APPALACHIAN COUPLES' PERSPECTIVES OF THEIR FAMILY LIFE: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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(Abstract)

The Appalachian family can be considered part of an ethnic group. This is due to the culture's unique, identifiable sociohistorical context, physical boundaries, family traditions, and cultural values. This qualitative study examined ten Appalachian couples' perceptions of their family life. Components of family life were accessed via semi-structured interviews. Questions elicited information about family membership, relationships, structure, functioning and values. The information provided by participants seemed to fall into two broad categories: family values and family dynamics. Themes that emerged from the interviews indicated that participants highly valued children, family of procreation, extended family,
work, community and the Appalachian region. Themes that emerged from the interviews that were related to family dynamics were boundary maintenance, coping and adaptability, and gender roles. The Perceptual Indicators of Family Life Quality Scale (Rettig, Danes, & Bauer, 1991) was administered verbally and analyzed for frequencies. This instrument measured participants' satisfaction with family life. Results indicated that these participants were highly satisfied with the quality of their family life.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Appalachia is the region which encompasses the Appalachian
mountain chain. Within this region are three subregions, Northern
Appalachia defined by New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West
Virginia and Maryland; Central Appalachia defined by Kentucky,
Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia; and Southern Appalachia
defined by Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South
Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. This region is often referred to
as "isolated" because the lack of easy access through rough
terrain has created "pockets" of people within the Appalachian
mountain range, and people located within this region are
referred to as Appalachians (Photiadis, 1986).

The Appalachian family can be considered an ethnic
sub-system of American society with a unique, identifiable
sociohistorical context, physical boundaries, family traditions,
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and cultural values. Appalachian families have been evolving in function and form rapidly in the past several decades. This evolution within the family system is due in part to the changes in industry throughout these rural regions (Photiadis, 1986). Being familiar with the history of the Appalachian region helps to highlight some of the intricacies that create the traits characteristic to the Appalachian family (Rodeheaver & Thomas, 1986). Coal mining in Appalachia began to rapidly replace the farming industry in the earlier years of the 20th century. As the mining industry peaked in the mid to late 1970’s (World Book Encyclopedia, 1990), the Appalachian region was developing into a point of migration for families in search of financial security. Small prospering communities began developing around these coal mining businesses. Today, as the industry becomes increasingly mechanized and there is a decrease in demand for mining coal, many families have been placed in precarious positions in terms of economic uncertainty. Although economic scarcity has become
the norm for the past several decades, many Appalachian families have chosen to remain within the region and have been forced to become quite resourceful in terms of their day to day living.

The rural Appalachian community is an identifiable social-subsystem of the American society, and the Appalachian family is a sub-system within this community (Photiadis, 1986; Rodeheaver & Thomas, 1986). The Appalachian family is unique and multifaceted. For example, the elements that contribute to the uniqueness of the Appalachian family are value orientations that resist change which tends to create isolated systems (Rodeheaver & Thomas, 1986). The rural Appalachian family tends to value a traditional, nuclear family with clearly defined gender roles (Beaver, 1988). Another unique facet of Appalachian family life is dealing with very limited economic opportunities and poverty conditions (Robertson & Shoffner, 1989). The purpose of this study is to explore Appalachian family life by examining family membership, relationships, structure, functioning, and
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values. This study gives a rich, detailed description of how Appalachian married couples view their family life using in-depth qualitative interviews.

Significance of the Study

_The family is the central unit of rural Appalachian social organization: It is the basis of an individual's identity._

Keefe, 1988 (p. 24)

Studies on Appalachian family life have been largely neglected in the professional literature (Robertson & Shoffner, 1989). Much of the literature and media representation that does exist about Appalachian families has focused on negative aspects of the culture and lacked a thoughtful exploration of the strengths of the family (Damron, 1992; Miller, 1988). For example, Caudill (1962) who is an Appalachian family scholar, spoke of the Appalachian people as "cynical, penniless, resentful and angry." His later work considered the Appalachian people as being resistant to "change" (Caudill, 1976). Rodeheaver and Thomas (1986), however, do not see this resistance to "change" as
a negative stereotype, but as a characteristic that is part of the rural Appalachian culture. Erikson (1976) and Weller (1965) discuss other negative characteristics of Appalachians such as their inability to seek out and obtain resources. Typically, very little scholarly work has focused on strengths of the Appalachian family (Keefe, 1988; Coward & Jackson, 1983), and it is still not fully understood why most Appalachians perceive quality of life to be good (Coward & Jackson, 1983; Salstrom, 1988). With much of the research focusing on the problematic aspects of family functioning, there needs to be more research on the elements contributing to strengths in families (Stinnett & Defrain, 1989). The current investigation examines how Appalachian families function in daily life and how their family's strength contributes to their functioning. Focusing on family strengths rather than pathology enables scholars, researchers and clinicians who work with these populations to gain a more complete understanding of their family life and facilitates their ability to build on these
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strengths.

Survey research has been a traditional way of doing empirical research for many reasons, such as ease of data collection, analysis and validity (Babbie, 1992). It is particularly useful in terms of quantifying aspects of family demographics, relationships between variables, and inferential statistical methods (Babbie, 1992; Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1992). However, the use of quantifiable data tends to mask the richness and complexity of life experiences (Daly, 1992; Pugh, 1990). Qualitative interview data gives the researcher an in-depth description of family member interaction, relationship, experiences and quality (Daly, 1992). Due to the complexity and unexpected transitions that affect Appalachian families, these phenomena are too complex to be studied through survey research and in particular single, limited-scope studies (Photiadis, 1986). A survey is often inadequate when attempting to examine the nuances of cultural change, the interaction of society and
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individuals, exploring familial patterns and uniqueness of the Appalachian family (Bartlett, 1990). This study uses a qualitative design. Interviews with Appalachian husbands and wives were analyzed to obtain a rich, detailed description of family life.

Much of the research conducted on Appalachian families has been from only one person's perception of the family system. Traditionally, data collected about Appalachian family life has been primarily obtained from women (McKee & O'Brien, 1983). There are several reasons for this. Women are more widely accessible (Bronstein & Coward, 1988), women are also typically providers of child care (Barnett & Baruch, 1987), and focused "inside" the family (Bronstein & Coward, 1988). Although women's perspectives are valuable, obtaining multiple perspectives about family life adds breadth and depth to the issues under study (Handel, 1992). Multiple respondents from the same family add quality information such as vivid detail and
insight into the group dynamics and interactions occurring within the family system (Feldman, Wentzel, & Gehring, 1989). Because women and men participate together to construct meanings within families, it is important to gather data about family life from more than one person's perspective (Risman & Schwartz, 1989; Thompson, 1992).

This study has several implications for clinical work. It is important for mental health practitioners to be aware of ethnic diversity and the cultural contexts of their clients in order to be most effective. Although clinicians may be sensitive to a variety of family forms, it cannot be assumed that Appalachians are similar to non-Appalachians, nor can it be assumed that all Appalachians are alike (Keefe, 1988). Therefore, it is imperative that mental health practitioners understand the uniqueness of families from diverse cultural contexts in order to effectively use family therapy concepts and interventions (McGoldrick, 1989). Clinicians can thus be open to the specific needs of their clients.
Cole (1988) stresses the importance of being familiar with the specific Appalachian culture. This is because the Appalachian family system is usually closed to "outside" help. Thus, if the clinician is aware of the traits characteristic to the Appalachian family, families entering treatment will more likely adapt and feel at ease in the therapeutic setting. Understanding the dynamics of the Appalachian family structure and functioning, will foster more effective intervention strategies (Keefe, 1988; Coward & Jackson, 1983).

Theoretical Framework

Family systems theory is one of the theoretical perspectives that guides this study. Family systems theory looks at family members as interacting and interdependent (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993). A family systems theoretical framework allows the researcher to look within the family system to explore relationship dynamics, patterns, and processes as well as how those relationships develop (Becvar & Becvar, 1988). A family
systems perspective has several key elements. This perspective explores the daily routines, responses, exchanges, and constructions of reality as members within the family system interact (Day, 1995). This study uses the family systems theoretical framework to guide the exploration of Appalachian family relationships, rules and roles, and construction of meanings that direct daily family life.

The feminist framework is another theoretical perspective that guides this study. The feminist perspective is collaborative, respectful, and interested in how participants construct meanings within the family, such as what family members perceive as contributing to the quality of family life (Nichols & Schwartz, 1991). It explores power and connectedness in relationships and examines how the personal and family experiences reflect larger societal expectations and experiences (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993). The feminist perspective examines family process by considering historical, social, economic, and
political contexts that affect family functioning (Avis, 1988). This perspective allowed the researcher in the current study to view these Appalachian families through a sensitive lens that took into account the participants' cultural contexts and influences which affected all facets of family life. The feminist framework believes that women and men make active choices within the constraints of social circumstances (Gerson, 1985). This perspective views personal experiences as affected by broader elements, captures the struggle to adapt to family relations, embraces the diversity among families by looking at race, class, and age, and challenges the prevailing concepts and assumptions as to how researchers think of gender (Thompson, 1992). Because gender is something created and sustained daily in interactions among family members, women and men co-create the meaning of gender within the family context (Thompson, 1992; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This study examines the experiences of both women and men in Appalachian families by
comparing and contrasting their perceptions of family life. Through the feminist lens the researcher was able to examine participants' stories for experiences in daily life, gender issues, rules and roles, and how men and women balance power in their relationship. In summary, a systemic and a feminist theoretical approach guided this inquiry.

Research Issues

Guided by the theoretical perspectives discussed above, the research issues that were explored included the following:

1. What do participants value about their family life? How do these participants view life in Appalachia? What contributes to some of their ideals and values about family life in Appalachia?

2. What are some of the family dynamics? What are the rules within the family? What are the member's roles within the family? What are the roles of children in the family? How do members interact in the family?
3. What are the gender roles in the family? Who is the primary wage earner? What are the rules and roles around work inside and outside the family? Are there specific gender role expectations for children?
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review examines the pertinent research on Appalachian family life and is comprised of two broad areas. First, it examines the relevant literature describing the Appalachian cultural context by exploring the research on Appalachian microculture and the types of communities found in the region. It also examines the literature reporting the effects of regional economics on the Appalachian family. Second, this review of literature discusses the pertinent literature describing Appalachian family characteristics which includes an overview of the characteristics that are unique to Appalachian families. It also examines family functioning styles, gender role ideology, and Appalachian family values, attitudes and beliefs.

The Appalachian Microculture

The Appalachian microculture is an identifiable social sub-
system of the American society with well-defined boundaries that are generally accepted among the people living there. Boundary maintenance is described by Photiadis (1986) as the intricacies (e.g., language and rituals) that separate Appalachia and its people from the larger society. Boundary maintenance allows for the Appalachian social system to maintain its identity and worth, and its “otherness” in relation to urban communities and to function as a relatively autonomous social system (Photiadis, 1986). Photiadis described boundary maintenance as a part of Appalachia’s overall cultural uniqueness in comparison to larger society. It is just as important to many Appalachian researchers to examine the context “within” Appalachia by examining the intricacies of communities that exist in Appalachia. The types of communities are important to understand because they provide the social context for understanding how the Appalachian family is effected by their community and culture.
Types of Appalachian Communities

Several Appalachian scholars have attempted to categorize the types of communities found in the Appalachian region.Hennon and Photiadis (1979) discuss three types of Appalachian communities and the effect of each community's culture on the family. The three types of communities they describe are the County Seat, Frontier II and Frontier I communities.

County Seat communities have the highest population in the region and link the rural Appalachian community to mainstream America. These communities are usually centered geographically around a larger community and serve as linkages to increased outside resources for Appalachian families. Because of the close contact with the mainstream culture that County Seat communities have, there are increased educational opportunities for families as well as access to health, legal, and religious services. Occupations within this community vary from professionals to laborers and there is ample opportunity for
A second type of community is the Frontier II community. These communities tend to be geographically remote and are formed by rather small populations of people. Daily interaction for people in these communities may center around a crossroads store or post-office. However, in this community there are still formal organizations and non-family links to larger society, such as churches and schools. Much of the community commitment and activity is centered around family ties. The people within this community are primarily blue-collar skilled workers who have a high school education. There are jobs such as mining and service in the Frontier II community, but many families still remain part-time farmers.

A third type of community is called Frontier I. These communities are characterized by extreme physical and social isolation. Economic alternatives are few and poverty is high. There is little interaction with outside systems and the family is
central with few activities taking place outside the family unit. Frontier I families live subsistent lives farming on poor land with little or no industry. These isolated communities have linkages to the larger society but only through school systems and welfare agencies.

The three types of communities discussed by Hennon and Photiadis help to conceptualize the similarities and differences between Appalachian communities. In addition, discussion of types of communities helps to highlight the economic circumstances and the life many Appalachian families lead. Gallaher (1976) proposed a fourth type of Appalachian community which is the coal camp and/or sawmill town. The coal camp and saw mill communities are non-existent today. These camps were owned by companies, and families migrated to them leaving their familistic, agrarian and highly supportive kinship groups behind. Gallaher described these communities as abusive to its members and provided meager wages to support families. For example,
there was crowded company housing and payment to workers was in the form of "script" (instead of money) to use in the company store. In addition, overwhelming amounts of labor were required of the workers. Much of the inner turmoil in these communities led to the need for unionization as a source of protection for these coal mining and saw mill families.

The four types of communities discussed by Hennon and Photiadis (1979) and Gallaher (1976) take into account the size of the community and the economic resources available. Williams (1976) created a simple typology of three Appalachian microculture communities which focuses on community members' socioeconomic status as well as the size of the community and economic opportunities available. The three communities identified by Williams are Town and City Dweller, Valley Farmers, and Branchwater Mountaineer communities. People within the Town and City Dweller communities have "risen" out of mountain life and resent being called a "mountaineer." These
people perceive themselves as having a higher socioeconomic status due to their positions within the community attained through higher education or a professional career.

A second community is called the Valley Farmers community. This community has the largest number of people of the three proposed by Williams. The people that comprise these communities are generally proud to live in Appalachia. People of this community have economic problems, yet still share many mainstream American values such as the enjoyment of material possessions and acquisition of social status through education. The people of this community continue to be cognizant of hierarchy within the community, but tend to be less concerned with gaining higher individual status in comparison to their Town and City Dweller counterparts. Instead, people in these communities tend to place family and community before oneself.

A third community that William’s discussed is the Branchwater Mountaineer. These communities have the fewest
number of people and are located in secluded, inaccessible areas of the mountains. The Branchwater Mountaineers tend to own poor land and have few material possessions. These people often experience disrespect for their livelihood by people of higher status such as the Valley Farmer's or Town and City Dweller's. The members of this community tend to turn their daily family lives to traditionalism and unconventionality. Examples of traditionalism and unconventionality Williams provided included strong fundamentalist religions, raising children to work rather than attend school, and a family's subsistant living standards. The Branchwater Mountaineer tends to be seen by others from higher status communities as "an exaggeration of the weaknesses" that mainstream Americans often associate with the people of Appalachia.

The descriptions of diverse Appalachian communities provided by Gallaher (1976), Hennon and Photiadis (1979), and Williams (1976) gives a basic understanding of the impact of
community, economy and social status on Appalachian family life. Early prominent books on Appalachian families have focused on the communities with the fewest members and least amount of community resources such as, Williams' Branchwater Mountaineer or Hennon and Photiadis' Frontier I communities. For example, Weller's 1965 book *Yesterday's People* described Appalachian families as isolated units with their main resource being close-knit, emotionally dependent kinship groups. Other observations that Weller made is that all Appalachians were regressive, traditional, existence oriented, and fatalistic. These descriptions of Appalachian people leave little room for detailed examination of the differences between communities and how the various community contexts determine how families make choices in daily life.

Similarly, Caudill (1962), focused on the Branchwater Mountaineers and Frontier I communities in his book *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*. He skillfully described the sociohistorical
context that related to the structure of Appalachian's lives in the 1950's. Caudill concluded that Appalachians were "cynical, penniless, resentful and angry." However, he did not discuss differences between Branchwater Mountaineers, Frontier I community, and people living in other communities.

Erickson (1976) examined the lives of Branchwater Mountaineers and Frontier I families in his book *Everything in it's Path*. In this book, the Appalachian value of familism is highlighted. Familism was defined by this author as belonging to a family and valuing the elements that comprise a family. Erickson concluded that the reliance on family networks in the Branchwater and Frontier I communities is so dysfunctional that people rarely have individual resources. In addition, he examined these communities isolation and economic depletion that may have affected the increased reliance on the family as a resource. Erickson's descriptions tended to be generalized to all Appalachians, but clearly his focus was on the communities with
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the fewest number of people and the most economically deprived communities. For Branchwater Mountaineers and the Frontier I community, this description gives an overview of how these families struggle to live and function in daily life.

Each of these early Appalachian scholars have neglected to consider the diverse societies found in Appalachia and the ways in which families in the different communities have learned to survive. They have made broad comparisons of the Appalachian culture to that of mainstream America and have deemed the functioning of the Appalachian family as pathological without much consideration of the social context in which families live. However, in defense of these early works, these authors have described in detail how families function and attain family resources in small depressed communities. These reflections on Appalachia's smallest communities have helped to open the door to more fully examining larger Appalachian communities and the effect that these communities have on family life.
Effects of Regional Economics on the Appalachian Family

This section discusses the literature that relates to the effects of regional economics on the Appalachian family. Photiadis, who is an Appalachian expert, explained the functionality of the Appalachian microculture economy and its effects on the family system in his 1986 book *Community and Family Change in Rural Appalachia*. Historically, the first industries entering the Appalachian region were coal mining and timbering in the early part of the century. These industries provided increased opportunities for skilled and unskilled laborers which in turn offered economic stability for the Appalachian family. The boom of the 60’s and 70’s has ended putting many Appalachian families under economic stress. Nevertheless, many families have chosen to stay in the region. Therefore, a thorough examination of the literature that deals with the direct impact that economics in the region has on the family is needed.
The security of jobs and employment is one of the Appalachian microcultural characteristics that effects nearly every family living there (Hennon & Photiadis, 1979). In this section, researchers discussing economics in the Appalachian region did not make a clear differentiation between community types sampled. However, because most people in Appalachia are blue-collar, semi-skilled workers, most of the research seemed to have implications for the working poor.

Duncan (1992) examined the impact of unemployment, the structure of work in the region, and how persistent poverty effects the Appalachian people. The lack of industry has "created a community context that is both unstable and oppressive. These people piece together a livelihood with intermittent work, help from family members, and various public assistance programs that can supplement too few hours of work and too low wages" (Duncan, 1992, p. 111-112). It is hard to escape poverty in depressed Appalachian communities. People of the region value
making a life for themselves by maintaining their self-sufficiency. They tend to be embarrassed by taking "hand outs" (p. 118) and tend to blame themselves for not escaping poverty by saying they "should have finished school or shouldn't of gotten pregnant" (p. 132). Duncan concluded that the majority of families value steady work, and not welfare, but are faced with limited access to this work.

The scarcity of employment has always been problematic for people living in Appalachian rural areas (Tickamyer, 1992). Tickamyer used 1980 census data from rural areas of southeastern Appalachian states (i.e., Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia). This study specifically explored economics in the poorest areas of these Appalachian states and the likelihood of employment for rural workers. In addition, Tickamyer compared these statistics to urban statistics to see which area had the highest rate of employment. He found that poor rural Appalachian workers had more difficulty in
finding employment due to regional economics than non-Appalachian, poor urban counterparts. However, the Appalachian poor were more likely to work in inconsistent jobs for low pay in comparison to the urban poor. Tickamyer attributed this difference in employment rates to the Appalachian cultural values of hard work and self-sufficiency. That is, Appalachians living in the poorest rural regions had very high levels of work effort.

Further, Yarrow (1990) conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews with 60 coal miners and 30 of their spouses in 1987. This study examined the effects of the poor economic conditions of the Appalachian region on participants' families. The participants overwhelmingly reported that they were in continual fear of unemployment due to inconsistencies of the coal mining industry in the region. Yarrow reported that “the unit of economic struggle becomes the family rather than the union” (p. 46). That is, the union renegotiates the mining contract
every four years leaving families uncertain of their job security during the renegotiation process. Participants felt they could rely on support from extended family members through the ups and downs of the negotiations and even unemployment. This extended family support was in the form of emotional, physical and financial assistance. Because the mining family structure has been shaped by a subculture forged in hard times, survival of the family is determined by the family's role flexibility. Role flexibility often meant changes in the traditional division of labor between husbands and wives. Further, Yarrow concluded that because these families have survived in a climate with an intense focus on economic deprivation, most families have developed resiliencies and strengths. However, ongoing deprivation limits these families to developing new strategies for dealing with crisis.

In summary, because Appalachia contains diverse types of communities with unique economic infrastructures, there are
many questions about how families living within these various contexts function. It has been established in this review of literature on regional economics that economic deprivation is extremely problematic for most families. This context forces many Appalachians to become increasingly creative in the ways they provide financially for their families. The extended family kinship network was one of the most important resources for the Appalachian nuclear family. The extended family was reportedly one of the solid foundations for the nuclear family unit and provided for its emotional, physical, and financial resources. A basic understanding has been provided about family functioning styles in a stressful economic culture.

Appalachian Family Characteristics

This section reviews the literature on Appalachian family characteristics and highlight implications for cultural effects on the family system. It is important to address unique aspects of the culture because looking at the culture’s structure gives a
clearer idea of how people organize their lives, observe certain rituals, and make distinctions about kinship (Batteau, 1980). Therefore, Appalachian attitudes, values and beliefs as they pertain to the family system are important indicators of how these families make choices in a culture dominated by limited resources. This section looks specifically at three major areas: family functioning styles, gender role ideology, and family attitudes and beliefs.

**Appalachian Family Functioning**

This section summarizes the literature written on Appalachian family functioning in order to explore how these families cope with familial, economic, community, and wider macrocultural stressors. All of these stressors affect the family. Therefore, it is important to look at what contributes to a family's resiliency because this strength is an important determinant of well-being and the ability to deal with crisis (Sanders, Walters, and Montgomery, 1985). There appeared to be
an evolution in the literature that indicated ways that researchers should begin to examine families ability to deal with crisis. The first wave of literature focused on family strengths as indicators of a family's ability to deal with crisis. Most recently there has been a focus by some researchers on family functioning styles as indicators of family's ability to deal with crisis. There is a brief review of Herbert Otto's (1962) family strength research and then a review of the more recent research on other elements contributing to a family's ability to function.

Herbert Otto pioneered the first published work on family strengths in 1962 with his article entitled *What is a Strong Family?* Otto examined healthy family characteristics that contributed to functional processes which led to their ability to deal with crisis. According to Otto (1975), family strengths are defined as "those forces and dynamic factors which encourage the development of the personal resources and potentials of members of the family... and which make family life deeply satisfying and
fulfilling to family members" (p.16).

Trivette, Dunst, Deal, Hamer, and Propst (1990) proposed that instead of attempting to determine "strengths" in families, more focus should be given to "family functioning style" which does not imply an either/or stance by labeling a family process as a strength or weakness, but allows for a closer look at effective styles of functioning that occur in response to different life events, cultural contexts, and unique situations. This is important to the current study because the Appalachian cultural context has already been established as economically depleted, and the Appalachian people defined as an ethnic group with unique ways of functioning. Because the Appalachian family lives within a unique cultural context, effective internal family processes may not mirror what is assumed by the mainstream culture to be useful or even helpful (Smith & Coward, 1981).

Greenlee and Lantz (1993) conducted 32 in-depth, qualitative interviews with working poor, rural Appalachians to determine
how these people coped with poverty in economically hard times. The sample consisted of 26 Appalachian households and the participants were adult members of the family. Questions asked of family members were related to the family’s internal dynamics as indicators of their strengths and ability to cope. Greenlee and Lantz found that participants cited personal resources such as keeping oneself busy or praying to God as ways of handling financial difficulties. Familial resources such as asking an extended family member for money or being able to talk to another family member also helped respondents cope with the economic burdens on the family. Finally, participants were able to find network supports to help them cope. Examples of network supports included friendships and the social service system. In economically hard times, participants killed two or three deer for the winter to keep the family fed. Some reported that children cut grass to help support the family and/or the family went without needed water or clothing for extended periods of time to
save money. Sometimes, people would turn to alcohol to help, while others turned to God. The creative ways of coping these participants used to survive says a great deal about their sense of self-sufficiency and perseverance. Greenlee and Lantz concluded that "poverty has tremendous impact upon family life, and family responses to poverty that appear pathological to some are often courageous and creative attempts to keep afloat" (p. 136).

Keefe (1988), a family therapist who works with Appalachian families, wrote about the Appalachian kinship system and the strengths her clients found from this resource. She found that the extended family network is extremely beneficial to rural Appalachians. Belonging to a kindred in rural Appalachia is a resource with rights and benefits that contribute to maintaining one's identity. For instance, Keefe reported that in the Appalachian culture jobs are easier to acquire through relatives. This kinship system serves as a solid resource for financial
opportunities within the community as well as personal and group identity that is determined by the family's reputation. These "loyal" relatives provide the familial resource of emotional and moral support especially in times of hardship. According to Keefe, strong family ties are important to the formation and maintenance of strong identity, a feeling of "roots" or heritage and a sense of belonging.

Singleton, Ratliff, Carpenter, Davis, and Brunner (1991), who are Appalachian natives and clinicians working in rural areas, formed a panel to focus on their own experiences in the Appalachian family kinship network. This group asserted that healthy family functioning styles are attributed to how families perceive events. That is, positive outlooks on negative situations helped these people and their families persevere in difficult economic times. Other characteristics that helped their Appalachian clients and their own families of orientation cope with crisis included a strong sense of survival, self-reliance, and
strong religious beliefs in God.

**Appalachian Family Gender Role Ideology**

There have been several recent studies examining Appalachian women's gender roles in the family system. Fiene (1991) interviewed 18 rural, low-status Appalachian women and examined social processes that contributed to their sense of self. The participants described how their roles inside the family contributed to their increased sense of self. For instance, for these women, their roles were centered around the mother-child relationship. There were also expectations for conduct in interpersonal relationships that contributed to an increased sense of self-worth and empowerment for these women. That is, there were unspoken rules in their rural community that attributed to a sense of “etiquette of equality.” This means that the women who believed they had the right to the same services as others, regardless of economic or social status, had a higher sense of self-worth. There was a sense of perseverance and
independence that accompanied these women's sense of higher self-appraisals. Most reported that they had positive accomplishments in life, they could fill occupational roles, if necessary, and had a general sense about the "outside" world. Fiene concluded that Appalachian women's gender roles tend to be traditional. Participants tended to have high self-worth when they were able to feel "good" about being mothers. However, self-worth was even higher for the women who recognized their own abilities to be self-sufficient (i.e., getting and keeping a job).

McCoy (1993) conducted a study using mail surveys with 64 Appalachian migrant women who moved from rural to urban areas nearly 20 years ago. The study was conducted as a replication of a 1962 study to see if attitudes about social status and/or identity had changed over time. The study's purpose was to compare social stratification position, gender role identity, and the degree of ethnic identity. An overwhelmingly common
response was that the roles adopted by women in the mountains have been less useful and/or helpful for women living in urban areas. For instance, the traditional Appalachian value of women placing the parenting role above the earner role was not as highly valued by the urban women. This is interesting because over half of the women sampled were full-time homemakers and mothers. In addition, these women appeared to hold less loyalty to the Appalachian ethnic identity and the roles that accompanied that identity than when surveyed in 1962. They also appeared to have middle class mainstream American ideals that encouraged women to be equal to their male counterparts.

Trent and Stout-Wiegand (1987) conducted a phone survey with 101 rural Appalachian men and women to measure their attitudes about women as members of the labor force and specifically women as coal miners. Trent and Stout-Weigand found that there were negative attitudes from men as well as women toward women who worked as coal miners. Resistance
was most commonly reported among male coal miners and female full-time homemakers. The most remarkable finding was that there was an overall strong support for a woman's "right" to do paid work, but there were conflicting messages about how to put the idea into practice. Interestingly, the Appalachian men and women interviewed were generally knowledgeable and supportive of women's rights to work. However, when faced with the question, "can women be as effective as men," much of the traditional, rigid thinking was apparent where the majority felt that men are better equipped to handle work in the coal mines.

Beaver (1988), who is a clinician working with Appalachian families, discussed the sociohistorical context of the families living in Appalachia that relates to current understanding of family characteristics and changing gender roles. Appalachian families are typically labeled patriarchal. However, Beaver suggested a more useful way of looking at sex roles by viewing power, authority and influence as separate entities with
different people holding various amounts at different times throughout the life cycle. Traditionally, Appalachian women had inside family power through her roles inside the home. More commonly today, Appalachian women are working outside the home while maintaining their roles inside the home. This places them in a double jeopardy because they are often expected by their families to maintain the old “quality” of work even though new and time consuming roles have been added.

In summary, the research highlighting Appalachian family gender role ideology has been sparse, but offers some insight into the attitudes of men and women living in Appalachia. Examination of attitudes about the roles of men and women in families helps to understand more about the ways in which families structure themselves. Currently, much of the research has indicated that the Appalachian family’s ideas about gender roles are changing. More women are working outside the home, but little literature was found that clarifies how these changing
roles outside the family have shifted the roles inside the family system. It appeared that many of the Appalachians who participated in the research were knowledgeable about men and women's changing gender roles, yet many still maintained a more traditional belief that women need to be the sole providers of nurturance for the children and men the protectors. According to the Appalachian women interviewed, their self-worth was based upon their perceptions of their individual resources. Many of these women still see the primary occupational role of mother as the most important and take great pride in providing for the family in this way. In conclusion, the changes in gender roles in Appalachian families may be slow in comparison to mainstream America. Therefore, taking into account the cultural context and social climate in which these families live helps to understand some of the elements that contribute to the Appalachian family's characteristics.
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Appalachian Family Attitudes and Beliefs

Understanding Appalachian family values and beliefs is vital to understanding family functioning (Yelton & Neilson, 1991). Most of the literature on Appalachian families has identified them as familistic. The family system/kinship network is considered to be a vital part of the Appalachian's existence. According to Heller and Quesada (1977), there are two distinct forms of rural familism: the extended-kin-oriented familism and the primary-kin-oriented familism. These researchers examined populations of people in rural Appalachia and the rural mid-west. They found that Appalachians tended to value the extended-kin-oriented family where the identity of the family is of utmost importance and the family is viewed as the basis of emotional and physical support. Rural mid-west families tended to value the primary-kin-oriented family where the nuclear family is the positive reference group. Heller and Quesada concluded that it has been easier for Appalachians to crystallize their kinship
groups because generations of families have had time to build on that family community unlike their mid-west rural counterparts. Family communities have become extremely important as a resource network and to maintaining self-sufficiency.

Jones (1984) discussed several distinct Appalachian cultural ideals. Jones is a native Appalachian expert who writes about her own perceptions of Appalachian values. According to Jones, most Appalachians have strong religious beliefs in God. There is also a sense of individualism, self-reliance and pride that accompanies living in the region and surviving hardships. Most people in the region value neighborliness and hospitality which comes with a sense of community. Family and loyalty to the family name is very important and valued by the kinship system (Jones, 1984; Photiadis, 1986; Cantrall, 1994). It is important to have a sense of humor and personalism as it is very important to relate well to others in the community. “Love of place” is something most Appalachians value as well as the region’s beauty (Jones, 1984;
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Photiadis, 1986; Cantrall, 1994). A person's ability to be modest and show equal status to all those in the community is valued as important. Finally, patriotism is extremely important as most of the families living in Appalachia have had previous generations of men go to war for their country (Jones, 1984).

Daniel (1986) conducted a longitudinal study of the cultural influences of 101 Appalachian men and women's attitudes about leaving or remaining in Appalachia. High school students were sampled in 10th grade about their attitudes toward education, achievement, leaving Appalachia. These same students were recontacted 10 years later. Of the 101 sampled 10 years prior, 61 had remained in the region. These men and women were interviewed face-to-face. The 40 that left the Appalachian region were mailed surveys. Both groups of men and women were asked the same questions as they were while high school students. Of the 61 subjects that remained in Appalachia, the following themes emerged as reasons they chose to stay: a sense
of belonging to the region, commitment to family, need for physical space, sense that they "have enough," and enjoyment of self-sufficiency. For those who moved from the region, investment in achievement goals, such as better opportunities for children, achievement of higher education, and higher standards of living were among the reasons for leaving. Most of those who moved from the region expressed a desire to return to the region at least part of the year. The people involved in the "out" migration from the region held more mainstream American values such as increasing status through higher education and attainment of material goods. The people staying in the region valued mainstream American ideals less and concentrated more on being self-reliant and close to extended family. The most striking observation that Daniel made was that no matter where the native Appalachian resided, there was a sense of loyalty to the area and a desire to return to the mountains whenever possible.
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In a study by Robertson and Shoffner (1989), 29 male and 38 female young adults, who were reared and currently residing in the Appalachian region, were asked questions in a qualitative interview to assess their perceptions of life satisfaction. These participants found overall life satisfaction to be high and attributed this satisfaction to several factors. Being productive members of society by maintaining jobs and providing for self and the family were important to life satisfaction. They also frequently referred to referent groups such as school, peers, and people in the community as contributing to their increased sense of satisfaction. This was due in part to their desire to be involved in the community to interact with systems outside the kinship network. Participants also reported the importance of the extended family system and its impact on their life satisfaction. Robertson and Shoffner expected that because poverty in Appalachia is so widespread, people living in the region would report an decrease in life satisfaction. However,
the participants tended to focus on aspects of life, such as community and family, that contributed to their satisfaction rather than negative aspects of Appalachian life such as economic struggles. Wilson and Peterson (1988) were also interested in examining Appalachian life conditions, and if these conditions were predictors of decreased life satisfaction. These researchers collected 322 questionnaires from Appalachian men and women (140 males and 182 females). The questionnaires were administered three times over a period of ten years (fifth grade, eighth grade and senior in high school). It was found that participants were not likely to value “objective” attainment, such as education and occupational attainment. They did tend to value “subjective” attainment, such as self-esteem. It did appear that it was important to “aspire” to higher occupational levels, but participants were frustrated by the limited economic environment and did not “expect” to attain their career goals.
Wilson and Peterson concluded that this was a realistic response given the cultural context in which people have limited choices. These participants had the desire to be successful, but attaining that goal did not seem achievable. Thus, respondents found other ways of gaining status and improving their life quality. These reports tended to reflect some of the Appalachian values and beliefs such as living in close proximity to one's childhood home. Although these people faced adversity, especially economic difficulties, coping mechanisms such as a focus on family and community have developed to deal with larger cultural difficulties.

In summary, this literature review has highlighted the pertinent literature describing the Appalachian cultural context and Appalachian family characteristics. There are several types of Appalachian communities found within the region: Williams' Branchwater Mountaineer, Valley Farmer, Town and City Dweller and Hennon and Photiadis (1979) and Gallaner's (1976) County
Seal, Frontier II, Frontier II, and Coal Camp Town communities. It is important to know the intricacies of each community so that statements about the Appalachian cultural context can be sensitive to each communities needs and strengths. These communities provide varying degrees of resources to families. However, most communities in Appalachia have a scarcity of jobs and poverty is persistently high. The effects of the community and regional economics directly effects the family system.

Appalachian families have some unique characteristics. These families tend to be quite resilient and have learned to cope with the microcultural stressors. Research indicated that Appalachian families tend to be satisfied with their family life. These families also tend to structure themselves patriarchically. Women and men's roles in the family are clearly defined with women working inside the home and men working outside the home. Research indicated that most Appalachian families found this structure to be functional. Appalachian family values,
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attitudes and beliefs were consistent across studies. That is, Appalachians tend to value the extended family, religion, sense of community, and the Appalachian region.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

The Larger Study

The current study is part of a larger study of 52 West Virginian families from five counties in north central West Virginia. The principal investigator was Vicki Loyer-Carlson, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Family and Child Development Department at West Virginia University. The project was funded by a HATCH grant through the department of Agriculture and Forestry at West Virginia University.

The larger research project had three phases. In the first phase of the project a questionnaire was administered to 350 college students in undergraduate classes at West Virginia University. The purpose of phase I was to determine if students' perceptions of their quality of family life was related to pet ownership, and if there were differences between urban and rural student populations. Phase II included qualitative interviews in
which families in West Virginia were contacted and asked to participate in research on quality of family life. The purpose of phase II was to gather rich, detailed information about native Appalachian families' perspectives of their family life. Phase III, which was never completed, was to develop a typology of Appalachian families, and to construct a primary intervention model that would facilitate clinical work with rural families.

Phase II Participants

This section describes phase II participant selection and the details of the phase II research process. Participants for phase II were either volunteers from phase I of the West Virginia Family Life Quality study (Loyer-Carlson, 1992) who indicated interest in being part of phase II interviews or were identified by county cooperative extension agents. County cooperative extension agents were chosen to select families because of their status as community leaders in these rural regions (Waltman, 1986). Extensions agents selected families for phase II who had two or
more members, who were in a variety of life cycles stages, and who were likely (to the extension agents belief) to participate in the interview process. Because there were five West Virginia counties included in phase II, five county extension agent were contacted. These county extension agents spoke with and identified 12 families in their area that verbally agreed to be contacted by a phase II researcher. It was therefore very important to have a regional contact for the researchers as a way of gaining access to these rural households.

Loyer-Carlson hired and trained three female and three male student interviewers with all team members being native West Virginians. The training occurred over the course of four weeks. There were weekly team meetings that discussed preliminary concerns and interview techniques. Before interviewing the participants for phase II, interview teams consisting of one man and one woman, were constructed. Each interview team was trained with one volunteer family from the local community that
was recruited by Loyer-Carlson. These practice interviews were audiotaped and then carefully analyzed by the principal investigator who provided vital feedback to the interviewers.

Potential participants for phase II, who were identified by county extension agents, were then contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the Family Life Quality research project. The investigators of the project identified themselves as researchers from the university and expressed interest in learning about Appalachian family life. Of the 65 families contacted, 52 agreed to be interviewed. Upon receiving verbal consent over the telephone from the families willing to participate, the interview teams traveled to their homes. Since most of the counties in West Virginia are very rural and many residents are lifelong friends or relatives, participants in the same county were interviewed on the same day or within a short time of each other. This was done in attempt to reduce the risk of participants being influenced by the responses of others.
Phase II family interviews lasted for 1 1/2 to 2 hours and were conducted in the participants' homes at times that were most convenient for the family and when all members of the household who were willing to be interviewed could be present. Interviews were semi-structured and consisted of five sections that tapped various aspects of family life (see Appendix A, B, C, & D). Participants were asked to create a family sculpture by cutting out markers and placing those markers on a grid which indicated individual family member's relationships to one another (see Appendix A). Appendix A also lists sociodemographic questions that were asked to participants during the interview. This gathered information about economics, education and ethnicity. Another section asked participants to list their family members (see Appendix B). A third section included the Perceptual Indicators of Family Life Quality Scale (Rettig, Danes, & Bauer, 1991). This scale measured family life satisfaction and resources exchanged in the family (see Appendix C). A fourth
section asked participants to think of their family life as a book, title their book and give their book ten chapters (see Appendix D). This gave participants a chance to think about the turning points in their family's life and led to the telling of many family stories.

With family members' knowledge and permission, the phase II interviews were audiotaped. The interviews began with all family members together in one room for 30 minutes talking about day to day interactions and routines. Once joining had occurred, interviewers then met individually with the adults in the household in a separate room of the participant's home away from other members of the family.

Participants and Selection Process for the Current Study

Participants in this study were 10 couples selected from a pool of 17 couples. Although 52 families were included in phase II of the larger study, only 17 of the 52 families met the criteria for selection in the current study. The criteria for selecting the
pool of 17 were: 1) intact families, 2) separate interviews with both mother and father, 3) families with children and 4) audible tapes for transcription. This study's sample of 10 participants were chosen from the pool of 17 couples according to the following criteria: 1) richness of interview, 2) life cycle stage, 3) socioeconomical status and 4) community type. The criteria above have been listed in the order that participants were chosen. The first two interviews were selected because these interviews were lengthy and gave rich examples of family values and interactions. The next five participants were chosen to gain a wider selection of life cycle stages. The next two families were chosen to gain a wider selection of occupations and socioeconomic status. The final participants were chosen to gain a wider selection community types.

The demographics for the 10 participants in this study are discussed here and are included in a table (see Appendix E). The participants for this study were all caucasian and had at least
one child in the family. Ages ranged from 31 to 59. There was
one couple with young children, three couples with school-aged
children, three couples with adolescents, two couples launching
young adults and one family in later life. Nineteen participants
were Protestant and one participant was Catholic. Two families
were considered professional (white-collar) families and eight
families were considered laborers (blue-collar). Of the ten male
participants, nine were working and one was unemployed. Two of
the male participants were employed as professionals. six male
participants were laborers, and one male was a retired volunteer.
Of the ten female participants, four were working outside the
home in paid positions, two were students at a college or
university, and four considered themselves full-time
homemakers.

Nine of the ten couples lived in Frontier II communities as
described by Hennon and Photiadis (1979). The largest number of
Appalachian families tend to live in Frontier II communities and
the pool of 17 couples reflected this. The Frontier II community was the most representative which included 13 of the 17 couples. Four families were considered part of a County Seat community and there were no representative participants from a Frontier I community. Only one couple who lived in a County Seat community was chosen for the current study.

Design of the Study

This study uses a multiple-case qualitative design to describe Appalachian family life. In individual interviews, men and women were asked to discuss their experience of being members of their families and how their families operate. A qualitative method was chosen to examine the men's and women's perceptions of family membership, relationships, structure, functioning and values. A qualitative approach captures the essence of people's lives, experiences and interactions (Patton, 1986). It is one of the best means for closely examining participants' experiences within families and gaining a better
understanding of complex social phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Unit of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis for this study was the family system. Information was gathered from husbands and wives about themselves, the couple relationship, and the entire family system including how it operates, family members’ roles, rules, values, and a sense of the family’s developmental history. Therefore, although the level of assessment was the individual, information collected described the whole family, therefore the unit of analysis or level of construct was the family system (Copeland & White, 1991).

Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation

The bulk of the data analysis consisted of examining transcripts of recorded interviews. These interviews were transcribed and coded by the researcher. Through open coding, data were named and placed in as many categories as possible
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(Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As new information was added, new codes were created and categories reorganized. As themes emerged from the interviews, coding led to increasingly refined categories. This form of data analysis extracted patterns of meanings for these families from the interviews. During the process of coding, the researcher kept written logs that accounted for personal responses and theoretical insights which were crucial to writing the final results. This log was a tool for to keeping a record of thoughts, ideas and theoretical notions that evolved over the course of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Ethnograph (1988) computer software package was used to assist the researcher in coding and sorting data. Interviews were transcribed in a word processing program, saved in an ASCII format, and downloaded into the Ethnograph program. Lines of the transcribed text were numbered and these numbered lines were used to clearly demarcate where coded sections began and ended. The codes were then entered into the computer which allowed for
sorting output and organizing the data.

Descriptive statistics taken from the participants' interviews were used to analyze the quantitative data collected from the participant's reported demographic questions (see Appendix A). This analysis provided a demographic profile of the Appalachians that were interviewed including participants age, sex, racial or ethnic origin, religious affiliation, yearly income, and occupation. In addition, the Perceptual Indicators of Family Life Quality Scale (see Appendix C) was analyzed to determine how satisfied participants were with their family life quality. This Likert-type scale composed of 35 questions with responses ranging from 1=terrible to 4=mixed to 7=delighted. The 35 questions tapped six aspects of satisfaction with family life: family affection, help given, family flexibility, material goods, money, and individual autonomy. Analysis for this questionnaire included running frequencies to determine which aspects of family life participants rated high or low in satisfaction. This
analysis was done only to compliment the dialogue that emerged from participants' discussion about the questions.
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CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

This section examines the broad categories and themes that emerged in the qualitative data analysis. It weaves systemic and gendered themes throughout the results. Two broad categories emerged: family values and family dynamics. Themes of children, family of procreation, extended family, work, community and regional loyalty emerged as aspects of family values. Themes of boundary maintenance, coping and adaptability, and gender roles emerged as significant aspects of family dynamics. This section describes the themes that emerged from the analysis of data and uses participants’ own words to illustrate.

Values

The families in this study directly and indirectly revealed what they found valuable about family life. Family values are being defined as the attitudes and beliefs that seem to determine
what is essential or important to the family. Interviewers were instructed from the onset of the study to probe areas that were of interest to the participants and contributed to their sense of family life. As these participants reflected on their families lives, several broad categories emerged to help describe what was most important to them: Children, family of procreation, extended family, work ethic, community, and regional loyalty.

Value of Children

All of the participants in this study indicated that children were highly valued members of the family system. The role of having and raising children was seen as very important and taken very seriously. Several themes emerged from the analysis of data regarding children that clarify the nature of their value to the family: parental sacrifices, parent-child “teaching,” parent-child interactions, and learning to raise children.

Children were viewed as basic to the definition of a family. Most participants had something to say about the meaningful
aspects of having children in order to complete the family. Some participants labeled the brief time the couple was married without children as "before family." One mother expressed it this way: "the first chapter [of my family life book], Travel the Long Road, is a hard one. That was when there was just the two of us, before I had family." When asked why she rated her first family life book chapter the lowest (30% family life quality), another woman described the progression of events leading up to having "family."

Well, it's 30% because we didn't have a family. There were no kids. Just starting out it was just us. In the next chapter, we move, but he's still in school. We still didn't have much, but things keep getting better and better. You get settled, you find a job, you get the house and then you get the kids and you know.

Interestingly, comments like these were made most often by the women participants. Women indicated more frequently that
children were seen as a vital part of establishing the “family.” Having children contributed to these mothers’ sense of identity and accomplishment, and there was a great deal of discussion around the willing sacrifice they made to provide as much as they could for the children. In fact, most of these women saw their parenting role as the most important sacrifice they could make. One mother talked about how she was willing to forgo working for the sake of her children.

_in my ideal family I might have a job and maybe only two children, instead of four. This is an extremely busy family and I don’t have time to work, the children need me here. . . . The children and their education are the most important right now._

Another mother talked about how she puts her children and her husband before herself. In the following quote, she discusses the perception of her “placement” in the family after she completed her family sculpture. As she puts it, “[Husband] is first because
he’s everything in my life, the children are also above me [on the family sculpture] because they all come before I do. . . . They all always come first.”

Overall, the men in this study reported being more hesitant about having children and tended to be less confident about parenting than their wives. However, when asked about what it was like to have children, none neglected to voice their devotion and affection for the children. Many spontaneously reflected back to the time when children first entered the family recalling that anxiety was mixed with a sense of anticipation about the new arrival. Many men became acutely aware at this point of the new and demanding roles that accompanied fatherhood. The arrival of children tended to be a turning point in life for most of these men. One father reflects back on the beginning of marriage and the addition of children to the family.

_We were married 2 years before we had kids. We just took care of ourselves and the only responsibility I_
had was taking care of someone that was my same age. Children are an adjustment. She really loves kids, so that made it easier.

In addition, entry of children into the family prompted the men’s awareness of becoming primary providers to the family. One father discusses the sacrifices he made in order to provide for the family.

*How do you provide for your family? How can you have the American dream? They told us if we wanted our jobs, we had to cross [the picket line]. I had kids and a wife, there was no stopping me.*

The parent’s role of “teacher” in the child’s life was extremely important. Interestingly enough, the role of teacher was most commonly talked about by the fathers. The fathers in this study who discussed their role as their child’s “teacher” also tended to feel there were certain topics that were important to teach children. Some of the lessons participants found
particularly important to teach children were responsibility, knowing the value of money, respect for parents, extended family, and others in the community. One father talked about how he taught his son lessons in money and responsibility by using the resources on their family farm.

*See we’ve done a lot of farmer economics with him. He didn’t have enough money one summer to buy his pigs, so he had to borrow from the bank. Now, of course, I’m the banker [laughter]. We had a little meeting where we signed some papers on it and everything. So he knows he owes me about 15 dollars, plus 18% interest. Some people laugh at me, but he needs to learn that it’s a business. He may only be 10 years old, but he needs to learn. I hope some of it sticks in his head.*

When another father was asked, “what was the most important aspects of being a father” he began to talk about his
role as "teacher" in the children's lives. The lessons he described are those of respect and responsibility.

*Some kids can't say thank you...no respect. My kids have certain times they have to be in and certain times they could watch TV. They all have chores they have to do every Saturday morning.*

Many participants discussed aspects of not only "teaching" children, but "learning" how to be parents. At various points in each of the interviews, participants were asked to describe what it was like to be a parent. Many clearly articulated the struggles of parenthood and voiced initial apprehensions when deciding to have children. When asked to describe what it was like to become a parent, most participants also mentioned the joy they felt when they realized they were parents. In addition, several voiced frustration and anxiety due to the lack of resources available to parents on how to raise children. One father in particular was very thoughtful as he pondered the ideas of parenthood and his
frustration with the inability to have someone “teach” him how to be a parent.

I still say the problem with raising kids is that there is no one out there to teach you how to do it. Every kid is a unique thing and no one teaches you how to do this stuff. I don’t know, it’s a frustrating thing for me. I sit back and say should I do this, should I do that? Each situation is different.

Another participant, who is now a grandmother, also reflected back on the difficulty in finding someone to “teach” her how to be a parent. In the following excerpt, she talks about sharing her knowledge with her adult children in an attempt to give them the “lessons” she never had.

Now sometimes I will read something on raising children and I’ll send it out to all my children. I never had anybody to teach me. We just had to learn by trial and error. I figure if there is anything I can
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I'm gonna share it with [the children]. I want to make it better for my grandchildren.

In conclusion, the expression of value for children was implicitly described by these participants through examples of parental sacrifice, parent-child interaction, parents as “teachers,” and their desire to learn more about parenting. Although participants voiced frustrations about child-rearing, all of the participants in this study mentioned the importance of having children in making the family complete. The majority of the participants even commented on the fact that they were not really “family” until children were born. These participants highly valued children and strove to provide a structured environment with limits that helped their children conform to the sociocultural environment of Appalachia. In addition, many of the participants discussed how they were “teachers” for their children and how they “learned” to become parents. As their struggles and accomplishments were explored, it became evident
participants considered parenting one of the most important roles in life and children one of the most meaningful aspects of family.

Values Related to Family of Procreation

The family of procreation was clearly valued by these participants. The role of belonging to a family was very important and taken very seriously. Because the focus of the study is on how the family works, the questions participants were asked were based on daily routines and rituals of family life. Therefore, the interviewers were given semi-structured questions that elicited information to understand more about how these families functioned. For example, a question commonly asked was, “what makes a strong family?” The theme that emerged from this question tapped dimensions of family strengths. In addition, a quantitative measure was administered verbally to participants. The Perceptual Indicators of Family Life Quality Scale (PIFLQ) (Rettig & Bauer, 1991) (see Appendix C)
indicates how satisfied participants were with their family life. Because this measure was administered verbally, explanations of why people rated portions of the scale low or high were discussed. Some of the rich, detailed explanations will be included to highlight pertinent themes.

Interviewers were instructed at some point near the end of the interview to ask, “what makes a strong family?” This question examined dimensions of family strengths and the elements that contributed to healthy family functioning. Interestingly when the interviewers asked this question, participants tended to describe values in their family. Two themes emerged from the responses to this question: intangible and tangible family resources. Participants described intangible resources such as respect, love, closeness, truthfulness, and flexibility as major contributors to healthy family functioning. When one woman was asked what makes a strong family she replied, “love, respect, and hope I guess. Without love you
wouldn’t have anything.” As another man put it, “to make a strong family you need truthfulness and good relations, you know. I wouldn’t trade anything for what I got.”

Tangible resources that contributed to family strengths for these people included strong family partnerships, doing things for each other, and helping each other. Most of the participants were able to give examples of tangible resources exchanged in the family. The following quote describes one woman’s perception of the partnership needed to make a family strong.

*It takes turns to make a family. You have to have people that listen. If he didn’t want to listen and I didn’t want to listen, that would be very difficult. Like if he or I were an alcoholic, that wouldn’t work. Two people have to be ready to work with each other to make it go.*

One man talks about how the family would help others as an indicator of his family’s strength.
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I have a strong family now and I had a strong family growing-up. We fought just like other kids, but when it came right down to it, when the other one needed help, we were there to help each other. Ya know, if my boy needs help, I'm going to help him. If my daughter and her husband need help, I'm gonna do everything in my power to help them. Ya know, that just makes good family to me.

In order to determine if the values participants described were aspects of their family, interviewers were instructed to immediately follow-up with the question, "do you have a strong family?" The outcome of this question indicated every participant felt they had the values they described as making their family strong.

The Perceptual Indicators of Family Life Quality scale (PIFLQ) (See Appendix C) was verbally administered during the interview. Participants were asked, "please think about the
people you include when you think of "your immediate family," and answer the following questions about your family environment and how your own needs are met in this family group." This Likert-type scale was composed of 35 questions with responses ranging from 1=terrible to 4=mixed to 7=delighted. The 35 questions tapped six aspects of satisfaction with family life: family affection, help given, family flexibility, material goods, money, and individual autonomy. By asking participants the questions verbally, there was a window of opportunity to have them elaborate on why a question was rated particularly low or high.

Overall, the participants were pleased with the amount of family affection, help given, material goods, and individual autonomy found in their families. The average rating on all of these dimensions of family life was high (5-6). Participants tended to be least satisfied with the amount of money available and family flexibility. Overall, it was indicated that money and
family flexibility were dimensions that indicated the most mixed feelings (4).

Overall, most participants were either pleased or delighted with their family life quality. The two elements of the scale that appeared to lower family life satisfaction were money and family flexibility. Participants offered the most explanations about why they rated money and family flexibility lower than other questions. One male participant laughed as he was asked about the ability to negotiate differences of opinion, “I’m mixed on that one, 4, my boy and I have differences of opinion. He will either go his way, or I’ll go mine.” When one female participant was asked, “how openly and honestly you can express feelings,” she replied, 

Is this with me? Now I can express my feelings, but all the family members are not as open as I am. My son is difficult to discuss things with. . . . You know, [extended family] will open up and tell you things on the telephone, but when you visit, there is so much
reserve there.

When asked if he would like to discuss any of the questions, one man explained why he rated the questions about money so low.

_I rate the money one's low and that's because of my work. I'm out of work, and we don't have insurance. I'm 40 years old and there is no job market that allows me to do what I know how to do. I wouldn't rate things so low, but it's because of the financial situation. Really the only problems we have is outside the immediate family._

This quote comes in response to the question "the amount of money saved for emergencies." A male participant described why he gave a low rating on this question in the following way:

_I'll give it a 2, especially recently. We haven't been able to save much of anything. We had to buy things for [kids] to go to school. It's just one thing after another. You live for what you feel like you have to_
have.

Overall, the responses to the PIFLQ were above average and nearly all participants reported that they were pleased (6) or delighted (7) with their family life. It was difficult to extract many descriptions from participants on extremely high ratings because they did not elaborate as much as on the particularly low ratings.

In summary, the overall structure of the interview was to tap dimensions of family life. Participants discussed many aspects of family and clearly valued their families of procreation. When asked what values contributed to making a strong family, participants tended to respond in two ways. They described tangible and intangible resources exchanged with the family that related to making their family strong. After determining which components were necessary to have a strong family, each individual was asked if they had a strong family. All participants reported that they had strong family values. The PIFLQ was briefly discussed because it offers a Likert-type measurement of
participant's perceptions of family life quality. Overall, the measurement indicated that these participant's were satisfied with their family life and found it largely a positive experience. The components that appeared to be ranked lowest in terms of family life quality were the lack of money available and family flexibility. The value of the family of procreation was clearly illustrated through examples of the effort and time it took for family members to pull together and make it work.

**Value of Extended Family**

One of the most striking commonalities throughout the interviews was a strong emphasis on extended family ties. Most participants made references to the extended family members during the interviews and especially when the participants were asked, "please list who you think of when you think of family." Nearly all of the participants included "extended family" in their definition of family and often made reference to everyday family activities that included extended family members. Participants
clearly placed value on the extended family network and reported at least one set of relatives living within the same or adjacent town whom they saw at least once a week. Several themes emerged in this analysis: extended family as a resource (i.e., emotion, physical, monetary), extended family as a close-knit network, and the dilemmas of maintaining close extended family ties.

The extended family seemed to be an important resource to participants. Interestingly, most participants included the nuclear family, families of origin and/or other extended family members as "family." While a few listed only families of procreation when asked who they included in their "family," even these three people talked about extended family members and the role they play in their lives. The family network is seen as an important resource due to its influence and ability to provide for its members. Some examples of the ways that these participants found extended family to be a resource included financial support,
housing, and/or a sense of "being there" for them in times of need. One man talked about his mother-in-law as a resource.

[Mother-in-law] has done a lot to help us financially. She will bring us out some cake or something to help a person get on. I know that if I ever needed someone to watch the kids or something like that, she would certainly help.

One woman describes the degree to which she values her extended family and the importance of maintaining close family ties.

Of all the social concerns we have in society, the one that bothers me the most is seeing the break down of the family. Because once your family goes, you don't have anything. That's one reason why I reach out beyond my immediate family.

Another way that participants found extended family ties important was the connection they felt through the close geographical location of members. When probed about interaction
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with extended family members, participants talked about a connection with extended family that was maintained through frequent visits. Visiting referred to the connection made with family members when being together or doing things together. For example, the following quote describes the importance of connection and closeness one male participant places on “knowing” one’s family.

*Well, mom and dad were the reason why we moved back to West Virginia. We wanted the children to be closer to their grandparents. We wanted the kids to know their whole family.*

When asked why it was important to remain in Appalachia, one male participant described the importance of the day-to-day interaction with extended family members as a meaningful component of close family ties.

*Our family is here [in West Virginia] and we are tight with our families. We like the day-to-day contact.*
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[Wife] has to know what every member of her family is doing every minute of the day. I value my parent's opinion and you just can't forget your family, of course.

While much of participants' dialogue focused on the positive experiences that related to belonging to an extended family network, for some participants contact with extended family members seemed bittersweet. Although family could always be seen as a resource, close family relations sometimes meant increased family conflict. Participants who talked about conflicts in their extended families still tended to see family members as close and connected. They found that avoiding family conflicts was important to maintaining close family ties. In the following quote, a woman discussed how she handled the delicate balance between extended family confrontations and the family's status quo.

Now I'm the trouble-maker in my family. Because if I
stand-up and say, this is my opinion, then everybody
says, ‘why are you being like this?’ So I just sit there
with my mouth shut and everybody thinks I’m, you know,
very sociable.

Another aspect of the extended family network that was a
concern was the problems that existed within the participants
families of origin. Although these participants tended to
categorize current relationships with extended family members
as a resource, there were discussions about previous experiences
with parents and/or siblings that they continue to view
negatively. Some of the earlier experiences that impacted these
participants included divorce, sibling conflict and parental
conflict. Whether or how continued processing of these earlier
experiences impacts on the participant’s current relationships
with extended family members is unclear. However, these
participants felt that the experiences occurring in their families
of origin had affected them at least at the individual level, and
subsequently affected the choices they have made for their families of procreation. The most talked about experience was divorce. Interestingly, belonging to a step-family or enduring a divorce was mentioned by only the women in this sample. It is unclear whether the men in this sample all came from intact families of origin or the topic was not perceived as important. Of the 10 women in this sample, five discussed the impact that divorce had on their lives as children as well as the lasting impact it had on their lives as adults. For all of these women it was made clear that because of their previous experiences with divorce, there was a direct impact on their family values. For example, one woman talked about the fighting that led up to a divorce between her parents. This passage indicates the value she places on having a stable marriage and keeping the peace which she related to her childhood experience with parental discord and divorce.

*When a divorce happens, it's not just one person's*
fault. I remember waking up as a kid at night and hearing the fighting going back and forth. It still upsets me today. I made-up my mind that my kids were not going to be put through that. You know they say kids get over it, but I think it depends on what they've been through. I just remember how imprinted that time was on me. I guess I've never forgiven my father for the way he talked about my mom, I guess I don't see why I should.

In summary, these participants clearly had an understanding of the resources that accompanied belonging to an extended family network. Extended family was valued as a resource to these participants through its ability to provide emotional, physical, and/or monetary support. This close-knit network was strengthened by living in close geographical proximity with other family members. Participants found it important to raise their children in the region so that they could “know” their family and
be a part of the extended family network. Although many positive outcomes came from having a close extended family network, there were also challenges related to maintaining close family ties, such as family conflict. Participants illustrated how family conflict occurred and how they best avoided it. This avoidance of conflict seemed to be important because of the significant role that the extended family plays in everyday family life. Finally, many of the female participants talked about the effects of family of origin stressors on what they value today. The topics included divorce, sibling conflict, and parental conflict. While some of the discussions about extended family were based on negative experiences, the overall attitude of these participants was that the extended family network was a very important aspect of family life.

The Value of Work

There is a strong value placed on work among the participants of this study. Every participant in the study
discussed the value of hard work and its impact on the successful maintenance of the family in some fashion. Themes that emerged that indicated the value of work were: family's ability to remain self-sufficient, differences between the work that men and women value, and the sense of family members' sacrifice. For many participants, the ability to work (either paid work or family work) was often part of how participants defined themselves to the outside world and the family. Although these participants did not clearly articulate that work was a part of their identity, it was implicit in the overwhelming time that they spent discussing the value of work and its implications for the family. In addition, it was seen as an extremely important part of what they do and who they are in relation to the family. The men tended to see outside-the-family labor as their main source of hard work, whereas, the women tended to see their inside-the-family labor as their main source of hard work.

Another important aspect of the work ethic that was evident
was the value of hard work and not “taking handouts.” This was very symbolic of their desire to be self-sufficient. Taking handouts tended to be seen as one’s failure to obtain and maintain work in order to support the family, thus relying on social services and the welfare system. For many of these participants the ability to maintain a sense of self-sufficiency was extremely important even if the work they performed was under poor and unsafe conditions. As the following participant illustrates, his belief in a hard day’s work lends itself to feeling frustrated when seeing others around him suffering from economic strife and choosing to take handouts.

*As long as the [children] do something without moochin’ and be happy. I don’t like freeloaders. Maybe that’s from my dad, I don’t know. I know that there are people who do need help, now don’t get me wrong. But you continue to look for a job and you ain’t moochin’. All [some people] do is have a kid every now*
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and again to boost-up their check. I don't believe in that. I don't like moochers.

Although all of the participants commented on the economic strife in the region, there was a belief that if one worked hard enough, the American dream could be achieved. It appeared that the American dream was based on the idea that a hard day's work was all one needed in order to achieve a "happy" family and a comfortable home. This tended to go hand-in-hand with the belief that taking handouts was counter to what one strived for in order to have the American dream. The following participant illustrates his frustration with the current economic problems of the region and confusion with the fact that people can work extremely hard and still not reap the benefits of a middle class life.

All I know how to do is manual labor, you know? My wife and I have been waiting for this house for 16 years...it's a shame, [some people] work real hard and
still don’t get the American dream.

Another participant gives an example of the importance of achieving the American dream and talked about his frustration with how hard it is to get there.

_if we could ever get out of debt._ . .Now I guess the worst would be if had to get on foodstamps and the government. _How do you provide for your family? How can you have the American dream? How do you make a good wage and get what you want? You can’t do much around here. I haven’t had a raise since Reagan took office. I don’t think now it’s as easy to live your typical middle class life._

There was also a sense of sacrifice that came with the men’s role of providing for one’s family. Coupled with the belief that hard work would help these participants get ahead was the sense that sacrifice was necessary in order to perform roles adequately. For the men in particular, their dialogue about work
reflected the sacrifices they made in order to maintain the role of breadwinner in the family. In some instances, the context of work meant that there was the possibility of unsafe working conditions or working long hours. In an oppressive economic culture such as Appalachia, there are few choices, and these men tended to pride themselves in their ability to attain the role of provider no matter how difficult or unpredictable the work was.

It was nasty work, just a plain nasty, greasy, dirty job. I didn’t like it, but I couldn’t quit. I was working triple time and making $4.10 an hour. I was rolling in the checks. I had a family, a wife, first car, a mobile home, you can’t quit.

For women in this study, their reports about sacrifices for the family tended to be talked about as secondary to their husband’s sacrifice. Although work and sacrifice were discussed by the women, it tended to be disguised in the interviews and down played as less important. Men rarely discussed their wife’s
work. By examining the demographics (see Appendix E), it is clear that four of the ten women worked outside the home. Upon closer examination of their interviews, it was apparent that their primary roles in the family were not perceived as a wage earner and very little was said about their paid work. In addition, very little was said about their unpaid work inside-the-family. In the following passage a woman is asked what a typical day looks like in her family. She shares a few words about her paid work, but only after describing the other family member's work and her home duties first.

[Husband] goes to work about 7, [son] will roll out of bed anywhere from 7:30 to 10:00. When I hear [son], I get up. He has chores to do and he will feed the hogs. I just tinker around the house. I teach health classes during the school year and I also take classes.

The above participant mentioned that she worked in the beginning of the interview and never discussed her work again. In addition,
she labeled her inside-the-family work as “tinkering.” This implies her work inside the home was of less importance. Another woman, who works full-time outside the home, shares some of her thoughts about she and her husband’s sacrifice to work outside the home.

*See, I had to go to work. We needed the money. I’m just holding out for where I want to be and that’s at home. I think my kids need me here more than they need me at work, but it’s just not gonna happen. My [work] is stressful, but husband’s is really bad. His is constant. See, I left my old job because of politics and got this new one. Husband can’t do that. I can get out and he can’t. I know exactly what he’s goin’ through, but he’s just stuck in it.*

In the quote above, this woman’s paid work was perceived as important, but not as important as her husband’s ability to maintain his job for the family. Interestingly, this woman, like
most in this study, did not comment at all on her inside family
work. Instead, dialogue tended to focus on her husband’s work or
his sacrifices.

Interestingly, professional families had a slightly different
view of work roles than the blue-collar families. There were two
couples (4 participants) that fit the category of professional (by
occupation) in this sample of participants. Although these
couples are labeled professional, they did not live in communities
identified by Hennon and Photiadis (1979) as County Seat
Communities where the predominately professional families are
likely to be found (see Appendix E). The men in the professional
families tended to focus less on outside-the-family work as a
component of their identity than the blue-collar men. They
tended to more freely discuss the type of work their wives did
outside the home as well as their ability to help with household
tasks. The women from white-collar homes tended not to focus
on their husband’s work as much as the women in blue-collar
household. The white-collar women tended to speak freely about the work and experiences they had outside of the home as well as their roles inside the family. One white-collar, male participant comments on his wife’s work outside the home and her pursuit of her own interests.

...She started going to the university, she’s a career-oriented person. That’s what she wants to do. So, do it. You want to work, do it. You make the money, I’ll retire.

In contrast, male blue-collar workers tended to focus more on their ability to provide for the family and less on their wife’s work. More often than not, the role of provider for the blue-collar workers was implicitly described as a source of the men’s identity. For example, one male participant described the sacrifice he made for the family and his determination to fulfill his role as provider for the family.

Well, [work] is hell, that’s what it is. I like my job,
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don’t get me wrong, but seven days a week, 365 days a year. I remember a year or so ago the company said I could take a day off. It’s very tiring especially when you are out there 12 to 16 hours. I’ve got 15 more years to work seven days a week… I got three kids a livin’ so I gotta keep a workin’.

All of the women in the study spoke about the importance of their husband’s work. In several instances, the women worked outside the home. However, they nor their husbands made mention of it. In fact, one woman, who had taken a job outside the home when her husband was laid-off, reported feeling saddened by the situation because now she was “over him.” To her this meant that she had increased family power which she felt uneasy about.

*The worst time in our family life was right after [daughter] was born. He got laid-off from work. About that time I was over him because I had an income and I didn’t like it. He didn’t have an income*
so he wasn't equal.

In summary, work was clearly valued by these participants. Paid work made it possible for men to provide adequately for the family; it made families self-sufficient; and it implied a sense of identity for many participants. For the majority of these participants, acceptable work roles were clearly delineated between the sexes. Clearly the provider role belonged to the men in the families and was discussed frequently by the men and the women. The women and the men rarely talked about the wife's work outside-the-home. In fact, some women appeared uncomfortable having increased power that came with outside the home work. Four of the 10 women worked outside the home and even those women tended to talk about their husband's work. An interesting part of the results that needs to be underscored is the lack of dialogue on the women's part about their inside family work. It was unclear whether paid labor was more valuable to these families and/or unpaid labor inside the family was less
valuable. It certainly lacked depth of discussion for many men and women participants. It is, however, implied from the interviews that women’s work is primarily done inside the home in which many sacrifices are made. In addition to other elements of the work ethic value, participants described the importance of providing for the family without using social services. This contributed to their perception of the family as self-sufficient, even in economically hard times.

Further, there were reported differences in the professional and blue-collar families view of work. Professional men were able to discuss wife’s work or activities outside of the home while the professional women also freely discussed their roles inside and outside the home. Blue-collar workers tended to hold more rigid ideals of the roles of men and women’s work than white-collared workers. Finally, a key element across all the families was the sense of sacrifice that men made in order to provide for the family. Several men reported making sacrifices
through enduring oppressive work conditions. Several of the women briefly explained their sacrifices by taking jobs outside the home. However very little was said about women’s work by both men and women. Overall, there were sacrifices that were made and difficult economic times endured, but participants’ valuing a hard days work to provide for the family was strikingly clear.

Value of Community

Most of these participants referred to the importance of community to the family’s operation. Participants seemed to view community as belonging to and being provided for by fellow members of one’s group rather than as a geographical boundary such as a city limit or town. Interestingly, although interviewers were not asked to probe specifically about the community context, the participants offered the information without prompting. A great deal of information was gathered which led to a sense that the community was an important resource and highly
remains unclear whether the emphasis on the social aspects of church was an indication that these people were not religious, but it was clear that some people valued the community resources that accompanied church functions and gatherings. The following quote describes how the church social network was a resource to the family when a family member died.

_The church was there for us. They took us by the hand and prayed for us. Everyone put their arms around us and prayed, and I could feel it. It helped, I felt him go._

Participants also viewed community as friendships and neighborly interactions. Friendships and neighborly interactions seemed to include the activities others do with and for each other, their ability to “be there” in times of need, or simply visiting with each other in the evenings. These elements of community involvement appeared to help the participants to safely maintain relationships outside the family without being disloyal to the family network. It seemed that this allowed for
the participants to gain a small sense of personal differentiation apart from family activities. One man talked about belonging to a supportive community of friends, family and church support which was extremely important during his family's crisis.

_I have great friends. I'd do anything for them and they'd do anything for me. I had a [building] burn down, and I lost everything. All my friends came...my church helped me out financially and a another man down the road let me use his [building] to rebuild what I could. I didn't cry, but I felt like it._

A woman described her role in being neighborly to others. She stressed the importance of "being there" for her neighbors when they were faced with a family tragedy.

_I've been there for neighbors who needed me. I've been strong for them. [Our neighbors] had a death in the family. I supported the family and went with them. I knew what they were going through._
Although participant's descriptions of community varied, very little negative aspects of community were shared. Most participants viewed the community as one of the more positive aspects of the Appalachian culture, but for a few it had some drawbacks. Those that did describe the negatives of living in a rural community tended to balance their reservations with reasons why it's important to remain connected to the community. An articulate description of an Appalachian community came from one participant who struggled with the positive as well as negative aspects of choosing to live rurally.

*The community around here is a very close-knit organization, so-to-speak. You know, you see [son's] teachers on the street and you say, 'I need to ask you a questions about this or this.' It is very informal. That, at times, can be a negative. You always have the gossip circles. In small communities everybody knows your business. That's just a normal thing,
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that's just small town America. Everybody knows what you're doin'.

For many participants, the ability to use the community as a resource was extremely important and a positive experience.

Negative aspects of rural life were described by some of the participants. Interestingly, the negative attitudes toward community tended to be talked about by the professional families most often. There appeared to be a sense of being different in their community due to differences in their family’s socioeconomic status and the vast majority of people in their communities. It is unclear whether these differences are due to the participants’ actual difference in social status and/or other perceived differences among themselves and others in the community. One man describes his perception of status differences between his family and the people in his rural community.

We have our community involvement and interaction
with others, but we don’t have what you would call friends. It’s not that we don’t want friends around, but we really can’t make friends. I think it’s more or less an intelligence problem, our whole family is alike. That really upsets [those in the community], but I don’t really see it as any real detriment to the family.

In summary, most participants found the community to be a major resource available to the family. They found pleasure in having relationships outside the family system such as being neighborly, attending church gatherings, being there for friends and fellow community members when needed, and being a part of informal social networks such as school and children’s activities. However, there were instances in which white-collar, professional participants struggled with negative aspects of the rural community. It is unclear whether this is an indication of a participant’s social status within the community or individual
participant’s values about community interaction. Further, the sense of community was perceived as belonging to a reference group with the many benefits. The community resource tended to be tapped in times of crisis and especially when extended family members were unavailable. The various communities that these participants describe and utilize were perceived as a vital resource for families as well as individual family members.

Value of the Appalachian Region

Regional value is defined in this study as the attitudes toward living in the Appalachian region and the elements of the region that contribute to a perception of increased family life quality. Each interviewer was instructed to ask about family ties in and around the region and to probe for what effect they had on the family unit. Most of the participants discussed positive as well as negative aspects of the region that they felt directly affected their families and their choices to remain in Appalachia. Most of the participants who talked about living in the region

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were men. Interestingly, more men than women chose to discuss and justify why they have chosen to remain in the region. The women tended to focus their dialogue about the region in terms of the family ties to various communities in the region. Several themes were identified that indicated the value of the region to the participants: a sense of heritage acquired through generations of family living in the region, a sense of familiarity and comfort acquired through living in the region, and the sense that they have chosen a more fulfilling life through living in the region.

For many the sense of connectedness to the Appalachian region seemed to be related to heritage. Heritage is referred to in this section as the sense of roots that accompany a family's way of living. Many talked about the sense of heritage or roots by discussing the connection of family ties within the region. One woman talks about how her daughter considers "home" to be among family members in West Virginia and West Virginia "soil."

Well, we are an awfully close family. My daughter's
husband teases her ... He says she goes home to West Virginia to recharge her battery. She has to get her feet on West Virginia soil.

This perception of connection to the region appeared to be indicative of the strong sense of heritage and connection to the family. Many families have chosen to remain in the Appalachian region due the fact that as far back as most could remember their families had lived in the region and forged a productive life there. For some, this was described as a feeling of familiarity and comfort in continuing family life in the region as their families before them had done. In addition, the perception of familiarity and comfort also came with understanding the culture and the ability to find resources to provide for the family. One woman talks about her family’s connection to the region through her and her husband’s generations of families living there.

[My family] is in the neighboring county and [husband’s family] is around here. This is where [our
families] have always lived. . . We like it here, and we like seeing the family every weekend.

In addition, a man describes how he finds comfort in the region by being able to teach his son lessons that he learned through experience on the farm.

See I know ways of [teaching my son] through the farm. I guess if you lived in the city there are ways of teaching, but I don’t know them. I wasn’t raised in the city. That’s one reason why I like it here, I’m comfortable.

Participants expressed serious concerns about the economic state of the region. Interestingly, in all families, including white-collar workers, there were discussions about the negative impact of regional economics on the family. There appeared to be uncertainty about job stability in all strata of work. In many of the interviews, the discussion about economic difficulty led to interviewers asking participants if they had ever considered
moving. The participants tended to struggle with the question. In addition, determining the importance of remaining in the region was difficult. Below a male participant offers an explanation for why it may be difficult to leave the region, even in desperate times.

*Moving ...[deep breath] I don’t know, the only thing I do is work, ya know? The only thing I know is manual labor. I wouldn’t know where to move to. We’re all stuck here. This is where I grew-up, this is it.*

To many participants it appeared that the culture within the region was something they felt comfortable with which appeared to outweigh the benefits of moving out of the region. For nearly all of the participants responding to the question of “why not move,” there was a sense of feeling secure in that after having seen other places they found Appalachia more appealing. Most felt quite sure about choosing to live in the region after having looked at other places. Participants tended to offer reasons for
making the choices they did. As one participant puts it, "I have been exposed to cities from Chicago to New York city. I would visit, but no that’s not for me at all. I’m out of my element totally." Another man offers his perception of the regional culture as well as a sense for how he justifies differences between himself and “outsiders.”

*I would have to say that people not from here have a few different [opinions]. It helps give you a worldly outlook... I’d say that once they are here for a while they learn how to be a West Virginian [laughter]. I’ve been around the world and haven’t found a place that I like any better.*

In summary, participants’ experiences of the region tended to be mixed. It was difficult for most to clearly articulate the positives of remaining in Appalachia when faced with the problems that accompany this economically poor region. However, most were extremely clear that moving to another,
more economically prosperous place was not an option for them. Some of the reasons participants remained loyal to the region included extended family ties and the family network, a sense of comfort and familiarity with the Appalachian culture, and the belief that a “choice” had been made in the decision to stay. Although each participant was challenged with the economic problems inherent to the region, there continued to be the overriding sense that there is “no place quite like Appalachia.”

Family Dynamics

The family dynamics and patterns discussed in this section are based on participants’ descriptions of their family life. Specific family dynamics discussed are boundaries, coping and adaptability, and gender roles. Family process will be interwoven throughout this section because it clearly helps to illustrate how families interact together (Nichols & Schwartz, 1991). These family system terms were not specifically used by the participants. The researcher used systemic terminology to label
and organize participants' descriptions of their family life. Family dynamics are broadly defined in this study as elements affecting a family system's overall ability to operate and maintain itself (Nichols & Schwartz, 1991).

**Boundaries.**

Boundaries are defined as the emotional barriers that protect the integrity of the family system as well as individuals and subsystems within the family (Nichols and Schwartz, 1991). For these participants, examples of boundary maintenance were found in participants' stories about interactions between nuclear and extended family as well as between individuals within the nuclear family. This section focuses on two kinds of boundaries: family boundaries and individual boundaries.

The closeness between participants and extended family is indicative of their frequent day-to-day contact. Frequent contact with extended family members appeared for some of the participants to be a double-edged sword. While the closeness of
the extended family, in general, had many benefits and was valued (e.g., emotional, physical and financial resources), it sometimes left little room for the nuclear family to establish clear boundaries and to create its own rituals. While it was important to remain close to extended family, many participants were unsure of how to establish clear nuclear family boundaries without endangering their closeness. Below, a woman talks about how her parents tend to make decisions for her resulting in her getting caught between them and her husband.

. . .[My parents] have a tendency to make decisions for us and then just inform me. If i'm lucky I know the day before I have to be somewhere. It's like show-up for this and this and be happy and smile. I don't like that. We have plans of our own. [Husband] gets mad at me because I can't say anything to them.

Clearly, this participant felt that she was unable to confront her parents about their making decisions for her.
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In contrast, there appeared for some participants to be a discomfort in the nuclear family when there was diminished closeness or interaction with extended family members. Because there is such importance placed on interaction with extended family members, diminished contact was just as uncomfortable as too much contact with extended family. For example, a man described the difficulty his mother had in remaining close to the nuclear family after the birth of their first child. This passage also illustrates how the interaction between nuclear and extended family became more comfortable over time.

My mother was upset with the fact that she was becoming a grandmother. She didn't want to face the fact that her generation would be the next one to die, I guess. The first couple of years with [first child], she really wasn't that close. That was hard on us. Now that [second child] is here, she's an official grandmother. She babysits and everything. My dad
couldn't wait.

Interestingly, participants felt the most discomfort with extended family boundaries when there was either an over or under-involvement with the nuclear family. For the most part, it seemed that day-to-day interaction with extended family was accepted and often preferable. However, over-involvement between nuclear and extended family was often troublesome and difficult to manage.

Individual boundary maintenance also proved difficult for some of the participants. In particular, women seemed to struggle with setting limits on their time and personal space with children and husbands' needs and requests coming before their own. It was not clear whether boundary intrusions were accepted by these individuals or quietly disputed. Below, one woman talks about her willingness to alter her plans, if needed, when she is called upon to do something for her children.

I got a letter in the mail the other day saying that I
was having a 4-H party, and I didn’t know nothin’ about it. There is an awful lot I don’t know about until the last minute. [Not knowing] is usually fine unless I had something planned, but I guess if I did [have something planned] I would have to call and cancel.

It appeared this woman’s definition of self included being a mother who was willing to make sacrifices for the family.

Even though most of these women recognized the positive attributes that accompanied their role as mother, few talked about the sacrifice of self in order to be a good caregiver. Instead, the majority of these women spoke of doing things for the family and very little about how they felt about the sacrifice. For most of the women in this study, making sacrifices for the family is a clear choice that includes difficulty in maintaining individual boundaries and sometimes a sense of self. Although most women did not comment on how the boundary intrusions
affected them, some women were able to discuss the resentment that coupled the family's disregard for their needs. For example, the following quote is by a mother talking about her willingness to make the needed sacrifices for her family. Yet, unlike most participants, she also shares the resentment that results from her children's disrespect.

[The children] always come first. I feel like they just don't care. They care about themselves, but it won't last. What I want, they don't care. They just get mad if I tell them no. There is just no respect. They will mouth off and say things to me, but I just keep it inside. It makes me hurt, but wait until they have kids. They will find out. They just don't make me feel like I'm part of anything. I'm here to cook and clean. That's it. Most of them don't know what I want. They come first. I'm used to it, and I keep my mouth shut. I just keep it in.
Although not as frequent, men sometimes talked about individual boundary problems. Typically, the men in this study were clear about which boundary intrusions were comfortable and which were not. Sometimes, however, they found it difficult to be clear about how to get their needs met. One man shared his anger with his wife’s inability to limit the time spent talking to her extended family.

[Wife] has to know what every member of her family is doing every minute of the day. She calls her parents everyday. That gets me a little angry at times, the phone bills are so much. I make an extra dollar and she’ll spend it on phone calls. . . I’m not really sure if she knows how much it upsets me.

For the man quoted above, it was made clear throughout the interview that the amount of time his wife spent with extended family was uncomfortable for him. It became apparent throughout the rest of the interview that he wanted to spend
more time with his nuclear family unit, yet he was unsure of how to say this to his wife.

In summary, maintaining clear boundaries between nuclear and extended families was sometimes difficult. This was indicated by participants’ discomfort with confronting extended family members about establishing clear nuclear family boundaries. For some participants, closeness to extended family appeared to be a double-edged sword because although close family ties were seen as extremely important sometimes nuclear family time was intruded upon. At the same time, not enough closeness to extended family appeared to be uncomfortable. It appeared the dilemma came with how to establish comfortable boundaries between the nuclear and extended family. Part of the difficulty may be how to establish a comfortable family boundary without offending other family members. There also tended to be some difficulty for individuals inside the nuclear family in establishment of one’s own boundaries, especially for women. It
was quite clear that doing a good job as a mother was very important and usually came before their needs as women. Although this could be seen as a loss of oneself, rarely did the women express their resentment.

Coping and Adaptability

Family life was riddled with stressful situations for these participants. Participants talked about both non-normative stressors (e.g., death of a child, fire, etc.) and normative stressors (e.g., financial stressors, life cycle stage transitions, etc.). This section highlights ways participants coped and adapted to stressful situations. Coping responses varied from avoiding the topic altogether to utilizing as many resources as possible to cope. This section focuses on two major themes: coping and adapting to non-normative and coping and adapting to normative stressors.

In most of these families, there had been at least one non-normative stressor. Although the interviewers were not
instructed to ask participants if they had experienced a non-normative stressor, they were asked to follow-up on how participants moved on after a traumatic event if one had been experienced. One way participants found it helpful to cope with non-normative stressors was acknowledging the sadness of the event while focusing on what the family has left. This way of coping tended to allow people to acknowledge the loss, yet focus on how the family can heal and move on. One participant shares his ability to cope with his daughter’s death by focusing on what the family had rather than what the family had lost.

Things happen. I always say that if someone has six kids, somewhere in there they lost one to a miscarriage. It happens all the time, or most of the time. We still had our oldest daughter, plus we had each other. That kind of covered-up the hurt or at least helped it. Life can’t stop. You can grieve and have sadness, but you can’t wear a black veil the rest
of your life. You have to keep going, even though it hurts (participant begins crying).

Similarly, another participant dealt with a difficult kind of non-normative stressor by focusing on what the family had rather than what they had lost. This man shared with the interviewer that he had invested a large sum of money in a new building that was destroyed by fire. In the passage below, he describes how he coped with the tragedy by focusing on the positives, pulling together as a family, and accepting the help of extended family and friends.

I guess you could say that since the tragedy [fire], we've had to gather our bushes and pull together. Adversity has brought us closer. [Wife] was working at the time, so it wasn't so bad financially. I could salvage some of my tools and I rebuilt four of my eight machines. The church helped us out, too. . . . It helped to know that the church, family, and friends
have been there to help us deal with [the fire].

A second way that people found useful to cope with non-normative stressors was agreeing to disagree with family members about how to cope. Individuals within a family may deal with a crisis differently, which may be difficult when it comes time to negotiate how the family can heal and move on after the crisis. However, spoken or unspoken family agreements about unique individual coping styles may be quite functional. The following passage describes a wife’s impressions of how she and her husband deal differently with the death of their son.

[Husband] will always say, ‘I don’t want to talk about it, all you want to do it talk, I don’t want to think about it.’ When I need to talk about it, I talk about it, there are a lot of other people that let me just talk. That’s why I need other people, because he doesn’t like to talk about it. . . It feels good to talk about it, because it reminds me that I haven’t forgotten about
him.

She dealt with her son’s death by reaching outside of the family for support. In addition, she clearly knew that her husband’s way of coping with their son’s death was to avoid talking or thinking about it. Below is an excerpt of her husband’s interview. He shares his impressions of how they cope with their son’s death differently.

See [I cope] differently than my wife, she let’s it out, and I hold it in. That’s the only thing that I can see. She wants to talk about it, but that subject (son’s death) I don’t like talking about.

By examining this couple’s interview closely, it was apparent that the wife talked about the death in order to remember her son. In contrast, the husband did not want to talk about his son’s death although he seemed to accept his wife’s need to talk. Agreeing to disagree on how to cope with a death in this family appeared to be functional.
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A third way that people found useful in coping with non-normative stressors included avoiding the topic altogether. This way of coping appeared to help people momentarily forget about the tragedy in order to move on with family life. Below one man talked about his way of avoiding the topic of his mother-in-law's cancer and eventual, untimely death.

I’ve never really talked to [wife] about it. It’s crossed my mind a couple of times, but I’ve never really taken the time to talk to [wife] about it. I’m not sure if the children know [why their grandmother died]. It may have gone through the grapevine, but I imagine they do know.

The man quoted above had not talked to his wife about the death nor the children about why their grandmother had died. The whole family had in a sense issued an unspoken rule that the death would not be talked about. In the passage below, the man’s wife discusses how the whole family decidedly dealt with her
mother's death by avoiding the topic in order to cope with its significant effects on the family.

*See my mom had uterine cancer. I was the one who took her to the doctor that day. The whole family was there, but we never said a word. We just got up and walked away. I was so mad I had prints in my palms.*

*but, I just avoided it and never said anything about it again.*

For this family, avoiding the topic of the grandmother's death was important and not talking to each other about it appeared to be part of how they adapted to the loss.

Normative stressors were a second kind of stressor that these participants discussed. Unlike the non-normative stressors, people often did not see normative stressors as difficult situations requiring coping skills and adaptability. Therefore, not as many rich, detailed descriptions about effective coping strategies were gathered. This section differs slightly
from the previous format on non-normative stressors because it examines the context of the stressor and attempts to highlight small ways that the participants (recognized or not) attempt to cope. Some of the normative stressors that were commonly discussed included financial difficulties and life cycle transitions.

Financial difficulty was one kind of normative stressor talked about by participants. Many participants worried whether or not work would be available from one day to the next. This often left families continually anxious about how to proceed with usually positive normative stressors such as moving into or building a new home. A man shared the financial stress that the new home placed on the family. He talked about how he coped with the financial burden of the new home by saving money and continuing to work for meager wages.

*We’ve been waiting for 16 years for this house. Me and [wife] lived in a trailer before this on mom and dad’s*
farm. We saved $15,000 over 16 years for the down payment. It was hard on us. We’ve always wanted [this house], but it’s been hard on us. I haven’t had a raise since Reagan took office. I don’t think now it’s as easy to live your typical middle class life. I really don’t have a choice. All I do is go to work, come home, go to work, come home.

His wife also talked about some of her concerns about the stress of owning a new home and how she has coped with the family’s financial struggles by taking a job outside the home.

Well, we waited 16 years for this house. It takes lots of money to own a house. I had to go to work. You kind of get stuck in that rut when you get used to an income. I started by pumping gas. I just agonized over it. But, we were thrilled when we got the house. We were as happy as we could be. Other than a money shortage, life isn’t too bad.
For the couple quoted above, owning a home was one of their dreams for 16 years. Although they complained of the financial difficulties that came with a new home, they also illustrated how they coped effectively by the wife taking a paid job and the husband staying with an undesirable job.

Another normative stressor that participants experienced was job loss or the possibility of job loss. It was clear that economic hard times and lack of job security was difficult on many aspects of family life. Although economic uncertainty was problematic for nearly all these families, only a few discussed how they coped. The man below described the way he coped with the possibility of job loss. He has learned to deal with the anxiety of financial losses by saving money and “mellowing out.”

I just don’t get hung up on things anymore. I worry about my job, it’s a day-to-day type thing. I have just enough to pay the house off if I get laid-off, so I ain’t worried about it. Things just don’t have the impact
that they used to have. I've mellowed out in a positive way.

Similarly, another man attributed the loss of his job as less severe due to his wife's job and her ability to pitch in to help.

See, my troubles started when I worked for the coal mines. In one day, hundreds of men were laid-off. It would have been more of a trauma if [wife] didn't have a job. I don't think my lay off from the mines affected us really. [Wife] was working at the time so there was no big trauma about it.

As his wife put it, her husband's job loss was less problematic because she had an income for the family. Her passage also highlights the family's unique coping strategy of "not fretting" about the financial loss.

We kind of get used to [the job loss]. It's like being a coal miner and worrying about the work. We did that for a couple of years until he got this job and his
business is slow. I worked and that helped. We have just gotten used to it. We’ve adjusted by not fretting and as long as you try, that’s what matters.

It appeared that this couple was able to cope by developing a sense of teamwork. Cooperation and flexibility of their roles seemed to be helpful as the wife became the primary wage earner while the husband was out of work. Another unique feature of their coping strategy included not worrying about the problem.

Normative stressors also tended to be discussed as they relate to life cycle stage transitions. For these participants, children were highly valued members of the family and were talked about at great length by the men and women. Stress and frustration often accompanied parenthood and several discussed coping strategies they had adopted in order to adapt to changing life needs. One common life stage transition that was discussed included addition of new members to the family. Below a man talks about the transition he made to fatherhood and how he coped
with his new role as parent by talking to other people with children.

\[
\text{[Wife] was six months pregnant before I came to accept the fact that I was becoming a dad. I mean, it scared me to death. I would ask myself, would my parents do this or that? I talked to people and they said that the more kids you have the better you get at [parenting].}
\]

Another life stage transition that was commonly discussed was becoming families with adolescents. Adolescence for many of these parents was frustrating and quite stressful. A way that some participants found useful to cope with the family's transition to adolescence was to become more flexible in their family rules. The woman below described how the family coped with adolescent-adult power struggles by sitting down and discussing issues with each other.

\[
\text{Right now we are having a lot of power struggles. Our}
\]
16 year old thinks that he can do things completely, so we are having struggles about who is the boss and who is the kid. . . If a situation comes up we sit down, talk about it and handle it. We try to discuss things. Sometimes [the children] don’t like the answers. . . You have to set limits.

The woman quoted above spoke about the power struggles several times throughout the interview. Although these power struggles were quite stressful, it appeared that their ability to cope by being flexible, yet setting limits worked for this family. In contrast, some participants felt that the family rules needed to become more rigid in order to deal with adolescent struggles. One father talked about his adolescent and how he coped with their struggles through continuing to “teach” him about life in ways that used to work when his son was younger.

Now our oldest son is 13 years old, an eighth grader.

He’s a know-it-all so I put him up here above the family
Appalachian Family Life

[on the family sculpture]. You can’t explain nothing you do, ya know? That’s why he’s up there like that. . .See he thinks he knows more than me, but it’s my job to teach them about responsibility. He doesn’t seem to listen, but I just keep tryin’.

Maintaining the rigid rules and roles that were helpful when the children were younger were not as helpful as they became adolescents.

A third life stage transition that was also discussed was families in the launching life stage. This life stage accompanied a sense of loss for some of the parents who had to deal with the stress of letting go of a child. Below one father talked about launching his oldest daughter. To this man, launching his daughter was done through her marriage. An aspect of his coping with her leaving was giving her advice and making sure that she was happy. As he put it:

Before she got married I asked, ya know, if she was
satisfied, if she thought that this is what she really wanted, ya know. I told her that marriages now-a-days may not last. You’re married one day and divorced the next. I wanted to make sure that she was happy and that she would be married for a lifetime.

It appeared to be important for this man to know that his oldest daughter was happy and secure. Similarly, the transition for this man’s wife was facilitated by her confidence that the man her daughter was marrying was right for her. As she said, “He takes care of [oldest daughter] and he loves her, that’s what makes her going so easy for me. I know that he loves her and she’s happy.”

Finally, there was one couple in the families in later life stage. This couple was making the transition to growing older and redefining who they were after having launched the children. Although this couple still focused a great deal on their children in the interview, they were very candid about things they did in order to make the adjustments to growing older. This man talked
about how he has stayed active after retirement in order to help him adapt to later life.

_I took an early retirement from my work, but now I volunteer at the hospital for the meals on wheels program. I still work 8 to 5 everyday and I really enjoy the volunteer work._

This man was quite pleased with his volunteer work which helped him feel productive and able to help someone else. Below his wife shares how she copes with growing older. This passage reflects her attempts to maintain a positive attitude about growing older and sharing her knowledge with others along the way.

_I’ve come to appreciate my age. As long as you stay young at heart and keep a young outlook, you are not afraid. I’m open to new experiences and not afraid to try new things. I will approach people and offer advice, asked for or unasked for. I’m not afraid to say,_
have you ever thought about this or that. I think, you know, why have all this knowledge and not share it? I feel well-rounded and I’m enjoying my age.

For this couple, growing older was seen as a time to be productive and to help others.

In summary, there were many stressful situations that have been a part of these participants’ lives which appeared to have a significant impact upon them. There were discussions about normative as well as non-normative stressors that have impacted families’ choices and life circumstances. Most of the participants who discussed non-normative stressors talked about how they coped with the event. Four common ways of coping with non-normative stressors included focusing on what the family had rather than what they had lost, agreeing to disagree about how to cope, avoiding the topic altogether, and using resources. It was apparent that each way of coping was functional to some degree for these families because families reported a high degree
of family life quality. Two kinds of normative stressors discussed were financial stressors and life cycle stage transition stressors. Couples coped with financial stressors by demonstrating teamwork in the family, saving money, and attempting not to worry. People coped with life cycle stage transitions by talking to others, demonstrating role flexibility and rigidity, and staying productive. The participants in this study were able to describe ways that have been useful as they adapted to many stressful situations.

Gender

Gender roles in these families were clearly defined. Although gender has been woven throughout the analysis and reporting of results, it is important to address gender roles specifically because some participants provided detailed descriptions of how gender determines many family dynamics. Women's roles in the family tended to center around family caretaking, while men's roles in the family tended to center
around providing financially for the family. This section examines two themes that emerged in the analysis: family hierarchy as determined by gender and gendered roles inside the family.

The first part of this section examines family hierarchy. For the most part, the family hierarchy was determined by a members’ gender. These families were structured patriarchally with men seen as the heads-of-households who were primary decision makers and leaders of the family. It appeared to the researcher that most of these men and women perceived the family hierarchy as functional. The passage below discusses one family’s hierarchy. This man shares his views on the primary responsibilities of men and women in a family.

*You have to do what the husband says. He’s the one that makes all the decisions. His responsibility is to watch over the wife. The wife is to follow his lead, I think.*
Another participant was asked to talk about his family sculpture and the arrangement of his family members. Here he shares his philosophy of why members of the family are placed on the grid by gender.

_We are all on the same line because we are equal, but I'm first because I'm supposed to be the leader. That's the way it's supposed to be. I was raised in a strong environment with reference to dad calling the shots. Mom would yell and scream, but when it came down to wait until your dad comes home, you knew you were in trouble. Our son is a male chauvinist and I get accused of that, too. . . some things are woman's [roles] and not men's [roles]. I guess I'm kinda rigid in my thought processes._

As did most of the participants, the two participants quoted above clearly indicated that their families were hierarchically structured according to gender. The second participant clearly
knew that he viewed family hierarchy in this way because he was
raised with his "dad calling the shots."

In two families, there were noticeable shifts in the family
hierarchy. These families included women who were university
students at the time of the study. In both families, the men
discussed aspects of how the hierarchy had shifted or evolved
over time. Although these women did not comment directly on a
shift in hierarchy, each of the two men discussed extensively how
the family had changed due to their wives "outside" interests.
For one man, the shift in hierarchy was gradual and functional for
their family. Below the passage describes how this husband had
seen his wife change since she began college. In addition, he gave
a clear description of what the family hierarchy looked like in the
beginning of their marriage and the shift that occurred over time.

_I would have to say that in the past two years, [wife]
has become 10 times more assertive than she used to
be. I think part of it is living with me because I don't_
play games. The other part is that she is getting out into the outside world [through classes at the university]. She's a career oriented person. . . The beginning of our marriage could be charted on a piece of paper. I was the decision maker. She was a subordinate. The longer our marriage went together, the roles went from here to here. She would come in and say, ‘what do you think?’ [Husband would say] I don't care, handle it, I've got other things to do. I trust her to do that. I think that we were very different people and we have grown to trust each other more and more.

A second man who discussed a shift in family hierarchy did not perceive the change quite as functional. Although he clearly supported his wife's decision to go to college, it appeared he resented the challenges it posed to the family.

It's not easy with wife in [college]. . .[Wife] used to
take care of the family problems, more or less. She was always there to fill in the gaps, it seems. My responsibilities have increased. To a certain extent the kids and I have a little more household chores to do and [wife] has less. I have to cook and clean and do laundry and take the kids to everything. Today it might be that I have yardwork to do and I have to go in and cook supper, the next day it might be different. . . It has really been a sacrifice for the whole family and our quality of family life right now is pretty low.

The second part of the analysis of gender includes family roles that were determined by members' gender. For the most part, this information was gathered via interviewer's questions about who does what in the family. Women in particular tended to focus upon women's work as inside household responsibilities, while men tended to focus upon outside household responsibilities as their primary work roles in the family. One
woman described in detail each members' responsibilities for chores. Family work was allocated by one's gender with the mother's work being inside the house and the father and son's work outside the house.

[Husband] takes care of the outside work like mowing with the tractor. Every once in a while the youngest one will clean like a crazy man. He has to teach the oldest one here [laughter]. [Oldest] will bale hay and stuff like that, but it's mostly the work outside. I work around and putter, I like that. If it's something that I can't handle or he can't handle then we hire it out, but for the most part that's how we do it.

The woman quoted above was very clear that men and women had specific roles to perform within her family. It appeared to the researcher that for many of these families the stratification of roles were perceived as functional which helped to provide reliable structure and consistency. One woman who works full-
time outside the home also described how the family has allocated work roles at home based upon gender. When the interviewer had empathized with the tremendous amount of activity in the family and asked if everyone in the family helped around the house, she said:

Only when they need to be doing something. I usually don’t work too late so, unless I have to tell them to do something, I do it. [Husband] does almost nothing inside the house. He will work on the cars and will, ya know, work outside and in the garden.

For most men in this study, their primary role in the family was to adequately provide financially for the family’s well-being. In general, they did not talk about their roles inside-the-family. Some of these men had such a focus on outside paid work, that it was difficult to know exactly what they did inside the family to help from day-to-day. When asked about what he does around the house, one man talked about his responsibilities for the family
routine at home in the following way.

_When I come home [from work] supper is ready. We eat and if we decide to go somewhere, we go. If I’ve got something to do around the house, I probably go work at it. If not, I sit around, talk, and then watch TV, ya know, just leisure time._

The participant quoted above was clear through most of his interview that his role in the family was to provide financially for their well-being. He was also very clear that his wife maintained the home and the children. Their roles in the family were gender specific and very rigid. There was little ambiguity about who would be doing what to keep the family functioning.

Another interesting aspect of gender roles in the family was how participants reared their children based upon the child’s gender. It appeared that children were taught from a young age that there are rules and roles in the family that are clearly gender specific. One mother describes how boys were able to do
more outside activities while girls needed more protection and safeguarding. She talked about specific expectations and limitations for her children based on their gender.

Maybe I'm wrong, but there are things that a boy can do that a girl can't do. I think they are safer for a boy to do than for a girl to do. Even though my baby girl is my oldest child in the house, it's harder for me to let go of her. It really doesn't bother me to let him get into a car and drive around. But it does bother me to let her get into the car and run around. That's just the way I am. I can't make her understand that.

Another subtle aspect of gender that involves children is the participant's specific value of male children. As one male participant put it, “I really wanted our first [child] to be a boy, but we got a girl. I was so happy when I saw her little face, it didn’t matter. . . . We never got a boy, but I'm happy with how everything turned out.” The indication that there was increased
value for a male child was very subtle. Another father shares his delight with the birth of his second child which was his first son.

*I said if I ever had a son I would call him Benjamin*.  
That’s my father’s name and he was an attorney.  
[Son] is really bright, really aware and he picks up on things really quick. So does [daughter] of course. Now out of the 23 grandchildren, Benjamin is the first boy. *I’ll take credit for that one [laughter]*.

Subtly, the above two participants talked about the value of male children in the family.

There appeared for a few participants to be some drawbacks to having rigid, stratified gender roles within the family. It is important to state that most participants did not talk about any disadvantages to their family structure, and it did not appear to be an issue for any of them. Interestingly, a few participants did talk about how the family’s expectations of their role as a man or woman kept them from certain family arenas. When one woman
was asked by the interviewer what an ideal family would look like for her. Her response was based upon her roles as a woman and mother in the family.

You want me to tell you how my family could be 100%? Well, I guess it wouldn’t look much different. It might be how our family was planned. Instead of four children, we would have only two. I might have a job (laughter). I would also prefer not to have to get up and drive 2 hours to take my youngest to school.

That would be the most ideal situation.

The above quoted participant is kept from paid work outside the home because of her responsibilities as a mother. Later in the interview, this woman shared with the interviewer that she once had paid work and found it very fulfilling, but her responsibilities as a mother were too great to do both. Similarly, a man talked about his primary role as financial provider as a drawback to spending time with his children.
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It's frustrating for me because during the school year I work the night shift so we are only together in the evenings about half an hour everyday. We are in the house together, but we are not together as a family. [Wife] is checking up on the rest of the family and then tells me about everyone and about her day. The kids are so involved in things and there is only so much time in the day. I miss seeing them because as they are coming home, I'm leaving for work.

In summary, patriarchy and gender stratification of roles in these families was very common. It appeared that hierarchy and rigid stratification of roles in families were functional and helped to lessen ambiguity, because it was very clear about who does what in the family. For a couple of families, the process of determining hierarchy and gender roles changed as needed over time. This was not the case for most families, however. The rules and roles in most families seemed to help provide a clear
structure that allowed families to function smoothly. While most participants did not discuss negative impacts of rigid gender roles, a few shared the limitations that sometimes accompanied their roles within the family.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine Appalachian family life. A semi-structured, qualitative interview format was used to talk to participants about their family life. Participants were located through county extension agents. When interviewed, participants were specifically asked to talk about their family life through questions about family membership, relationships, structure, functioning and values. This chapter begins by interweaving the summary of the findings with previous research. Next is a discussion on the impact this study has had on the researcher as well as what is known about the impact on the researched. Following this section is a discussion of the limitations of this study. This chapter concludes with implications for policy, clinical interventions and future research.
Summary of Findings

These participants were asked to describe their family life in a variety of ways. The semi-structured format of the interview asked broad questions about family membership, relationships, structure, functioning, and values which helped tap dimensions of Appalachian family life. Data collected were organized into two broad categories: family values and dynamics. The first category, family values, resonated throughout the interviews. Values that seemed to be important to participants included: children, extended family, work, community, and the region. The second category, family dynamics included: boundaries, coping and adaptability, and gender roles.

Consistently, participants talked about the importance of having children in the family. According to Fitchen (1981), children in the Appalachian family are seen as a means of their parent’s self-fulfillment and self-image. Fitchen also suggests that a family’s status within the community is largely dependent
upon having children in the family. Although participants in this study did not indicate that children brought the family increased status, perhaps through children, the family had access to resources such as church, school and social support networks.

Women participants, in particular, appeared to identify most with their role as mothers. It was clear that no other role in the family was as important and being a mother was one of the greatest sacrifices that a woman could make. This finding supports the work of Fitchen (1981), who also found that most women in Appalachian families consider the role of mother the most important, satisfying and fulfilling. As Fiene (1991) reports, a woman's comfort with her role as a mother is directly related to her self-image. The women participants in this study referred to the sacrifices they made in attempts to be a "good" mother. This often meant placing everyone in the family before themselves, even to their own detriment.

These parents tended to have clear ideas about children's
roles in the family, as illustrated through discussions on discipline, teaching, and parent-child interaction. According to Peters and Peterson (1988), parent's in blue-collar work tend to value obedience, conformity, and neatness in their children which is critically important in adapting to the Appalachian cultural context. In this study, it appeared that there was an emphasis on teaching children about conforming to cultural norms through learning the "value of a dollar" or the "value of a hard days work." It was also very important for children to learn to respect the family hierarchy and conform to socially accepted rules and roles for boys and girls. Although most participants strongly believed that children needed to conform to parental and social norms, this was often difficult during life stage transitions. Perhaps parents in this study struggled to mold their children to fit what is socially acceptable in the Appalachian cultural context in order to assure their children's ability to adapt as adults to a relatively rigid and economically limited environment.
The subsystem least commented upon by participants was the marital dyad. Interviewers asked participants questions about their marital relationships. Responses although usually positive, lacked depth and richness. It is unclear whether the marital dyad was perceived as a private area not to be discussed with strangers, or whether it was perceived as less important than other family subsystems. Fitchen (1981) reported that the woman’s role as mother was far more important than her role as wife. Fitchen also reported that Appalachian couples tend to continue a marriage despite problems for the sake of the children. Participants in this study said little about the marital dynamics which leaves more questions and issues to be explored. Perhaps, the primary role of mother was seen by the Appalachian culture as the woman’s most important role within the family and the roles as wife not as important.

The extended family was highly valued by participants in this study. According to the literature, Appalachian families have
created small pockets of closely-knit, family-based communities within the region for many generations (Heller & Quesada, 1977). Perhaps, the greatest resource one might have in Appalachia is the ability to rely on family resources in times of need. Because so often these families are plagued with economic strife that demands unique coping abilities, it may be detrimental not to maintain one's place in the family network. Family networks often provide a person with work connections as well as the emotional support needed during crisis (Duncan, 1992). Further, Duncan adds that in Appalachia even a family's name carries with it a reputation that effects every member of the family. For example, a person with a family name that has a good reputation for hard work may be hired largely due to his or her name alone. Similarly, family members who are highly respected within the community may put in a "good word" for an individual increasing the likelihood that the individual will have increased access to community resources. Perhaps for most Appalachians, failure to
respect and invest in the extended family network makes one’s acceptance into the community and access to resources difficult.

Participants in this study also valued hard work. This finding supports the work of Singleton, Ratliff, Carpenter, Davis and Brunner (1991) which ascertains that Appalachian families tend to value a hard day’s work and making an honest living. Work roles in Appalachian families who participated in the current study tended to follow traditional lines with men working outside the home and women working inside the home. Men tended to discuss their outside the family work and how that work allowed them to provide financially for the family. Women also tended to discuss their husband’s work as primary and their work as secondary to the family’s ability to function. Unlike the men, the women did not label their family work as “work.” Perhaps these women did not label their work as “work” because society, in general, does not recognize inside the family work as “work” (Hochschild, 1989). However, the women in this study did feel that being a
mother and staying at home was the greatest sacrifice they could make for the family. Thus, they commented a great deal on the things they did to help the family function more smoothly such as taking children to school functions and having meals prepared.

Beaver (1988) suggests that Appalachian families tend to have a patriarchal family structure which requires cooperation between men and women's work roles. Further, the differing work roles of men and women, inside and outside the family, are considered equally important to maintaining the family. Because of economically hard times for the Appalachian families in this study, some women have taken jobs outside of the home in addition to their jobs inside the family with little change in their inside family role expectations. Although several of the women in this study had mentioned working outside the home, very few felt that it was their primary responsibility or spoke very much about it. Instead, most talked about their husband's work and the contributions that he made financially to the family.
Interestingly this occurred even when the husband was unemployed and the woman was working outside the home. Perhaps because a patriarchal family structure is a norm in this culture, it is confusing or uncomfortable to shift work roles.

The Appalachian community appeared for most of these participants to reflect a sense of belonging to a group rather than a geographical boundary. The sense of community was heightened by social interactions in church, with neighbors and with friends. According to Photiadis (1986), Appalachian communities are primarily constructed around the social interaction patterns among members. Further, communities that were historically undifferentiated social systems revolving around family relations have now begun to extend out to other social institutions. Participants in the current study tended to use the community as a social resource, especially in times when family was unavailable. Some felt a strong connection to church activities and sharing experiences with their fellow members.
Interestingly, not many of those who talked about church talked about the religious or spiritual aspects of church. Instead, they seemed to focus more on the gathering that occurred weekly and the interaction with others. Similarly, people who commented on neighbors and friendships focused on the interaction that occurred between people as important. Although the Appalachian culture is family-focused, perhaps these participants also enjoyed moving outside the family in search of meaningful relationships. In addition, perhaps when participants want to talk about issues that may be threatening to family members (e.g., marital unhappiness or family conflicts), they turn to friends.

Finally, regional value was discussed as pertinent to family life by participants in this study. Strong regional values are unique to the Appalachian culture and there is a sense of connectedness that comes with living in the Appalachian region (Jones, 1984). This was suggested by participants in this study through examples of loyalty to the geographical boundaries of the
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Appalachian region. Perhaps, they feel a connectedness to the region because it has provided them with a way of life that is determined by their familiarity and comfort by remaining in the region. The region has also in a sense protected these people from the ‘outside’ world and the perils that accompany an ever growing industrialized society.

Limited economic opportunities in the region did not appear to affect participant’s sense of familiarity with and belonging to the region. This appeared to the researcher to mean that their comfort in remaining in the region outweighed the advantages of moving for socioeconomic advancement. Some participants seemed frustrated and confused by the question “why not move?” Their responses seemed similar to other groups who see themselves as unable to change situations that are unhealthy and yet perceive their situations as acceptable. Baumeister (1989) describes this phenomena as an optimal margin of illusion. This optimal margin of illusion is the perception that things are
slightly better than they really are and that one’s capabilities are overestimated. The positive consequences of an optimal level of illusion is that people tend to be happier and function better when perceiving a situation as better than it actually is. The downside of this phenomena seems to be when the illusion creates large distortions which lead to negative consequences (Baumeister, 1989). This concept seems to help explain the participant’s choice to stay in Appalachia. Perhaps these participants reached an optimal level of illusion when viewing the family kinship network, community and comfort within the Appalachian cultural system. Further, the optimal level of illusion may help to conceptualize why staying in the region outweighs the negatives of economical difficulties and financial struggles. Photiadis (1986) adds that the main reason for the Appalachian’s failure to migrate out of the region is due to the kinship network and kinship communities. Perhaps, these participants’ optimal level of illusion coupled with their strong emphasis placed on the
family network has stifled any notion that these individuals might have for moving into the “outside” world.

Many of the participants told stories or gave examples of daily life rituals that provided information about family process. Boundaries and boundary maintenance was found to effect individuals in the nuclear and extended family. It appeared that some of these participants found boundary maintenance difficult to enforce. Participants alluded to boundary infringement in their stories, yet seemed to accept the process as normal. The most discomfort with boundary infringement tended to encompass nuclear family time and rituals. However, confronting family members appeared to cause even more discomfort than boundary infringement. Perhaps, confronting extended family would be interpreted by those members as disloyalty or disrespect. Further, as indicated earlier, the extended family is an extremely important resource to have and jeopardizing that resource could be detrimental to family life.
Interestingly, Minuchin's concept of enmeshment (Nichols & Schwartz, 1991) comes to mind as these participants talked about their inability to establish clear nuclear family boundaries. Systemic thinking suggests that enmeshment is dysfunctional for families due to the difficulty for members to have separate ways of doing things and unique thoughts on issues. However, it does not appear that enmeshment is dysfunctional for these participants given the cultural context and strong emphasis placed on belonging to a family network. Perhaps, enmeshment is seen as something to obtain rather than relinquish and may be interpreted as necessary in order to gain family loyalty.

The internal family dynamics of coping and adaptability also yielded some interesting findings. These participants were not protected against the catastrophic events that can occur in any family. However, they talked about how they were able to cope with the events to make appropriate adaptations. Many of the participants discussed stressors such as death, divorce, fires, job
insecurity, and moves. It was common to get reports of a child’s death (as well as addictions or divorces) from only one member of the couple. In several instances, the men even dedicated a chapter of his family’s life book to a deceased child and offered a short discussion about it, while all but one of the women in the families with a known child’s death made no mention of it. Because the interviews were conducted in separate rooms, interviewers as well as family members, were unaware of the dialogue between their counterparts. Perhaps, the loss of a child and especially a miscarriage or stillborn baby was much more traumatic for the woman and was discussed less.

The gender roles in these families tended to be patriarchal in structure with clearly defined roles for men and women. Women in these families tended to work very hard at their role as caregiver in the family. Even if they had taken on a job outside of the home, most felt their primary responsibilities were with the family. Interestingly, even if women worked outside the home,
they still maintained their traditional jobs at home (e.g., cooking and cleaning). Men’s jobs at home tended to focus around outdoor chores such as lawn mowing and car repair. Hochschild (1989) reports that men and women’s work inside the home is qualitatively different because often women do work that needs to be taken care of daily while men tend to do outside family work which can be done sporadically. This creates a dual burden on the women in these families who work inside and outside the home. Beaver (1988) suggested that dual roles for Appalachian women have been occurring frequently in the past several decades, however little change has been made due to the family’s structure with an intense emphasis on men as heads of household.

Men repeatedly talked about their fear about their loss of work. They tended to feel that no matter how difficult, dirty or unsafe the work, it was a sacrifice they were willing to make to keep the family running as smoothly as possible. According to these families, it takes teamwork and cooperation to make a
family work. Gender roles tended to be rigid among these families which appeared for the most part to be functional given some of the tough times and difficult circumstances. Interestingly, none of the participants complained about their defined roles in the family. In fact, they seemed to accept the stratified gender roles as if it helped the family function at its best. Perhaps, with limited choices and a great deal of financial insecurities, a more rigid family structure is optimal. This leaves little ambiguity which may help when important decisions and changes need to be made in the family.

In summary, values and internal family dynamics are two broad categories that emerged from the analysis of participants' dialogue. This discussion of family values and dynamics helps to pull together the pertinent findings and some ideas about their connection to the past research. It also helps to clarify and delineate the elements involved in helping these families function. For instance, there are cultural influences that
determined many of the choices that these participants had. Overall, these participants spoke highly of the lives they had made for themselves in Appalachia and were pleased with the quality of their family life. Clearly children in the family, a strong extended family link, belonging to a community, and connectedness to the region contributed to the quality of their family life. Other findings included dynamics that helped describe how these families functioned which included boundary maintenance, coping and adaptability, and gender roles.

Effect on the Researcher and the People Researched

I have included in this section some brief comments about how this project has affected me as the researcher and the knowledge that I have gained from this process. I grew-up and lived in the Appalachian region for the majority of my life. For at least four generations, my family has lived in the mountains of West Virginia and continues to see this region as a safe haven against the “outside” world. I was taught as a youngster to
respect my family’s heritage and covertly not to stray far from “home.” I have since joined the “outside” world with many in my family admiring my ability to do so and others admonishing my selfishness and disloyalty to the family’s “roots.” I continually struggle with how my values and beliefs are similar and different from others in my family. In my struggle for “differentiation,” as Bowen (1978) calls it, I have paid a terribly high price. As many of the participants in this study have expressed, family closeness is seen as a goal to attain in one’s family, because it establishes one’s place in the family network and is associated with safety and stability. This is probably the most powerful network one could have in Appalachia. Without the closeness to family, one is seen as an “outsider” choosing the values of the wider culture (e.g., money and success) which may be seen by the native Appalachian as worthless in comparison to the riches that accompany family acceptance.

Although I largely identified with these Appalachian people
due to my own experiences growing-up in an Appalachian family, it became increasingly clear over the course of this research process that I had in some way integrated a double vision of the world. This "double vision" discussed by Hartsock (1983), describes how less powerful members of society (e.g., women and ethnic minorities, such as Appalachians) learn to survive by adopting sensitivity to society's dominant perspectives as well as their own marginal, minority perspective. This allows people to be both insiders and outsiders which gives them a more complete view of social reality. This perspective helped me to understand the ambiguous and conflictual feelings I sometimes had during the analysis of these interviews. I often felt like I understood the important points these participants had to share about their families. I could understand some of the things they valued because I often had similar values. In addition, many of the family dynamics were similar to my own family experiences which helped in understanding how family decisions were made.
My “insider” view was quite helpful in those arenas.

However, my “outsider” perspective raised many questions for me. For instance, I had many reactions to the rigid, hierarchical, patriarchal gender arrangements in these families. I struggled with hearing the functionality of some of those arrangements. Hearing a woman’s story about how she skillfully maintains two full-time jobs without a blink of an eye (or even a thought that it should be any other way) was difficult for me to accept. In addition, regional loyalty and people’s connectedness to place was difficult for me to understand. Especially when times were tough, they remained. I once again had to do some tough reflecting about why this might be the case because of my personal belief that everything we do is a choice and we determine a great deal of our lives through the choices we make. I think what helped me understand this phenomena was thinking about battered women and why they stay in relationships with abusive partners.
I am not fully aware of how participants were affected by doing this study because a follow-up was never done. However, participants were told at the initial phone contact as well as at the beginning of the interview that the research was aimed at learning more about family life in Appalachia. Their experiences would teach clinicians, researchers and professionals more about what family life is like for them. This goal has been partially achieved. I have learned more about their lives, attitudes and beliefs through this process. At the end of some of the interviews, the interviewer asked participants if they had any questions. Most were being polite, I might guess, in saying no, but to those who did share some of their thoughts, they wondered who would read about their lives; they wanted reassurance that their confidences would be maintained; and most of all, they wanted others to learn from their experiences. More often than not, participants willingly told interviewers, complete strangers, some of the most intimate details of their family's life in hopes
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of helping others and/or sharing some insight that would help professionals understand more clearly what it is like to deal with painful circumstances. Overall, the experience of participating in the project seemed positive for the participants. As one man said at the end of an interview filled with painful family stories, "it’s just good to talk to somebody about it and know I’m gonna help somebody else do it a little better."

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the data used for this project was secondary data obtained by multiple interviewers with varying degree of interviewing skills. The interviews for this project were taken from 52 family interviews in the three-phase larger study designed by Loyer-Carlson. Student interview teams conducted the family interviews over the course of the summer of 1992. Although the researcher was part of the interviewing team from the onset, interviews were conducted by several different people with each person’s having a
unique style of interviewing. The depth and richness of information gathered varied and appeared to be contingent upon the interviewer's experience with interviewing techniques. Therefore, it appears that opportunities to gather rich descriptions of family life were sometimes missed.

Second, these qualitative interviews were not conducted in an iterative fashion. The iterative concept as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is a way of furthering theoretical premises by analyzing interviews as they are acquired to form future questions about issues that seem pertinent to the study and clearly need more explanation. For the current study, interviewers met weekly to discuss broad themes that emerged. However, the structure of the interview and questions throughout this process remained unchanged leaving emerging themes unexplored. Because of these unexplored issues about Appalachian family life that have become apparent, a section of unanswered questions has been added at the end of this chapter.
Implications for Policy, Clinicians and Future Research

There are some implications for public policy. This study has clearly established these Appalachian families' willingness and ability to work. It has also been established that it is important for these Appalachian families to remain in the region due to feelings of comfort and connectedness to extended family and the community. Therefore, policymakers need to be aware that these people perceive job insecurity and unemployment as one of the most stressful aspects of living in Appalachia. Also, due to poor regional economics and lack of business in the region, families are often left with marginal work to support them. There needs to be an influx of industry into the region providing blue-collar work. Increased industrial and economic considerations need to be made for the region to help these families continue to thrive based on their value systems and the unique cultural needs.

There are several implications for clinical interventions. It is important for therapists to learn about the Appalachian value
system as well as certain family dynamics that may be unique to the Appalachian culture. Family therapists tend to represent the majority culture and its values (Boynton, 1987). There is an overall cultural insensitivity among therapists that accounts for the primary reason ethnic minorities are unable to reach needed social services such as family therapy (Ho, 1987). In most instances, therapists represent the middle and upper class and may be able to talk about the unique aspects of the Appalachian culture, yet not alter their therapeutic interventions (Sovine, 1988).

These families clearly valued children and said little about marital dynamics. Therefore, it is important the clinician respects the couple’s potential unwillingness to focus on the marital dyad and expect the focus to be on children. The focus on children may feel most comfortable to them and may in turn keep them interested in the therapy process. It may also lead to the family’s increased trust in the therapist. Respecting the family’s
presenting problem creates a context where the family may at a later time be willing to explore other family dynamics.

Because it is important for many of these participants to have a sense of self-sufficiency, coming to a family therapy setting for treatment may be difficult. There tends to be minimal participation by ethnic minorities in clinical treatment settings with many people getting their needs met through family and community resources (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). Although these families did not talk about receiving mental health treatment, they did discuss the assistance they received from their communities and family network. Appalachians who do present for family therapy tend to be a rarity due to the resources they have established in the family network and the community (Lemon, Newfield, & Dobbins, 1993). "The main goal of the family therapist in the Appalachian culture is to function within the family and community value system" (Cole, 1988, p. 185).

There are several implications for future research. This
section will discuss some ideas for research based on the current study and then list specific questions that were not asked that seemed salient for more exploration. Future research needs to focus on the internal family dynamics of Appalachian families. Clearly, there is a need to examine the marital subsystem and its dynamics. It remains unclear how comfortable spouses are with their marital roles and how the couple subsystem is experienced. Because so much emphasis was placed on children and so little was said about marital dynamics, it remains unclear whether the marital subsystem is more private or less important. Future research needs to explore these issues in more detail in order to form a more complete picture about marital dynamics.

In addition, roles in the family need to be explored in future research. The fathers in this study talked about children a great deal, but their roles as fathers seemed unclear. It was unclear whether or not fathers wanted to have a closer relationship with their children or not. It was also unclear whether mother's
wanted something different than their primary role as caregiver. It was not clearly articulated by these participants whether or not their stratified roles in the family were comfortable or, if given the opportunity, would like to be parts of other family arenas. These issues about family roles need to be explored further in future research.

The following are some of the unanswered questions that arose during this project. In the analysis of the interviews, it became apparent that significant issues affecting the family system had not been adequately explored. For feminist researchers, in particular, the questions asked or not asked are as significant as the answers (Thompson, 1992). Therefore, issues left undiscussed merited reporting as well as preliminary hypotheses about why these issues were not discussed. First, as mentioned earlier, the marital subsystem was one issue seldom discussed by participants. When it was mentioned, it lacked the richness found in the discussions about other subsystems and
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dynamics in the family. A closer look at the interviews revealed that although interviewers were consistent in attempting to probe the topic of marital dynamics, participants consistently steered away from this issue. Further study should highlight the marital dynamics and its role in the family.

Second, the hierarchical nature of these families appeared patriarchal. However, participants' attitudes about this hierarchy is unclear. During the second structured section of the interview, the family sculpture, participants were asked to place markers of their family members on a grid. Once the participant finished placing family markers on the grid to represent family relationships, the interviewer would ask the participant to explain the reasoning for placing the markers as they did. Although there was variation in the ways that markers were placed, participants gave similar verbal descriptions of their thinking about family hierarchical structure. Repeatedly, participants reported that they placed the markers on the grid on
the same line because everyone in the family was “equal.” The dialogue typically indicated that dad, who was given the largest marker was viewed as the leader of the family, while mom was given the next largest and so on. Hierarchically speaking, members of a family knew their “place” in the family and who had the most power. However, it remains unclear what they meant by saying that it was important for everyone in the family to be “equal.” It might be hypothesized that what participants were referring to was a sense that everyone in the family was equal in terms of their worth. Perhaps although families are hierarchically organized, no one perceived themselves as better or of greater worth than anyone else.

There were some questions that remain unanswered about gender and gender roles. The participants offered many insightful comments about how the family functions. The discussion of gender roles was highlighted and discussed as well as who works inside and outside the home. The families in this study clearly
appear to be patriarchal in structure which apparently is functional for them. However, what remains unanswered in terms of gender roles was the impact that the patriarchal family structure has upon the individual members in the family and the sense of dissonance that may accompany lack of choice. For example, many of the women in this study felt like they were peacemakers between family members. It remains unclear what this role signifies for them and/or if they are content with this role. In addition, these women consistently said that it was important for their husbands and children to always come first. One participant believed that part of her mother role includes making sacrifices for the family. Other female participants emphasized the need to place everyone in the family ahead of themselves. It is unclear whether they believe that the nurturance they give now will come back around to them.

The men in this study placed emphasis on their work outside the family. They also reported a sense of sacrifice for the family.
It remains unclear whether they believed that they had choices in how the family would structure itself. Did the culture dictate their roles to these men and women? Did they resent the sacrifices they made to help the family function better? If they could modify the roles in the family, how might they do that?

Finally, the researcher had many unanswered questions about life cycle stages. This sample did not include any couples without children and only had one family in retirement and one with small children. How do families with adolescents deal with their adolescent’s need for autonomy? Families with adolescents often talked about the lack of time and hurried schedules, how does the family in this stage negotiate what activities are most important?

Throughout all the life stages there were jolts or non-normative stressors that occurred. For several of the families a child had died, there had been divorces, or a member struggled with alcoholism. Although this research project did not
specifically focus on these topics, it did uncover some ways that these participants found useful to cope with stressors. It would be interesting in future research to examine in more depth how families coped with these kinds of stressors. Are there unique coping strategies used in this cultural context? Are these elements different and/or similar to the way the larger society may cope with similar situations?
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Summary

In conclusion, these participants shared many stories about their families and, in general, saw their family life as functional. They also indicated a high degree of satisfaction with their family life as indicated on the PIFLQ. Participants highly valued children, nuclear family, extended family, work, community and the Appalachian region. The family dynamics that illustrate how these families operate include many processes, such as gender roles, adaptational skills, coping strategies and boundary maintenance.

These participants clearly had identifiable characteristics that contributed to their values and family dynamics. First, there was a tremendous emphasis on the importance of maintaining close family relations. These participants often included members of their extended family in everyday activities and rituals. All participants viewed family as a vital element contributing to their family life satisfaction. This finding
supports previous research that determined Appalachian families to be extremely family-focused (see Duncan, 1992; Photiadis, 1986; Rodeheaver & Thomas, 1986). Second, communities tended to be very close-knit. Often participants would discuss community in terms of interaction with family, friends, and neighbors. Participants discussed the interaction within these relationships as a sense of belonging to a group rather than a physical boundary (e.g., city limit) or formal institution (e.g., school and church). Third, there was an overwhelming sense of participants’ loyalty that accompanied living in the Appalachian region. Participant’s discussed connections to the region such as comfort and familiarity. The Appalachian region faces economic strife leaving many families with limited choices. However, the benefits of remaining in the region appeared to far outweigh the benefits of moving for these participants.

Some of the family processes and dynamics discussed by these participants appeared to have clearly identifiable
characteristics. First, coping and adaptability was discussed by these participants in the context of normative and non-normative stressors. Their ability to draw upon resources and coping mechanisms appeared to part of their coping process. This finding contradicts some of the previous research that has highlighted culturally determined coping mechanisms such as fundamentalist religions, isolation, or increased use of anxiety medications for “nerves” (see Greenlee & Lantz, 1993). Second, participants appeared to have clearly identifiable ways of dealing with boundaries. It has been established that these Appalachian families are very family-focused, but there were often reports of boundary intrusions. Over-involvement of family members and diffuse boundaries between the nuclear and extended families tended to be the norm for these families. Third, these Appalachian families were patriarchal in structure. This structure determined primarily by gender was common among these families. However, the Appalachian cultural context
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creates a society with limited choices for men and women, and conformity to cultural standards is expected. Therefore, for these participants the Appalachian culture provided a context that encouraged men to be leaders of their families.

My experience growing up in Appalachia was invaluable to understanding some of the complex cultural issues that these families face such as poverty and unemployment. It also has given me the opportunity to examine these participants' stories from a strength perspective and examine internal family processes. This perspective has allowed me to de-emphasize the incredibly negative aspects of the Appalachian culture that affect the family and look for ways that these participants found resources to function and provide for their families. These participants were not afraid of hard work, they were eager to provide the best they could for their families and most of all, there was the overwhelming message throughout all the interviews that no matter how tough things got, they could
always count on family.
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APPENDIX A

Guiding interview Questions

1. Family Members (see Appendix B).

"Please think about the individuals you include when you think of "your family." These are sometimes individuals who live in the same household, but not always."

What is the family member's name? What relationship do they have to you? How old is this family member? Do you live together?

2. Family Sculpture.

"With paper and scissors cut out markers that represent each member of your family listed in part I. The markers, which represent people, can be any shape or size you want them to be. I would then like you to place each marker/member on this piece of grid paper that will illustrate to me the relationships, and closeness and distance of the people within your family at the present time in your family life."

Tell me about the differing shapes of the members and what that represents? Are the figures hierarchical in nature? Are any markers particularly small or large? How are the members arranged in terms of closeness and distance? Have any members from part I been left off the diagram? How would the markers be arranged if the family were at 100% family life quality? How would the markers be arranged if the family were at 0% family
life quality?

3. Perceptual Indicators of Family Life Quality Scale (see Appendix C).

"Please think about the people you include when you think of "your immediate family." These are typically people who live in the same household, but not always. Think about these people and answer the following questions about your family environment and how your own needs are met in this family group."

This is a quantitative scale which describes resource exchange theory as articulated by Rettig, Danes, & Bauer (1991). It pertains to family life quality of rural farm families. This is a likert-type scale asking 35 questions based on resources exchanged in families and how that pertains to life quality (Foa & Foa, 1973):

1=Terrible, 2=Unhappy, 3=Mostly Dissatisfied, 4=Mixed, 5=Mostly Satisfied, 6=Pleased, and 7=Delighted.
The 35 questions were a subset from the original 51. They were asked verbally to the participants.

4. Family Stories (see Appendix D).

"If your family life were a book, what would it be titled, and if there were 10 chapters in your book, what would they be called?"

Once the participant had titled the book and it's chapters, the following task was given: "When you think of family life quality with 100% being the best times during your family life and 0% being the worst times during your family life, where would you rank each of the chapters of your family's life?
What do you see as important up-turns and down-turns in your family's life cycle? How did the family members pull together in times of crisis or need during hard times? How do you attribute to the good times in your family's life? What do you think makes a strong family? Do you think your family is strong?

5. Sociodemographics.

"Because of the number of things that influence the challenges that families must face it is helpful to know where your family is at in terms of economics, education, and ethnicity. The following questions are fairly standard in social research to tap those dimensions."

What is the participant's gender? What is the participant's racial or ethnic origin? What is the participant's religious affiliation? What is the family's yearly income? What is the primary wage earner(s) occupation? What is the primary wage earner(s) responsibilities?
I. Family members.

Please think about the individuals you include when you think of "your family." These are sometimes individuals who live in the same household, but not always.

<table>
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<th>Relationship</th>
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COMMENTS:
Appendix C. Perceptual Indicators of FLQ Scale (Rettig, Danes, & Bauer, 1991)

1=Terrible    2=Unhappy     3=Mostly Dissatisfied    4=Mixed
5=Mostly Satisfied     6=Pleased     7=Delighted

1. Your family life as a whole? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. The love and affection you experience? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. The amount of respect you receive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. The way they work with you or for you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. The information sharing that helps to make good decisions? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. The material good you enjoy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. The amount of money available for personal use? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. The warmth and tenderness they express? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. The help given when it is needed? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. The recognition of your personal accomplishments? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. The willingness to discuss alternative solutions to problems? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. The money available for your own important needs? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. The things you have that are your own? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. The affectionate way they act toward you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. The errands they often do for you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. The appreciation of you as a unique person? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. The family income and how it enables you to live? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. The space available for your own needs? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. The freedom to discuss a wide range of topics? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. The hugs and kisses you receive? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. The ability to negotiate differences of opinion?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. The checking they do on your needs for assistance?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. The way they make you feel like an important person?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. The amount of money saved for emergencies?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. The adequacy of household equipment for your needs?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. The discussion of problems without emotional outbursts?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. The enjoyment they show being with you?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. The confidence in your abilities?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. The things they do to make you more comfortable?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. How openly and honestly you can express feelings?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
31. The money available for doing what you enjoy?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. The clothes you have to wear?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. The way they can disagree with you without blaming?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
34. The willingness to talk about sensitive issues?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. Your family life as a whole?  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
The interviewer asked, "If your family life were a book, what would it be titled?" and "If your book had ten chapters, what would they be called?" Participants were also asked to rate each chapter of their family stories on a scale from 0% to 100% family life quality and asked to explain the up-turns and down-turns in their estimates.
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</table>
KIMBERLY D. BIRD

2617 Rainfall Trail
Cedar Park, TX 78613
(512) 257-9190

EDUCATION

M.S. 1995 Marriage and Family Therapy
      AAMFT Accredited Program
      Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

B.S. 1992 Child Development & Family Studies
      West Virginia University
      GPA: 3.8/4.0  FGPA: 3.9/4.0
      Graduated Magna Cum Laude

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

August 1995 - PRESENT
  Marriage and Family Therapy Intern
  Austin Child Guidance Center, Austin, TX (Supervisor: Sharon Bischofshausen, Ph.D.)
  Assessment, diagnosis and treatment of families, adolescents and children with primary responsibilities for case management; provide art and play therapy to children; coach parents in Filial and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy with their children; attend weekly individual supervision and group seminar; attend educational seminars, in-service training meetings and prevention lectures; Co-lead children's group for alcohol and drug-prevention in Blackshear Elementary School; Co-lead multi-family group at Gardner-Betts Juvenile Justice.
Kimberly D. Bird

July 1994 - August 1995
Marriage and Family Therapy Intern
Center for Family Services, Virginia Tech, Falls Church, VA
(Director: Eric McCollum, Ph.D., 300+ client contact hours)
On-site clinical placement--Assessment, diagnosis, and
treatment of families, couples and individuals in an outpatient
setting with primary responsibilities for case management;
attend bi-weekly group supervision and a weekly practicum;
receive individual live and video supervision.

July 1994 - July 1995
Marriage and Family Therapy Intern
Montgomery County Department of Addiction and Victim Mental
Health Services--Child & Adolescent Outpatient Services,
Germantown, MD (Supervisor: Louise Fleischman, LCSW-C, 100+
client contact hours)
Off-site clinical placement--Assessment and treatment of
families, adolescents, and children in an outpatient setting;
provide art, play and family therapy; attend weekly treatment
planning meetings; attend educational seminars, in-service
training meetings, and prevention lectures; coordinate services
with the department of social services, juvenile court and school
system; receive individual video supervision weekly.

August 1993 - August 1995
Graduate Research Assistant Department of
Family and Child Development
Virginia Tech, Falls Church, VA
Developed, gathered and processed family therapy outcome
research funded by a Freddy Mac grant; attended and presented at
professional national conferences; assisted instructors with
course materials; wrote and analyzed research data.
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Summer 1994
Center for Family Services
Virginia Tech, Falls Church, VA
Part-time position in family therapy clinic, conducted initial intake interviews, assisted the clinical director in day-to-day administrative operation, entered and processed outcome research data.

1993
Corporate Child Development Center
Ruby Memorial Hospital, Morgantown, WV (Director: Rita Massullo, M.S., 500 contact hours)
Full-time instruction of pre-school classes (ages 2-4); development of academic curriculum; evaluation of age-appropriate activities; testing of fine and gross motor development.

1993
Graduate Research Assistant Department of Family Resources
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
Gathered and processed research data for "The Effects on Quality of Family Life in Rural and Urban Populations" (HATCH grant project, WVA 00346); analyzed computer data; acquisition of grants and research writing.

1993
Co-Leader of Adolescent Multi-Family Group
Family Enrichment Program--Preston County, WV. Supported by a grant from the West Virginia Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program
Assisted in developing a systemic approach curriculum; interacted and facilitated group discussions with family members.
Kimberly D. Bird

and assessed group process within this primary prevention education program.

1991-1993  
**Early Childhood Education Intern**  
West Virginia University Laboratory Nursery School, Morgantown, WV (Director: Barbara G. Warash, Ed.D., 240+ contact hours)

Developed, taught, and evaluated age-appropriate curriculum for pre-school age children; conducted motor and cognitive developmental testing.

1992  
**Family Interviewing Team Leader for Phase II of the HATCH Grant Research Project**  
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Trained student interviewers, organized participant interviews in four West Virginia counties, and conducted family interviews for "The West Virginia Family Quality of Life" research study.

1992  
**Family Assessment Intern**  
W.G. Klingberg Center for Child Development, Morgantown, WV (Supervisor: Chet D. Johnson, M.D., F.A.A.P., 100+ contact hours)

Observed, interacted and participated in clinical, developmental assessments with parents and children under the supervision of Chet Johnson, M.D.; assessed children's developmental strengths and deficiencies through gross and fine motor tasks; assessed children using art and play therapy techniques; attended weekly treatment planning meetings.
Kimberly D. Bird

1990

The Family Resources Support Network Group
Leader Training
Trained in Morgantown, WV (Instructor: Vicki Loyer-Carlson, Ph.D.)
Support group training to work with families involved in crisis (precipitated by the Gulf War crisis)

COMPUTER SKILLS

- WordPerfect (5.1, 5.2, 6.0)
- dBaseIII+
- SPSS (Mainframe and PC)
- Harvard Graphics (3.0)
- Macintosh Word
- Lotus 1-2-3
- QuattroPro
- Windows
- Ethnograph (for qualitative data analysis)
- Macintosh JMP (data analysis program)

PUBLICATIONS


PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Kimberly D. Bird


PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Council on Family Relations (Associate Member)

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (Student Member)