

Negotiating Ideologies of Motherhood

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Today's Presentation will consider

- , Ideologies and constructions of Motherhood and Surveillance
- The ISSF Study - Health and Wellbeing in Pregnancy
- Negotiating Ideologies of Motherhood in order to preserve stigmatized identities and avoid judgment: Anna, Cat and Jess.

Constructions and Ideologies of Motherhood

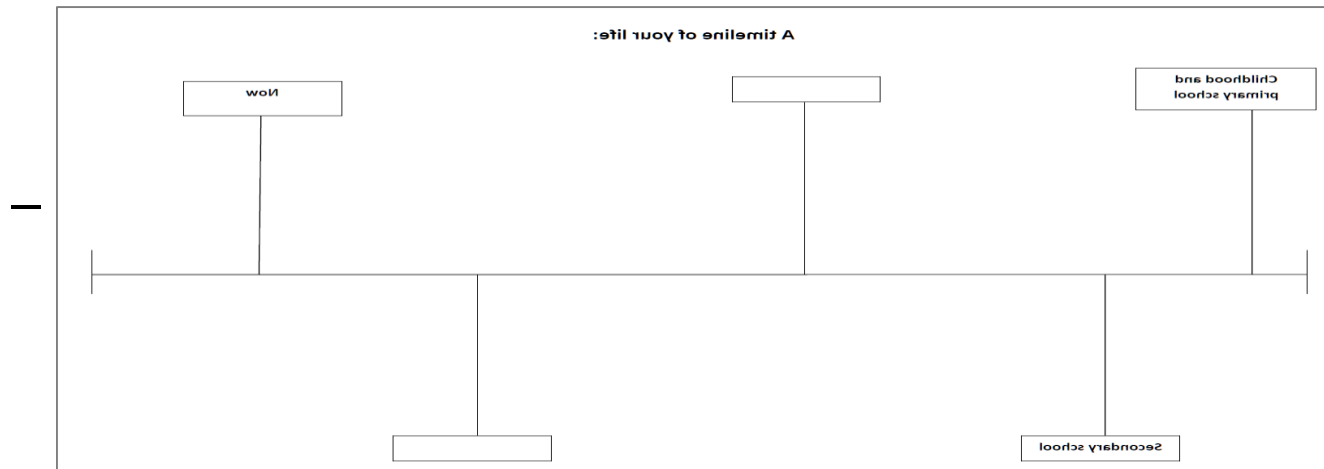
- Pregnancy and motherhood subject to surveillance by medical professionals, the media and general public (Grant, Mannay,& Marzella, forthcoming)
- The duality of the “Mother ” universal also but much variation
- Motherhood is a felt experience, socially constructed, vigorously policed and regulated (Hollway, 2006).
- Yummy Mummies v Chav Mum (Allan and Osgood, 2009) and ‘failling’ maternal subjects (Allan and Taylor),

The research study

- Broad Aim: Understand what it is like being pregnant on a low income and how to support new mothers.
- Under 30 Weeks pregnant
- In receipt of benefits
- Residing in a deprived area of South Wales.
- 10 Participants recruited via posters, Communities First, facebook.

Data Collection

- 2 Interviews at home – creative, participatory visual methods
 - rich data – offered new understandings of individual lives and meanings:
 - First Interview - Timelines to facilitate life history interviews



Data Collection

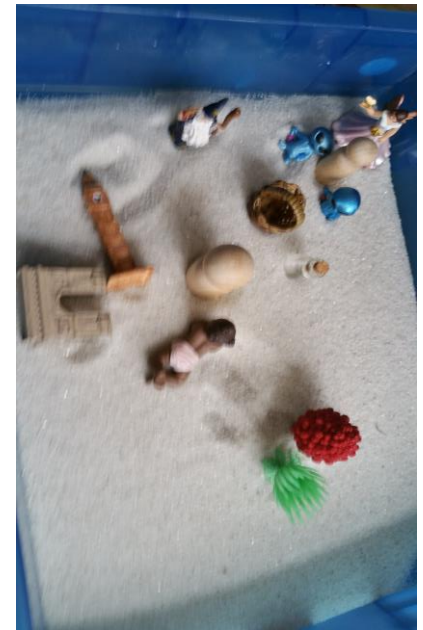
- Second Interview - Thought bubbles, Collaging and Sandboxing to describe feelings and experiences of pregnancy and motherhood



Pre-interview supplies sent via post



Participant



Interviewer

Each to their own but not in public

- Discourses of autonomy
 - generally an 'each to their own' approach adopted in regards to drinking alcohol, smoking and breastfeeding.
 - 'do want you want' it's no one else's business
- BUT contraction,
- strongly condemned public smoking and alcohol consumption in pregnancy.

Not in Public: Anna

I: And will you have a drink?

I: No. Not in public, I don't like that.

R: Why do you say that?

I: Because I slag people off that do it when they're pregnant, I sit there and go ah look at her, that's just awful that is [laughs]. And I can't do it. It's like people who smoke when they're pregnant, if you want to smoke that's fine, I just don't think it looks good when you've got bump on show walking around with a fag in your hand. If you want to do it in your house, that's fine. When I was pregnant with [youngest daughter] and [eldest daughter] I did smoke with them but it was in my own house, I never walked around out and about with one, it's not the best look.

R: But then it does make you think that other people would be watching you because you're pregnant?

I: Well yeah. So if you stay in they can't say anything to you [laughs].

R: Yeah.

I: If they don't know you're doing it.

Anna: Preserving identity through moral comparison

R: No it is funny that about like you think about what other people think about you being pregnant.

I: Well yeah and I am one of those ones that would not slag other people off but there is a girl around here that's pregnant and recently went on a hen do to [city] you know nice outfit, bump on show, was slamming glasses of wine down her and drinking like a chimney. There is no need for that, there's not. You want to go out and get pissed that's fine but that baby didn't ask for that and she'd soon be in tears if something went wrong. So don't do it innit?

Judgements from Family and Friends: Anna

- I: Well that's my baby in there... Oh that was there because towards the end I had court with [eldest daughter] father, so seen as I couldn't drink... ok I did smoke five in a row because I was a bit stressed, he was like you do know that's my child in there. I went, it's my body so it's just tough. Once they've got it out of me I will be fine.

Doing identity work and not needing to: Cat

- First Life History Interview (timeline) with Pregnant Interviewer (Stranger)
 - INT: How did you cope with giving up smoking, drinking and things like that?
 - RES: I did it quite easily, to be honest.
- Second Interview - Sandboxing with Interviewer who she knew previously (not pregnant)
 - I: No I smoked, I smoked and then I quit and then I, when I found out I did quit but then I started smoking again when I was pregnant and then I went onto those e-cig fags and then I stopped on that but now I am pregnant again I've started having a few fags again it's like I've got a craving for smoke or something, it's really weird, I'm not a heavy smoker but if I am in the house I'll fancy like a little cig or something you know.

Judgements from Family and Strangers when quitting isn't an option: Jess

R: So even now like we were down at the pub the other day, we had some food down there and stuff and I was smoking, and he's like you're not going to do that when you're fully shown, he said you know people will just come up to you and have a go at you and stuff. I said well they can have a go at me, I said I've been having people having a go at me for years thinking I was pregnant and smoking. I said what I do is my choice, if the baby is healthy you know at the end of the day what else can you do, I said you know it could be worse I could have a pint in my hand. You know, so if people want to talk about me they will talk about me, I'm not going to, there is nothing I can do to stop that, I'm not going to just put my life on hold because they'll still find something else to talk about me.

R: So do you think it bothers your partner more than you?

I: Yeah.

R: In terms of how it looks?

I: Yeah, yeah definitely you know he goes on all the time that he was brought up in pubs you know as a baby he was brought up in a smoking environment and stuff like that and but then he is like oh you know, he is very society based and I'm like... you know for years I have been society based and realised that actually there is too much negativity in following society, sometimes you have to think out of the box or do something out of the box to be yourself and to be happy with yourself. You know what else can you do really? You'd just be a robot [laughs].

Summary Conclusions

- Health promotion can alter societies previously normalised behaviours but also stigmatises those who cannot or choose not to conform to ideal standards of public health (Hacking 1986, Graham 2013)
- Publically smoking or drinking positions the women as failed maternal subjects not meeting the standard of good mother.
- To avoid stigmatized judgements and shame, the women altered their behaviour in the public realm.
- In negotiating ideologies of motherhood and to preserve their moral identities, the women used heirarchical moral tales and comparisons to other “failing subjects” (Holdsworth and Robinson, 2008)
- Women often felt judged in the private realm by Partners, Friend’s and family.

References and core reading

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Thank you



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- Any Questions?

