FINAL REPORT

UNDERSTANDING THE FEMALE OFFENDER (2001-IJ-CX-0034)

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INTRODUCTION

The project activities described in this final report detail the three key phases of the project and outline key deliverables and/or findings. The primary goals of this study were three-fold. First, we set out develop a computerized version of the data collected for the Glueck and Glueck Women's Reformatory Study. These data were maintained on microfilm a significant portion of the project timeline was devoted to data coding and data entry to generate a computerized database that could be used for statistical analysis. Second, we did a thorough literature review in two broad areas. One area covers contemporary theories and empirical work related to female offending patterns, highlighting the factors associated with persistence and desistance among female offenders. The second area focused on the historical context within which the data were collected, highlighting factors that influenced women's offending behavior at the time. Here we were particularly interested in the role of behavioral norms and expectations as they affected women, and how those influenced definitions of offending and related arrest patterns. Using these two literatures, we developed hypotheses about the key factors that would impact women's offending trajectories, triggering desistance or encouraging persistence. Third, we analyzed the data, testing the hypotheses that emerged from our literature review.

In brief, using historical data on 500 female offenders collected by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck in the 1920s, we examine how social capital generated via commitments to marriage, motherhood, and work influence women's desistance. We also examine the influence of women's personal motivation to change, to test whether social capital is more powerful when combined with agentic movement toward change. Our data provide a test of the scope of current theories of desistance, examining both their applicability to women's experiences and their historical specificity. Our findings suggest that social capital and personal agency are implicated in desistance in a manner that transcends both gender and historical context. At the same time, the specific manner in which these processes affect desistance appears to be contingent on gender and historical context in notable ways. Below we outline the data development process, the key literature guiding this work, and the emergent hypotheses and related findings.

DATA DEVELOPMENT

Data for the current investigation come from the Sheldon and Eleanor Gluek's Women's Reformatory Study, and were originally collected for their work investigating the correlates of female offending. Details of the original study and related findings are presented in the book *500 Delinquent Women* (Glueck and Glueck, 1934). Through their research efforts, the Gluecks sought to identify the key factors influencing female offending and to develop a typological schema for classifying female offenders. This required the collection of detailed case history data on the female offenders who comprised their sample, making for an extremely rich dataset even by contemporary standards. The data contain retrospective information on the childhood, adolescent, and early adult backgrounds of 500 female offenders, focusing on physical, psychological and social characteristics. In addition, they include detailed information on the women's Reformatory experiences and post-reformatory adjustment to work and family as well as their offending behavior during a five year post-parole follow-up period.

While the Glueck's experienced some sample attrition, complete retrospective life history and prospective follow-up data was collected for 424 women. Of the 76 women for whom complete data is unavailable (15% of the total sample), the majority (53%; N=40) were legitimately excluded from the follow-up as a result of death (24%; N=19), institutionalization (24%; N=18), or deportation (4%; N=3), while the remainder (47%; N=36) were never located during follow-up (35%; N=27) or had limited/inadequate follow-up data (12%; N=9). All available data for all 500 women was coded, though analyses, described later, focus on the 424 women who the Gluecks were able to track through the five-year follow-up period.

Procedure

The Gluecks and their team of research assistants gathered the original data, which we coded and automated for the current study. The methods developed by the Gluecks for gathering, verifying, and editing the data were based on their previous research with male offenders, *500 Criminal Careers* (1930), and are described in detail in *500 Delinquent Women* (1934). According to their documentation, the women in this study were selected for participation if their parole from the Women's Reformatory expired between the years 1921 and 1925. Cases were selected in consecutive order, beginning in December 1924 and working backward until the required number of cases (N = 500) had been assembled, with the majority of the women originally committed between 1918 and 1922. Data were collected from a number of sources and then recorded on standardized assessment protocols. Data for each case were summarized on five separate data collection forms documenting each offender's personal, family, reformatory, parole, and post-parole experiences. The original data collection instruments for all but the follow-up data were developed using Reformatory case files for 50 test subjects. These case files were thoroughly examined on each of the key data collection domains, and the information gathered from case files was checked against multiple sources for validity. The data collection instrument was then refined and finalized. Since post-parole data could not be culled from case files, this instrument was developed

separately but was designed to generate data that would be comparable to that gleaned from the case files and provide insight into the benefits and drawbacks of the Reformatory experience for the women in the sample. These data were gathered through direct contact with the offender and/or other reliable informants (e.g., family members, employers, social workers, etc.).

Since much of the data used to fill out each assessment instrument was based on offenders retrospective accounts of their experiences as documented by Reformatory staff in case records, the validity of the data is an important concern. The Gluecks went to considerable lengths to verify the data they collected from these records. Based on their account, the superintendent of the Women's Reformatory (Mrs. Jessie Hodder) and her research associate (Miss Barbara Sanborn) were meticulous in the collection and verification of the information reported by these 500 women. Upon entry to the Women's Reformatory, Miss Sanborn personally interviewed each woman. Information garnered from these interviews was then verified by further investigation. The staff at the Reformatory sent form letters to city clerks asking for verification of each offender's date of birth, the date of birth of any children as well as verification of marriages and causes of deaths of members of the family. Inquiries were made to the principals of the schools that the offender had attended to verify reported educational histories. Offenders' family physicians were contacted to verify medical history and standard of living information. The superintendents of hospitals or other institutions in which the offender or members of her family had been confined were asked for diagnoses, dates of confinement, and prognoses. Employers were questioned regarding the offender's abilities, the exact nature of her employment, her earnings, and the reasons for her discharge. If there were gaps in the court record, police and probation officers were asked to fill in the missing pieces. A letter was also sent to the offender's family asking for a statement regarding her family background. Pastors and social agencies were also contacted. Miss Sanborn then compiled all of this information into a summary statement that was placed in the offender's file. With the help of a full-time research assistant, the Gluecks spent one academic year analyzing the material in the offenders' files and entering the appropriate data onto the data collection instruments.

While the Gluecks collected and coded an extensive array of data on each of the 500 offenders, the data were originally collected in paper format and ultimately stored on microfiche at the Henry A. Murray Research Center of Radcliffe College (the Murray Center). In order to analyze these data using contemporary analytic techniques, they had to be converted to an automated format. Upon receipt of the microfiche documents from the Murray Center, each case was individually printed so that a paper copy could be used for data coding and entry. Prior to data entry, the authors held several collaborative meetings with their research assistants to establish coding guidelines and to produce a standardized manual for data entry. We then developed a computerized data entry system that closely mirrored the five data collection instruments developed by the Gluecks. Trained research assistants entered the data and, following data entry, conducted an extensive data cleaning effort designed to ensure the validity of the newly created data set. We relied on two strategies to validate the data. The first focused on coder reliability. After all of the cases were coded, nineteen cases were randomly selected for

re-entry by a different coder. We then examined the overlap and divergence between coders for each double-entered case. Focusing on those variables for which the coders were to enter a categorical numeric response (N=2,581), coder entries matched 96.6% of the time. While the extensive amount of data collected for each case precluded the double entry of a large number of cases, these results suggest that the coding rules were precise enough to generate minimal confusion among coders and ensure reliable data entry. In addition to this double entry procedure, we carefully checked the frequencies for variables in our computerized database against those reported by Glueck and Glueck (1934) and found that we were able to reproduce the data presented by Glueck and Glueck using our computerized database. This further reaffirmed our confidence in the reliability of the computerized data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender and Desistance

The study of desistance has recently garnered considerable theoretical and empirical attention. Questions of when, why, and how individuals exit an offending trajectory have been central to broader efforts to articulate life course theories of offending that model criminal behavior and its correlates from childhood into adulthood. While theories of offending have traditionally focused on *between* individual variation in exposure to a range of criminogenic influences, life course models focus on the factors that shape *within* individual patterns of stability and change in offending behavior. Recent interest in desistance as a key element of the life course model can be traced to Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control. This work elaborates a life course theory of offending emphasizing not only the factors that shape its onset and persistence, but equally important, those that influence its eventual decline. Among their most notable findings is that adulthood processes factor heavily in adult offending patterns such that, independent of individual differences and regardless of childhood/adolescent experiences and behavior, the accumulation of social capital and related experiences of social control accrued through attachments to conventional adult institutions can induce desistance. Using data on 500 delinquent boys and 500 controls followed into adulthood, their findings support this theoretical model. While their data were originally collected in the mid 1900s, empirical work with more contemporary data sets reinforce their conclusions (Horney, Osgood, and Marshall 1995, Piquero, Brame, Mazerolle, and Haapanen 2002). Refinements to the original life course model proposed by Sampson and Laub (Laub and Samspon 2003), along with other recent work (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph 2002; Maruna 2004; Rumgay 2004; Sommers, Baskin, and Fagan 1994), suggests that personal agency also plays a central role in initiating the behavioral changes associated with adult desistance.

Until recently, the study of desistance focused almost exclusively on males. However, researchers have begun to examine whether social capital accrued through social bonds that tie individuals to one another and to important social institutions (especially work and family) influence female desistance in the same way they influence male desistance (Alarid, Burton, and Cullen 2000; Giordano et al. 2002; Griffin and

Armstrong 2003; Li and MacKenzie 2003; Simons, Stewart, Gordon, Conger, and Elder 2002; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998). This body of literature suggests that desistance is shaped by complex patterns of social capital and social control, some of which are gender neutral, and others of which prove more gender specific. However, it is virtually impossible to draw any concrete conclusions from this body of work, as results are notably inconsistent across studies.

Giordano et al.'s (2002) findings with respect to social capital and social control are, in effect, gender-neutral. However, contrary to the findings reported by Sampson and Laub (1993), their analyses reveal that traditional measures of social control (marital attachment and job stability) have insignificant effects on both male and female desistance. Recent work by Piquero, Brame and Moffitt (2005) also suggests similar long term offending patterns and uniform influences across males and females, arguing that for both males and females, offending trajectories in adulthood can be predicted from offending behavior in adolescence. They argue that this suggests a strong trait component associated with long-term offending, though note that cumulating disadvantages and labeling effects may also help account for these patterns. While their focus is on continuity as opposed to change, the implication that the factors influencing long term offending patterns across males and females are similar is still notable here. Other work, however, documents important distinctions among the life course offending trajectories of males and females, with fewer offender groups among females, more limited offending behavior, and earlier desistance (D'Unger et al. 2002).

Building on these differences, another body of research reinforces the importance of social capital/social control for desistance among both males and females, while noting gendered variation in the specifics of the desistance process. Uggen and Kruttschnitt's (1998) work suggests that the social capital and related social controls that evolve from parenthood, school, work, and involvement with conventional peers, have stronger effects on female than male desistance and conclude that the factors that influence official desistance are not gender neutral. These findings are similar to those reported by Alarid et al. (2000), who find that the social controls that evolve out of social capital have a stronger influence on female compared to male desistance. Simons et al. (2002) also report variation in the strength of social control measures across gender, with a broader array of social control influences reported to impact adult desistance among females compared to males. At the same time their work indicates that delinquent peers and antisocial romantic partners jeopardize desistance more strongly among males than females. In general, these studies all find that key variables operate similarly across gender, though the size of their effects often vary. Limited research suggests even more notable variation across males and females in the desistance process. Li and MacKenzie (2003) report that social controls have divergent effects on male and female desistance. Their findings indicate that social bonds are linked to male desistance, but facilitate female recidivism. While noting the potential biases introduced by their non-representative sampling method, the authors attribute this admittedly counterintuitive finding to the fact that, for women, traditional indicators of social capital (marriage, education, and employment) may not be linked to social control for women but instead may increase access to criminal opportunity.

The results from this body of work are difficult to interpret. Part of the variation across studies is likely attributable to distinct sampling strategies and methodological designs. Still, as a whole, the results indicate that at the very least, similar theoretical processes may manifest differently across males and females and may have distinct influences on male and female desistance. Moreover, the results suggest that we should use caution in applying what we know about male desistance patterns to females. Indeed, Giordano et al. (2002) suggest that in thinking about desistance, especially among females, social capital and social control may be less important than cognitive orientations, personal agency and related commitments to behavioral change. These factors have recently been invoked by Maruna (2004) to help explain desistance among offenders in the Liverpool Desistance Study. He reports that recidivists are significantly more likely than desisters to interpret negative events as the product of stable, internal character failings. Desisters on the other hand, are significantly more likely than persiters to attribute positive events to stable, internal characteristics. Similarly, focusing on female offenders, Giordano et al. (2002) report that desisters evidence a personal commitment to change and a strong conviction that they have the potential to improve their lives. Sommers, Baskin, and Fagin (1994) also find that women's motivation to stop offending is central to their eventual desistance. Indeed, Rumgay (2004) argues that cognitive commitments to change may be particularly central to the desistance process for female offenders.

This body of work focusing on the role of personal agency in the desistance process suggests that without a cognitive commitment to change, or a firm belief in the possibility of change, desistance is unlikely. However, as Giordano et al. (2002) suggest, this idea is complementary to Sampson and Laub's theory of informal social control. Invoking personal agency can help offenders access the more substantive social capital and related social controls implicated in behavioral change. Sommers et al. (1994) make a similar argument, linking the cognitive decision to stop offending with actual behavioral change and, importantly, changes in offender's social networks. Indeed, Laub and Sampson's (2003) recent update to *Crime in the Making* integrates personal agency into their theory. The current project adds to the growing body of literature that examines the influence of adult social capital and cognitive commitments to change on women's desistance by exploring these influences in a unique historical context. Our aim is to help articulate the scope of these influences as well as their contextually specific manifestations. In what follows, we specify the potential role of historical context in shaping the influence of key indicators of social capital and personal agency on female desistance.

The Importance of Historical Context

Life course criminology has been largely silent on the role of historical context in shaping offending trajectories. Laub and Samspon (2003), however, point out that such an omission is problematic as the salience of any particular turning point is historically embedded (see also Elder, Modell, and Parke 1993). Giordano et al. (2002) echo this point, arguing that historical variations in opportunities to access important social

institutions may help account for the fact that ties to conventional institutions prove less significant in the desistance process for men and women in their contemporary sample than is the case in Sampson and Laub's work examining men who came of age in the middle part of the twentieth century. While Sampson and Laub argue that growing up during the Great Depression had a profound impact on the men in their study, the way in which this historical context shaped the offending trajectories of the men in their sample is never entirely clear, and in the end, broad social processes take precedence over the historical specificity of their manifestations. In fact, Sampson and Laub are skeptical that the particular forms of social capital and social control they document are historically or socially specific, making the case that the centrality of marriage as a turning point, for example, should transcend place, historical time, gender, and race (2003; 283-284). While we agree that broad constructs such as social capital and social control should apply across contexts, like Giordano et al. (2002), we would argue that particular avenues for accessing social capital and social control might not transcend historical and social context.

We explore this potential variation by examining female offending trajectories in the context of the early twentieth century. There are a number of historically unique dynamics that impacted the lives of women in the early 1900s and these dynamics cannot be overlooked as we explore the offending trajectories of women who came of age during this period. The early 1900s marked important economic and social shifts that were particularly dramatic for women. Industrial capitalism firmly replaced the domestic economy and working class women now had an undeniable presence in the labor market as domestic and factory workers (Smith 1994). As women took their place in the labor market, the traditional public/private divide that had been institutionalized in the nineteenth century became increasingly difficult to sustain, especially among working class families who relied on the labor of their older daughters and wives to supplement the family income (Kessler-Harris 2003; Odem 1995; Peiss 1986). In this context, women's sexuality became a matter of central concern. Young working class women not only worked in the public sphere, but also increasingly flocked to the city's public venues for leisure (Peiss 1986; Perry 1985). Here they interacted with young men and engaged in sexual behavior outside of marriage that contrasted sharply with middle class values that only recognized women's sexual desires under the pretense of matrimony and motherhood.

In response to the increasingly overt sexuality of working class girls, middle class reformers launched a variety of social campaigns designed to curb immoral behavior and preserve women's purity. While many of these campaigns relied on informal social controls, a corresponding efforts on the part of formal social control agents also intensified (Boritch and Hagan 1990). The women's reformatory system emerged in this context and represented an effort to employ the formal authority of the state to impact the "suspect" behavior of working class girls (Odem 1995). As Freedman (1981) and Rafter (1990) both document, this system was designed specifically to reform the "fallen woman" who had strayed too far from normative middle class ideals of femininity. Reformatories focused their efforts on young women convicted for vice or moral offenses, reflecting a concern with uncontrolled female sexuality and behaviors that

might encourage promiscuity (e.g., smoking, drinking, vagrancy). While their violations were often petty, reformatory sentences were lengthy, with indeterminate sentences of two to five years being common (Rafter 1990). Notably, these sentences were imposed for behaviors that were ignored or leniently sanctioned among boys (Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2004). Reformatory personnel justified these lengthy commitments by arguing that the women referred to the reformatory system were in need of intense moral training that could only be realized through a substantial time commitment. The goal of the reformatory, then, was to instill in working class women, middle class norms that hailed marriage as the only proper venue under which sexual behavior could be legitimately fulfilling, and motherhood as its prime goal (Odem 1995).

Our analysis of the centrality of social capital and personal agency to women's official offending trajectories focuses on these dynamics in the context of working class women institutionalized in the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women in the 1920s. We proceed by outlining the broad and contextually specific ways in which we expect these influences to shape future institutional involvement among female offenders confined in the reformatory system in the 1920s.

Adult Institutions and Criminal Trajectories

As previously noted, Sampson and Laub's research has highlighted the fact that continuity and change in offending behavior, manifest in adult patterns of persistence, intermittency and desistance are significantly linked to the contemporaneous events and social contexts that mark adulthood. Focusing on males, they implicate the social capital and social controls provided by marriage, employment, and the military in the desistance process. While Sampson and Laub developed their theory to explain continuity and change in male offending trajectories, the idea that those adult experiences that foster social control often mark turning points in a person's criminal trajectory represents a broad theoretical expectation that should be similarly applicable to female trajectories (c.f. Giordano et al. 2002). What seems less clear is whether similar institutional ties mark these important transitions for women. Certainly, compared to men, women's military ties are limited and there is evidence to suggest that marriage and employment, while salient for women, provide unique emotional and social benefits and may influence male and female offending trajectories in unique ways (Giordano et al. 2002). Moreover, as Giordano et al. note, we need to be sensitive to historical context, since macro level shifts in access to normative institutions as well as the relative importance of various institutions could affect the way in which institutional ties shape offending trajectories.

Marriage

While there is evidence to suggest that, even into the latter part of the twentieth century, marriage offers distinct benefits to and has unique meanings for men and women (Bielby and Bielby 1989; Thompson and Walker 1989; Turner and Turner 1999), this was undeniably true in the early twentieth century. Despite the fact that women in the 1920's had begun to challenge their relegation to the private sphere by engaging in public activism, leisure, and work, domesticity remained central to their lives (Smith, 1994). In

fact, the 1920 census revealed that 75 percent of adult women "functioned exclusively as wives, mothers, and housekeepers in their own home" (Smith 1994: 48). At the same time, birth rates were dropping and divorce was becoming more common, though it remained morally suspect (O'Neill 1965; Smith 1994). Notions of marriage as a union that should provide emotional, sexual, and economic benefits for women took their place alongside the notion of marriage as a moral imperative. While women still aspired to marriage, marital quality became a central focus as is clear from the fact that by 1915 one in nine marriages ended in divorce and it was women who secured two thirds of these divorces (O'Neill 1965; Smith 1994).

This historical context leads to predictions that both mirror and challenge those proposed by Sampson and Laub (1993; Laub and Sampson 2003) and Giordano et al. (2002) regarding the role of marriage as a catalyst for social capital and social control and a potential turning point in women's criminal trajectories. As noted above, Sampson and Laub argue that the effect of marriage should transcend time and gender. Their work suggests that, while marriage per se may not generate desistance, there is a "good marriage" effect that operates via increased social control (Laub, Nagin, and Sampson 1998; Sampson and Laub 1993) as a function of strong ties to conventional others (Sampson and Laub 1993) and reduced ties to nonconventional peers (Warr 1998). Yet, Giordano et al. (2002) find little evidence that this good marriage effect transcends time or gender and propose that Sampson and Laub's findings are historically specific and may be gendered. Their research with offenders who came of age half a century later than the Glueck men studied by Samspon and Laub indicates that marital attachment does not prove uniformly central to desistance. Despite the concession that their findings may reflect a lack of statistical power, Giordano et al. (2002) argue that these results are more likely a reflection of changes in the likelihood, stability, and meaning of marriage over time. There is also evidence to suggest that marriage can foster recidivism among women, a finding that has been interpreted as an assortative mating effect (Krueger, Moffitt, Caspi, Bleske, and Silva 1998; Simons et al. 2002). Women may be especially vulnerable to such effects as research suggests that women are often drawn into criminal endeavors through their associations with deviant male partners (Alarid et al. 2000; Hanynie 2001; Steffensmeier and Allan 1996).

For women who came of age in the 1920s, marriage was a virtually universal goal and entry into marriage signaled support for the middle class norms and values thought to guard against sexual waywardness (Odem 1995; Smith 1994). Since crimes against morality represented the majority of offenses for which young women entered the reformatory system in the early 1900s (Odem 1995; Rafter 1990), marriage itself may be a turning point that marks the start of a desistance process. Moreover, it may signal to the formal authorities charged with guarding women's morality, a commitment conventional behavior norms that would limit the intrusion of formal social control into the lives of women in the early 1900s. Hence, we contend that, for women in the early 1900s, marriage itself is implicated in desistance. However, given recent findings regarding assortative mating effects, we contend that this only holds for women who marry conventional male partners.

Marriage was a moral expectation for women in the early 1900s but, as we noted earlier, the stability of marriage was undergoing notable changes during this period. Its meaning to and benefits for women were increasingly coming under attack by divorce advocates who argued, among other things, that marriage was a repressive institution that discriminated against women and subjected them to sexual victimization (O'Neill 1965). While those opposed to divorce remained the majority, even they were coming to recognize the importance of a mutually fulfilling relationship to the success of marriage as an institution. As such, while entry into marriage may limit the intrusion of formal control agents into women's lives, marital quality is likely a more significant mark of the social capital and social control processes underlying the linkage between matrimony and behavioral change. We thus hypothesize that marital quality will also significantly increase the likelihood of desistance among female offenders in the early 1900s.

Motherhood

The importance of marriage for women in the early 1920s was intricately bound with the status and centrality of motherhood in women's lives. Domestic life was central to women's identities and motherhood a virtual mandate. Like marriage, motherhood itself might indicate a commitment to normative expectations. However, as contemporary authors have noted, motherhood is a double edged sword, since societal expectation of appropriate mothering can place unrealistic demands on lower class women that can both criminalize their "improper" enactment of the mothering role, and compel them to crime to help them manage the demands of mothering (Ferraro and Moe 2003; Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2004). But, while motherhood may be linked to women's entry into the system, it might also make desistance a priority as women, once removed from their children, realize the risks of their behavior for their children and their relationship to their children. Consistent with this, recent research reports that women with children are significantly more likely to desist than those without (Graham and Bowling 1996; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998). The majority of women currently in the system have children under 18 and qualitative studies have found that separation from their children is among the chief sources of anxiety for incarcerated women (Enos 2001; Henriques 1982; Watterson 1996). Not only are incarcerated men comparatively less likely to have children, those who do are rarely the primary guardian for their children. Hence, while fatherhood does not prove central to the desistance experience of males in Sampson and Laub's study, it is a central theme in narratives of contemporary samples of incarcerated women (Enos 2001; Ferraro and Moe 2003; Watterson, 1996) and we suspect it is equally central, if not more central in the lives of women incarecerated in the 1920s. It is important to note here that Giordano et al. do not report any significant relation between attachment to children and desistance among the men and women in their contemporary sample. At the same time, 26% of the women in their sample invoke their children as an impetus for desistance, compared to only 7% of the men in their sample.

Work

The role of wife and mother are central to women's identities and to the societal expectations of women, both in the 1920s and today (though deviations from these roles are more common today). Historically work, among women, has been less clearly tied to identity and more clearly tied to need, especially for poor, immigrant, and/or minority women. And, while women have made significant inroads into the professions, work remains an often hard won necessity for poor, minority women, even today. Giordano et al. (2002) report that the women in their sample have difficulty finding work and, when they do find work, it is generally in low wage, unstable, service sector jobs. So, whereas Sampson and Laub report stable, quality employment to be central to the desistance process for males, it is less clear how work might affect women's desistance trajectories. Not only is such work difficult for the typically marginalized female offender population to secure, it is traditionally less central to women's identities. At the same time, for single women, especially those with children, a stable job could be the key to desistance, since many women report committing crime for the express purpose of supporting their families (Ferraro and Moe 2003). While women's work was not a necessity (and indeed a rarity) among upper and middle-class women in the 1920s, the same was not true among poor women, many of whom came from immigrant or minority backgrounds. Young, single girls often left their families to move to the city and work in factories or the retail/manufacturing sector in clerical or sales jobs (Boritch and Hagan, 1990; Hembold and Schofield 1989; Smith 1994). This work was necessary to help supplement the family income, but many social commentators derided the dangers and temptations these young women were exposed to living alone in the city. Domestic work was also common, and viewed as less "dangerous" since the girls generally boarded with middle- or upper-class families. It would appear that, for women, especially in the early 20th century, certain types of work might prove criminogenic and others protective. Indeed, the reformatories steered single women towards domestic service as opposed to factory work since it helped to prepare them for their eventual role as wives and provided a monitored environment with few criminal temptations (Freedman 1981; Odem 1995; Rafter 1990). Hence, for the women in our sample, the role of stable employment may be context specific. Getting married and moving out of the job market is likely to trigger desistance as it remained the "ideal" situation for a woman in the early 20th century. Still, many poor women worked out of necessity and for these women we suspect that domestic work proves protective while non-domestic work is implicated in reoffending.

To summarize, we hypothesize that social capital and related social controls will facilitate desistance among females committed to the Reformatory System in the early 1900s, but in gendered and historically specific ways. Taking into account gender and historical context, we hypothesize that 1) both being married to a conventional husband and having a quality marriage will increase the likelihood of desistance among the women in our sample, 2) having children will make desistance more likely, 3) the effect of work on desistance will depend on both the quality and type of work, with high quality work and work in the domestic arena increasing the likelihood of desistance and factory work decreasing the likelihood of desistance, and 4) not having to work (being supported as a housewife) will also increase the likelihood of desistance.

Personal Agency

Finally, we explore the role of personal agency and cognitive commitments to change on desistance. Giordano et al. (2002) argue that cognitive transformations have a stronger influence on desistance than bonds to conventional adult institutions among contemporary offending populations. Their work suggests that access to the conventional adult institutions that foster social capital and social control is so limited that an explicit cognitive transformation is mandated to overcome the influence of severe disadvantage faced by this population. However, they contend that such notable disadvantage was not a feature of the social world navigated by the Glueck men who made up Sampson and Laub's sample, which helps to explain why the social control effects found by Sampson and Laub could not be replicated by Giordano et al. We contend that such severe disadvantage is also not a feature of the social worlds of the Glueck women we focus on for this work. Here we expect our findings to be more similar to those reported by Laub and Sampson (2003), wherein personal agency is linked to desistance, but in conjunction with, rather than in lieu of attachments to conventional adult institutions. We hypothesize that cognitive commitments to change will not be as strongly implicated in desistance as social capital. However, an explicit commitment to change should nonetheless increase the likelihood of desistance both directly and indirectly, by moderating the influence of the above-mentioned institutional ties on desistance. In other words, expect that personal agency will be significantly associated with desistance and that key indicators of social capital will be more strongly associated with desistance among those with strong cognitive commitments to change.

Project Goals

In the end, our goal is to contribute to recent work on the role of social capital and personal agency in shaping desistance by examining the impact of these key processes on female offending trajectories. At the same time, we hypothesize that these broad theoretical processes are manifest in unique ways as a function of historical and social context. Understanding women's desistance patterns requires a nuanced assessment of their social positions and related opportunities. We argue that the specific features of women's social worlds (and indeed men's) are not historically stable and propose that both theory and policy need to account for the dynamic features of the social worlds navigated by men and women. As such, we interpret both the broad theoretical implications of our findings and the specific ways in which they are influenced by gender and history.

DATA ANALYSIS

Variables

Desistance. Analyses examine the factors that accelerate desistance for the women in this sample, focusing on the factors that distinguish those offenders who return to crime in the five years following their parole (non-desisters, coded as 0), from those who do not (desisters, coded as 1). We recognize the possibility that the desisters might eventually re-offend, and that the non-desisters might eventually stop offending.

However, in our view, articulating the factors that inhibit offending among previously active offenders over a five-year period adds to our understanding of the social and personal contexts that generate turning points in women's offending trajectories.

The data provide two potential measures of desistance, one based on official arrest records and another based on unofficial behavior reports. Here we focus on the arrest data, defining desisters as those women who were not arrested in the five year, post-parole follow-up period[i]. Our decision to focus on official as opposed to unofficial data stems from the very "private" nature of the offenses noted in reports of unofficial offending. Most references to unofficial offending note the lapses in the women's sexual or moral behavior, indicating that she has been "promiscuous" or is presumed to have been involved in adultery or prostitution. Often times, however, such charges are not based on the admission of the offender, but on the word of informants who are likely assuming the woman's involvement in such behavior, without direct evidence. Since such assessments could be influenced by the prior behavior of the offender, in other words, be based on labeling effects and related behavioral expectations, we are reticent to reify them by treating them as behavioral fact. While similar biases might influence arrest decisions, we would argue that biases on the part of the police are more likely to be reflected in the police overlooking the criminal behavioral/moral lapses of certain classes of women (i.e. middle and upper class white women) than in arresting women for behavior they did not actually engage in[ii]. Of the 424 women for whom we have complete follow-up data, 264 (62%) avoided arrest in the 5 years following their parole and are classified here as desisters. Between them, the remaining 160 women (38%) accumulated 235 arrests during the follow-up period. The majority of these arrests were for non-sexual moral offenses (47%), especially alcohol related offenses as they exited parole during the prohibition. Sex-related offenses were also common (35%), with the remaining arrests reflecting person/property offenses (18%), primarily larceny/theft. The outcome measure is a reflection of rearrest in the post-parole period with 0=official arrest record post-parole (non-desister) and 1=no arrest record post-parole (desister).

Independent Variables

We are particularly interested in whether and how adult social capital influences women's desistance. We explore the role of adult social capital in three domains: marriage, motherhood, and work. In addition to social capital, we are interested in the influence of personal agency on desistance. The description of these variables is presented below.

Marriage. We examine the role of marital status and marital quality. While our hypotheses lead us to expect that the contemporaneous effects of social capital are more important than the effects of the social capital women had upon their entry into the system, it is important to control for prior social capital. We focus here on the most recent marriage prior to commitment and the marriage (if any) documented in the post-parole follow-up period. As such, we include measures of offenders' marital status at commitment and during follow-up. The measures of marital status reflects whether the offender was married and living with her husband at commitment and/or during the post-

parole period (1=married, 0=not married). Since separation was a common alternative to divorce in the early 1900's, the caveat that married couples are living together (not separated) is an important one when analyzing the influence of marital status. Focusing on the women who are married post-parole, we also examine the character of her spouse, particularly his offending behavior and employment patterns. Husbands are categorized as "conventional" if they are reported as having a steady job and no arrest history (1=conventional, 0=not conventional).

In addition to marital status, we also examine the influence of marital quality in both the pre-commitment period and the post-parole follow-up period. Marital quality scores for the period prior to commitment and the post-parole period are based on a factor weighted scale with 4 indicators: the attitude of the offender and of her husband towards marital responsibility (1= neglects responsibility; 2=accepts responsibility), along with the quality of conjugal relations and the offender's competence as a homemaker (both coded as: 1=poor; 2=fair; 3=good). Higher scores on this variable reflect higher marital quality (alpha for marital quality at commitment =.69; alpha for marital quality post-parole =.86). This variable was generated only for those women who were ever married (this includes women who were separated, divorced, or widowed) during the period of interest (prior to commitment for the marital quality at commitment scale and post-parole for the marital quality post-parole scale). For this group, any missing data on a given scale item was replaced with the mean value on that item. In order to preserve cases in regression models, missing scores for the single (never married) women on the marital quality scales were replaced with a score of 0 (N=205 prior to commitment: N=69 post-parole). Since these are factor-weighted scales with a mean of zero, a score of zero for this group is meant to signify that these unmarried women were neither encumbered by the pitfalls of a bad marriage nor benefited from the rewards of a good marriage[iii].

Motherhood. The data provide only limited information about parenting and parent/child relationships. We can, however, assess the role of motherhood status on desistance. The data provide two points of information, one reflecting whether the woman had children prior to her commitment (1=yes, 0=no) and the other reflecting whether or not she gave birth to children following her parole (1=yes, 0=no). While the Gluecks did attempt to gather information about the quality of parenting provided by these women, the information is missing in too many cases to generate any solid empirical conclusions.

Work. The final arena through which we examine social capital effects is work. In addition to employment status (*working at commitment* and *working post-parole*: 1=yes, 0=no), we also examine job quality at commitment and post-parole for those who ever worked during these periods. In both instances the measure is a factor-weighted summed index based on 2 items reflecting the offenders work habits (1=poor; 2=fair; 3=good) and the steadiness of her employment (1=irregular, 2=fairly irregular; 3=fairly regular; 4=regular). Missing data on either variable was replaced with the mean for those who worked during the period of interest. Higher scores reflect a higher quality work experience (alpha for pre-commitment job quality =.71; alpha for post-parole job quality =.81). As was the case with the marital quality scale scores, we replace missing data for

those not working with 0, the mean scale score, on the assumption that they neither benefit nor suffer from the demands and rewards of employment (N=10 prior to commitment; N=181 post parole)[iv]. Additionally, we examine whether job type post-parole influences desistance. Here we use variables reflecting whether the women in the sample are employed in factories, have secured domestic sector jobs, or identify as housewives. These variables are all coded 0 for "no" and 1 for "yes." Models that include these variables exclude the "working post-parole" variable since these measures are highly correlated.

Personal Agency. Our hypotheses focus on the role personal agency in the form of cognitive commitments to change. While the social capital variables derive from fairly unambiguous data, measures of personal agency are not readily available in these data. However, some of the open-ended data provide insight into the offenders' mindset regarding their incarceration and motivation to desist from future offending. In particular we tap into two open-ended data items to generate a measure of personal agency. One reflects on the offender's *attitude toward commitment* and the other her *plans for the future* (e.g., post-release plans). Both measures are collected prior to the women's release from the Reformatory. This is important because most studies have relied on retrospective accounts of personal agency (Giordano et al. 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003; Maruna 2004). Once change has taken place, it may be easier to attribute such change to one's own agentic strategies. However, it is important to also examine whether agency also operates prospectively such that those with the clearest understanding of their "mistakes" and the most focused plans for behavioral change are the most successful.

Unlike much of the data collected by the Gluecks, responses for the items used to measure agency (*attitude toward commitment* and *plans for the future*) are not uniform and we had to develop a coding scheme and coding categories for each. For each item, we began by identifying broad categories into which responses seemed to fit. Once we were fairly sure we had a concise set of response categories that was still broad enough to capture the varied responses, we (the authors) independently coded each response. We then met and compared our codes. Where there was disagreement, we debated the appropriate code and then generated a coding rule to apply to future disagreements. Once we agreed on the codes and related coding rules we had a research assistant use our coding rules to independently code the responses. We then ran inter-rater reliability tests and while there was some disagreement, reliability was reasonably high (Kappa=.71 for attitude at commitment; Kappa=.83 for attitude towards the future), producing confidence in the coding scheme and the codes we had initially generated. It is important to note here that Kappa corrects for levels of agreement by chance alone, thereby providing a more stringent evaluation of inter-rater reliability than simple correlation analysis would (Cohen, 1960). While inter-rater reliability was high, it was not complete, in the end, we use authors' codes (rather than the codes generated by the research assistant) for analysis.

Responses to the variable reflecting offenders' *attitudes at commitment* are available for 78% of the sample (N=332). Responses reflect the women's reactions to their confinement. In some instances the reaction is a direct quote from the woman herself such as, "I am shamed as the devil about it" and "I haven't done anything so very,

very wrong". In other instances the reaction is documented and described by the social worker in charge of the woman's case. The social workers notes on women's attitudes at commitment include comments such as, "sorry for what she has done and knows it was wrong" or "made no attempt to justify her immoral behavior." In general the responses can be broken up into positive and negative attitudes. However, a particularly interesting subset of responses is evident among the women—responses reflecting the presence of shame. A fairly large subset of women (N=109) either express shame regarding their criminal behavior/commitment or indicate that they deserve the punishment they received. Since our hypotheses suggest that personal agency is linked to desistance via a cognitive commitment to change, we are particularly interested in the subset of women who have taken responsibility for their behavior and express some measure of shame as compared to the rest of the sample, many of whom view their commitment as unjust and their attitudes towards commitment are outwardly hostile. The assumption here is that among those whose attitudes towards commitment reflects a sense of shame or acceptance of punishment, commitment is associated with an important cognitive shift towards viewing their offending behavior as wrong. The variable reflecting shame at commitment is coded 1 for those who report shame and zero otherwise.

Responses to the variable reflecting *attitudes toward the future* are available for 70% of the sample (N=297). Here virtually all responses reflect a generally positive attitude towards the future with only 16 women indicating a bleak future. Of particular interest are those women who not only have a positive attitude towards the future, but a clear sense of how they plan to turn their lives around. A large group of women note that they plan to change their lives by accessing adult social capital via a concerted focus on work, marriage/family, or their children (N=190). Examples include: "I want to get some kind of work and take care of my children and bring them up right", "I intend to quit prostitution. I will return to mother and work in shoe factory", and "I am going to get married if I get out of this place". In the language adopted by Giordano et al. (2003), these women have identified important "hooks for change" in their environments. This contrasts with those women who, while indicating they do want to change, offer no clear indication of how they plan to make that change. These women's plans are vague as evidenced in the following examples: "I am going to be a nice girl when I get out" and "going to do right as you don't get nowhere living wrong". The variable reflecting future plans to access conventional forms of adult social capital is also coded as 1 for those who reference such plans and zero for those who do not. From the responses to these two items we generate a variable that captures these women's cognitive commitments to desistance by differentiating those offenders who are ashamed of their behavior and/or have a clear plan to change via traditional routes to social capital from the rest of the sample.

Those who's attitudes towards commitment and the future are consistent with one or both of these views (N=232) are coded as being high on personal agency (personal agency=1), while those who exhibit neither of these attitudes (N=141) are coded as low on personal agency (personal agency=0).

Control Variables

All models include controls for other key measures thought to influence desistance. We control for number of prior arrests. The average number of priors is 3, but 16% of the sample have no prior arrests and 17% have 5 or more. Table 1 reports descriptive data based on the full range of priors (0 to 41), but, the regression models use a measure that ranges from 0 to 5 or more to preserve a more normal distribution for this variable. We also control for age at commitment and early delinquent involvement (first reported delinquency prior to age 14) as well as immigrant background (mother and/or father immigrants).

Plan of Analysis

Our analytic strategy proceeds in four steps. We begin by simply comparing desisters and non-desisters on measures of social capital and personal agency. Here we examine differences between the two groups using chi-square tests and t-tests as appropriate. Our hypotheses lead us to expect that desisters will have higher scores on key measures of social capital and personal agency than will non-desisters. We then proceed with multiple regression models that test more directly the contributions of social capital and personal agency to the desistance process. Given the dichotomous nature of our outcome variable (desistance versus non-desistance) we use logistic regression. Here the effects of marriage, parenthood, work, and personal agency on desistance, controlling for number of priors, age at commitment, early delinquency and immigrant parents. Odds ratios that are significant and greater than one indicate the variable is associated with a greater likelihood of desistance, while those less than one suggest the variable decreases the likelihood of desistance. Our first set of analyses test the influence of social capital on desistance, examining the domains of marriage, parenthood, and work separately and then together in a full model. We then test the influence of personal agency on desistance both independently, and in concert with social capital. These analyses are conducted with the reduced sample of women (N=373) for whom we have data on personal agency. Finally, we examine the possibility that social capital is more strongly associated with desistance among those with cognitive commitments to change by comparing the effects of social capital on desistance via separate regression models for those high on personal agency and those low on personal agency. We use a Wald Chi-square test to compare coefficients across models.

Results

We begin by comparing desisters and non-desisters on key measures of adult social capital and personal agency. Table 1 reports percent distributions (or means for continuous variables) for the total sample and for the desister and non-desister subgroups, as well as chi-square (or *t*-statistics) values testing whether the two subgroups differ significantly on key indicators of social capital and personal agency. The results suggest that there are some important differences between desisters and non-desisters in the domains of marriage, motherhood, work, and personal agency. Prior research has implicated marriage in the desistance process for both males and females. Basic comparisons across desisters and non-desisters in this sample reinforce the importance of marriage in the desistance process, though its effect appears to be qualified, dependent on timing and quality. Indeed, the comparative data indicate that desisters are significantly less likely than non-desisters to be married prior to committment (7.6.% v. 14.4%) This suggests that for women who are already married when they enter the system the marriage effect is detrimental rather than beneficial. Notably, marital quality scores are similar for desisters and non-desisters prior to their commitment. However, when we examine marital status and quality five years after these women completed their parole, desisters are significantly more likely to be married (54.0% v. 34.4%) and have a conventional spouse (24.2% v. 5.0%) than are non-desisters. Moreover, marital quality scores are significantly higher for the desisters. The distinct effects of marital status and

quality before and after commitment suggest that the timing of marriage is important. Compared to non-desisters, desisters are less likely to be married prior to commitment but more likely to be married post-parole. Clearly though, it is not just marital status, but marital quality that is implicated here. Not only are desisters more likely to be married post-parole, their post-parole marital quality scores are significantly higher than those of their non-desisting counterparts.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons of Desisters and Non-Desisters

	total sample	desisters	non-desisters	Chi-Square	t-statistic
	% or mean (S.D.)	% or mean (S.D.)	% or mean (S.D.)		
	(N=424)	(N=264)	(N=160)		
Marriage					
married at commitment	10.1%	7.6%	14.4%	5.05*	
married post-parole	46.6%	54.0%	34.4%	15.39*	
conventional husband post-parole	17.0%	24.2%	5.0%	26.17*	
marital quality at commitment	.00 (.72)	0.03 (.74)	-0.04 (.68)		0.99
marital quality post-parole	.00 (.91)	0.22 (.92)	-0.36 (.78)		6.70*
Parenthood					
has kids at commitment	51.7%	55.7%	45.0%	4.55*	
has kids post-parole	25.9%	33.1%	13.2%	18.92*	
Work					
working at commitment	22.0%	23.3%	19.7%	0.74	
working post-parole	57.0%	58.0%	56.3%	0.12	
homemaker post-parole	23.1%	31.4%	9.4%	27.29*	
factory job post-parole	20.2%	21.4%	18.2%	0.60	
domestic job post-parole	9.7%	11.5%	6.9%	2.31	
job quality at commitment	0.0 (.99)	0.09 (1.01)	-0.15 (.92)		2.41*
job quality post-parole	-.07 (.85)	0.18 (.76)	-0.49 (.82)		8.57*
Personal Agency					
shameful/deserving at commitment	25.7%	30.3%	18.1%	7.74*	
future plans involve marr/fam/kids/work	44.8%	48.1%	39.4%	3.07*	
shameful and/or future marr/fam/kids/work	54.7%	59.8%	46.3%	7.44*	
Control Variables					
number of prior arrests	3.4 (4.8)	2.2 (2.9)	5.2 (6.2)		-6.69*
age at commitment	24.6 (7.7)	23.86 (7.6)	25.89 (7.9)		-2.61*
delinquent before age 14	38.3%	39.3%	36.6%	0.29	
immigrant mother or father	70.8%	70.8%	70.6%	0	

*p<.05

It is notable that for the majority desisters who are married post-parole this marriage represents a change in marital status since their release from the Reformatory. Only 6% (N=8) of these women were married to the same man prior to their commitment. For the remainder, this post-release marriage represents a change to a new spouse (2%, N=2) or more commonly, from being single (63%, N=87) or being separated/divorced/widowed (30%, N=41) prior to commitment. Among the married non-desisters significantly more (16%, N=9; chi-square=5.78, p=.02) were married to the same man at both time points. Clearly though, even among this group, change in marital

status is the norm. This reinforces the idea that it is not marital status (or even shifts in marital status) per se that trigger desistance; the shift must be associated with movement towards a conventional husband and a quality marriage. We test this more explicitly in the regression models to follow.

Like marriage, motherhood appears to hasten desistance. Desisters are more likely than non-desisters to have had children when they entered the system (55.7% v. 45.0%) and were more likely to have had children after their sentence expired (33.1% v. 13.2%). Distinct from marriage, the timing of parenthood seems less material than the general presence of children. Having children, either before or after incarceration, appears to motivate women to avoid future contact with the system. Interestingly, this effect appears to be largely independent of marriage. Examining the correlation matrix in Appendix A shows that, while the correlation between having children post parole and measures of marital status and quality are significant, they are not large (marital status/kids post parole=.20; marital quality/kids post parole=.11). We explore the relative strength of each measure in regression models presented below.

Unlike marriage and motherhood, we did not expect work, in and of itself, to be associated with desistance. This expectation stems from the fact that the climate and culture of work in the early 1900s was less central to women's identities than were marriage and motherhood. Additionally, many of the job opportunities open to women at the turn of the 1900s exposed them to criminogenic influences that could counteract any potential protective effect work might introduce. Indeed, neither working at commitment nor working post-parole distinguishes desisters from non-desisters. And, contrary to our expectations, the same is true of the type of work women secured post-parole, with neither factory nor domestic work being more common among desisters compared to non-desisters. However, job quality is important, with desisters having significantly higher job quality scores than non-desisters both prior to and following their commitment. Also of note is the fact that desisters were significantly more likely than their non-desisting counterparts to avoid the labor market by settling in as a homemaker. In fact, 31.4% of desisters are homemakers following their parole, compared to only 9.4% of non-desisters.

Personal agency also distinguishes desisters from non-desisters. Specifically, data collected while women were in the Reformatory indicates that desisters were more likely to have expressed shame or admitted that they were deserving of their sentence, with 30.3% of desisters expressing shame compared to 18.1% of non-desisters. Additionally, while still incarcerated, close to half of the desisters (48.1%) specifically mentioned marriage, family, children, or work in their post-release plans, while only 39.4% of non-desisters had explicit plans to access these forms of social capital upon release. Combining these two forms of personal agency, well over half of the desisters (59.8%) referenced shame and or conventional paths to change, compared to less than half of their non-desisting counterparts (46.3%).

In addition to social capital and personal agency, the comparative data presented in Table 1 show that desisters are significantly younger at the time of their commitment

to the Reformatory than are non-desisters (23.9 v. 25.9 years old; *t*=-2.91). However, it is important to note here that there are no differences between the desisters and non desisters in mean age at first arrest (21.5 v. 21.5), conviction (21.8 v. 21.8), or commitment (22.5 v. 23.4). The fact that the non-desisters in the sample are older, is, instead, likely a reflection of the fact that they evidence a significantly more extensive arrest history than desisters (5.2 v. 2.2 prior arrests; *t*=-5.91). This is reinforced by the fact that there is no evidence that desisters began their delinquent careers later than non-desisters, as both are equally likely to have evidenced delinquency before age 14. It is also notable that immigrant status is not central to desistance. The majority of the women in the sample come from immigrant backgrounds and there is no variation in the distribution of immigrant status across desisters and non-desisters.

The descriptive findings reported above are telling, but it is important to assess how these various mechanisms fair in multivariate models that examine their joint influence on the likelihood of desistance. We begin by examining the influence of social capital on desistance. Table 2 reports the results of logistic regression models examining the effects of social capital as accrued through marriage, motherhood, and work on the likelihood of desistance. Focusing first on marriage, model one examines the effect of marital status. Recall that we expect marital status to matter only to the extent that women are able to couple with conventional partners. Indeed, controlling for prior marital status, being married post-parole in and of itself is not significantly associated with desistance. However, having a conventional husband who has a steady job and is not involved in crime significantly increases the odds of desistance for the women in this sample (O.R.=4.00; 95% CI= 1.69/9.49). In fact, 89% of the women who married a conventional partner desisted post-parole. It is, though, important to note here that few of the women in our sample (17%, N=72) find this kind of stable, law-abiding partner.

Sampson and Laub argue that marriage primarily shapes desistance not through the conventional influence of one's spouse, but through the strong social bonds and social controls that a good marriage generates. Marriage, they argue, generates social capital. Our findings support this view. Model two suggests that securing a high quality marriage upon release significantly increases the odds of desistance (O.R.=1.73; 95% CI= 1.28/2.34). Additionally, once we factor in marital quality, the effect of marriage to a conventional partner is reduced to insignificance, suggesting that good marriages mediate the effects of a conventional spouse on desistance.

Examining the influence of parenthood, model three indicates that women who have children after the expiration of their sentence are more likely to desist than those who do not have children (O.R.=2.57; 95% CI= 1.40/4.71). Among those who entered the system with children, they too are more likely to desist, though this relationship is not quite significant (p = .069). Parenthood appears to be an important route to desistance that may be unique to women. Indeed, while Sampson and Laub report that having children is unrelated to desistance among the males in their sample, ours is not the first study to suggest that parenthood is a central concern among incarcerated females and is implicated in their eventual desistance (Graham and Bowling 1996; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998).

Table 2: Logistic Regression of Marriage, Children and Work Variables on Desistance

	Model One		***Model Two***		***Model Three***		***Model Four***		***Model Five***		***Model Six***	
	O.R.	95% C.I.	O.R.	95% C.I.	O.R.	95% C.I.	O.R.	95% C.I.	O.R.	95% C.I.	O.R.	95% C.I.
Marriage												
married at commitment	0.61	.30 / 1.25	0.55	.25 / 1.22							0.44	.18 / 1.07
married post-parole	1.36	.83 / 2.23	1.28	.77 / 2.14							0.89	.48 / 1.64
conventional husband post-parole	4.00*	1.69 / 9.49	2.01	.78 / 5.16							1.66	.60 / 4.57
marital quality at commitment			1.24	.89 / 1.74							1.25	.84 / 1.84
marital quality post-parole			1.73*	1.28 / 2.34							1.42*	1.01 / 1.99
Parenthood												
has kids at commitment					1.60	.96 / 2.64					1.84*	1.02 / 3.34
has kids post-parole					2.57*	1.40 / 4.71					2.52*	1.20 / 5.27
Work												
working at commitment							1.01	.59 / 1.73	0.93	.50 / 1.70	1.03	.52 / 2.06
working post-parole							1.11	.72 / 1.73				
homemaker post-parole									4.26*	2.16 / 8.38	3.48*	1.60 / 7.53
factory job post-parole									1.70	.92 / 3.16	1.75	.88 / 3.47
domestic job post-parole									2.86*	1.17 / 7.03	2.79*	.99 / 7.90
job quality at commitment									1.05	.80 / 1.37	1.00	.73 / 1.36
job quality post-parole									2.52*	1.83 / 3.47	2.40*	1.67 / 3.45
Control Variables												
number of prior arrests	.68*	.59 / .77	0.69*	.60 / .79	0.71*	.62 / .81	0.67*	.58 / .76	0.74*	.63 / .85	0.78*	.67 / .92
age at commitment	1.02	.99 / 1.06	1.01	.98 / 1.05	1.00	.96 / 1.04	1.00	.97 / 1.04	1.00	.96 / 1.04	1.00	.96 / 1.05
delinquent before age 14	1.15	.71 / 1.87	1.23	.75 / 2.01	1.14	.70 / 1.88	1.26	.78 / 2.04	1.25	.74 / 2.13	1.40	.78 / 2.50
immigrant mother or father	1.29	.79 / 2.11	1.09	.66 / 1.82	1.31	.79 / 2.16	1.19	.73 / 1.94	0.98	.57 / 1.70	0.94	.51 / 1.73
Model chi-square	69.06*		84.35*		51.62*		47.58*		112.86*		129.47*	

* $p<.05$

Models four and five examine the influence of employment on female desistance. Consistent with expectations, model four indicates that, for women, just having a job does not generate desistance. Model five tests whether the type and quality of the job a woman is able to secure post-parole influences the likelihood of desistance. Given women's social positions and labor market opportunities in the early 1900s, we expected that being able to opt out of the labor force by taking on the traditional homemaker role would be associated with an increased likelihood of desistance, as would be finding work in the domestic sector. Model five supports these expectations. The odds of desistance are significantly greater for women who are homemakers (O.R.=4.26; 95% CI=2.16/8.38) and those who work in the domestic sector (O.R.=2.86; 95% CI= .1.17/7.03). However, we also anticipated that factory work would reduce the likelihood of desistance, and found that it has no significant effect on desistance (p = .092).

The final model (model six) evaluates the influence of all three domains of adult social capital on desistance. Results suggest that, aside form having children and exhibiting limited prior involvement with the system, it is contemporaneous adult experiences that are central to the desistance process. Specifically, having a quality marriage post-parole remains important even controlling for the influence of motherhood and work experiences (O.R.=1.42; 95% CI= 1.01/1.99). Having children both on entry into the system and, more importantly, after the expiration of one's sentence, increase the odds of desistance. With respect to work, even when marriage and motherhood are taken into account, desistance is most likely among women who are homemakers (O.R.=3.48; 95% CI= 1.60/7.53), have domestic-sector jobs (O.R.=2.79; 95% CI= .99/7.90), and those with high quality jobs following their parole (O.R.=2.40; 95% CI= 1.67/3.45). Finally, even when all of these influences are taken into account, prior involvement with the system remains important. As was the case in all of the reduced models, the odds of desistance are significantly attenuated for women who have had prior arrests (O.R.=0.78; 95% CI= .67/.92). The remaining control variables do not influence desistance once the influence of marriage, motherhood, and work are accounted for. Of particular interest here is the age effect. The comparative data (Table 1) indicated that desisters were significantly younger that non-desisters at commitment. However, this variation proves insignificant in regression models. We ran the regression models with only the control variables (models not reported) and it turns out that the age effect, as noted above, is largely a reflection of the more extensive arrest histories of the older women in the sample. Age at commitment is only significant if the number of prior arrests is removed from the model. Once we control for number of priors, the age effect is reduced to insignificance, a pattern which is reflected in the models reported here.

While these results clearly suggest that, in a broad sense, adult social capital can influence desistance among females in much the same way it has been shown to influence male desistance, they also suggest that the specific process are, in many ways gendered and historically specific. The role of parenthood in the desistance process may be unique to women, as might the ability to opt out of the employment market (an option not likely available to men and not as available to contemporary women, especially poor women). These models, however, do not explore the degree to which these paths to desistance are

linked to personal agency. As noted earlier, we suspect that those who express a strong desire to change their lives following their commitment would be most likely to access these avenues to desistance. As noted previously, measures of personal agency were collected prior to the women's release from the reformatory thus allowing us to prospectively examine how their motivational state prior to release related to the subsequent behavior. Descriptive analyses comparing desisters to non-desisters (Table 1) suggest that desisters are more likely to take responsibility for their misdeeds, expressing shame at their commitment or a sense that they were deserving of the punishment they received. Moreover, they are also more likely to explicitly reference marriage, family, children, or work in their plans for the future. We use multivariate logistic models to test whether personal agency increases the odds of desistance independently and controlling for social capital. Results, reported in Table 3, indicate that offenders who express shame and/or an explicit plan to access conventional social capital upon their release are significantly more likely to desist (O.R.=1.66; 95% CI= 1.03/2.67). However, this relationship does not hold once measures of social capital are added to the model. This suggests that, among female offenders incarcerated in the 1920s, marriage, motherhood, and employment play a stronger role in shaping desistance than does personal agency.

Table 3: Logistic Regression of Personal Agency and Social Capital on Desistance

	Model One		***Model Two***	
	N=353		N=317	
	O.R.	95% C.I.	O.R.	95% C.I.
Marriage				
married at commitment			0.41	.15 / 1.12
married post-parole			0.72	.36 / 1.44
conventional husband post-parole			1.52	.53 / 4.4
marital quality at commitment			1.27	.83 / 1.94
marital quality post-parole			1.45	.99 / 2.13
Parenthood				
has kids at commitment			1.71	.90 / 3.24
has kids post-parole			2.58*	1.14 / 5.80
Work				
working at commitment			1.30	.62 / 2.76
homemaker post-parole			3.02*	1.30 / 7.01
factory job post-parole			1.53	.72 / 3.28
domestic job post-parole			3.28*	1.02 / 10.61
job quality at commitment			0.93	.66 / 1.30
job quality post-parole			2.82*	1.86 / 4.29
Personal Agency				
shame and/or plan for future	1.66*	1.03 / 2.67	1.77	.98 / 3.20
Control Variables				
number of prior arrests	0.66*	.57 / .76	0.79*	.66 / .94
age at commitment	1.01	.97 / 1.04	1.00	.95 / 1.05
delinquent before age 14	1.25	.74 / 2.10	1.04	.70 / 2.49
immigrant mother or father	1.17	.69 / 1.98	0.93	.53 / 2.02
Model chi-square	48.22*		119.68*	

* $p < .05$

In the final analysis, we explore the possibility that social capital differentially impacts the odds of desistance among those who exhibit personal agency as compared to those who do not. While the sample is too small to support a model that incorporates interaction effects for personal agency and each measure of social capital, we can explore the interaction between personal agency and social capital by comparing the effects of social capital on desistance for those who exhibit personal agency and those who do not. The operating hypothesis is that social capital and the related desistance opportunities it might foster, will more readily hasten desistance if offenders take responsibility for their behavior and express the intent to actively take advantage of available desistance opportunities (Rumgay, 2004).

Table 4 reports the results of logistic models for two separate groups of women. Those labeled "low agency" are women who have not taken explicit responsibility for their offense and have no clear plans to access traditional avenues for acquiring adult social capital on their release (N=141). Indeed, most of these women feel their commitment was unjust and, while many of these women report planning to "do right", "live a better life", or "be a nice girl" once released, few express any clear idea as to how they will accomplish such behavioral change. Those labeled "high agency" (N=232) have taken responsibility for their crime and/or plan to avoid future contact with the system by focusing on marriage, family, children, or work once they are released. These women generally report feeling shame or embarrassment at their arrest and have clear intentions to change once released. These women commonly report wanting to "marry and settle down," "make a home for my children," or "work and go straight."

Beginning with the low agency group, the model suggests that social capital has no effect on the likelihood of desistance. The only factor that affects the odds of desistance for this groups is prior experience with they system, with the number of prior arrests significantly reducing the odds of desistance (O.R.=0.61; 95% CI= .45/.82). A very different picture emerges among those who exhibit high agency. While none of the marriage variables are significant for this group, motherhood and work experiences prove central. Having children post parole significantly increases the odds of desistance (O.R.=4.30; 95% CI= 1.20/15.36), as does being a homemaker (O.R.=3.67; 95% CI= 1.15/11.77), having a domestic job (O.R.=6.06; 95% CI= .1.13/38.67), and having a high quality job (O.R.=4.10; 95% CI= 2.11/7.96). Moreover, these effects trump the influence of prior involvement with the system. The number of prior arrests in a woman's history does not significantly influence her desistance if she is shamed by her arrest and/or makes a commitment to change by accessing conventional paths to adult social capital. And, aside from job quality post-parole, this is the only variable with an effect size that significantly differs across groups (Wald chi-square=3.99). Of course it is notable that the high agency group has significantly fewer prior arrests and convictions than the low agency groups (arrests: 2.1 v. 3.2, t=-2.4, $p < .05$; convictions: 1.8 v. 3.0, t=-2.6, p<.05). It may be that the limited resolve on the part of the low agency group reflects a sense of resignation on their part after numerous arrests, while those with high agency may be optimistic for their future success given their more limited prior involvement with the system. However, this does not appear to be entirely a selection effect, because while the high agency group has access to better quality jobs post-release (Post-release job quality

means: .02 (high agency) v. -.19 (low agency); t= -2.01, p<.05), both groups are equally likely to have kids post parole (high agency=26%; low agency=26%), to be homemakers (high agency=25%; low agency=21%), and to hold jobs in the domestic sector (high agency=9%; low agency=10%).

Table 4: Logistic Regression Models Comparing Effects of Social Capital Across Low and High Agency Groups

	Model One				***Model Two***				
	Low Agency				***High Agency***				
	N=141				***N=232***				
	O.R.	95% C.I.	b	s.e.	O.R.	95% C.I.	b	s.e.	Wald Chi-square
Marriage									
married at commitment	0.16	.02 / 1.07	-1.84	0.97	0.50	.13 / 1.91	-0.69	0.68	0.94
married post-parole	0.42	.13 / 1.33	-0.88	0.59	1.02	.39 / 2.66	0.02	0.49	1.38
conventional husband post-parole	2.22	.38 / 13.02	0.80	0.90	1.44	.32 / 6.46	0.37	0.77	0.13
marital quality at commitment	1.08	.54 / 2.15	0.08	0.35	1.53	.76 / 3.08	0.43	0.36	0.49
marital quality post-parole	1.60	.85 / 3.04	0.47	0.33	1.35	.78 / 2.33	0.30	0.28	0.15
Parenthood									
has kids at commitment	2.22	.77 / 6.37	0.80	0.54	2.01	.83 / 4.91	0.70	0.46	0.02
has kids post-parole	0.97	.28 / 3.30	-0.03	0.63	4.30*	1.20 / 15.36	1.46	0.65	2.71
Work									
working at commitment	1.07	.30 / 3.81	0.07	0.65	1.26	.43 / 3.71	0.23	0.55	0.04
homemaker post-parole	4.25	.86 / 20.99	1.45	0.81	3.67*	1.15 / 11.77	1.30	0.59	0.02
factory job post-parole	0.65	.19 / 2.22	-0.43	0.63	2.12	.73 / 6.67	0.79	0.56	2.09
domestic job post-parole	1.50	.20 / 10.99	0.40	1.02	6.06*	1.13 / 38.67	1.89	0.90	1.20
job quality at commitment	0.08	.48 / 1.32	-0.20	0.27	1.01	.63 / 1.63	0.01	0.24	0.34
job quality post-parole	1.72	.95 / 3.12	0.54	0.30	4.10*	2.11 / 7.96	1.41	0.34	3.68*
Control Variables									
number of prior arrests	0.61*	.45 / .82	-0.49	0.15	0.93	.70 / 1.22	-0.08	0.14	3.99*
age at commitment	0.99	.91 / 1.07	-0.01	0.04	0.99	.92 / 1.08	-0.00	0.04	0.03
delinquent before age 14	1.11	.39 / 3.15	0.10	0.54	1.47	.60 / 3.57	0.38	0.45	0.16
immigrant mother or father	2.10	.60 / 7.28	0.74	0.64	0.71	.29 / 1.73	-0.35	0.46	1.91
Model chi-square		50.25*				78.71*			

* $p < .05$

CONCLUSIONS

The results presented here support the contention that social capital and personal agency are implicated in the desistance process in a manner that transcends both gender and historical context. Specifically, our findings indicate that recent theoretical developments linking male desistance to the accumulation of adult social capital (Sampson and Laub 1993) are applicable to women. Moreover, our findings suggest that the importance of personal agency in women's pathways to desistance (Giordano et al. 2001) is not historically specific. At the same time, the specific manner in which social capital and personal agency operate to shape the desistance process appears to be contingent on gender and historical context in notable ways.

The marriage effect documented here is a prime example of the gendered and historically specific way in which these key processes operate. Giordano et al. (2001) find no marriage effect among males or females in their contemporary sample, and argue that contemporary demographic and social trends (postponement of childbirth and marriage, rising divorce rates, and increased prevalence of generally unstable cohabitation arrangements), have significantly reduced the likelihood of marriage, particularly among lower-status minority populations that are disproportionately over-represented in the criminal justice system (Giordano et al. 2002). Whereas only 27% of the women in their sample married, 47% of the women in the Gluecks' sample were married following their release. The centrality of marriage to the desistance process may be historically contingent, such that as marriage becomes less accessible, its role in the desistance process becomes less prominent.

Not only does the marriage effect exhibit some historical specificity, our results suggest that it is also gendered. Despite the fact that our findings mirror Sampson and Laub's (1993) in showing a strong marriage effect, driven largely by marital quality, there is some indication that the process through which marriage effects desistance is distinct for males and females. In particular, our findings leave us skeptical with respect to the argument that the marriage effect, at least for women, wholly a reflection of social control processes invoked through marriage. While the influence of marital quality suggests that social bonds between spouses may inhibit offending via the informal social controls spouses impose on one another, there seems to be a second process at work here. We say this because the data indicate that few of the women in this sample actually marry conventional men. Focusing on post-parole marriages, only 17% of the sample married conventional partners with stable work histories and no criminal history. Even among those who desist, only 24% are married to conventional spouses. If we look only at those desisters who are married, still less than half 45% have a conventional spouse. It seems unlikely that husbands who are themselves criminal and/or have difficulty holding a job could provide the kinds of social control the wives that Sampson and Laub talk of provide for the men they studied.

What then, explains this marriage effect? Here we return to historical context. As noted in the introduction, formal social control agents in the early 1900s were particularly concerned with the sexual improprieties of young women. As such, it may be that a good

solid marriage shields women from the kinds of crimes (precocious, out of wedlock, or adulterous sex) that formal social control agents typically targeted disadvantaged women for at this particular historical juncture. We propose that marriage, among the women in this sample, is not important solely because of the social control it induces, but because it legitimates women's sexual behavior and reduces the likelihood that they would return to the system for illicit sexual behavior, the most common committing offense among these women. Indeed, further investigation reveals that only 13% of those who were married and living with their husbands post-parole were arrested for a sex offense following their release, while 26% of their unmarried or separated counterparts were arrested for sex offenses in the post-parole period (chi-square=11.22; p=.001). This translates into 70% of the post-parole arrests for sex offenses being attributable to those who were not married in the post-parole period. This is a clearly gendered and historically specific finding. Men's sexual behavior was not similarly scrutinized, nor would similar behavior on the part of contemporary women fall under the purview of formal social control.

This finding suggests a broader theme that runs though the findings presented here. Desistance, at least among female offenders in the early 20th century, involves more than a commitment to stop offending; it also involves a commitment to embrace conventional social norms. For the women who came of age during the time these data were collected, promiscuity among young, single working girls was condemned and, indeed deemed a pressing social problem. In this context, marriage was the only legitimate venue within which women's sexual behavior was socially sanctioned. Marriage, among these women signaled acceptance of this norm. Moreover, the high quality marriages exhibited by the desisters likely assured they confine their sexual behavior to the marriage, while the low quality marriages evidenced among the non-desisters might suggest that these women were more likely to engage in sex outside of marriage, a clear violation of social mores, and at the time, one punishable under formal social control.

Related to marriage and commitments to conventional social norms, our findings also suggest that work, while implicated in the desistance process, operates in gendered and historically contingent ways. To begin, among the key predictors of desistance for these women is the ability to leave the job market and live as a homemaker. This is a clearly gendered and historically contingent finding. Exiting the labor market is not a likely path to desistance for males or contemporary samples of disadvantaged female offenders. Even among those contemporary female offenders who marry, work likely remains a necessity, albeit an often-difficult one to come by. Work by Holtfretter et al. (2004) suggests that, among contemporary samples of female offenders, recidivism is strongly lined to poverty, and state sponsored programs that aim to help women combat poverty, especially via education and vocational training, reduce recidivism. While some of the women in our sample access legitimate alternatives to work, for those who do work, job quality is important. Here our findings mirror Sampson and Laub's, reinforcing the importance of social bonds and informal social controls invoked via adult institutions. However, the type of job women secure also proves important, with domestic work in particular being implicated in desistance. This again suggests that desistance is driven by a commitment to conventional behavior norms. Upper- and

middle-class activists working to influence the plight of their working class counterparts were especially worried about young women living and working alone in the city. These activists recognized that economic need was a key factor pushing working class women towards the illicit temptations of the city and encouraged them, instead, to take domestic jobs in rural areas where such temptations would be minimized (Kessler-Harris 2003). Whereas factory workers were stereotyped as "loose, easy women", domestic work did not evoke a similar image. While those who opted out of the labor market to take their place as homemakers in the private sphere were most complicit with social norms, those who had to work but moved into the domestic sector also, at least to some degree, embraced conventional views that women's place is in the home.

Along with marriage and homemaking, motherhood was a role women were expected to fulfill. Our findings indicate that embracing this role hastens desistance. Among the women in this sample, having children, whether before commitment or after, is significantly associated with desistance. That a significant portion of the sample entered the system as mothers (52%), suggests that parenthood itself does not keep women from offending. However, having children does seem to be a "hook for change" such that those who have children are more motivated to stay out of the system in the future and having children once released also helps to keep women from reoffending. This is perhaps our least historically contingent finding. Contemporary work indicates that up to 80 percent of women prisoners are mothers (Snell 1994) and that parenthood is implicated in their eventual desistance (Graham and Bowling 1996; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998). However, this finding is clearly gendered, with parenthood not similarly implicated in men's desistance (Giordano et al 2002; Samspon and Laub 1993). While not being historically contingent, it is important to recognize that the 1920 census revealed that 75 percent of adult women "functioned exclusively as wives, mothers, and housekeepers in their own home" (Smith 1994: 48). Hence, motherhood is part of the conventionality package that likely shielded women from the gaze of formal social control agents in the 1920s and 30s.

In the end, our findings suggest that above all, social capital is central to desistance for these women because key forms of adult social capital (marriage, motherhood, and work as a homemaker) are also a reflection of a broader commitment to conventional social norms regarding women's place in the social world. Specifically, they signal her acceptance that women should confine themselves, as much as possible, to the private sphere. It is important to remember here that the Reformatory system in which these women were incarcerated was explicitly designed to preserve the Victorian notion of "separate spheres" and to train working class women to be good mothers, wives, and housekeepers (Bloom and Chesney-Lind 2003; Rafter, 1990). It appears that in addition to the informal social controls that social capital invokes for men (Sampson and Laub, 1993), social capital also helps women access conventional social roles. In this particular historical context, social capital provides women the opportunity to assume their expected role in the private sphere, at once escaping the temptations of the public sphere and the gaze of formal social control and, at the same time, marking their endorsement of conventional social norms that prioritized women's domestic roles over the public roles becoming increasingly available to them.

While the normative expectations imposed on women are historically contingent, the influence of normative status on women's official desistance may not be. In fact, Uggen and Kruttschnitt (1998) draw similar conclusions based on a contemporary sample of offenders. In their work, they note important differences in the official desistance patterns of males and females and conclude that "the legal system is determining which types of women are in need of control" (p. 360). Moreover, they argue that the legal system makes such determinations based on women's normative status and that such statuses "weigh more heavily against women than against men" (p. 360).

There is some evidence to suggest that social capital influences desistance among contemporary samples, but Giordano et al. (2002) argue that the role of social capital in the desistance process is becoming increasingly muted. Using a contemporary sample of offenders, their findings indicate that social capital accumulated through marriage and work, has no significant effect on desistance among males or females. They argue that that the effect of social capital was likely stronger in the past, whereas for contemporary samples of offenders, access to conventional forms of adult social capital is so restricted that its effect on desistance is limited. In this context they suggest that personal agency has become increasingly central to the desistance process. In many ways our findings support their argument. To begin, like Sampson and Laub, we find consistent social capital effects, a finding anticipated by Giordano et al. given the historical context within which our data were initially collected. We also find evidence to suggest that personal agency plays a role in the desistance process. Our results suggest that exhibiting shame and/or accepting responsibility for one's misbehavior as well as expressing a focused commitment to change are central to the likelihood that these women actually take advantage of the desistance opportunities social capital can provide. In the end, while social capital is more strongly related to desistance among these women than is personal agency, our results suggest that the two interact, with social capital more likely to significantly impact the odds of desistance among those high on personal agency compared to those who do not express misgivings about their behavior and/or a cognitive commitment to change.

As noted above, the accumulation of key forms of adult social capital influences desistance among the women in our sample largely because it reflects a commitment to the dominant moral values of that era. The same can be said of personal agency. The kinds of personal agency that matter here are those that indicate an agreement with normative moral codes via shame at having violated such codes along with an implicit commitment to embrace these codes upon release, through a focus on domesticity and motherhood. The qualitative data from which our measures of personal agency are drawn indicate this explicitly. Here desisters express their shame and a renewed commitment to conformity with such statements as "I am sorry to cause family disgrace", "I done wrong and I gotta suffer for it" and "I want to hold my head up again and show people I can be somebody". Interestingly, Giordano et al. note that the women in their sample use personal agency to facilitate desistance by crafting "highly traditional replacement selves (e.g., child of god, the good wife, involved mother)" (2002: 1053). This suggests that forging a path to desistance by embracing conventional social norms

may be central to women's desistance beyond the historical context in which our data were collected. A key difference, however, is that among contemporary samples, it appears that the desire to change and the ability to craft a conventional social identity is at the center of the desistance process, with access to social capital playing a secondary role. Conversely, in our sample, social capital proves central and seems to drive cognitive shifts, with those who have the most resources (in our sample a conventional spouse, high quality marriage, high quality job, and children) being the ones most likely to exhibit an explicit desire to desist. In fact, the women who desisted were more likely to mention specific plans on how to succeed such as: "All I want is to get well and get my boy a home all our own" and "Wishes to live away from Newton where known and support her children by office work".

Whether purposefully crafting a traditional identity is a central or secondary mechanism in the desistance process, the general idea that female desistance is linked to a commitment to traditional feminine roles is not without consequence. As Giordano et al. point out, such roles can be limiting and "in many instances, the women appear to have used their "agency" only to become enmeshed in life circumstances that could be characterized as highly repressive and lacking any means to become economically self-sustaining/independent" (p. 1053). This statement is clearly applicable to the women in the Glueck sample. In fact, the path these women took to desistance provided indirect support to informal and state level efforts to criminalize the sexual behavior of publicly visible poor, immigrant women by at least implicitly endorsing the view that such behavior is not only wrong, but worthy of formal sanction. Qualitative accounts of these women's attitudes towards their incarceration indicate that some recognize this. While not the majority, close to twenty percent of the women in the sample openly expressed the view that their commitment was unjustified and, at a minimum, contend that their behavior was not worthy of such strict punishment. For example, many of those who persisted in their deviant behavior made comments like, "'I don't think I ought to have been sent here. I don't think I had a fair chance" while those who desisted tended to make statements like, "it was the best thing that could have happened to me". Some suggest that parole would have been a more fair punishment and others argue that their behavior is not worthy of punishment at all: "I haven't bothered nobody to be arrested, he was going to be my husband, anyway." In essence, the movement towards desistance can be a double-edged sword for women. On the one hand it represents personal triumph and on the other hand it represents an endorsement of behavioral norms that can serve to limit women's opportunities and stifle social change.

While we highlight the historical specificity of the marker of convention implicated in desistance, we do not mean to imply that embracing convention is less important to female desistance today than it was in the early 1900s. As noted, Uggen and Kruttscnitt (1998) draw similar conclusions about the importance of conventional social status to women's official desistance in a contemporary sample. For both, males and females, they find that working a regular job and going to school are also implicated in desistance from official offending. They also find that women's current drug use plays a significantly stronger role in her likelihood of rearrest than does men's drug use. Here it seems relevant to compare the social control efforts focused on girls' sexuality in the

early 1900s to the current war on drugs, which is having similarly disproportionate effects on girls and women (Chesney-Lind 1991). Bloom and Chesney-Lind (2003) note the increasing tendency to formally sanction non-normative behaviors among women, such as homelessness (via ordinances to prevent begging and sleeping in public places) and drug addiction (especially among pregnant women).

Future research on desistance, among both males and females, should pay more attention to the influence of normative roles and behaviors in the desistance process. While normative expectations are gendered, we believe that behavioral and cognitive commitments to normative roles are central to desistance among males and females and implicated in behavioral change. That desistance was most likely among the men who joined the military, got married, and/or found a good job in Sampson and Laub's data is suggestive of this. However, it is possible that normative commitments among women trigger official desistance not necessarily because they lead to behavioral change but because they remove women from the public scrutiny where formal social controls are operative. While it seems to be the former, if the latter proves to be the case, such commitments may be less important among males since the normative roles they are expected to fulfill do not isolate them from the gaze of formal social control. If this is the case, then for males the commitment to stop offending would be more important than a commitment to crafting a more conventional self. While it may seem difficult to disentangle the two, in our data, as well as in Giordano et al.'s there is some indication that simply wanting to change is not enough, desisters also have a clear vision of themselves fulfilling traditional roles and responsibilities. Indeed, virtually all of the women in our data expressed a desire to stop offending.

We hope that future theory and research on desistance will continue to examine the process across a range of samples and contexts. Such work extends our confidence in the broad applicability of emerging theory while at the same time helping to articulate the scope of these theories.

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[i] We acknowledge the ongoing debate about how to define and operationalize desistance (Bushway et al. 2001, 2003; Loeber et al. 2004). However, we would argue that individuals who go unarrested for five ears, especially women in the their late 20s to early 30s, would be unlikely to exhibit a new arrest in the following years. Work by D'Unger et al. (2002) and Piquero et al. (2005) indicates that female offending frequencies are very low beginning among women in their 20s and that the number of arrests among women in their 30s is negligible.

[ii] Abelson (1990) documents class biases in the formal social control of shoplifting during this time period. She finds that working and lower class women who were caught shoplifting were labeled thieves and subjected to criminal justice system processing. On the other hand, middle and upper class women caught shoplifting were considered victims of uncontrollable urges who needed to be helped not punishment. These middle and upper class women were labeled with kleptomania and, unlike similar behavior on the part of lower/working class women, their behavior was deemed outside their control.

[iii] Giving single women a score of 0 is not meant to suggest that being single is better than being (or having been) in a bad marriage. It could be argued that unmarried women are in a worse position because they have been unable to secure even a bad relationship. However, this is more a reflection of the influence of marital status than quality. If their marital status were affecting their odds of desistance, this would be captured in the marital status variable. As such, we would argue that those who never married are not influenced, for better or worse, by marital quality, but only by marital status.

[iv] Here again we recognize that those who never worked may be in a worse position than those who secure bad jobs, however, again we would argue this is captured in the employment status variable.