SPEAKING method, developed by Hymes in 1974 focuses on eight micro communication parts that form a macro speech code. This framework aims to use an etic approach to form an emic understanding. By examining speech codes through a structure, the process of observing, recording, explaining, and predicting codes of speech is streamlined. Scene and setting (S) focus on where the speech exchange happened – the physical happenings surrounding the communication exchange and physiological scene (Philipsen, 1972). Participants (P) examines who was present at the time of speech code exchange, the pattern of speech, sequence of speech exchange (such as taking turns) and frequency of speech. End (E) examines the motives behind the speech code exchange – the purpose behind the communication interaction. Act (A) observes the act topics discussed by members of the speech community and the act sequence in which the communication takes place. Topics include descriptive forms of speech and topic themes.

Therefore, topics discussed in an act sequence must be relevant and accepted by interlocutors in the speech exchange. Key (K) examines the tone of conversation during the communicative exchange - this includes tone of voice and nonverbal acts. The key of communication also included emotive meaning, for example: tears, sobs, slowing of speech, yelling, and whispering. Instrumentality (I) studies the communication channel of the speech code. For example, particular communication events take place in person, through face-to-face verbal exchange, while others are mediated through online comments, posts, or social media sites. Instrumentality also observes the language or dialect used, accents, and code switching. For example, women who wished to express their experiences as mothers in the professoriate found

instruments to do so; either through online comments or personal interviews. Norms of interaction/ interpretation (N) examines terms and expressions frequently used by members of a speech community. Interpretation also includes challenged or accepted behaviors and explicit conduct rules of interaction. Finally, Genre (G) observes the types of speech overheard. This may include intimate speech events, such as jokes or stories that are specific to the community. Chapter three, methods section explains my use of SPEAKING as a methodology for research. However, it is important to understand how the SPEAKING framework leads to understanding and analysis of communication situations and context.

Application of the EOC. My research of mother professors in academia took into account the functions of speech as an interpersonal interaction and membering within a speech community. I examined this communication phenomena to abstract, describe, and explain the “rules of appropriateness” in the academic system (Hymes, 1962, p. 114). In other words, what does it mean to be a mother and what does it mean to be a professor in a specific culture? I used the EOC and SPEAKING framework to observe patterns, codes and rules apparent in communication of mother professors through their personal interviews and online-mediated comment streams.

According to Covarrubias (2010) the EOC can be used for both organizations and online communication. Therefore, examining the organizational speech codes of academic life through the interview data and comment posts, I was able to regard “Language [as] the public storehouse of tradition, the signal of just what it is in the world that is significant, the resource for speculatively creating new worlds” (Agar, 1986, p. 21). Mother professor experiences were present for decades; however, through the use of the EOC and my study, current perspectives, issues, and emotions were showcased.

I examined the social life of mother professors through participant interviews and online Amazon.com comments on the book *Mama, PhD*, published by Rutgers University Press in 2008, edited by Elrena Evans and Caroline Grant. The comments interpreted in the data were public domain and anonymous and discuss perspectives of book content. I explored the three main foci of the EOC, understanding, interpreting, and explaining, to uncover the cultural communicative resources mother professors use regularly.

Because the EOC is “fundamentally concerned with the idea that culture and communication are inseparably intertwined” (Covarrubias, 2010, p. 355) I explored communication resources and interpersonal conduct through the EOC, SPEAKING framework, and speech codes theory.

Border Theory

Desrochers and Sargent (2004) define border theory as “a general cognitive theory of social classification that focuses on outcomes such as the meanings people assign to home and work and the ease and frequency of transitioning between roles” (p. 40). In other words, border theory examines the role responsibilities an individual fills in a certain life domain (e.g. motherhood and professoriate). A role is “a set of activities and relations expected of a person occupying a particular position in society, and of others, in relation to that person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 85). However, border theory accepts that not all borders are stagnant. Therefore, border theory also examines how roles overlap, conjoin, remain separate, and combine to form one individual’s multiple role fulfillment.

Border theory is predominantly used in the field of family studies in conjunction with work/life balance theory. Work/life balance theory focuses on stress and conflict between work (public) roles and family (private) roles and views the roles as separate entities that rarely

overlap. Work/life balance theory mainly studies the emotional stressors and outcomes related to perfectly balancing roles to predict when and where conflict will eventually take place. Border theory, however, does not focus on the need or goal for balance. Instead, border theory observes how various life roles interact, overlap, and affect each other in a more general sense. Nippert-Eng (1996) describes this border theory as studying a continuum of domains in which borders allow for movement, integration, separation, and overlap at any given time. The border crossing takes place between two or more domains. The next section will explain how domains are formed, how they interact, and the borders between various domain roles.

Domains. Domains in border theory, as defined by Clark (2000) are spaces “people have associated with different rules, thought patterns and behavior” (p. 753). Domains act as social demarcations for rules, premises, and expectations individuals follow. Clark (2000) explains how domains affect communication through “means of attaining goals in an organization create a culture in which certain behaviors and ways of thinking are encouraged” (p. 753). In other words, the communication in a domain among members of that domain effects communication goals, patterns, and rules.

According to Clark (2000) border theory focuses on the intricate details of “domain integration and segmentation, border creation and management, border-crosser participation, and relationships between border-crossers and others at work and home influence work/family balance” (p. 747). Therefore, border theory subsumes work/life balance. Border theory examines how individuals negotiate role responsibilities across domain borders. It is vital to understand the social roles and communication patterns of each domain participant. For example, to understand experience of mother professors who travel between the professoriate and motherhood domain, a researcher must understand what communication codes are expected in each domain. Then the

researcher can identify individual domain resources and expand the study to understand how role communication is translated across domain borders. It is important to note that the “information transmission” (Philipsen, 1992) of roles and communication takes place across borders and domains with varying degrees of success (p. 11). In other words, sometimes the border boundaries keep information within the confines of the domain; while other times the communication translates well in other domains. To better understand domains, a clear definition of borders is provided in the next section.

Borders. In border theory Clark (2000) defines borders as “lines of demarcation between domains, defining the points at which domain-relevant behavior begins or ends” (Clark, 2000, p. 756). Nippert-Eng (1996) explains that much of the dominant United States understandings of boundaries are in relation to nation states or “nationality” (p. 278). Concurrent with Nipper-Eng, the present study does not define borders or domains by nation, but instead by existential, behavioral, and communication demarcations; the context domains for the current study being motherhood and professoriate life.

Ahrentzen (1990) defines boundaries as, “social relations and social expectations of one’s role, which include expectations of the behavior and setting appropriate to that role, are significant forces surrounding potential role conflict” (p. 724). Ahrentzen’s (1990) discusses how role conflict can lead to role confusion when one individual is forced to quickly change role responsibilities between two or more domains. The idea of role conflict stems from the concept of strong borders that separate roles through a strict chasm of communication patterns, norms, and sequences. Clark (2000) likens work and home to two countries “where there are differences in language or word use, differences in what constitutes acceptable behavior, and differences in how to accomplish tasks” (p. 751). An individual’s ability to adhere to role responsibilities, and

affiliated cultural communication within the appropriate domain can, at times, prevent role conflict. However, when an individual frequently inhabits two roles, such as mother and professor, the role conflict issue becomes a communication and cultural role stressor. Constantly travelling between various roles and cultural domains can lead to role confusion and a blending or pull of domain borders.

Border Types. Border theory accepts three border types: physical, temporal, and psychological. The first, a physical border, is a border-space defined by physical and tangible objects, “such as the walls of a workplace or the walls of a home...*where* domain-relevant behavior takes place” (Clark, 2000, p. 756). For example, the walls of a university and the walls of a professor’s office denote the physical space of academia where academic rules and speech codes exist. On the other hand, the walls of a home or domestic space define a physical domain in which household, familial, and marital roles exist.

Temporal borders are domains of time that “divide *when* work is done from when family responsibilities can be taken care of” (Clark, 2000, p. 756). For example, temporal borders become relevant when mother professors are expected to be in multiple places at the same time: picking a child up from school at noon and attending a departmental faculty meeting at noon. Temporal border struggles lead to scheduling conflicts, because the mother is culturally expected to be in both places at the same time, and thus, is forced to choose between the two domains.

Psychological borders are “rules created by individuals that dictate when thinking patterns, behavior patterns and emotions are appropriate for one domain but not the other” (Clark, 2000, p. 756). Psychological borders and/or existential borders define roles and personhood of an individual. These borders, though not tangible, are perhaps the most important border in role conflict management and balance because they help shape individual experiences

along the border. Psychological border experiences are formed through emotional states; often discussed in terms of role conflict and role stress. When one role, for example, the academic role of professor, becomes stressful and negative, that negative experience may affect the individual's psychological state in the motherhood/domestic domain.

Permeability. Clark (2000) defines permeability in border theory as the “degree to which elements from one domain enter another” (p. 756). Permeability is the incoming and outgoing transitions of a specific domain or the entry and exit points at the border.

In his research on work and family border, Pleck examined how working mothers negotiate the “*asymmetrically permeable boundaries between work and family roles*” (Pleck, 1977, p. 423). Pleck's (1977) research found that women often manage borders as a hierarchical or preferential ordering where “the demands of the family role are permitted to intrude into the work role more than vice versa” (p. 423). This adheres to the typical North American ideal mother role in which a women chooses her family, particularly children, over herself and other role responsibilities. This same research study also found that in the case of an emergency, such as family sickness, women often choose family roles and responsibilities over those of the academic, work-oriented space (Pleck, 1977, p. 423). For example, a professor leaving class early to attend to a child's sickness – the professor is leaving work role duties to fulfill the more pressing mothering duties at home. Much like the various border types, permeability can function at a physical or psychological level.

Flexibility. Flexibility in border theory is “the extent to which a border may contract or expand” (Clark, 2000, p. 757). Flexible borders allow individuals to change the shape of existing borders. By giving cultural members autonomy to change border shapes, the border crossing experience morphs to fit their personal needs. Permeability and flexibility are vital factors in the

success or failure of a border-crossing. If domain borders are not permeable and flexible, individuals are forced to separate, hide, or negate/disown identities.

Clark (2000) explains, “When a great deal of permeability and flexibility occurs around the border, ‘blending’ occurs. The area around the presupposed border is no longer exclusive of one domain or the other, but blends both work and family, creating a borderland which cannot be exclusively called either domain” (p. 757). This blending of domains and identities produces a borderland of mixed signals, or double binds, which can cause conflict, confusion, and turmoil for individuals who identify as both a working professor/academic and a mother. The next section will expand Clark’s (2000) concept of boundary blending by incorporating Nippert-Eng’s (1996) concept of overlapping boundaries of self-identity.

Overlapping Borders. Nippert-Eng’s work on overlapping boundaries and the effect of boundaries on personhood will inform much of my research. While most individuals think of boundaries in terms of physical space, Nippert-Eng (1996) conceives boundaries in terms of “territory of the self” (p. 34). That is, the roles and premises of cultures an individual identifies with which ultimately morph together to form identity.

The territories operate on the assumption that “self does not end with a mentality. Rather, we portray and reinforce that self, that way of thinking, through our bodies and our physical, tangible surroundings” (Nippert-Eng, 1996, p. 34). In other words, the speech codes, patterns, domain role and cultural communicative interactions that take place within a domain ultimately form, sustain, and define an individual’s personhood – even outside of the domain boundary. Each domain affects the gestalt of personhood in a profound way. Border theory aims to understand how each domain in an individual’s life affects their experience as a whole, or the gestalt of their many roles.

I applied Nippert-Eng's concept of overlapping boundaries and territories of self with the idea of physical and psychological borders. The concept of borders tends to be evaluated in terms of strict adherence to domains that only change through permeability and flexibility, but rarely overlap or conjoin. As Nippert-Eng (1996) states, "if we fundamentally conceive of any two categories as oppositional, inversely defined classes of things, and especially if we further locate them in distinct times and spaces, we virtually force ourselves to ignore their overlapping potential" (p. 279). Therefore, my research focused on both boundary overlap and boundary chasm and the two poles of the permeability and flexibility spectrum. By shrugging the pre-conceived notion of strict, impermeable boundaries, one can view boundaries in terms of options, multi-faceted experiences, and continuums (Nippert-Eng, 1996). I expanded this concept of continuums in terms of border crossing as a continuum of flexibility, permeability, communication resources and cultural enactment.

According to Nippert-Eng (1996) "exploring such overlap also means being extremely sensitive to the myriad points at which categorical boundaries are placed" (p. 280). My research remained sensitive to the participant's experiences through direct quotes and the EOC approach. By capturing micro experiences along the border of two domains I identified patterns along the continuum of flexibility and permeability, role conflict, and role overlap.

Domain Role Conflict. Role conflict takes place between domains and occurs when an individual is expected to be (physically or mentally) in one role while simultaneously filling another role. Hall and Richter (1988) argue that role conflict occurs when "a person engaged in a specific role is called on to operate in another role simultaneously. This might result in "role overload" or role conflict between the two or more domain role expectations (p. 217). Role

conflict can lead to feelings of inadequacy, stress, or inability to fully engage in a domain while fulfilling a role in another.

In a study conducted by Frone et al. (1992) an astounding forty-one percent of their sample reported feeling extreme cases of role conflict on the border between domains (Frone et al., 1992, p. 728). The concept of role confusion, overload, and diverse role expectations was a key focus in my study. My interview instrument [appendix B] aimed to identify the roles fulfilled by mother professors, their enactments of motherhood, and interpersonal resource. My three research questions ultimately identified the role confusion, overload, and expectations in each domain.

In extreme cases of role conflict, role exit occurs. Role exit is a separation from a domain and the subsequent domain responsibilities (Ashforth et al., 2000). “The contrast in role identities means that there is more of a psychological and possibly physical gulf to bridge” (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 477). For example, when a mother professor physically exits her role as professor by leaving the confines of the academy, she enters the domain of motherhood. However, by bringing work home or thinking of work-related responsibilities at home, she is overlapping the border domains and experiencing role permeability.

Participants at the Border. Another key concept in border theory is the function of participants at the border, both participant border-crossers and border-keepers. There are two types of participants: central participants and peripheral participants. Central and peripheral participants can also be categorized as border keepers or border crossers.

Central participants, as discussed by Clark (2000) are individuals who “(a) internalized the domain’s culture, including learning the language and internalizing the domain’s values, (b) demonstrated competence in one’s responsibilities, (c) connected with others who have central

membership, (d) identified personally with domain responsibilities” (p. 279). Peripheral participants have, “(a) ignorance of or disdain for domain values and cultural norms, (b) full competence not yet achieved, (c) lack of interaction with members of the domain’s central community, (d) little or no sense of identification with domain responsibilities”(Clark, 2000, p. 759). In other words, central participants are in the middle of cultural action, communication sequences/formation, and interlocation; whereas peripheral members are on the outskirts. It is important to identify a border-crosser as peripheral or central to properly evaluate their border-crossing skills and experience.

Border keepers are individuals who monitor border-crossings, domain interaction, and are “influential in defining the domain and border” (Clark, 2000, p. 761). Examples of border-keepers are workplace supervisors, academic department chairs, or marital spouses. The interaction between a border crosser and a border keeper can be positive, allowing for flexibility, role overlap, and permeability, or hostile, forcing the border crosser to keep one domain completely separate when entering a new domain.

Clark (2000) views this interpersonal relationship between border crossers and border keepers as an “intersubjective activity in which several sets of actors – border-crossers, border-keepers, and other domain members – negotiate what constitutes the domains and where the borders between them lie” (Clark, 2000, p. 761). The interaction between participants and border keepers ultimately becomes a negotiation between domains and formation of borders, permeability, flexibility, and frequency of mental or physical border crossing.

Hall and Richter (1988) discuss three main types of border crossers for both physical and psychological boundaries: anticipatory, discrete, and lagged. The first, “anticipatory” style pertains to individuals in which “concern with the domain of destination begins before the person

physically leaves the current domain” (p. 215). For example, a mother professor may be concerned about her lecture later in the day while she is feeding her infant breakfast at home: She is anticipating the work role responsibilities while still in the home domain.

In the “discrete style, the individuals’ concern with the domain of destination starts upon arrival there” (Hall & Richter, 1988, p. 215) which means the trigger of both physical and psychological experience is the border itself. For example, a mother professor may not think of home responsibilities (e.g., making dinner, cleaning, feeding the children, laundry) until she is physically present in her home.

Finally, lagged style is a delayed sense of border in which “the person’s concern with the newly entered domain does not start until he or she has been physically present for a period of time” (Hall & Richter, 1988, p. 215). For example, a mother professor may spend time in her office before class, and thus, is present in the university domain. However, she will not fulfill and fully engage in her role until she begins to lecture in her class hours later.

Application of Border Theory. I used border theory to examine the daily mental and physical border-crossings between the contrasting domains of home and academia for mother professors. I used border crossing styles and the concepts of domains to examine border experiences of women who identify as members of both the motherhood domain and the professional academic domain. By examining the ideology of a culture, for example, what makes an ideal mother, or what makes an ideal professor; I identified cultural enactments and role expectations for each domain.

The border-crossing experience between motherhood roles and academic roles is an intimate, delicate, and overlooked interpersonal experience for mothers who are university

professors. Therefore, by using the ethnography of communication and border theory to interview mother professors, a more intimate and nuanced account of experiences manifests.

Double Bind Theory

Double binds were first identified by Bateson, Jackson, and Weakland in 1956 in an attempt to explain how schizophrenia manifested through interpersonal double binds. Double bind theory has since been applied to individuals suffering role confusion and contradiction in a broader sense, particularly in intimate relationships (Hennestad, 1990). Neuman (2009) defines a double bind as a “pathological pattern of interaction with a significant other in which conflicting messages at different logical levels of analysis are loaded with polar values” (p. 228). These opposing communication forces often lead to communication confusion, conflict, and polar role identities.

A double bind occurs when an individual receives two opposing directives or messages in one communication exchange and is unsure which directive to follow. Miller (2005) states “...the notation of double bind illustrates how looking at issues such as levels of communication, content and relational messages, and symmetry and complementarity can lend insight to the processes of communication in relational systems”(p. 191). The process of a double bind depends on the exchange of messages between one or more individuals. During this communication exchange, one individual – often the subordinate – lacks the autonomy to fully engage in and understand the communication message.

The double bind sequence. In order to be considered a double bind scenario, a communicative exchange must have five identifiable parts. First, the situation must include “two or more persons,” such as a university professor and their supervisor/department chair (Bateson et al., 1956, p. 4). These individuals share an intimate relationship in which they communicate on

a regular, patterned basis. Second, the scenario must be a “repeated experience,” eventually leading to a pattern in which the double bind is a socially “habitual expectation” (Bateson et al., 1956, p. 4). This means that the confusion and unclear communication expectations of the double bind are so inherent in the exchange between the interlocutors, that the perplexity of the exchange becomes second-nature and expected by both parties. For example, if a professor and a department chair have a double bind communication relationship (in which the professor is unclear of what is expected and how to proceed), both the professor and chair will eventually expect the miscommunication and confusion for all future interlocations. Because double binds function in terms “discriminating between orders of message” (Gibney, 2006, p. 51) and “language activity of the interacting participants” (Neuman, 2009, p. 230) I observe double bind situations of mothers in academia through the ethnography of communication.

In addition to these two situational requirements, Bateson, Jackson, and Weakland (1956), state a double bind situation must have three distinct injunctions. First, a “primary negative injunction” most often from the dominant party (e.g., a supervisor, department chair, or senior colleague) (Bateson et al., 1956, p. 4). This primary injunction is often a broad, overarching concept regarding punishment. For example, a department chair may tell a mother professor, ‘If you miss another day of work ‘x’ will happen’ or ‘if you bring your child to work again ‘x’ will happen’. The primary negative injunction often relates to disciplinary actions or contingent threats.

Next, a “secondary negative injunction conflicting with the first at a more abstract level, and like the first enforced by punishments or signals which threaten survival” (Bateson et al., 1956, p. 4). Often these secondary negative injunctions are nonverbal or conceptual in nature; thus making them harder to identify if not intimately acquainted with the speech environment.

For example, the tone of voice or posture of a department chair when communicating with a professor, which can often conceal or suggest implications of disciplinary action.

Finally, a “tertiary negative injunction” occurs, which prevents or prohibits the “victim from escaping the field” (Bateson et al., 1956, p. 4). For example, a mother professor may be unable to comment on or question the commands of the department chair and is, thus, unable to leave/ have autonomy in the work domain for fear of losing her job. In either scenario – leaving the ‘field’ or commenting on the double bind – the mother professor places herself at risk of retaliation from the department chair.

It is important to note the once a double bind pattern and/or environment has been established, the sequence of all injunctions is not needed to send the victim into a double bind reaction, “almost any part of a double bind sequence may then be sufficient to precipitate panic or rage” (Bateson et al., 1956, p. 4). In other words, once a double bind sequence is an expected form of communication between two or more people, the primary, secondary, and tertiary injunctions are not needed to establish a double bind. Instead, only a primary injunction may send a double bind victim into a full state of confusion, inadequacy, belittlement, and paranoia.

There two key assumptions in double binds. First, is the expectation of a second double bind, or habit-forming communication exchange. Second, is the assumption that one person in the communication exchange is a victim. Bochner and Eisenberg (1985) define the victim as an individual in the interpersonal situation who cannot clearly decide on one communication action without choosing the other (Bochner & Eisenberg, 1985). Gibney (2006) defines victim in terms of schizophrenia as “the person who... finds him or herself in a communicational matrix, in which messages contradict each repetitive activity that creates a habitual expectation” (p. 50). In other words, the victim is caught in a lose-lose situation. By choosing to act on one command he

or she instantly negates the other command and, thus, is caught in a push-and-pull of negative injunctions.

The victim has a difficult time negotiating the social expectations of the communication exchange in which there are "...two orders of message and one denies the other" (Hennestad, 1990, p. 267). The injunction of stress and worry in the double bind scenario stems from the requirement to "discriminate accurately what sort of a message is being communicated so that [the victim] may respond appropriately" (Hennestad, 1990, p. 266). The accuracy of the communication, for example regarding maternity leave or a pay raise, ultimately impacts the success and livelihood of the communication victim in the exchange.

Hennestad (1990) also states that the victim in a double bind is "unable to comment" (p. 267) or request message clarification and is therefore "trapped because he or she will be punished, or expect to be punished if he or she comments on the message being expressed" (p. 267). Victims of a double bind are also denied the chance to question or clarify the situation and often, as a result, do not know how to react to the push-and-pull of domain responsibilities. As a result of this, "a common reaction will then be withdrawal from the situation in sense of reducing the amount of participation in constructing the environment" (Hennestad, 1990, p. 269). For example, a mother professor negotiating maternity leave may be unable to question the department chair regarding her paid leave rights for fear of social retaliation or judgment from the department chair. Subsequently, she will socially withdraw or marginalize herself in the departmental domain as a coping mechanism for her emotional and social confusion spurred by the double bind negative injunction.

The constant double bind push-and-pull of expectations, role confusion, and unrealistic domain expectations leaves many academic mothers feeling powerless and neglected by the

professoriate as they cross the psychological and temporal borders of home and work. For example, expecting mother professors to attend events on weekends or in the late evening hours places them in a double bind scenario that can result in social retaliation, confusion, and forced border-crossing. By attending the event they are leaving their home domain and being forced to cross into the academic domain. However, by not attending the event they refuse to engage in the academic domain role responsibilities and may later experience social consequences and negative injunctions from colleagues and supervisors.

The social-psychological impact double bind scenarios have on individuals is profound and often extremely stressful. Hennestad (1990) explains that “mixed messages – a ‘double bind’ seems to have a serious impact on human beings and human relationships” (p. 266). The impact Hennestad (1990) discusses can be evaluated in terms of role and/or domain conflict, impermeable borders, and speech code confusion. Miller (2005) points out that any double bind situation can have “devastating effects on individuals and family systems...” (Miller, 2005, p. 191). These conflicts arise because one (or more) individual(s) in a speech community are unsure how to use a speech code. I use of double bind theory in my research to better understand how mother professors negotiate the stressful, often victimized, process of border-crossing and domain roles.

Double bind organizations. Double binds do not only apply to individuals or micro-groupings of individuals. In certain circumstances entire organizations can become so intertwined in double bind communication that the organization itself takes on a culture of paradox. Hennestad (1990) discusses the concept of double binds in organizations in which there are many victims stemming from one large, cultural double bind (p. 273). Because a double bind organization has many victims, such as professors and staff within a department, the root

cause of the double bind is difficult to track and change. This inability to change the injunction sequence leads to a “double bind universe” and creates an “organizational phenomenon” that “can lead to *everyone being victims*” (Hennestad, 1990, p. 273). When an organization is a double bind universe the double bind scenarios are so ingrained in everyday speech sequences, interactions, and beliefs of that speech community that double bind roles are nearly impossible to change at a macro or micro level.

However, Hennestad (1990) is quick to point out that “The members themselves contribute to the reproduction of the phenomenon through a type of vicious circle, but for them it seems as if they are constantly confronted with mixed signals generated by management and/ or ‘the organization’ and by the demands and signals they send” (Hennestad, 1990, p. 273). This concept links to speech codes theory, in which the code users simultaneously form a code and retain the existing code through constant use. When double bind patterns become completely cemented in an organization, Hennestad (1990) states that the organization has ““organizational schizophrenia”” (Hennestad, 1990, p. 271). Therefore, by examining the double bind of working mothers who are professors and their interpersonal networks, I uncover the double binds, negotiation of expectations, and production of these organization phenomenological patterns of communication.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this current study was to observe and record key speech resources and experiences available to women who identify as mother professors. Three research questions guided my study and interview methods. The first research question focused on understanding the communication resources available to mothers who are college professors, specifically in negotiating double bind situations. The second research questions aims to understand cultural

enactments of motherhood in the professoriate. And finally, the third research question identified what interpersonal networks were available to mother professors in the academic domain. I used the ethnography of communication, double bind theory, and border theory to understand mother professor's experiences, cultural enactments, and interpersonal networks.

Procedures

Participants. I interviewed mother professors at a large public research university in the southwestern United States. The selection of participants was based on ease of access as well as criterion sampling. Criteria, as defined by Lindlof and Taylor (2011), are exclusionary terms that ultimately form a sampling or selection community. Criterion sampling can be based on “activities, events, sites, and settings” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2001, p. 112). For example, my study interviewed professors at a Southwestern university who identify as mothers. The criterion community, then, was women who are both professors in a university setting and mothers of at least one child. I selected mother professor criterion as a base for my research study because it allowed me to focus a broad cultural community (professors at the university) into a more narrow, less-researched network of communication: mothering experiences in the academy. To participate in my study, the mother professors met the following criterion: be a full-time lecturer III, associate professor, or full professor. Additionally, each participant in the study was a mother for at least two years while working full time with at least one child under the age of 21.

Participant Protections. To assure the protection of all participant information and data collected, I employed methods of participant protection discussed by Israel and Hay (2008) and share a participant consent form informed by Lindlof and Taylor (2011). Any individual included in interview process participated on a “on a voluntary basis” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), was able to “understand what the study will demand of him or her” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), and was

able “to understand the potential risks and benefits of participation; and have the legal capacity to give consent” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 119). To ensure a clear level of understanding between researcher and participants, consent forms and a detailed description of the research course and purpose was provided at the initial email contact and the interview appointment. Hard copies of consent and procedures were left with each participant to assure follow-up access to researchers. My consent form [appendix A], informed by Lindlof and Taylor (2011), acted as an informing guidepost for the study’s participants.

Before each interview I received both oral consent, documented in the voice-recording device, as well as written consent signed and dated by each participant. I also informed the participant before each interview that if, at any point during the interview or after the interview, she wished to exit the study, for any reason, no negative consequences would ensue and the data would be properly destroyed in a classified manner.

In addition to receiving oral and written consents before each interview, I informed the participant regarding the purpose, risks, and possible outcomes the interview may provide. Israel and Hay (2008) state that, “researchers must provide potential participants with information about the purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and possible outcomes of the research, including whether and how the research results might be disseminated” (p. 431). Regarding dissemination of research information or publishing, I immediately changed all names in the data set upon completing each interview to pseudonyms. Three of the nine participants chose their own pseudonym, the remaining six granted permission for randomly assigned pseudonyms. By changing all personal identifiers in the data, all information throughout the coding and writing process was anonymous and not connected to the original identity of the informant in any way.

I stored the interview transcriptions and voice recordings on my personal laptop computer locked with a password, known only by me, and kept at home. Each file saved was only filed under the participant pseudonym. This ensured that data were protected away from the interview site context, while simultaneously giving me access to the vital insight it provides. If at any point participants wished to review their interview transcription or observe how I stored the data, I would gladly share my data and explain data storage methods. Any written documents, such as consent forms, were stored in my personal file cabinet at home, locked and away from the interview population and site. Participants were provided with a copy of the consent form; however, if at any point they wished to review the original form, I would provide the hard copy immediately.

Internal Research Board. To ensure compliance with all Internal Research Board requirements, I submitted an Internal Research Board proposal for research study in October of 2014. No data collection took place until the proposed research study was granted in compliance with the standards of participant protections, data collection, and anonymity in late November of 2014. As stated in the previous section, individual consent forms were signed by each participant, assuring their identity and comments were completely anonymous. This was to ensure no risk of retaliation from related interpersonal networks, such as coworkers or supervisors, who may frown on research participation.

Observational protocols. The observational protocols informing my research were participant interviews and online media analysis, both informed by methods of the EOC as discussed in previous sections. The interviews and observation of online comments in this study served three purposes: (1) to offer intimate insight into the experiences of mother professors in professional contexts; (2) to recognize and trace, with as much detail as possible, the

interpersonal networks of mother professors; (3) to evaluate how communication double bind situations relate to, or affect, experiences and interpersonal networks of mother professors. My goal was to understand mother professor role enactments through access to a particular research site. DeWalt & DeWalt (2010) discuss the importance of observing and interviewing participants regarding everyday actions and events to record cultural intricacies and interactions. For example, my research focused on the interpersonal relationships and double binds enacted in academia for professors who are mothers. Therefore, I designed my interview instrument questions to emphasize everyday actions and events that constitute communication surrounding the criterion.

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) express the need for researchers to capture, through intricate notes or direct quotations, the essence, spirit, and purpose for the communication interaction. Therefore, the researcher must write, “notes as systematically as possible, focusing on how routine actions in the setting are organized and take place” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011, p. 27). I did this by conducting interviews in private spaces, where noise and distraction were limited and where voluntary participants felt safe and comfortable. The use of a voice recorder assisted in assuring all data collected during interviews remained objective and true to the interviewee’s perspective. Voice recorders are “capable of capturing and preserving all of the interview discourse” and, therefore, allow for accurate transcription (Lindlof & Taylor, 2001, p. 192). Transcription, is the process of converting recorded interviews into a text and allows the researcher to intimately review the data collected before beginning the coding process (Lindlof & Taylor, 2001). I completed all transcriptions of the interviews myself, which make it easier to “recognize speech patterns” in the data set and assure accuracy (Lindlof & Taylor, 2001, p. 212). I then read through the transcribed interview discourse to extrapolate common themes of speech,

topic and roles enactments within the academic domain. I did not begin coding until all interviews were completed and transcribed. The coding process began in early February of 2015 and ended March 1, 2015. Nine face-to-face interviews were conducted.

McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig (2003) outline seven principles of transcription that I followed throughout the transcription process. The first, is to “preserve the morphologic naturalness of transcription” (p. 65). In other words, I made the punctuation and grammatical/verbal inflections as close to the actual speech in the recording. The second principle is to keep the pauses and breaks in the transcript as close to the original structure of speech (McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig, 2003). Next, the researcher should only use exact wording, verbatim from the recording (McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig, 2003). The fourth principle highlights the importance of universal access – for example, granting my participants rights to access the information via computer transcription at any time (McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig, 2003). The final three premises state that transcriptions should be “complete, independent, and intellectually elegant” (McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig, 2003, p. 65). In other words, the transcription should represent the interview in its totality, not a fragmented portion and should function independently from all other transcriptions of other participants. If at any point the interview participant wish to access the recordings or transcriptions, I would gladly provide them with the information for review.

Due to the personal narrative nature of my interviewing process, I used the ethnography of communication (EOC) approach to guide my methodological understanding of speech and cultural. The ethnography of communication is “useful for identifying patterns of situated language use (as opposed to grammars only) as well as abstracting culture themes from the data” (Covarrubias, 2002, p. 17). The EOC defines a communicative event is understood as “an

integral patterned part of social life,” which is “formative of social processes and sequences” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 2). I interviewed participants to gain a more developed understanding of how role communication affects mother professor communication, cultural enactments, and networks. The EOC believes that meaning is created through communicative interaction, or constitutive of meaning; which is inextricably bound to the context and culture of the community (Carbaugh, 2007; Hymes, 1967). Therefore, this study also understood that meaning and interaction in the academic domain was specific to that single context and personal account of the mother professor.

I used Hymes’(1974) SPEAKING approach to analyze and organize cultural communicative events and interactions as told through: S or scene/ setting (physical area and/or psychological situation); P representing participants (who is involved); E or the ends (what are the goals or purposes); A representing act content or act sequence (what is the order, form and content); K for key (what is the tone or spirit); I or instrumentality (codes of communication); N representing the norms of interaction (rules and rituals for the interaction); and G representing genre (categories or types of speech acts and events) (Covarrubias, 2002; Hymes, 1967). I used the SPEAKING instrument to extract the emic structure for interviewing mother professors and conducting Amazon.com comment data analysis.

I also used the EOC methodology to inform my coding and analysis of comments and posts on an online comment feed from Amazon.com. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) argue that online forums and comment feeds, such as Amazon.com product comments, open communication to “disembodiments, anonymity, and accessibility of communication in public websites” (p. 166). It is because of this anonymity and detachment that comments offer new insights into deep, rich, and often controversial conversations. Online contexts present “distinctive practices by which

their participants produce, circulate, and interpret related texts” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 167). Because the research artifacts, for example, texts are permanently displayed in a forum, researchers have full access to the content and related cultural perspective. Nonetheless, “Online community communication and contexts are complex, but widely distributed and networked thanks to the global access to multimodal communication and the internet” (Murthy, 2008, p. 849). Because I had open and free access to the comments, I subsequently gained access to observe the formation of opinions and online role enactments through written communication.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) emphasize the need for researcher reflexivity and awareness of self, or self-observation in the research context (p. 68). This includes being aware of personal biases, experiences, and stereotypes that could skew data collection or communication between an observational researcher and the participants (Spradley, 1980). While it is not uncommon for cultures to archive data or artifacts online (Miller, 2009) it is important for the researcher to reflect on “what communication is and how it is accomplished” (Markham, 2004, p. 114). It is important to note that I did not participate in the comment streams on the Amazon.com posts. Instead, I only evaluated the 16 posts available in January of 2015. All comments were public domain. I coded the online comments in the same manner as the interviews, looking for emergent themes, enactments, and patterns that denoted mother professor experiences.

Kendall (2009) encourages researchers to think of research contexts in terms of practical application to a larger context. For example, by using participant interviews and an online comment feed, my research was able to uncover common cultural themes and codes that apply to the larger, universal context of mother professors. Dicks et al. (2005) examine this relationship between research contexts in terms of researcher reflexivity or justification as to why they can relate or add to the offline research context. For example, by interviewing women who identified

as mother professors in a North American university, I accessed cultural roles, enactments, and interpersonal networks available to mother professors in the specific academic domain. However, by simultaneously viewing Amazon.com comments on the book *Mama, PhD.*, I also gained access to a wider variety of perspectives and enactments (e.g., mother professors from other North American regions, or counties, various ages, and ethnicities). Lindlof and Taylor (2011) charge researchers with the “unique responsibility to reflectively conceptualize the relationship between “online” and “offline” communication as a guide to their study” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 166). Therefore, I believe it was my responsibility to ethically, objectively, and accurately represent mother professors interviewed during my research as well as those in the online Amazon.com comments.

Interview protocols. To better understand the roles enactments and experiences of mother professors, I used interviews to gather data from participants. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explain that interviews are the “‘digging tool’ of social science” and, therefore, present a wonderfully effective and adaptable source for data collection (p. 171). Interviews were structured as comfortable sites for verbal communication that are a conversation “with a purpose” between friends; they provide an environment free from judgment or retaliation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 172). Interviews were “a conversation between two partners about a mutual interest...in which knowledge evolves through a dialogue” (Kvale, 1996, p. 125). I structured each interview with the same ten interview questions which pertain to my research questions [appendix B]. However, it is important to note, that I focused on making each conversation and interview unique to the tone, perspective, and emotions of the participant. I valued, above all else, making the participants feel safe during the interview process.

Hammersley and Gomm (2008) state that the key purpose for any interview is to access participant viewpoints on “what happens in particular settings” (p. 89). For example, my research focused on the interpersonal networks and resources available to mother professors at the border between work and home. My context (the university) was limited to a specific setting and my participant population (mother professors) were specific to my field of inquiry. I was particularly interested in gaining access to “accounts” which Scott and Lyman (1968) define as relations to an individual’s experience with conduct and/ or the justification of that conduct. Through verbal and nonverbal communication (Kvale, 1996) I coded interviews and comments to examine the resources and interpersonal networks mother professors access on a daily basis in work and home domains.

Interviews should have a clear purpose. Spradley (1971) explains that interview research should include three communication elements: “explicit purpose, ethnographic explanations and ethnographic questions” (p. 58). The purpose of my ethnographic interview was accessing testimonies and perspectives through conversation by employing clear direction through the interview instrument. I engaged in ethnographic approach explanations by making sure that my interviewees understand the purpose of the interview and the results of their participation (Spradley, 1971). Finally, I used ethnographic approach questions for my interview instrument to assure full engagement in my purpose and ethnographic alignments. Per Kvale (1996) I also incorporated pre-interview briefs, as well as de-briefing after the interview to assure the participants clearly understood the process and outcomes.

Interview participant types. I combined both informant interviews and narrative interviews to capture field experiences of mother-professors in the academic domain. Informant interviews, according to Lindlof and Taylor (2011) inform the researcher about “the scene’s

history, customs, and rituals; the local “lingo”; the identities and actions of the key players; and so forth” (p. 177). For example, my research used informant interviews to examine communication resources, roles, and cultural enactments of motherhood in the professoriate. Narrative interviews and responses are “concerned with the study of entire stories” and do not “extract certain kinds of material” or verbal responses to events (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 180). In other words, narrative interviews and the data they produced are looked at as a holistic form of data, while certain points and themes can be extruded, as in informant interviews; narrative interviews focus on the product of the whole or the experience produced.

I collected data responses from the interview instrument using narrative interview framework informed by Chase (2008). The narrative alignment developed by Chase (2008) focuses on how narrative can inform as a “retrospective meaning making” process (p. 64). This means that while the narrator/interviewee is not actively living the experience in the field, they are producing a communicative point of view by recollecting their experience. This recollection is developed through the narrative “emotions thoughts, and interpretations” (Chase, 2008, p. 65). Because each narrative account was reliving the past, this form of interview was particularly fluid, flexible, and variable – shaped by one specific recollection of a specific event in a certain context (Chase, 2008). However, I argue that it is the fluidity and diverse approach of narrative that gave participants the freedom to share their perspective without fear of retaliation or distraction.

The independent interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting resulting in a personal account that embraces communication through casual conversational interaction (Langellier, 1989). All nine interviews were conducted in spaces requested by the participants: eight in their personal academic office behind closed doors, and one outdoors on the university

campus. This casual setting promotes a “dynamic interplay between self and others” (Corey, 1996, p. 57). I used this conversational gateway to uncover the organizational accounts and cultural enactments of mothers in the professoriate.

Organizational narrative, as defined by Lindlof and Taylor (2011) are the stories that are “embedded in - or problematic in relation to – the actions of the group” (p. 182). The organizational narrative and culture of a group ultimately determine how individuals play, relate, and network in a given setting. For example, the organization narratives of academia directly relate how women who are mothers and professors negotiate boundaries and from interpersonal networks within the academic macro-narrative. Boje (1991) also discusses organizational narratives in terms of “collective storytelling” through individual experiences and explains that organizational narratives “supplement individual memories with institutional memories” (p. 106). Therefore, in my informant and narrative interview methodology, I remained aware of the interplay between academic-culture narrative and the individual accounts within the large contextual domain.

Instrument display. For this research study on mother professors, I used a set of interview questions to guide one-on-one interviews with each participant [appendix B]. The format of the interview instrument is informed by both Kvale (1996) and Lindlof and Taylor (2011) to assure instrument validity and reliability.

Before the formal question, I read a short paragraph briefly explaining the purpose of the study. I then followed this briefing with the interview questions [Appendix B]. Finally, at the end of each interview, I read a debriefing paragraph that explained my research goals. This debriefing time, as suggested by Lindlof and Taylor (2011) also gave the interview participant an opportunity to ask clarifying questions developed over the course of the interview.

Sampling and saturation. I constructed my sampling community through snowball and convenience sampling. According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), snowball sampling “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (p. 141). For example, by making contact with one mother professor, she voluntarily offered contacts and referrals to other mother professor on campus. I scheduled all nine interviews as a result of snowball sampling.

Convenience sampling is “composed of the most readily available people – basically, anyone you can find who will cooperate” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 116). I used convenience sampling and snowball sampling to achieve a criterion sample. I conducted my research with a convenience sample of a mother professor on a Southwestern university campus. I conducted an interview after which she provided reference to another, or in some cases many, mother professors on campus. By contacting mother professors through interpersonal networks, I simultaneously gained access to their role expectations, communication interactions, and enactments in the academic domain.

The second co-occurring research site in the current study was an online comment stream on the book, *Mama PhD*. This book is a compilation of essays written by mother professors spanning the United States. Published in 2002, and edited by Evans and Grant, *Mama PhD* was the first book to address motherhood in the academy. While this study does not use accounts from the published material of the book, the current study coded comments from women on Amazon.com. These comments typically included commiserative accounts. I analyzed this online comment context for thematic patterns and enactments of motherhood related to the academy by examining the digital “paper trail” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 276). Access to the site is free and provides an entry point into a diverse sample set (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Saturation was reached when common themes in accounts became repetitive and no new data emerged. I conducted my interviews under the framework provided by LeCompte and Goetz (1982) which states that, as a result of extensive research interviews and/or time in the field, the data eventually results in a holistic conclusion (p. 32). When my data, both transcribed interviews and comment coding, reached a holistic state in which no new themes emerged, I regarded this as the point of saturation and began data analysis.

Analysis. The themes were coded as emergent in the data, and serve three purposes: data management, data reduction, and conceptual development (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 243). Data management gives the researcher a framework to identify the most common themes. Data reduction, the next step in the analysis process, means that “the value of evidence is prioritized according to emerging schemes of interpretation... data are “reduced” by categories and codes that put you in touch with those parts of the material that can be used to construct claims” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 243). For example, by reading through transcriptions of interviews and the comments from Amazon.com, I reduced the narratives into categories which relate to my research question and research goal of uncovering mother professor interpersonal networks and communicative cultural enactments.

Coding and categories provided an analytical framework. Categories are “concepts, constructs, themes” grouped in similar phenomenological frameworks (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 246). Therefore, categorization is the process of organizing the data with common themes into categories for analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). LeCompte and Schensul (1999) describe categories emergent in account data as “pre-coded” topics for a broader application; a kind of gestalt model of coding and processing data (p. 58). By categorizing data in broad cognitive

categories, application of the results can apply to many contextual sites and, perhaps, more populations.

To code accounts, such as the interview transcriptions gathered, I began with an understanding of the communicative structure exemplified in the interview and then “locate[d] cultural and interpersonal patterns in talk, stories, [and] media content” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 249). I used Goodall’s (2000) framework to identify codes and commonalities in narrative data. First, personal meanings are pulled from the data set, which corresponds to the informant’s personal perspective, point-of-view, and meaning-making behind accounts (Goodall, 2000). For example, by asking mother professors to define what an ideal mother and ideal professor is to them, they provided a personal perspective and constructed meaning simultaneously. Next, rich points of data are identified. Rich points, according to Goodall (2000) relate to speech codes, communal jargon, phrases, or common dialectics within the speech community. For example, mother professors who mention academic jargon or dialectics of interpersonal speech in their interview provide rich points of data and coding themes. Finally, turning points in accounts discuss, “critical decisions in an individual, a group, or an organization” (Goodall, 2000, p. 108). In other words, turning points in organizational structure are intertwined with individual turning points and experiences, such as academic culture on individual mother professors. These three methods for coding represent dimensions of organization and personal speech codes, meaning making in domains, and possible emergence of phenomenological categories for future application.

Validity and reliability. To assure ethical interactions with all research participants, as well as a valid and reliable representation of all data, I followed the framework of Lindlof and Taylor (2011) as well as LeCompte and Goetz (1982). Validity in qualitative research has “to do

with the truth value of findings” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 273). The validity of any social science research project is “characterized by its internal, conceptual, and external dimensions” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 273). Internal validity pertains to the related research frameworks and how they apply to a specific study, for example, how the EOC and domains related to my research questions about mother professors (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 273). I achieved conceptual validity, using theory as a framework.

External validity, according to Lindlof and Taylor (2011), depends on the participants shared account or contextual relationship and the final translation of presented data produced by the researcher on behalf of the participant (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). To assure valid results, I used direct quotations from interview transcriptions and comments to achieve contextual, theoretical, and methodological validity.

Reliability refers to the systematic and methodical meaning making process (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Research reliability is ultimately determined by the research instrument’s ability to produce similar, accurate results across multiple studies and contexts. For example, by choosing the EOC approach as a main methodological and theoretical tool, I implied that the structure of the EOC correlates strongly to the structure of my contextual site. Interviews and accounts, as well as coding for emerging data themes were methodological assumptions that produce a reliable result in the tradition of interpretive social science work.

About the researcher. I am a product of a working mother. For years I watched as she changed hats, from mother to manager, and back again. She negotiated time between meetings, travel, soccer games, professional networking, parent teacher conferences, and sick days. As an adult, my perspective and positionality regarding role borders changed. Now, as an adult woman, I became infinitely more aware of the emotional turmoil and stress my mother experienced as a

working mom. My experience negotiating roles as a full time student, instructor, and daughter is difficult, but I could not fathom adding the responsibility of child care. My new-found awareness of roles and communication enactments of motherhood was as a result of my immersion into the academic domain.

I entered this research study as a seeker of understanding. Though I am not a mother, I believe it is a sacred cultural role that should be respected in all domains of a woman's life. I lived as the child of a working mother for 23 years and I believe that experience gave me particular insight and understanding regarding the experiences working mothers face on a daily basis.

Upon entering the academe, I witnessed many acts, both verbal and nonverbal, against professors who identified as mothers. I reflected back to my own mother and her uncanny ability to negotiate borders and cross-domains. But I wanted to explore why, in a field that encourages intellectual and personal growth, so many professors hid the fact that they were mothers. I wanted to know why the professoriate pretends children don't exist because, as a child of a working mother, I know they do.

Therefore, I entered this study as a female academically-oriented individual seeking answers from mother professors. I systematically reflected on my own ontological and epistemological alignments (Kvale, 1996) as I conducted interviews, gathered textual data, and coded.

Philipsen (1997) argues that "when a given world of discourse is examined, it will be found to house discursive particulars (ways of speaking and resources for producing and interpreting communicative conduct) that are locally distinctive" (p. 124). Therefore, I focused my observation to the local academic domain. By no means does my data set pertain to every

university setting speech code and pattern set; however, it does accurately represent the resources and interpersonal relationships of the local, distinct university culture observed.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

To remind the reader, findings for this study were informed by border theory (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004; Nippert-Eng, 1996), the ethnography of communication (Carbaugh, 2007; Covarrubias, 2002; Philipsen, 1997) and double bind theory (Bateson et al., 1956). The following chapter highlights key concepts and themes that emerged from interviews of nine mother professor participants and sixteen online Amazon.com comments on the book *Mama, PhD*. All data collected for this analysis were collected using signed and verbal consent from voluntary interview participants and collected from public domain, open-access sites. Data were coded for emergent themes and used to answer three research questions:

RQ1: What communication resources do women at a major research university in the US Southwest have available to express their experiences in their dual and potentially conflictive roles as mothers and professors?

RQ2: How can women's expressed experiences as mother professors be understood as cultural enactment?

RQ3: How do mother professors use their available communication resources to shape interpersonal networks in their work-family lives?

To situate the topic generally, I provide an overview of categories from the data regarding salient topics. Following the presentation of utterance data, I offered an in-depth analysis of each category.

I turn now to interview participant Carol, whom I introduced in the opening remarks of this study. I sat with Carol in her office and asked her what could be done to make mother

professors feel accepted. Carol, a mother of a nine year old boy, started to her right. Following an eleven second pause between my question and her response, she said, "...I think that there would have to be some kind of awareness campaign." The need for a consciousness raising regarding the treatment of mothers in the professoriate became data outcome. Cora echoed Carol's need for awareness. Cora said "we need to change attitudes [of the university to accept motherhood]." In addition to the need for consciousness raising, other needs were expressed, these included resources, networks, and cultural consciousness.

However, changing the professoriate and the academy to accept motherhood is a resource campaign that can only begin if individuals in academia are willing and open to discuss motherhood in the confines of the academic workplace. An Amazon.com commenter expressed a common approach when she said:

"I'm sorry I found the book [Mama, PhD] so late into my journey into motherhood/grad studies. The book contains so many amazing essays that give voice to a range of my concerns, fears, anxieties, secrets, pleasures, and wishes. Love it!" (Cosmologist Cosmologist jisungah "want-need-love earth", Amazon.com).

This cultural unawareness of anxiety and woes experienced by mother professors is an interpersonal disconnect expressed by a research participants. Olivia said, "Academia is it's own beast." However, it is not the "beast" this research aims to understand, but the experiences of mothers within the culture of the "beast". To explain this further, I expand on Carol's opening statements regarding awareness of mother professors. Carol shared:

"Um... so it's aggravating that I can't... and yet, because of what I'm doing and because I am behind, I can't do anything at this point to get into the administration where there might be one of the voices who tries to change it [how motherhood is received]... to make this profession more humane. And... the way the economy is going... I don't see... I think we [professors] have overworked because... society doesn't understand what we do, and so we have to do more so that it's accepted so that we are at least earning our pay and with the declining support for higher education, both culturally and financially, um... it's not gonna get better. So there's the aggravation of not being able to change this."

Carol's feeling of being ineffective in organizational change is mirrored in Rita's comments. When I asked Rita why she thinks the professoriate is so unfriendly and unwelcoming to motherhood she replied:

“I guess it is just the culture, again, of it's not about work, and it's not about what we do at work. And since some people can't really relate to that – because they don't have a family and they don't have children. So maybe the professional climate of keeping your personal life outside of what you do at work, might be why? I don't know, that's a good question, I wish I knew! (Laughs)”

The utterances from these three participants served as a general entry-point into my coding process. While all data pertain to the norms, rules, and premises that characterize the culture of the academy, many of the data also focused on individual injunctive experiences. Negative injunctions, as discussed in border theory (Bateson et. al, 1956) are cultural communication events that cause emotional distress, confusion, or trauma. For the mother professors in the current study, the negative injunction took place at the border of professor life and motherhood - the cultural clash of two domains.

Professoriate

To contextualize experiences, readers must understand the culture of the academy and how it affects mothers. For example, the hierarchy experienced in the academy, such as rank and status, works vertically. Professors are sandwiched between the elite faculty, such as deans and department chairs, but simultaneously ranked above students. This sandwiching affect, according to participants, often leads to a feeling of isolation. The tenured or tenure-track mother professors are stuck in a “pressure cooker” between elite faculty, who are not required to publish at such a rigorous rate, and the students, who are not expected to publish at all. One mother professor called this “pressure cooker” of tenure responsibility the “tenure crunch”. This crunch also takes into account the sabbaticals tenured mother professor's typically take every seven years. As with

all breaks, the professoriate expects academic publication production during sabbaticals, meaning the “pressure cooker” continues, even outside of the physical academic domain. The following categories take place in the professorate domain and emerged from interview data.

Academic status. The interview and online comments revealed a considerable awareness of “status”, “rank”, and “tenure” in the academy. The coding of status as a category stems from the repeated mention of hierarchies and social monitoring in the workplace; particularly regarding publishing productivity of books and articles. Halle, explained the power-status hierarchy as:

“You know, so there are kind of like these hierarchies of masochism. So um, and I think that we... it’s so hard to get a job, and then there is so much pressure to get tenure. And so, I guess you could say, to the outside world, ‘well once you have tenure you can kick back’... oh my God, once you have tenure... well you’re at least forty. And you have spent the last twenty years putting this first, and you can’t just change your brain. I mean aside from there are other things that happen when you get tenure, like you have to be department chair and stuff like that. So um, so I think that one of the hardest things is that like my husband would come home and he had a regular nine to five, or eight to five job, and he would come home and he would be home. And I would always think, okay, I’ve got to grade papers, and then always in the back of your mind I’m like, oh man, I should be working on my book. And it’s really hard to work on your book – because even if I had time at home, it [he] would be like, “Where’s her hat?” you know, or like even just that kinda stuff. And it’s really hard, but I mean I know women who do it, but it’s hard to just say ‘I’m shutting my door- nobody come in.’”

However, Halle went on to explain that she is fully aware of how her tenured status affects her status in the hierarchy, saying, she was “very conscious of having the luxury of someone who got tenure first.” In other words, Halle is aware of the fact that she gained protection and status in the hierarchy of the academy as a tenured employee; and while she remains in the tenured “pressure cooker”, she is ranked in the hierarchy of professorate status. Many of the participants discussed the power hierarchy from the bottom to the top, or students to department chairs and university leaders. For example, Cora stated:

“I found that it’s [motherhood] a really...an interesting way to relate... because there is a strange hierarchy between faculty and students. And... and it’s a hierarchy there for a reason: to protect the student mainly. But what I have found is having a family and being a mom, and having kids and being with people who are also your students who have kids, is a nice way of having another way to relate that is still very appropriate [professionally], but is a more holistic relationship.”

According to Cora, the interpersonal relationship between student and professor, was one that, generally, embraced the presence of motherhood. Cora discussed motherhood as a relation point with her students that, oftentimes, evened out the hierarchy of the professoriate. Therefore, according to Cora’s account, the levels of hierarchy below mother professors (students) can be generally receptive to motherhood as a cultural topic. However, as mother professors move up the professoriate hierarchy, to chairs, colleagues, and deans, they said they experienced a less-than-friendly welcoming regarding motherhood as a cultural topic.

Olivia shared a time in which she was forced to bring her two young girls to work with her because of financial stress. She explained that she was uncomfortable bringing her daughters to work because of a department person, or “chair”, who she knew would adamantly oppose having children in the office. Therefore, Olivia purposely brought her children to work with her on the days that the specific departmental chairperson was not working on campus. By deliberately avoiding the chair, Olivia skirted the hierarchy and unwelcoming views of motherhood. However avoiding motherhood in the academy is not always possible and Olivia later addressed a high-ranked chair yelling, “I would have never taken this job if I knew what a bunch of elitists you are!!”

The power and status of the professoriate is ingrained into all cultural roles. For example, the differential of tenured and non-tenured faculty was widely discussed by participants. Olivia

explained how power and dominance in the academy affected her role as a professor and mother.

She stated:

“I knew that it [bringing children to the workplace] could upset the, a little bit of a power shift of the balance between the curmudgeons and.... us young folks.”

The constant negotiation of power and hierarchy in the academy produced a solidified structure of norms and rules, typically monitored from the top (chairs) down to faculty. Carol corroborated saying:

“My chair is always telling me to go up for promotion to full and I had a sabbatical and I didn’t get done what I needed to get done because I was home... um... so... I’m feeling that as lack of legitimacy but because my contributions in other areas are recognized, but there is still this – you know, ‘Do what you need to do to get full’ [professor].”

Carol discussed feeling pressured by her colleagues and chair to submit her faculty file to be considered for status of full professor. The pressure and expectation Carol felt to produce a certain level of academic output is echoed by another mother professor. This participant told me about a time in which she was reprimanded in public at a department dinner by her department chair for the professor’s lack of publication productivity. The chair directly addressed her in front of her high-ranked academic colleagues saying, “I know how long it’s been since you published anything, (professor’s name)!!” This scene showcases what the study participant called “the oppression of the hierarchy” in the academy. By addressing a professor of lower rank in a demeaning manner, the chair reminded all those involved that she was at the top of the hierarchy, and thus had more available speaking resources. As the participant explained to me, this comment was directly related to her status as a mother, as the chair “systematically reprimanded” and “publically humiliated” the professor for prioritizing her status as mother over professor, and particularly as a publishing professor.

In affirmation to the previous scene, interview participant, Halle, cautioned mother professors expecting academic praise or tangible “pats on the back”, instead explaining that status is the reward. Halle said:

“There are not a lot of rewards for being a faculty member, the rewards are very invisible, and rewards of status. So it’s not about money, but people care very much about the status – like how you rank, and how you are reviewed, and title, and the office is part of that.”

Willa, shared an example that substantiates Halle’s viewpoint on academic status. Willa dropped off her two children at their respective schools on her bike. However, before teaching, she said she did not have enough time to take the child seat off the back of her bike. Instead, Willa took the bike into her office elevator with the child seat still attached. In the elevator her female coworker commented on the oddity of the child seat in the academic workplace. Willa explained:

“And she [the coworker] looked at my bicycle and said, “Oh, I didn’t know anyone [professors] had children” (snipped tone). And I thought (laughs) you don’t really mean that, right? Like that doesn’t make sense at all. But I understood what she was saying, right? Because anyone in this position as an assistant professor would be crazy to have kids.”

In Willa’s particular department, the status of associate professor is one of the higher ranked positions. Therefore, the coworker assumed that because of the academic culture and time commitment of the professoriate, no one would or should desire to have children. Not only does Willa break the professoriate cultural norm by having children, but she embraces the role and, thus, breaks another norm. It is also important, for the purposes of the current research, to point out that the negative injunction (Bateson et. al, 1956) regarding motherhood as a cultural topic, was often prompted by a female colleague; as shown by the previous examples.

Academic status analysis. In this section mother professor insights regarding academic status, rank, and hierarchy were displayed. The academy was referred to as a “beast” and a domain of “hierarchies of masochism” because of the cultural emphasis placed on high levels of academic output, specifically that of articles, books, and conference attendance.

This production and participation in professoriate domain responsibilities was socially policed by colleagues and individuals at the top of the hierarchy, such as chairs and deans. Like guards at the border, these “elitists” sustain the status-hungry structure of the proverbial academic Ivory Tower, an academic community that values exclusivity and supremacy. This same structure, produced and sustained through daily cultural communication, was the same structure that was unwelcoming to motherhood in general, but particularly indexes of motherhood such as child seats on bicycles or children in the office space. The utterance from Willa’s co-worker, “Oh, I didn’t know anyone had children” was an example of policing the professoriate border through verbal communication exchange. Thus, the co-worker blatantly pointed out the infraction at the border between the academy and home life, by pointing out and questioning the mother about the child seat. By stating “I didn’t know anyone had children” she marginalized Willa’s motherhood status, specifically because of her academic status role as an assistant professor.

For mother professors who have tenure, expressions of having higher power, safety, and rank were highlighted. Halle was careful to emphasize that with this “tenure safety”, comes responsibilities and additional forced expectation to climb the hierarchy of professional rank and status. The expectation to fill a specific status by following rules, “jumping through hoops”, and sustaining norms, was prevalent in the displayed data. Halle also explained that along with the

higher status, often came an overwhelming expectation of rewards, which never surfaced. Instead, the professoriate deems status as the paramount reward.

Ultimately, participants expressed this hierarchy and required quest for status in the academy as something that is widely accepted in the profession, however demanding, stressful or selective. Therefore, to understand bordered experiences and communication networks of mother professors, one must understand the social and promotional structure of the ivory tower and how it affects individuals who identify as both mothers and professors.

Productivity. Productivity in publication and research was discussed by participants as a key expectation required by the professoriate to ascend the academic status-role hierarchy. The participants mentioned repeatedly how academic productivity was affected by motherhood, and that often peers in the academy policed their rate of productivity in terms of published articles, participation in conferences, and meeting attendance. Many professors explain the high level of esteem and status given to colleagues who worked extensively and exclusively on academic ventures and gave their “undivided time”, energy, and attention to the professoriate.

Carol pointed out that, even in situations in which the professor is an involved mother in the home domain or has community accolades, the academy only valued academic output. For example, when speaking of a mentor who is a mother professor, Carol said:

“Because she [mentor] could produce incredibly high level scholarship in quantity [she succeeded]. And so what I value about her is... I value that [her scholarship]... but what I value most about her are the things that don't, that aren't, aren't part of her most visible [academic] legacy.”

In this utterance, Carol explains that she valued her mentor for her less-noticed role as a mother as well as her role of professor and scholar. To Carol, the humanity and heart of her mentor stemmed from her role as a mother, and was equally deserving of praise and recognition.

Instead, Carol's colleagues and the professoriate only valued her mentor for her article and book production. Carol emphasized the value of work, productivity, and scholarship in the academy when she compared herself to her peers who do not have children. She said

"I am way behind where I am supposed to be professionally. I... dropped out of a very exciting life (points at academic certificate on the wall). That right there – that's a prize I got from my first book ... okay, it doesn't get better than that. And... you know, that is 1998, and (chokes up) I co-edited one book since then, and you know, I am someone who came out of my doctorate school with a lot of promise and... I am reminded all the time (tears up) that that's what's valued...and I've also done a lot of service work, so... it doesn't feel like I am dead wood for the department – but I haven't done the scholarship like others".

In her emotive explanation, Carol highlighted the value that productivity, particularly publication productivity, holds in the professoriate and that to be valued one must adhere to the cultural expectation for constant productivity and the social role of producer. As Carol noted, service-oriented committees within the discipline at large, are not what is most valued in a research university. The theme of publication productivity in the academy was also addressed by Veronica, who explained her experiences filling roles as both a mother and professor in this way: "Constant pressure. I mean I wake up in the middle of the night and I'm under pressure."

Veronica and Carol both expressed the pressure to produce within the confines of professional academic life and the stress related with cultural expectations to fill the role of producer. Willa expanded on the theme of productivity in the academy to include participation at professional conferences and the expected work-related networking opportunities such conferences offer. Willa explained that if mother professors choose not to attend conferences, for any reason, the academic hierarchy will take notice and not hesitate to point out the inadequacy. This is another example of social network policing at the border between work and home. Willa said:

“If you’re not showing up for the conference, or whatever it is in the moment, all of a sudden someone later on will say, ‘Well you didn’t go to any conferences’ (laughs). You know, like you need to be in that flow or there will be consequences.”

Willa expressed her conference attendance as a required state of being in the “flow” of academia and that if one should leave the flow, professional “consequences” often ensue. These “consequences” could be, but are not limited to: lack of pay raise, lack of promotion, and being overlooked in consideration for positions of higher status. Other interview participants expressed their understanding of productivity in a different way, directly related with productivity in both motherhood and professoriate domains. Olivia, for example, expressed the value of general productivity in terms of both her home and work domain. Olivia disclosed:

“A lot of um.... Can it be okay if I don’t get this thing done? How important is it? Something that is important to me, something important to the students, to my family? There’s just so many things to negotiate.”

In this utterance, Olivia highlights the difficult situation many other mother professors experience: a constant negotiation of time and effort at the border between work and home. Ultimately, the hierarchical powers of the academy (e.g. higher ranked professors, department chairs, deans, etc.) affect how the mother professors experience their productivity at home. For example, Cora explains that when she was granted university sanctioned maternity leave for the birth of her first child, she was still expected by the professoriate to produce articles while on leave. Cora explained:

“I was meeting all expectations, but just, I had [maternity] leave. So there was an interesting assumption that if you had leave you were taking time off [not caring for a newborn], so of course you were productive – and this is from people who had never had children.”

This concept of professional productivity at home transgresses the assumed border between the home and work domain, resulting in overlapping borders (Nippert-Eng, 1996). By overstepping the organizationally-sanctioned maternity leave of mother professors and expecting production and research while they care for a newborn, the academy was negating the presence of biological stressors and emotional experiences affiliated with postpartum roles.

Much like Cora's experience in which the professoriate bled into her perinatal role, Carol expressed her frustration regarding academic writing and research productivity at home. Carol often works from home, and she said she feels "horrible" as a result. Carol said:

"And there are times when I, I am just focused on what I am doing [academically] and I, I get enraged when my son comes up and taps my arm... and it makes me feel horrible, because then – you know, him bothering me and wanting attention is absolutely natural and I am sitting there, um, trying to be productive and trying to do what I am supposed to do, and I get pulled out of that world, and I get angry at him and then I get angry at myself for being a bad mom. And that is every day – every weekend."

In this utterance, Carol expresses outstanding levels of frustration when her roles as a mother and a professor collide. More so, Carol considered herself to be a "bad mom" because she attempted to do work at home and, subsequently, ignored her son for periods of time while she focused on her academic work. Carol attempted to fulfill the professoriate role in her home domain, and was able to do so until her son "pulled [her] out of that world." Because Carol related with the academic definition of high publishing and research productivity, her role as a mother was affected.

Veronica shared her coping strategies for being productive as both a mother and a professor. Veronica explained that to fulfill the role of both mother and professor, she often drives her two daughters to social engagements and works on her publications, lesson plans, and professional responsibilities from a "mobile office" in her car. Veronica said:

“I do a lot of reading in parking lots...Most of my class prep is done like in a bowling alley parking lot, or like a pool parking lot, or waiting in front of someone’s house for a party to get finished. And I have my computer in there [the car], and I’m reading. But you can’t read on the road.”

Veronica’s utterance captures the constant battle many mother professors expressed in interviews: the struggle to climb the pyramid of hierarchy and productivity in both motherhood and the academy. When Veronica shared her account, she stated the phrase “but you can’t read on the road” in a sarcastic tone. To me, this suggested that Veronica felt her time spend driving was transitional wasted time: time she spent neither in her domain of motherhood at home, nor time producing in the professoriate domain.

Productivity analysis. The “expectation” of massive scholarly production in the academy appeared as a strong theme in many interviews. Mother professors discussed productivity in terms of authoring academic articles, submitting grants, publishing papers, and attending conferences. With this well-established professoriate expectation to fulfill, mother professors often experience threats at the border. Willa’s utterance regarding conferences was a keen example of communication threats. Willa felt that if she did not attend a conference, there “will be consequences”. Thus, the academic border and the expectation for constant production within that border is policed, first, by the academic hierarchy, and then by the mother professor’s own conscious regarding role expectations. The concept of unspoken threat in border lands, “or there will be consequences” is another key factor in policing bordered experiences. Should a border crosser decide to pass on an opportunity to represent the academic domain, there will be consequences that may affect later opportunities for promotion, tenure, or status changes in the hierarchy. For example, many departments in universities across the United States gauge eligibility for tenure and promotion by a point system. Oftentimes, books and articles receive ten

times the amount of points as service to the community and department. Therefore the academy, particularly in its hierarchy and status structure, values published productivity over interpersonal relationships and teaching.

Producing “scholarship in quantity” is valued over all else in the professoriate and “negotiating” these expectations alongside motherhood was highlighted as a source of great anguish and “aggravation” for mother professors. Some mother professors shared feelings of being a “bad mom”, while others expressed feelings of inadequacy as a tenured professor.

Cora’s experience during her maternity leave is another example of the academy’s ability to overstep domain boundaries for the sake of academic production. Despite the fact that Cora had full institutionally protected leave, per department and university policy, there was still an expectation from the academic hierarchy to produce quality scholarship in quantity while caring for a newborn. This policing of academic ventures in the home sphere is an additional level of surveillance at the border: it is expected that all professors work on academics, even at home.

By attempting to be productive in both spheres, literally straddling the border of work and home, Carol experienced tumultuous emotional outcomes and a loss of scholarship output, specifically publication. Carol attempted to work on academic writing at home because that was what she felt she was “supposed” to do. She accepted the cultural expectation of the professoriate to enact the academic culture outside of the domain borders. However, by doing so, Carol was “pulled out of the world” by her son. The feeling of meeting expectations and committing one’s self to high levels of scholarly output and production was a key theme in the data collected.

Censures. The censuring of motherhood as a topic in the academy was another kind of cultural taboo in the professoriate. While more existential, silencing one’s self or being silenced by others, placed an invisible border around a topic, thus affecting the accepted and acceptable

cultural enactments of all participants involved. One mother professor discussed the self-censorship of motherhood in the professoriate as “enacting a persona that we [mother professors] are not.” This professor went on to say that she felt as though she was a “fraud” when she did not embrace her role as a mother in the professoriate domain, regardless of cultural consequences or lack of receptivity towards the topic. Louise paralleled this viewpoint, emphasizing the idea that professors often “pretend” motherhood and family do not exist at all. Instead they focus all of their attention on the professoriate and physical space of the academy. Louise said:

“If everybody pretends it [motherhood] is non-existent, then we [professors] are good to go. It’s just, if it comes up, and I can’t imagine it coming up, like in a meeting or something that would be... Like ‘what are you talking about, your entire life should be directed here (gestures at the physical space – the university) and, and uh, the other is optional. I think that would be the case.’”

Louise’s explanation served as a stellar foundation to understand how motherhood is contained in the academy, and, often, how mother professors are expected to contain themselves within the confines of academic role enactments. This censorship of topics pertaining to motherhood became a common theme in mother professor interviews. Willa explains this experience, which echoes Louise’s account. Willa said:

“No one ever asks if you are a parent really – I mean I am trying to think of any example where somebody said ‘do you have any kids?’”

By refusing to ask about or recognize motherhood in the academy, the subject itself, and the women who enact motherhood, are often placed in marginalized social containment and communicative censorship. Louise explains the social norms and rules that dictate this enactment and social exchange. Louise explained:

“I wouldn’t be in a meeting and go, man I just adore my son. Mmmm. And I don’t even know who has kids here. I heard um... like the professors, like the full professors. I have no idea if they have kids. It is never mentioned – and it’s not even something we are

really supposed to inquire about, be curious about. It's not acceptable, and I certainly am not gonna ask."

When I proceeded to ask Louise why she would not mention her son to coworkers, she said:

"Because that would be, that would be breaking the norm – it's not something you just bring up. Umm, I would do it with a couple of other mothers, if we were having a conversation...but generally that doesn't come up either. Umm...no, it would not be well received. So, I wouldn't do it, I just wouldn't mention it at all. Ah, that's so sad."

The fact that Louise felt safe enough to bring up motherhood only with other mother professors; the other women who shared her sense of containment and shared the same existential box of tabooed censure, was a prevalent theme in the data. The need to feel accepted by those who relate was discussed in terms of social networks. However, it is also important to highlight the emotive statement Louise shared: her sadness that she censored herself regarding topics of motherhood and, particularly, her own son. Louise later admitted that she does not openly talk about her son with coworkers. Louise explained:

"I could see that if I had always been at a university, that uh, it would make me a bit of an outcast. Ummm... Because most people, it appears, don't have children. Some people, I mean men do, more men, but then they are the dads, and their role seems to be quite different. Um, so that, that I could see would be... and if I was here when my son was younger, I could definitely see how... because nobody talks about children. And... and I don't think it's a subject that anyone would just bring up – nobody sits around and chit chats about what their kids are doing or... I think they would look at you like you are nuts. (Laughs)."

The need to feel safe when discussing motherhood in the academy was a necessary resource for mother professors in the current study. Participants discussed the "pull" of being both a mother and professor and the "outcasting" they experience as a result. One mother professor shared a time in which she felt attacked and "outcasted" by a higher ranked professor. In this instance the professor of high rank snapped at the mother professor saying, "Can't you leave him [her son] alone for just one minute?" In recalling this event, the mother professor said:

“We [mother professors] are made to feel like we are not quite human; that anyone who would want to have children, or talk about them, or spend time with them is of another species.”

This “outcasting” and feeling “not quite human” are results of cultural communication enactments of motherhood in the professoriate. Louise, and many other mother professors cope with this communication threat and “outcasting” by choosing not to enact their role of mothers in the academic workplace. For example, Veronica stated:

“I never tell anyone [I am a mother]. Ummm. They find if...I think the only people who have found out is because we have kids who run into each other. Or sometimes someone will mention something about school and you’ll say, ‘Oh, my kid goes to such and such’. But it’s not really a topic of conversation.”

Veronica’s choice to not enact her motherhood and self-censor in the professoriate domain frees her from the “outcasting” of being labeled as a mother professor. In another instance, similar to Veronica’s, a mother professor recalled a time in which she was shocked to find that a close colleague had two children. This mother professor and her colleague worked together for nearly ten years on committees around the university. However, not once did the mother professor mention her children, even when the mother professor participant openly talked about her son.

However, data gleaned that not all silence surrounding the academically tabooed topic of motherhood is negative. Willa explained one such situation in her own department in which a strong network of mothers formed a positive silenced container in which they communicate.

Willa said:

“So I mean there is, in my experience, a sort of subterranean culture of like it’s [parenting] not the thing you talk about, but we [parents] all kind of... It’s the like secret smile project – we are all not gonna talk about it but we are all happy about it. Okay that’s good (Laughs).”

Willa's example explicates a scenario in which containment of a subject and a cultural enactment can actually be a positive resource-builder for a group of mother professors. By choosing to contain themselves in a tight network through enactment of a contained code of silence and censorship, they formed a tight bond impenetrable by outsiders, or non-mothers.

Censures analysis. Mother professors who participated in this study described feeling “outcast” and “not quite human” when they openly expressed their roles as mothers in the professoriate domain. Therefore, to cope with this cultural outcasting by their peers, many mother professors choose to hide their role as mothers. Some mother professors speak about this in terms of “subterranean” interpersonal networks, while others simply did not mention motherhood in the professoriate domain. The decision to contain their status as mothers allows mother professors to negotiate important academic ventures without the containment of socially enacted motherhood.

For example, Cora explained that, while she is currently a proud mother in her department, “When I arrived, I was pregnant, but no one knew that yet – except me.” Cora chose to silence and contain her experience as a mother to assure proper policies were in place before she revealed her motherhood status. Therefore, at times, containment of motherhood as a cultural enactment can be used to ensure political status, equality, and objectivity in the academic workplace. Another example of this strategic communication technique is the “subterranean network” discussed by Willa. Though she discussed this experience in a positive way, Willa's word choice conveys a sense of hidden, underground, camouflaged experiences.

Other participants pointed out that the professoriate “pretends motherhood does not exist”, thus placing motherhood in a category of tabooed and censored topics. By censoring the topic of motherhood in the academy and making mother professors feel “nuts” when they

mention their children, hundreds of professors who are mothers are socially outcast through censured communication.

The academy places motherhood in a contained box separate from culturally accepted experiences in the academy, thus marginalizing the mother professor cultural enactments. The othering and containment of a subject can happen in many ways. First, that of silence, in which no participants outside of the mother professor community acknowledge the subject and, second, by not publically enacting motherhood in the academy. However, by choosing to hide their status as mothers, professors are contributing to communication resource and interpersonal network repercussions. For example, by negating their identities as mothers, many mother professors are unable to identify one another as resources.

Louise's experience of being unable to identify other women who share her containment status can result in othering, marginalization, and a sheer lack of interpersonal resources for mothers in academia. In an attempt to free themselves from the negative injunctions motherhood in the professoriate entails, mother professors simultaneously stifle their own motherhood identities and experiences by failing to enact them. However, if a mother professor can identify other mothers and keep their cultural enactment contained, they can successfully sustain a network of support without 'non-parents' noticing.

Interpersonal networks

The importance of discovering influential networks and interpersonal resources for mother professors was a key research goal this study. The following thematic categories emerged from the data, expressed by voluntary participants, and discuss the importance of mentorship, networks, and advocates for mother professors.

Mentors and role models. Mother professor participants expressed a need for role models and mentors in the academy to act as sounding boards and “guides”. Cora, a mother of two young boys, expressed her experience as a mother professor in the academy. She said:

“I don’t feel like I have any role models. I am the first person in the department to give birth. When I arrived, I was pregnant, but no one knew that yet – except me. And so um... I kinda feel like I’m making it up as I go along.”

Many of the interview participants echoed Cora’s feelings regarding the lack of mentors and role models for mother professors; therefore, they are forced to “make it up” as they navigate the roles of motherhood and the professoriate. Participants in the study highlighted the sheer lack of mother professors in the academy. For example, Rita, stated that her role models in academia were only based on scholarly production. She said she could not have motherhood role models in academia because so few mother professors existed. Rita said:

“No. Umm, for one there is not a lot of other female professors who have children. And those who did, when I did... our children weren’t really the same age. And so I don’t think I really used other female professionals as mentors. I think about my [female] mentors in academia... the females did not have children... That wasn’t even really something we talked about much. My mentors in terms of mothering were, uh, women in the church, my own mothers, my older sisters. So... not really other professional women.”

Stemming from a need to feel supported, many mother professors turned to fellow mothers as role models for both scholarship and motherhood advice. These relationships, according to the participants, often formed inadvertently as a result of casual interpersonal relationships among department members. Louise explained how one of her mentorships formed when she had her son. She said:

“One of my best friends had a son who is about two years older than my son – and she was always giving me the play-by-play, like ‘it gets easier’ (laughs) you know, it was just wonderful – but that wouldn’t happen here [at current university]. That would not happen

here and that would be a problem. So what else am I... so, I don't know, I think psychologically that would bug me."

Louise's experience exemplifies the findings in many other participant interviews. Oftentimes, mother professors who have a child "first" become the role models and "guides" for mother professors who follow. The mentoring mother professors share experiences and give "play-by-plays" to ease the stress of the new mother professors and reduce uncertainty. Cora also mentioned the need to support mother professors on a broader level. Cora said:

"If you don't have it [support for mother professors] at an institutional level, you don't have it at an interpersonal level."

Both Cora and Louise's utterances capture the need for social support of mother professors. However, other mother professors used their status as a professor and mother to change the perception of motherhood for their students. Halle manifested her own mentorship role by enacting her identity as both a mother and a professor in the classroom. She stated that she never hides the fact that she is a mother in the classroom because motherhood is part of her professoriate role. Halle, shared her experience of mentorship, not in terms of seeking a mentor, but being a mentor herself. She said:

"I wanted my female students to see that you could be an intellectual and a mother. And so that I don't have to hide the fact."

Carol also expressed the need for open discussion of motherhood, mentor, and emotional supporters, both in the classroom and with peers. She does so by mentoring younger faculty members who are new to the academic or motherhood domain. Carol explained:

"It [mentorship] is tough and tiring to um... mentoring other faculty members, younger faculty members... which can be emotionally taxing when they come with difficult conflicts."

Carol mentioned the emotionally exhausting nature of mentoring peers, just as Louise mentioned the emotionally stressful outcome of not having adequate resources as a mother professor. Another mother professor explained this mentorship role as “unspeakably exhausting... to the point that now words can express it.” However, mother professors were still willing to take on the role of mentor or role model to help other mother professors navigate the “stress” and “fear” of being both a mom and a full-time professor.

Mentor and role model analysis. Oftentimes, the mentorship or role model experience in the academy was discussed in terms of relationships formed with women who previously experienced the pressures of filling both a motherhood and professoriate role. By seeking women who have gone before, mother professors are not forced to feel as though they are “making it up” as they experience motherhood in the professoriate.

The participants said they desired a role model who had experienced the border crossing; they desired a mentorship with the women who crossed the border between work and home hundreds and thousands of times, and who negotiated the hierarchy of the professoriate. The mother professors in the current study said they wanted someone who could give warnings and suggestions regarding the stress of mother professor roles, as showcased in Louise’s example, regarding “play-by-play” mentorship.

Louise’s experience with another mother professor depended heavily on existing social bonds the women shared as colleagues. Because her mentor had already crossed the border between motherhood and the academy, two years prior, she was able to share with Louise the ups and downs, frustrations, and challenges of negotiating the border. Thus, by knowing what to expect, Louise’s nerves were steeled. However, it is also important to point out, that Louise’s experience was not at her current university, and instead, was at a smaller school in a different

geographic location. Louise's comments feature the importance of community relationships and interpersonal networks in a specific institution.

Louise's experience showcased the importance of institutional culture. While at her current university she could not name more than two other mother professors, she came from a university that offered opportunities for interpersonal support and a "tight knit" community. Cora discussed the organizational nature of community support in her interview regarding the link between "institutional support" and "interpersonal support". Cora's insights underlined a key outcome in the mentor and role model category: to have mentorship, the institutional culture and interpersonal networks must be willing to embrace motherhood.

As a result of the academic hierarchy and censuring of motherhood, the participants discussed difficulty finding a mentor or role model in the academy. As Carol stated, the role of a mentor can be stressful, and yet the need for "psychological" support was present and a reoccurring theme in most interviews. Many mother professors were forced to find role models in each domain: motherhood and the professoriate. This is due to a lack of openly self-identified mother professors willing to take on a mentorship role. Mother professors in this study voiced a strong need for women who relate with the struggle of being both a mother and professor. They expressed this desire as both a system of social support and as an entry point to access communication tools and resources regarding role enactments and experiences of being a mom in the professoriate.

Peer networks. The participants pointed out the lack of mentors and role models in the professoriate for mother professors. They said they seek support from women who have already experienced motherhood and the professoriate to share insights and wisdom. However, because the academy often lacks mentorship resources for mother professors, many turn to colleagues for

peer support and commiseration. The need to have a “support group” or “club” were both present in the interview data, particularly regarding the importance and impact of interpersonal resources at the border between professoriate and motherhood.

Carol shared her departmental experience of motherhood and her peer networks with her colleagues. Over the past five years, women in her department have formed a “mom’s group”, which gives them a safe place to share the trials and triumphs of motherhood and professorship.

Carol said:

“We [mother professors] seek each other out when we know that, ‘Well she is gonna understand what I just went through.’ It’s very... not a work-family tension thing, but who is gonna understand? If I am here today and she’s here today and I just had this thing happen with my kids and, and she’s gonna get it.”

Being understood, having a feeling of empathy, and having a peer group to vent to, are all prevalent themes in the interview data. Carol’s expression of seeking one another out, is a key factor in experiences at the border, particularly in the professoriate hierarchy. Carol continues her experience of empathetic support by explaining how the group formed:

“And when we [mother professors] talk about it [motherhood] as a group, you know, we might find ourselves by happenstance in the hallway, and I think that is... we see each other as mothers. And so, you know, oh and all of a sudden, you know, ‘Oh, here’s the mom’s group’...we joke about having our mom support group. And I do have colleagues in this department that I can let off steam with and they are going through the same things.”

The need to feel as if they are not alone is a key purpose in mother professor interpersonal networking. Data from the online Amazon.com comments on the book *Mama, PhD* echoed this need for support. Amazon commenter Momproff said, “I loved how the stories women shared made me feel like I wasn't alone in this [mother professor] struggle.” Louise mentioned a similar circle of influence as a mother professor. Louise said:

“I knew a lot of mothers too, who also were in the same situation [mother professors]; so they made it easier. I had a support group.”

Many participants explained that they sought other mother professors to feel “supported” and “not alone” and to avoid feeling “outcast” by the professoriate culture. It is also important to point out that many of the participants mentioned the aspect of interpersonal peer networks regarding parenthood in general. For example, Willa recalled a salient moment in her mother professor experience in which her network of support expanded to a male colleague who openly identified as a father. Willa said:

“I can’t remember how it came up, but he said something when he was new [to the department] about having a kid in an email. Like, ‘I can’t stay. I have to go pick up my kid.’ And I wrote him and said, ‘Oh my goodness! You’re a parent! That’s so fabulous!’ And it was this moment in which we actually bonded on the sense of having our lives grounded or structured in this [parenthood] particular way.”

Because Willa and her colleague both break the childless norm of the academy, they instantly have a relation point as parents in the academic workplace, thus establishing a unique interpersonal peer network and support system.

Peer network analysis. The need to feel a sense of belonging on the border between the professoriate and motherhood was a strong theme in many participant accounts. Mother professors expressed a need to “let off steam” and find a group of people who were “going through the same things” as they filled both mother and professoriate roles. The need to feel accepted and not marginalized can only come from in-group experiences and peer networking. By enacting their motherhood together, in the professoriate context, mother professors legitimized their status as mothers and professors through commiseration, comparison of experiences, and social support.

The “understanding” that developed by becoming a member of a mom “support group” or “club” was a feeling mother professor participants in this study seek. Being understood, having a feeling of empathy, and having a peer group to vent to, were all prevalent themes in the interview data. This network ultimately develops a web of communication resources for mother professors. By understanding how fellow mother professors deal with difficult issues in the professoriate, these women form a set of enacted skills by which they can better understand their own experience. By seeking other women who share the common role of mother and professor, participants said they felt less alienated, foreign, and alone because they were “bonded” with individuals who shared a common experience.

Advocates. A third theme regarding interpersonal networks that emerged from interview data was the importance of advocacy for and among mother professors. Much like the need for border-crosser (Nippert-Eng, 1996) rights at the border and in certain domains, mother professors share a dire need for advocacy in the academy; both in terms of emotional and political support.

I asked Olivia if she would be willing to participate in a university sanctioned support group for mother professors. She explained that, while she feels she has a balance on both motherhood and academia, she would love the opportunity to share her insights with other mother professors and hear their accounts as well. Olivia said:

“I have figured out how to manage it [motherhood and work], but I would totally... somebody who hadn’t figured it out yet... I would totally tell them... I am all about helping you. I am all about being an advocate.”

In this utterance, Olivia expressed her desire to be an advocate regarding sharing mother professor experiences openly in an academic-sanctioned domain. Olivia continued her account, discussing her department’s issues with bullying. Olivia explained that, because of the

professoriate hierarchy, there have been times in her academic career that she felt marginalized; including regarding her role as a mother. Olivia said:

“When I first got here [the department], the environment of bullying was huge. And I, I don’t tolerate it. I am way too big and mouthy to be bullied. And so I, I usually end up trying to stand up for other people - whether it gets me in trouble or not.”

Carol paralleled Olivia’s desire to be an advocate for her fellow mother professors; however, her goal is university-wide and expressed as a source of forceful turmoil. Carol expressed feelings of stagnancy and oppression regarding the change of policy and cultural receptivity of motherhood. She explained that she is too busy with her role as a mother and professor, that she could not find the time to participate in changing university policy. Carol shared her frustration, saying:

“I can’t do anything at this point to get into the administration where there might be one of the voices who tries to change it [how motherhood is received]... to make this profession more humane.”

Carol’s utterance expressed motherhood in the professoriate as not only an individual right, but a human right for humane treatment.

Advocate analysis. Much like border crosser advocates on geographic borders, Olivia and Carol expressed a desire and need to advocate for the rights of thousands of mother professors around the world through policy change at their own university. Both women expressed their desire to “stand up” for marginalized and “bullied” groups in the university regarding treatment of mothers and family as a general topic. For motherhood to be accepted as a natural and uncensored topic in the professoriate, mother professors feel they must actively participate in change. They expressed a desire to “help” one another negotiate the hierarchical structure of the academy. By sharing stories of how they “manage” motherhood in the

professoriate, mother professors are enacting their right to discuss motherhood openly. By advocating for acceptance of motherhood and “humane” rights for mother professors, women such as Carol and Olivia open up dialogue about motherhood at an institutional level for “policy change” and awareness.

Home life

The concept of a separated domain, the home domain, was an emergent theme in interview data of mother professor experiences. I coded home life categories into the general domain of family/domesticity; which included marital status and domestic finance issues. I then coded home domain topics for frequency of child care related issues; such as finding child care, taking care of children as a professor, and leaving children in child care. It is important to note that no interview instrument questions directly addressed the home life domain; instead, all data utterances in this category emerged from discussions of motherhood in the professoriate and the cultural enactments of dual roles at home.

Family. The first category of home life domain focused on the experiences of motherhood and professoriate roles specifically relating to the interpersonal relationships found in the mother professor’s family. Olivia explained how the overlap (Nippert-Eng, 1996) of home life domain into the professoriate role affects her daily decisions and actions. Olivia said:

“So they [her daughters] are just so sweet and good natured and caring, and that’s really what I want to grow a little human – to be their own individuals and to not be bullied and to stick up against bullies. And so, I guess I just have to say being involved. Being in it. Being in the mix. So everything that I do, I won’t do anything unless I first figure how it’s going to affect my family.”

Many mother professor participants expressed their commitment to prioritize their family domain, regardless of the cultural retaliation or “consequences” they experience in the professoriate domain. Carol echoes Olivia’s prioritization of family life. Olivia said:

“I think it, I think it just comes down to time. And that um.... I am I have decided that my family is my first priority and my son is a special needs kid. And I spend six hours a week taking him around to therapy and.... I am way behind where I am supposed to be professionally.”

Willa expressed the same prioritization of family through a hypothetical ultimatum. Willa said:

“I am definitely a mother first. I mean if you said like we will take away your job or we will take away your family – well you can have my job – you know, like go ahead – do whatever you want (laughs).”

These three utterances each pointed out how many mother professors place their family above all other responsibilities, even the professoriate. However, the need to “be in the mix” often results in mother professors bringing professoriate work into the home domain. Halle expressed distain for working from home. She said:

“But I mean I know women who do it [separate themselves from kids], but it’s hard to just say ‘I’m shutting my door- nobody come.’ You know, you tell your little cherubic toddler, ‘don’t come and bother mom when the door is shut!’... When I go home, I go home, and I don’t spend my time with her [daughter] on the computer.”

Carol stated she could easily separate herself into home life containment for the purpose of producing mass amounts of scholarly work, and is sometimes “pulled from a world” of production when her son interrupts. However, Carol continued by saying:

“I adopted my son. And since then.... So one of the things I am going toward is that having a child is a demand you can’t ignore and so, I am forced to have a life other than an academic life. And it’s [motherhood] a life I chose. You know, my family didn’t just happen – I actually had to work a couple years for it to come about.”

Carol’s son and his presence in the home domain positioned her in a unique way to her experiences in the professoriate. Louise shared a similar account in which her son’s presence at home affected her enactments of motherhood in the academy. Louise said:

“And he [her son] was in a middle school that is bigger than my hometown. And.... It was really a shock for both of us, and he acted out. And that was very challenging. When, when, things weren't going well at home...that was the challenge. Because then it affected me at school. Because then.... It's such an important part that they [children] are happy. I wanted him to be well-adjusted and happy, and then when they are not, it's like a little piece of your heart is missing, and it's not like you can turn it off the next day and go, 'Oh, everything is great' in class. And I don't think I let people know that, but it was a challenge personally. Yeah, it was a challenge going back to work too... because I didn't want to be... yeah, it was hard (laughs).”

The inability to separate emotional borders to “turn off” the feelings in a specific domain was a key issue highlighted by Louise's experience. The professoriate focuses on mind, rather than mind and “heart”, thus affecting cultural enactments of mother professors in both home and work domains. For example, because Louise knew that her emotional experience regarding her son would be unwelcome in the professoriate, she attempted to “turn off” her feelings and censor her experience. Willa shared a similar narrative in which her separation into the academic domain affected the emotional state of herself and her family. Willa was involved in an extensive academic publishing project for her department that pulled her out of the home sphere for long hours. When she returned home she said her family could “sense” the stress she felt, particularly her son, who at the time, was under the age of five. Willa said:

“And my son ended up having hives...And I remember when I recognized in him, that I was putting so much stress on the family structure that he... was responding to my stress – my ability to sort of make things fall apart and I am the only thing that holds things together – for him. And so he was expressing it by coming out in hives and sort of being miserable and.... It was a moment of really recognizing that this isn't working – like I have to come up with a better way to make it work. And um, I think that was when I started to recognize how much I need to follow the rhythm of the family's needs and I need to make everything fit together. And I need to not, this sounds like I'm compromising and I think it's true (laughs), but I mean...Not generate projects that are so overwhelming for me, that I can't do the part where I am holding everything together. And it's you know – it's not that, for instance, that my husband can't do stuff – like he's not incapable, but he isn't programmed in the same way as I am and it's just the truth. And it's also just true that for my kids – you know – they want me to put them to bed. You know?”

Willa was very open about her concern regarding her son's livelihood and she felt that because she was containing herself in a separate sphere, her family's well-being suffered.

Family analysis. The affect the professoriate domain has on family life is a result of permeable border and overlapping roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Mother professors in the current study explained that there is no way to “ignore” the home domain, even when attempting to place focus on academic pursuits. Therefore, mother professors are forced to fulfill home domain roles and professoriate roles in a simultaneous manner which can “affect the family” domain.

Willa spoke about how she was the parent who “holds it all together” and explained that when she is upset or stressed it makes the family structure “fall apart”. As a result, many mother professors make the personal decision to place family as their first “priority” so they can assure they are “present” for their children and “in the mix” of family life.

Marital status. Participants referenced marriage and partnership throughout interviews, either regarding the support they received at home, which allowed them to continue their position as a professor; or the lack of support and understanding received at home. Halle expressed her extreme frustration after the birth of her daughter. She discussed her husband's willingness to help while at home on his parental leave the week after her daughter was born. However, when he went back to his full time job, Halle felt “anger”. Halle said:

“And I had so much anger, and it really surprised me. And I couldn't be angry at him [husband] cause he would have been home if he could. And I was just like, I don't understand, like this [caring for their daughter] is now my job? And that's, that's okay, and I'm a professor – we make the same amount of money.”

The need to share responsibilities at home was a clear theme in home domain marriage-related data. Willa shared a similar experience in which she left her family frequently to fulfill

the professoriate role. During this time, Willa traveled for weeks at a time, following the responsibilities and requirements of her tenure-track professor position. Willa said:

“It wasn’t really working out for my family for me to be doing that particular teaching job - to be gone for three weeks and a time and leave my husband in charge of two kids... was kind of making things fall apart on a regular basis.”

Willa went on to say that she is fully aware her husband can care for the children, but expecting him to do so alone was an unfair balance of marital and parental responsibilities.

Olivia expressed her wealth of support at home as she discussed her husband’s ability to make her feel “supported” and “loved”. She said:

“You know, you go home at night and I have a very supportive husband...So I love, I love, love, love, that my husband is... that he has told my kids, ‘Yeah, mommy can’t go four wheeling with us’ or, ‘Mommy isn’t gonna go camping with us, because she’s got homework. But just remember, everything that mommy is doing, she is doing for the family.’”

Olivia’s expression of marital status, and being married with a supportive husband, was a highlighted as a key communicative resource in her balance of work and home. However, Veronica expressed marital status as a negatively perceived social enactment in the professoriate. Veronica said:

“I think most of my life the ideal professors I had were women, who were never married, who had no children. Or men...like unmarried, or in some relationship but not like exactly a marriage/family relationship.”

Veronica’s utterance placed emphasis on the ability to avoid responsibilities that marriage places in the home domain. Instead, to Veronica, professors who were unmarried or not committed, were able to dedicate more time to academic life and are, thus, more successful in the academic domain.

Marital status analysis. Having communicated support in the home domain was an emergent theme in the data set. Mother professors expressed a sense of “anger” when their partners left them alone to fulfill the care and scheduling needs of a newborn. Halle struggled when her husband assumed she would be the primary caretaker for their newborn daughter. Because Halle identified as a “feminist” she believed it was not her sole responsibility to raise the child, particularly because she was a highly educated, professional woman. Other participants stated that ideal professors remained “unmarried” or free of “commitment” to assure their entire life was dedicated to students and the professoriate domain.

However, women such as Olivia expressed their gratitude in having support from a loving husband. Olivia’s experience in her marriage with her “supportive husband” allowed her to commit a substantial portion of her time at home to her academic pursuits. Because she felt supported in her marriage domain, she felt free to explore other domains and roles in the home realm without fear of retaliation or repression. Her support from her husband was a key interpersonal resource in the home domain.

Finances. Issues of monetary stress and providing for the family were also key emergent themes in the interview data. Willa expressed her home of finances and providing for her family in terms of a necessary requirement. She said:

“I love my job. You know, I would be willing, I mean as long as we [family] had some way to eat, I would probably willingly volunteer [for no pay] as long as I was given the opportunities, I would be willing to do this kind of no matter what.”

For Willa, her role in the professoriate was a means to pay for her family food, but she enjoyed the job enough to “willingly volunteer” if food was provided for her family. Carol mirrored Willa’s drive to teach but added additional emphasis on the need to provide for her family. Carol said:

“I chose this profession. I worked on it a long time. I chose it because I love it. And if I... if I somehow won the lottery and didn't have to support half of the family... I could find other very fulfilling roles... but the thing is, it would be hard to find something as fulfilling as I am doing now.”

Home finances greatly affected Olivia's workplace interactions as a professor. In her interview, Olivia shared that she and her husband could not afford childcare for the summer months, as they both worked full time and had no one to watch their two young girls. Olivia said:

“This last summer I had the challenge of ‘I don't have enough money and what are we going to childcare’... over the summertime, we just didn't have the money to put them into some kind of program... I just kind of had to say, ‘You know what? I am going to bring my kids to work with me. I have this great cozy office, I'm like, we have PBS.org, and tablets and, you know, we got play doh.’”

Because of financial stress at home, Olivia blurred the border of motherhood and the professoriate to regularly incorporate her children into the academic workplace as a result of financial need. Halle shared a similar account in which financial need, and the stress of providing for her daughter, caused emotional turmoil. Halle said she often finds herself reflecting on professoriate responsibilities, particularly book publishing, during time she spends with her daughter. Halle said:

“Even if I do publish it [a book], it's not gonna result in any more money, really, for the family. So it's, it's hard because the rewards [for publishing] are vague and the children are right there and real.”

Finances analysis. Carol's focus on academia, like Willa's, was a positive one because they both said they love their roles as professors. However, both women highlighted that their academic jobs, while emotionally fulfilling, mainly serve as an economic support for the family. To sustain the family life, both women need the opposing work domain. Therefore, there is a financial dependence on the academic sphere to sustain the home sphere.

Due to this financial dependency on the professoriate, many mother professors, such as Olivia, are forced to make difficult decisions as a result of financial stress. Olivia made the decision to bring her children to work and allow them to sit in her office while she taught in the adjacent hallway. Olivia's decision to bring her children across the border, to smuggle them into the professoriate, was only due to financial stress in her family structure. And, while Olivia did receive push-back for allowing the children in the often separated, non-family realm of the academy, she ultimately made the situation "work" for the betterment of herself and her children.

To succeed in both domains, the mother professors often had to negotiate hierarchy and networks while simultaneously fulfilling financial needs in their home domain.

Child care. A reoccurring theme in participant interviews was issues pertaining to childcare, or the containment of a child in a specific location (often away from the mother professor) while the mother professor remains contained in her own sphere of the professoriate. While many modern working parents struggle with childcare needs, the mother professors were quick to explain that the stress of child care stems from a lack of understanding and support, limited options, and menial resources in the academic domain.

Veronica shared an experience in which the need for adequate child care as a mother professor bled into her professoriate domain while conducting publication research. Veronica and her husband took her two young daughters to a South American country where she was leading archive research. She and her husband entered into the venture with confidence; however, she ended the journey with frustration and little scholarly productivity. Veronica said:

"So we all squeezed into one airplane seat. The three of us [she and her two daughters]. That was painful for 12 hours, just physically. Then we get to [location] and I'm entertaining a two year old, why? You know, why do that? So it really scared me off from bringing kids, which I think is... I did it too soon. I should have waited."

Veronica's experience in the field placed great emphasis on the need for child care and containment/entertainment of children while the mother professors works on scholarly pursuits. However, even when child care was available, mother professors discussed the emotional turmoil of leaving a child in a separate space. Halle recalled the first day she dropped her daughter off at daycare. She said:

“Um, but, the day that I left her there as a five month old, which again is very generous compared to many women, but um, they can't talk – and they are still babies. And I, you know, left her in that little baby handheld car seat thing, and walked away and I just got in my car and sobbed.”

Halle went on to share that she went out of her way to pick up her daughter before 3:30pm every day, leaving work early to rescue her daughter from the containment of the childcare facility. Halle said: “I wanted to distinguish myself between the moms who had to use the full time daycare.”

The social stigma of placing children in childcare and is a long-running theme in the data. Halle's account highlighted a stellar example of the need for containing and entertaining a child, but the simultaneous “sadness” that accompany the separation. Halle said:

“Anyway, so I think that there is more that the university could do, like just for everyone greater flexibility in terms of where they work and how they work and in terms of space... um, I think if the university were really committed, they would do more with childcare. That's the first thing, yeah, I mean it's so much easier if you can have something on campus, especially for infants and toddlers, where you can go over and breastfeed.”

Cora's experience regarding childcare also addressed containment of children and the guilt many mother professors feel. Cora explained that her two young sons are in school from “like 9-4 or 9-5 everyday, which is too much – or even 5:30 sometimes.” Cora explained that she often thinks about her son's school and child care in terms of a box. She said:

“I have had this metaphor in my mind for a long time that I have had a hard time shaking, which is it’s kind of like I am putting them in storage.”

The concept of storing one’s children in containment was a sentiment many mother professors shared regarding child care and the need for additional child care resources available on campus.

Child care analysis. Child care was expressed as a stressful responsibility of within the home domain. Because the academy is typically unsupportive of mother professor’s need for care close to campus, many mother professors place their children in “storage” for long hours. However, Halle pointed out that even after the child is in care, there is extensive scheduling that must take place to assure the child can be dropped off and picked up when the professoriate schedule allows. The fact that Halle “sobbed” when she dropped her six month old daughter off at day care, is an example of the emotional turmoil mother professors experience.

When mother professors are forced into the overlap of two domains, as discussed by Nippert-Eng (1996), they often expressed feelings of stress, as in Veronica’s case. Not only did she travel to a foreign country with two young daughters and a husband, but there was a requirement of care and entertainment for the children while she was attempting to be productive for publication and research.

Mother professors like Cora expressed their disdain for the “storage” of children in school and day care. She said that she and her husband would ideally like to “unschool” their children, and live naturally “off of the land”. However, because of her role as a professor, and the schedule it requires, they are unable to do so.

Mother professors expressed a clear need for university-supported child care near campus. Halle expressed this when she said the university should be “committed” to helping

mother professors access childcare. It is important to note that the university in this study does offer childcare to professors, however access to this childcare program is granted to students before professors. To place children in the care facility, professors are placed on a waiting list and are forced to pay a fee to remain on the list for up to five years. None of the participants in the current study were granted access to the on-campus childcare facility.

Double Bind

To understand the interpersonal resources, networks, and enactments of motherhood in the academy, this study asked mother professors questions regarding conflicting experiences and balance.

Willa shared an example of a recent double bind she experienced. Willa, her husband, and two children were given the opportunity to go on a ski vacation with family friends over a long weekend. However, Willa had a grant proposal for her professoriate role due the same weekend and felt torn which role to fulfill: motherhood on the ski slopes or professoriate grant writing. So, she decided to accompany her family to the ski resort but did not participate in all of the social activities in an attempt to allot time for her grant writing. Willa said:

“But because I was able to kind of do both things – like be kind of available and present – I went skiing one day, I didn’t go the other day...But it was okay. You know, I mean really – I got the grant in and I participated- sort of. That’s what it is, you know sometimes it’s like that sense of it’s rocky for me you know, because I have to put out all this effort to do all these things, but I can kind of keep them going.”

However, choices for mother professors were not always expressed in scenarios which allowed for dual role fulfillment. For example, Rita said:

“My son, uh, played soccer and was on a traveling team, and so...there were often times when I had to make choices between going to soccer games and travelling with my son and staying back to do work. And having to make that choice was always difficult.”

Rita's explanation was an example of a double bind decision; one in which she was forced to choose between her two roles. Other examples of double binds in the academy are not so psychologically based. Both Halle and Willa shared experiences in which their decision to choose work or family greatly affected their role in another domain.

Halle shared an experience about a time she was given an outstanding opportunity by her department to participate in an overseas conference. Professional and academically, Halle said she very much wanted to go. However, she was only given one month notice and was in the middle of a divorce. Halle had no childcare options for her child, and as a result, was forced to pass on the opportunity to attend the conference. She said she hesitantly informed her supervisor with much regret. However, days later, many colleagues questioned Halle's choice to decline attending the conference. Halle became worried that her decision to stay with her daughter would be viewed poorly by the department. She was experiencing a double bind scenario. The negative injunction was the initial choice to not attend the conference. The secondary injunction was when her colleagues pointed out her choice – thus othering her decision. Finally, Halle decided to address the issue with her supervisor. Halle said:

“I just said, ‘I am not asking you to give me advice about whether or not to go – because I have made my decision and I can't go. But what I need is your advice about how to reassure everyone in the office that I am serious about my job and that these are things that I would like to participate in but I can't do this one.’”

Because Halle addressed the decision with her supervisor and gained support, she was able to avoid a severe tertiary injunction. However, she was careful to highlight the stress and unease that stemmed from the decision to choose her daughter over a department agenda. She said:

“So there is always, even for me, that feeling of saying, ‘Oh I can't because of my daughter’ and people just grow bored with it and so you kinda feel stupid saying it.”

The simple act of choosing to acknowledge a child when making a professional decision can immediately place mother professors in a double bind scenario because the cultural enactment of motherhood in the professoriate.

Willa shared a similar double bind decision scenario in which she was forced to choose her professional obligations over a child. She said:

“My daughter... Was, she has recently taken up climbing and she just recently made it to the regional climbing competition; which really just takes having been a participant in several competitions. It’s not about how good you are. Ummm, which was on a weekend when – and it was in Tucson – and it was a weekend on an event that I had scheduled with my students where we were gonna do a performance [nearby]. And I couldn’t do both. It just wasn’t possible. Like I even looked at like what if we found a flight... I mean I couldn’t find a flight that would get me there in time to watch her climb. I just couldn’t do it. And I wasn’t gonna move the event or change it because it was with the site’s schedule and my students... So there are moments like that where work involves very specific events that involve a lot of people, you know, events like graduation, or um, being on hand for performances or events or shows that students put on.”

In this double bind, Willa was forced to choose between attending her daughter’s competition and attending an academic event for her students. Her two roles, mother and professor, overlapped in a way that did not allow for dual-role fulfillment. She could not be in “two places at once” and was forced to make the difficult decision many mother professors regularly face: family and children or the professoriate.

Double bind analysis. Double binds, as discussed in the literature review chapter, are lose-lose situations in which a mother professor is forced to choose between two domain roles that directly conflict with one another. This choice and the subsequent outcome of the choice can often cause intense emotional turmoil and stress.

Negotiating double binds as a mother professor often involved the choice between children and work-related activities, such as “soccer games” or “grant writing”. As with all double binds, it only takes one negative injunction experience to change how mother professors

cope with future double binds (Bateson et. al, 1956). For example, should Willa or Halle find themselves in another double bind scenario, choosing between child and career, their first double bind experience would substantially affect their decision and emotional state in all ensuing double binds (Bateson et. al, 1956).

Willa's ski trip experience represented a decision to choose both realms of enactment, both mother and professor, as a way to cope with a double bind injunction: the choice between motherhood and professoriate enactments. Willa attempted to balance the dual roles and overlapping borders (Nippert-Eng, 1996) by morphing the two roles into one space, thus avoiding a severe double bind scenario. Therefore, Willa somewhat successfully avoided the inevitable double bind of choice by technically choosing both motherhood and professoriate roles.

However, in Halle's experience, forced to stay home and not attend a conference, the double bind injunction came days later when her coworkers approached her skeptically regarding her decision to not attend the overseas event. As a result, Halle became "worried", thus constituting a secondary negative injunction as discussed in double bind theory (Bateson et. al, 1956). The double bind in this scenario exemplifies the psychological effects of home and work life balance decisions; by choosing one domain over another, role enactment in the professoriate domain was affected and formed a communicative double bind in which Halle felt uncomfortable, "guilty" and "worried" that she could not attend the conference.

Guilt. When mother professors were forced into a double bind, they often expressed feelings of guilt as a result of the negative injunction. Halle expresses the battle of guilt in her home and work lives as a daily emotional presence. She said:

"I feel guilty every day. And I feel guilty when I'm with her [her daughter] because I have been a professor and I have been in academia so much longer than I have been a

mother, so it was almost like I felt just as guilty not doing my work as I did, you know, not being with her full time.”

Halle’s account highlights the struggle of prioritizing identities: mother or professor.

Carol shared a similar situation in which she experienced guilt regarding expectations the professoriate placed on her. Carol said:

“If I weren’t at a research 1 university, there might not be that constant reminder, but there is a constant reminder that I’m not doing my job. So... that’s I live guilty all the time – that I’m not doing what I was hired to do. (Shrugs and sips drink, holding back tears).”

Carol’s guilt is a result of her double bind choice to prioritize her family over the professoriate, thus impacting her ability to produce high quantities of published articles and books. Other participants paralleled this guilt as a result of prioritizing one domain over another. For example, Cora chose to leave her young children in daycare for a majority of the day, and as a result, felt extreme guilt. She said “I have total guilt about it [not being at home]” and went on to say that, because of this double bind guilt, she was, “totally not the ideal mom.”

Rita, who admittedly always placed her children before her job, expressed the lack of guilt. She explained that although she was often placed in a double bind between work and home, she never doubted her prioritization of family. Rita said:

“I always want my family to come first – and not my job. And... so, those feelings of guilt and not being there for my kids, outweighed the guilt of not being there to do what I needed for my job. So, for me personally, it’s mother first and then professor.”

Guilt analysis. By prioritizing roles or domains and experiencing double bind scenarios, mother professors expressed feelings of “guilt” at the border between work and home. The guilt that accompanies double bind decisions or personal choices, was a common outcome for many mother professors. The root cause of the double bind and guilt was the inability to fulfill every

role enactment at once. In a majority of the utterances, the guilt immigrates with the border-crosser into both domains – work guilt bleeds into home, and vice versa.

For example, many participants discussed their guilt-laden thoughts in terms of an inability to fulfill one role, which emotionally effects an output in another role. Carol expressed this in terms of scholarly work. Her emotional feelings of guilt stemmed from the hierarchy's pressure to produce high quality essays and books in a short time.

Again, living up to the social role ideals, rules, and norms of motherhood is a difficult measure for any working woman, but living up to the ideals of the professoriate and its extreme time commitment, often produces double bind scenarios that result in stress and guilt for mother professors.

Time

Time was discussed as a highly valued resource by all interview participants. Time, as stated by the mother professors, dictates many experiences and cultural enactments at the border between motherhood and professoriate roles. Many participants expressed the need for more time, flexible scheduling, and a more understanding academic structure. The following categories pertain to time in the academy and home lives of mother professors. The first category, schedule flexibility, focused on limitations and strategies for managing time. The second category, generations and age, showcased how generational differences and maturity affect social enactments of motherhood in the professoriate.

Schedule flexibility. Time was expressed by interview participants both with a sense of reverence and frustration, respect and hindrance. Cora explains the issue of time in terms of a limited resource at the border of home and work. Cora said:

“Umm... I think in some ways it's a great position to be in to be a parent because you have a lot of flexibility. And in many ways you're your own boss... so you're not having

to ask permission to bring your child to most things, like your own class, for instance. But um... if you have to cancel something because your child is sick and you can't find someone to take care of them, then you can. Um... so I would say there is a flexibility with being in this position [professor] and being a mom. Um... on the other hand, it's a position that is very all encompassing and it never really has an endpoint. So I look at a lot of my friends who are mostly lawyers, or doctors, but I guess they don't have an endpoint, um who when they are done who when they are done, they're done and they are at home at five o'clock with their kids and they have that time – or the weekends are theirs. So I feel like they have a more... they have a stronger border between work life and home life. And I think that's a greyer border for faculty because you are um..... While your time is your own in a lot of ways, also at the same time, none of it is. Because you always, especially at a research one school, you always have grad students or graduates who depend on you, you have a lot of service, especially if you are in any leadership position. And then going back to the first part of flexibility, if you can swing it, you have your summers off and you have a month off in the winter – so you have a lot of time to be with your children when you are off. So... it's a balance, I think it's..... I wouldn't do anything else, I don't want to do anything else and I don't know that I could do anything else and be a parent, quite frankly.”

Olivia expresses a similar relationship with time in terms of schedule flexibility. Olivia said:

“I have a much more liberating schedule now. I don't punch a clock anymore like I did [at previous job]. Umm. I do have a little bit more freedom of being able to be on my schedule and not someone else's during the time that I have set aside for work. I have more of a freedom of um... I can kind of decide when I get things done and it's not on someone else's timeline.”

Many participant accounts highlighted the need for “schedules”, “structures”, and “flexibility”. Willa shared an experience in which she realized her children were a “structural” element in her life in terms of schedules and time commitments. Willa said:

“So... they [son and daughter]... as just a structural element in my life, they teach me a lot of sort of teaching what's important and how to prioritize, and how to be present – obviously, with my classes, and then how to say, ‘I only have so much time and so I need to walk away’”.

Willa was careful to say that this ability to walk away from the office comes with the flexibility of professorship. Halle corroborated with Willa's viewpoint on flexibility. When I asked her to identify the positives and negatives of being a mother professor, Halle said:

“Well, I would say number one in both categories is the flexibility. You know, and that’s where my [step-mom]– who is only ten years older than me – she had my brother when she was working full time at this design firm and she was like, ‘I don’t understand what these women are complaining about – being a mom and being a professor is so much better than working in this office.’ Right? Like where there is no flexibility. So I see that, you know and I have only been a professor since I have been a mom. So I think the flexibility is great, you know, if you are smart you can maybe think of a way that you don’t have to have your kid in full time daycare. On the other hand, the flexibility is what will kill you because it’s a... it’s a trap. And we [professors] work, I mean the other thing with the flexibility is that you are never off clock.”

Halle’s feeling of being “never off the clock” and pressured by limited scheduling represented a stressful outcome of the professoriate work schedule. However, Cora and Willa highlight the positives of having a “flexible” job. Cora said:

“Umm... I think in some ways it’s a great position to be in to be a parent because you have a lot of flexibility. And in many ways you’re your own boss... so you’re not having to ask permission to bring your child to most things, like your own class, for instance. But um... if you have to cancel something because your child is sick and you can’t find someone to take care of them, then you can. Um... so I would say there is a flexibility with being in this position and being a mom. Um... on the other hand, it’s a position that is very all encompassing and it never really has an endpoint.”

The “all encompassing” nature of the professoriate was widely discussed by mother professors in this study. However, Louise mentioned breaks, and the scheduling flexibility breaks offer, as an important factor in her career choice. She said:

“I love my work. And so that’s a real bonus. And also, the scheduling makes it easier... so you have time in the summer together, and that, that really is... Every time I think about getting a real job... I go, ‘I don’t think so’! So we [she and her son] have lots more time together.”

Willa paralleled Cora and Louise’s reverence for the flexibility of professorship, but mentioned scheduling component of life as a professor that greatly affected her home life. Willa said:

“I mean, there are huge positives to having children – I don’t – and truthfully, you know, everyday there are these moments where I recognize how grateful I am to have a job that is about my intellectual capabilities rather than another kind of job, because it’s not utterly flexible. Like I have to show up for class. But it is flexible in the sense that, um, once you understand your capacities and what you are capable of, you can change your life so that all of those things sort of fit together – which you can do in an academic job.”

Willa’s utterance frames the expectation or need for mother professors to change their home domain to accommodate their work domain – flexible scheduling is a key factor in this negotiation and often oversteps the boundaries of containment. Willa continued her account when she said:

“So there are moments like that where work involves very specific events that involve a lot of people – you know events like graduation, or um, being on hand for performances or events or shows that students put on- there are a lot of commitments that happen outside of when a normal nine to five job would be. And that definitely impacts my family life.”

The professoriate expects productivity and commitment to academic domain events. However, the affect this “never off the clock” expectation of has on mothers, with regards to scheduling and family life, should not be overlooked. Olivia stated that she depends on flexibility to enact her dual roles of mother and professor. She said, “If I am not flexible, then I don’t know how I would be able to do it [be both a mother and professor].”

Many mother professors express a need for more time and adherence to schedules. Veronica expressed that mother professors are often fighting against the ideal professor image. When asked to define her ideal professor, Veronica said:

“Ummm. Honestly, (mutters) okay, this is telling, this is very telling. Okay, I think most of my life the ideal professors I had were women, who were never married, who had no children. Or men. Or also, like unmarried, or in some relationship but not like exactly a marriage family relationship, and were totally devoted to their students and had unlimited time and love for their students because they didn’t have anything else going on. People who had you over for dinners, with classes for dinner, and were always available, totally into their research. So that was one ideal. Okay, now that I’m older, I wonder if maybe

people who were parents and had a little less time, had a little more wisdom on some things, so I don't know, that's probably wishful thinking. Probably the best professor is someone who is totally dedicated to their students and their job."

Unlike the ideal professors described by Veronica many mother professors are forced to cross borders to fulfill two jobs: that of an involved mother and an active professor. Halle shared her insights on being an ideal parents and professor. She said:

"It [professoriate] is a full time job. Both [motherhood and professoriate] are full time jobs. And every faculty member that I know works way more than forty hours a week."

Therefore, mother professors are forced to straddle the border of work and home, fulfilling two roles in one space. Halle explicates this dual role enactment in her own experience as a mother, administrator, and professor. Halle said:

"And this maybe has more to do with being a single mom, but always on the clock. So, the second I walk away from this, and in fact there are two clocks, which I am sure you will also talk about, you know- I get the phone calls, you know, and I have to track and I have to set up her [daughter's] camp while I am here [in the academy] – so, so yeah, there is no gap, there's no time off."

Carol expresses time negotiation as an intense source of tension. Carol said:

"I don't have enough time to do what I need to do and so there is no way for me to get out of that tension– to me it's just there all the time."

The issue of tension and stress as a result of limited time often lead to mother professors taking control of a sphere schedule in an attempt to alleviate stress. For example, Willa expressed her tension with time in her home sphere preparing her children for school in the morning. She gets up at 3am to work on academic readings, start breakfast, and assure her children have what they need when she drops them off at their respective schools. Willa explains her process as a structured efficiency in which she enacts the process to assure success for her whole family unit. Willa said:

“But in terms of who is remembering all the various tasks – like as I said, I usually get up between three and four. And then, generally I try to go to yoga between five and six, and between sort of - around four and five I am doing things like getting ready and putting on oats for breakfast and then by the time I come back around six I am finishing up whatever breakfast I started and then making lunches for everybody. And so, by seven my husband can walk out the door with a lunch and I can be getting the kids to the bus by seven thirty. And get to work at eight and all of that has to happen... like if I don’t do it, no one does....And so there is sort of this efficiency principle which is ‘it’s easier if I do it’ so that I know there are underwear so that they can get on the bus and I can get to my job (laughs). You know?”

Contrary to Willa’s experience using scheduling to alleviate uncertainty, Veronica viewed scheduling as an oppositional force. She explained that no matter how hard she tried to schedule her home and work responsibilities, she never had enough time to spend with her children. Veronica said:

“So [time] feels like it should be seamless and it’s not. I think that’s the big thing. It just occurred to me now. It feels like it should fit. And it’s a shock that it doesn’t...So it’s actually really hard to fit everything in, even if it feels like your schedule is free. And, yeah, you can pick somebody up at 2:30 in the afternoon, but (clears throat) you don’t really have all that much time to give to your kids.”

Schedule flexibility analysis. The need for a “seamless” schedule and a “balance” of both work and home was widely discussed by the study participants. The mother professors explained that filling the role of mother and professors is a “full time job” and they are often left feeling as though they have “no time off” on the border between the two role domains.

When the domains overlap, as Nippert-Eng (1996) pointed out in border theory, the mother professors experienced a “tension” of dual role fulfillment. They were expected to operate in both domains at the same time and successfully manage the “all encompassing” cultural pressures of the professoriate. This social academic pressure to perform and produce high quantities of work in the professoriate was discussed by participants in terms of “never

[having] an endpoint”. In other words, the two domains of motherhood and professorship blend together to the extent that the roles become a joint “grey border”.

This concept of borders, as discussed by Clark (2000) and Desrochers and Sargent (2004), was vital to understanding the border domain experiences of time shared by mother professors in the current study. For example, mother professors in this study expressed a feeling of “flexibility”, “liberation” and “freedom” as a result of their “flexible” time schedules. They explained that if they needed to change their academic schedule to pick up a child in the middle of the afternoon, they probably could. However, this flexibility of borders subsequently leads to a high rate of permeability (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004; Nippert-Eng, 1996). This permeability leads to the “grey border” feeling Cora discussed; or the inability to separate the responsibilities and role expectations of each domain.

Time limitations and affiliated domain limitations were also discussed by participants. Two mother professors in the study discussed the freedom of “breaks” and particularly “having summer off”. Both women said that this allowed them more time to “spend together” with their children. However, the time off also came with a permeable border: “service” to the academy and expectation of academic publishing production. As a result, mother professors such as Carol, completely restructure their home domain border to be as permeable as possible, “chang[ing] your life” to fit the demands of the professoriate.

By constantly crossing the permeable and “flexible” border between the professoriate and motherhood, mother professors experienced a “structural” expectation of each respective role that they then morph into a schedule to “fit their capabilities” and ease the “tension” of time. This process, negotiating the border and forming schedules, happens over a long period of time

and is ever-changing. Thus, the “grey border” and “all encompassing” aspects of travelling between the professoriate and motherhood never fade away.

Age/ generations. The concepts of age and generational differences were discussed by participants as key factors which affected motherhood role enactment and interpersonal relationships of mother professors. Rita explained how generational differences affect how motherhood is viewed in the academy. Rita said:

“You know, the older generation of female professors – I think there was a lot of competition - it was a lot harder for them to um, compete if you will, in an industry, or in academia where there are mostly...well, you know it is mostly male dominated. So to feel like you can compete and do what you need to do, I think a lot of women felt like they needed to not have a family. And I don’t think that it’s quite as common as it used to be.”

According to Rita, by choosing to not enact or purposefully censure their role as a mother, some professors feel they are able to compete with the male professors of the academic hierarchy. Cora expresses a similar sentiment regarding female professors of older generations.

Cora said:

“A lot of women who came before us, umm... I mean some have adopted children, others didn’t even have children – It felt like a necessity for them to not if they were going to be successful. So I fell it’s kinda first generation to really... while there were some people who did it different, we are some of the first to start trying to have it all.”

Halle explained her experience entering motherhood in the academy. Halle discussed this experience in terms of age. She said:

“By the time you get tenure, well, you’re at least forty. And you have spent the last twenty years putting this [academia] first, and you can’t just change your brain [to be a mom].”

Losing an interpersonal network affected Veronica's ability to enact her motherhood in the professoriate. She explained this occurrence in terms of her age and the ages of those with whom she interacts. Veronica said:

"I feel like, 'Oh boy, everybody has turned over.' Everyone is a lot younger than me, all of a sudden. They used to be a lot older then, and then I had a few friends all over campus with kids who were my age, many with kids."

Now, a decade later, Veronica said that there is an expectation to frame her enacted experiences in a specific communicative framework. Veronica said:

"You're supposed to share personal insights of a very particular kind [not including motherhood]. And they are very stylized and I feel very old. Like my personal insights are actually more of a, uh, liability. So I feel if I could share it [insights] in a way that like seems sorta hipster like, it would be okay. But I'm not a hipster, like I don't spend time in bars and skinny jeans talking in like a quick banter. If I could share my experience in that way, that would be good, but that's not me."

Veronica's chose not to enact her experience as a mother. However, Veronica also chose not to engage in the generational communicative framework of her department interpersonal network.

Age and generation analysis. Another issue of regarding generational difference in the professoriate focused on the enactment of culturally expected and accepted ways of speaking. Veronica expressed this in her utterance regarding "hipster" ways of speaking. Because the EOC substantiates that culture and communication are inseparable and synonymous (Carbaugh, 2007; Covarrubias, 2002; Philipsen, 1997) this scenario was an example of how generational communication patterns affect mother professor's bordered experiences in the professoriate. Her choice to not enact her motherhood or professor roles in a "hipster" way marginalized Veronica from her peers. Veronica accepted that her enactment of motherhood and professorship would

forever be different from her younger peers and she embraced the difference as a generational quirk.

The age, status, and generational role models of mother professors affected their enactments of motherhood in the academy. The generational age “gap” presented another border the mother professors were forced to cross between the professoriate and their enactments of motherhood. Many women pointed at generational differences among faculty members as the source for the most “push-back” regarding motherhood in the academy, while other mothers blame their age and generational differences as the main source for othering in the academic sphere.

Chapter Five: Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

This current study contributes to the communication field by opening up discussion regarding mother professors’ experiences in the academy. As stated in the literature review, there was limited research that aimed to understand the structure and formation of interpersonal networks, double binds, and enactments of motherhood in the academy using approaches from the ethnography of communication. This study showcased that interpersonal resources are often limited, censored, or affected by the hierarchy of the professoriate. To better understand the contributions of this study, I revisit each research question and explicate the theoretical implication and methodological implication. Finally, I evaluated the research questions in terms of the practical implications this research provided as well as limitations and future research.

The theoretical implications of this study regarding experiences as mother and professors placed great emphasis on the need for solid, supportive interpersonal networks. However, this study found that most mother professors seek interpersonal networks in a censored environment because the professoriate did not embrace motherhood as a culturally accepted topic or role

enactment. Therefore, many mother professors gained support from peers who identified with their conflicting roles: professorship and motherhood. Theoretically, mother professors required and sought out interpersonal networks so they felt accepted into a professoriate group.

The methodological implications of the current research question one frames the importance of personal accounts at the border between motherhood and the professoriate. By giving mother professors a safe place to discuss their conflicting roles, an anonymous interview, participants were able to express their enactments and related double bind experiences in a casual setting, removed from the hierarchy of the professoriate. While surveys could gather data regarding interpersonal networks, the depth and richness of personal accounts gleaned from the ethnography of communication approach was more suited to the purpose of this study: understanding mother professor's cultural enactments and double bind scenarios in the professoriate domain. By exploring the formation and need for interpersonal networks through the direct utterances of mother professors, readers and researchers gained a more authentic view into the high points and struggles of bordered mother experiences.

Theoretical implications related to research question two of this study suggested that women use their interpersonal networks, both at home and at work, to formulate a sense of belonging. While many women expressed difficulties of being both a mother and professor; such as bordered or overlapping roles, othering, and double binds, they were careful to point out that the interpersonal networks were shaped by their resources of other mother professors. Therefore, the theoretical implications of research question one, two, and three merge into a central conclusion: mother professors sought other mother professors to understand and share their own experiences in the workplace to allow for cultural enactments of motherhood in the professoriate domain. While some women may feel marginalized or othered by attempting to fulfill and

balance both roles, there was an intense sense of comradery formed through the communication resources found in interpersonal networks.

The theoretical implications of motherhood as a social enactment in the academy stem from the interpersonal networks formed by mothers. Border theory explores interpersonal experiences in terms of domains, or circles of influence in this study. By seeking and joining a circle of influence, mothers gain a sense of confidence to enact their identity of motherhood in the academy. However, if a mother fails to gain access to/ find an interpersonal resource – such as another mother professor – she will more than likely choose to silence her motherhood status in the academy, thus failing to enact a portion of her identity.

Practical implications

The practical implications this study provided a theoretical and methodological framework for future work as well as an opportunity for understanding mother professors' experiences in the professoriate and opportunity for policy change. The mother professor experiences shared in this study, and the emergent data themes, expanded on border theory and double bind theory to incorporate the experiences of mothers in the professoriate, particularly their cultural enactments of motherhood as full time professors.

These coded themes and mother professor utterances were used to raise consciousness regarding marginalization of motherhood in the academy. For example, from the current study's data, university administration may better understand the communication resource needs of mother professors, such as: university-sanctioned support groups, casual interpersonal networks, university-sanctioned maternity leave, university-sanctioned/supported child care, and the ability to openly discuss and enact their roles as mothers in the professional professoriate domain.

This study also served as a resource for understanding. Readers who encounter this study immediately gained a more intimate look into the lives of mother professors. By sheer exposure to an often censured topic, these individuals gained additional understanding of how to interact with, help, and include mother professors in daily academic communication exchanges.

Limitations and future research.

Limitations. The limitations of the current research study are contextual and population based. Because I only had access to the large university setting, I was unable to produce data that represents all university cultures of North America. Instead, the scope and data of this study was solely focused on the research participants at one specific university, discussed in the Chapter 1 context section. Therefore, the context was limited to the culture, experiences, narratives, and demographics of the specific domain.

Future work. The academy must embrace motherhood and allow women to share their role as a mother and professor. The academy must become more humane. I hope to expand the current research study by extending future research into two additional areas of professoriate motherhood: parenting in the academy (both male and female receptions) and cultural motherhood in the academy.

The future study regarding parenthood in the academy would allow me to delve into the gendered experiences of parents in academia: similarities and differences of fatherhood and motherhood, social enactments of each, and resources for all parents. Mother professors in the current study mentioned that, oftentimes, fathers who are professors are culturally embraced and less othered than mother professors. I would like to interview fathers who are full time professors in order to glean their experiences and accounts regarding parenting in the professoriate.

The second avenue of future research, focusing on the cultural aspects of motherhood in the academy, would continue the current study's focus on motherhood, but evaluate understanding, resources, networks, and enactments of motherhood in the academy as a cultural space. For example, one mother professor mentioned that her personal identification as a Mexican mother greatly affected her experience as a mother in the professoriate. I am interested in accessing other cultures of motherhood in the academy to understand how/if national culture affects mother professor communication networks and double binds.

Afterword

I would like to thank the nine women who participated in this research study. I began this course of research with a desire to understand your everyday communication interactions and I conclude this research an empowered and inspired woman.

To the women and mothers who juggle the ups and down of academic life and loving a child: you are an inspiration to the world. I am honored to know each of you and deeply touched that you allowed me to share your stories. You are warriors.

To my committee members: thank you for giving me the opportunity to research a cultural topic that few professors embrace, a topic close to your heart, and one filled with emotional familiarities. Your insights, support, and input made me a stronger researcher and a stronger woman.

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Why are you being asked to take part in this research?

You are invited to take part in this study aimed at understanding the communication experiences of mother professors in the academic workplace. The name of this study is *Bordered mother professors: academic navigations of communication double binds*. You are being considered for participation in this study because you can offer personal insight, perspective, and narratives regarding your experience as both a mother and a university professor. If you choose to take part in this study, you will be one of 15-20 individuals interviewed on the subject of motherhood and academia.

Who is doing the study?

I, Sarah Fuller, am a graduate student at the University of New Mexico, in the Communication Department. I am being advised by Dr. Patricia Covarrubias of the University of New Mexico Communication Department.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to answer three research questions to assure a clear representation of mother professor experiences. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What communication resources do women at a major research university in the US Southwest have available to express their experiences in their dual and potentially conflictive identities as mothers and professors?

RQ2: How can women's expressed experiences as mother professors be understood as cultural enactment?

RQ3: How do mother professors use their available communication resources to shape interpersonal networks in their work-family lives?

What will you be asked to do?

Your voluntary involvement in this study will consist of a face-to-face, one-on-one interview comprised of 10 open-ended questions and will last about 30 to 60 minutes. The interview will be recorded by a digital voice recorder to assure complete accuracy when transcribing and representing your experience.

What are the possible risks and discomforts?

All interview questions are related to the experience of living as a mother professor in an academic environment. Therefore, the material discussed in the interview is not likely to pose direct emotional or physical risks. However, if at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question, you may stop the interview.

Do you have to take part in this study?

This research study is voluntary and you do not have any obligation to answer questions included in the interview. You may choose to withdraw your participation in the study at any time.

What will it cost to take part in this study?

There are no costs associated with your participation in the study.

Will you receive rewards for taking part in this study?

There is no tangible or financial reward for your voluntary participation in this study. I sincerely appreciate your time, effort, and insight.

Who will see the information you provide in this interview?

I, Sarah Fuller, will be the only person with full access to your name and interview transcriptions. Upon receiving your consent to voluntarily participate in this study, I will transcribe your interview data and immediately assign a random number to your interview. In all work (e.g., thesis, published articles, etc.) your name will not be used; instead the random number will be assigned to your narrative account. I will store this consent form as well as the interviewee information sheet, in my private home safe, only accessible by me.

What if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints?

If at any point you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints, feel free to contact me through my University of New Mexico email address at: sfuller7@unm.edu. If for any reason you are uncomfortable contacting me through the university email system, you may use my personal home email, sjfuller7@comcast.net, or call me on my personal cell phone, 505.321.2611.

Please indicate your agreement to participate in this study as explained above by signing below:

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Name of authorized person obtaining informed consent

Date

Appendix B: Interview Instrument

The following interview instrument is informed by Lindlof and Taylor (2011) and Kvale (1996).

Briefing:

This interview is designed to understand the communication resources women at a major research university in the US Southwest have available to express their experiences in their dual and potentially conflictive identities as mothers and professors. It focuses on the interpersonal networks available to mother professors that help navigate life at the periphery of the professional academic sphere. I will not divulge any information from this interview that will threaten your employment or result in retaliation. Your name will be changed immediately following the collection of data. This interview is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw your participation at any point before, during, or after the interview process.

This interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

1. Tell me a story about a particular incident in your life that really brought home the idea that you are living in multiple worlds.
2. For someone who does not live in your world, what would you tell them are some of the challenges of being a mother professor?
3. For someone who does not live in our world, what you would tell them are some of the positives of being a mother professor?
4. In one to three words, how would you describe your life as a mother professor?
5. When others find out you are a mother:
 - a. How do they find out?
 - b. How do they react?
 - c. How do you react to their reaction?
[Possible Probe 1: Do you have personal artifacts (i.e. pictures of family and children, child's artwork, child's school pictures) in your office? Why or why not?]
[Possible Probe 2: How did this specific example event make you feel? What emotions did it evoke?]
6. Do you have any network or group of people that share your world/ live in your world?
 - a. How did you organize yourselves?
7. How would you define your department culture on the basis of everything you have told me?
[Possible Probe 1: Where do you see your place in the department culture?]
8. How do you define the ideal mother? How do you think the university defines the ideal mother?
9. How do you define the ideal professor? How do you think the university defines the ideal professor?
10. Is there anything you would like to share that I haven't asked and that would help explain your experience to others?

Debriefing: As a researcher and child of a working mother, I am passionate about the experiences of mother professors. I hope to use the narrative you have provided to share perspectives and insights of your experience with other mother professors – I hope this will inform new conversations and bring attention to the resources available to women like yourself. I sincerely thank you, on behalf of all mother professors and myself, for participating in this interview. Please feel free to ask any questions at this time or in the future – you may contact me

at sfuller7@unm.edu. Again, all information and questions will be completely confidential. I sincerely thank you for your time.

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