A Qualitative Inquiry of Fathering in the Rural Context of Appalachia Virginia

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ABSTRACT

Given the increasing evidence of the benefits of father involvement, this study examined the process of fathering and the contributions to supporting father involvement and father identity. Emerging research in fathering suggests a complex set of contextual factors as influences on father identity and behavior. Social location, identities, and life events provide an opportunity to study variation and change in fathering. Guided by an integrated framework of symbolic interactionism and intersectionality theories, this study examined fathers' needs and desires in parenting programs. To address these needs in the literature, grounded theory methods were employed to analyze data from semi-structured interviews of 50 fathers of infants residing in the Appalachian region of Virginia. Results revealed a process model of fathering consisting of interactions within and between themes of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional and sociocultural domains. The factors of these three domains relate to father identity, meaning making in fatherhood, and enactment of fathering. Within a model of vulnerabilities and resiliencies, two typologies of fathers emerged: the thriving father and the evolving father. Implications for family strengthening programs and future research are explored.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Father involvement and father identity are areas of interest in family development due to the evidence of increasing benefits of father involvement. This study examined the process of fathering and the contributions to supporting father involvement and father identity. This study examined fathering within the fathers' social contexts, identities, and life events. Through interviews with fathers of infants living in rural Appalachia Virginia, this study examined variation and change in fathering. Additionally, this study examined fathers' needs and desires in parenting programs. Qualitative grounded theory methods were employed to analyze data from semi-structured interviews of 50 fathers of infants residing in the Appalachian region of Virginia. Results revealed a process model of fathering that emphasizes interactions within and between themes of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional and sociocultural domains. The factors of these three domains relate to father identity, meaning making in fatherhood, and fathering behaviors. Utilizing a model that addresses vulnerabilities and resiliencies, two typologies of fathers emerged: the thriving father and the evolving father. Implications for family strengthening programs and future research are explored.

Dedication

To my three amazing children Joseph, Cassondra, and Donovan. I dedicate this dissertation to you and your generation. May you all continue to enhance the lives of children and families and strive to make the world a better place.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

Within the parenting literature, more attention has been given to fathering in the past few decades (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000). Fathering literature has been reflective of a societal emphasis on fathers being more involved and nurturing than was expected by society of previous generations in the United States (Marsiglio et al., 2000). Changes over time have occurred in both the responsibilities of fathering as well as the meaning of fathering (Day & Lamb, 2004). Socially, in the United States, men's roles have been perceived as changing from previous generations; therefore, affecting the perception of their masculine identity and shifting their traits toward more feminine traditional roles of parenting (Park, Banchefsky, & Reynolds, 2015). For example, this shift is represented in the literature that investigates the division of household labor, which has shown that fathers are increasing their household and child care duties (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Marsiglio, Roy, & American Sociological Association, 2012).

Social and structural contextual factors can impact fathering identity and behaviors. The sociocultural expectations and social acceptance of more involved and nurturing fathers, influences fathers to believe in the importance of father involvement (Henwood & Proctor, 2003). This interaction between the individual and the environment (i.e., coparent, social expectations) contributes to and guides the father toward a construction of his identity and his behavior. Beliefs and perceptions of parents in parenting roles are associated with their inaction of their parenting roles and sense of competence in these roles. Moreover, parent sense of competence is influenced by the beliefs and perceptions of the coparent. A highly rated of sense of competence can lead to differing results in the amount of coparent support and conflict, which was found in a triadic study of coparenting, sense of competence, and child engagement with fathers, mothers,

and infants (Favez, Tissot, Frascarolo, Stiefel, & Despland, 2016). During the infancy period, father sense of competence was associated with high coparenting conflict, whereas maternal sense of competence was associated with lower coparenting conflict. However, as the child aged to 18 months, father sense of competence was associated with more engagement with the child even amongst this lower coparenting support (Favez et al., 2016). Recognition of both individual and cognitive processes, in addition to social processes, is important in understanding the interactions between individual identity, the environment, and interactions among these, in order to further the understanding of the role of the father.

In tandem to this changing landscape of societal attitudes, the fathering and family strengthening field has steadily increased a focus on effectively supporting father involvement in families and in communities. Public policy and programmatic focus on supporting and strengthening fathers is intended to enhance children's lives, support healthy relationships, and strengthen communities. This emphasis on supporting fathering is with the knowledge that father involvement has been found to be associated with positive developmental outcomes of children including cognitive, physical, and social and emotional development (Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007; Lamb, 2010; McWayne, Downer, Campos, & Harris, 2013).

Given the increasing evidence of the benefits of father involvement, it is important to understand the contributing factors to supporting father involvement and enhancing parenting skills (Cabrera et al., 2007; Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). Father involvement has been linked with positive social and emotional development in children (Ramchandani, Domoney, Sethna, Psychogiou, Vlachos, & Murray, 2013). For example, in children as young as one year of age, researchers have found that secure attachments with fathers decrease externalizing behaviors. Father play behaviors are also positively associated with attachment in middle

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childhood (Grossmann, Grossmann, Fremmer-Bombik, Kindler, Scheuerer-Englisch, & Zimmermann, 2002). Self-regulation, as defined as the ability to control and express emotions (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004; Eisenberg & Sulik, 2012), is influenced in a positive direction by father involvement (Downer & Mendez, 2005). Specifically, Downer and Mendez (2005) found that fathers are primarily involved with their infants and young children in playful activities. Self-regulation behaviors are enhanced through a physical type of play, often referred to as rough and tumble play. Rough and tumble play consists of intense and exciting play in which the father uses both encouragement and rules during the play to encourage behavior modulations (Flanders, Leo, Paquette, Pihl, & Séguin, 2009). This type of play therein strengthens the child's social and emotional development, as well as promotes a positive father and child emotional relationship (Fletcher, St. George, & Freeman, 2013; Paquette & Dumont, 2013).   Father involvement has also been associated with an increase in children's prosocial skills (Lindsey, Caldera, & Rivera, 2013). Prosocial skills in children are defined as behaviors that are empathic and caring for others. The quality of father involvement was found to be linked directly to an increase in prosocial skills, which was identified in a study of mother and child, teacher and child, and father and child interactions with young children (Ferreira, Cadima, Matias, Vieira, Leal, & Matos, 2016). Along with these findings of fathers' influences on prosocial skills and emotional development, father involvement affects both internalizing and externalizing behaviors in children. Within a sample of children involved in the child welfare system, father involvement was associated with a lower slope trajectory of externalizing behaviors. This study underscored the role of father involvement as a protective factor in children who are identified as at risk, which suggests a need for early interventions promoting father involvement (Fierreira et al., 2016).

The role of father involvement in contributing to child development has been associated with enhancement in cognitive development, language development, and school readiness skills (Bronte-Tinkew, Carrano, Horowitz, & Kinukawa, 2008; Shannon, Tamis-LeMonda, London, & Cabrera, 2002). Fathers support language development and other cognitive skills through scaffolding of young children's learning using toy and play activities (Roggman, Boyce, Cook, Christiansen, & Jones, 2004). Through the quality of father activities, fathers often use more words and words that are specific, such as location words, in early childhood more than mothers (Bingham, Kwon, & Jeon, 2013; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004; Tamis-LeMonda, Baumwell, & Cristofaro, 2012). Observed father and infant sensitivity was found to be strongly associated with language and cognitive development in preschool, above the influence of maternal sensitivity (Malmberg, Lewis, West, Murray, Sylva, & Stein, 2016). Father sensitivity was furthermore associated with an increase in children's language use during a triadic play observation (Pancsofar, Vernon-Feagans, Odom, & Roe, 2008). Executive function in the middle childhood years, the cognitive processes used to enhance working memory, inhibition, and mental processes, was enhanced by father involvement in early childhood (Meuwissen & Englund, 2016). Positive father involvement can also reduce the likelihood of cognitive delay in infancy, specifically for infants identified with disabilities (Bronte-Tinkew, et al., 2008).

To promote the positive outcomes associated with father involvement, fatherhood programs and policies have highlighted the importance of advancing current understandings of the fathering process in order to be informed effectively in providing services (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). Of particular importance to these programs have been fathers who may experience challenges and barriers in employment, income, transportation, incarceration, or instability as

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these have been identified as risk factors that can influence parenting quality (Cabrera & Peters, 2000; Goodman, Crouter, Lanza, & Cox, 2008).   In a study of women in abusive relationships, Few and Rosen (2005) found that a number of risk factors combined with a limited amount of resiliency factors can impact individuals by increasing their vulnerabilities to negative situations. The more vulnerabilities women faced, the more likely they felt trapped and stayed in their risky situation (Few & Rosen, 2005). An understanding of the vulnerabilities and resiliencies in a father's social context are important to examine as it has been found that diverse fathers in a low SES sample sought mental health services at a low rate (Isacco, Hofscher, & Molloy, 2015). Moreover, fathers with higher rates of risk factors were less likely to participate in parenting programs, specifically in a diverse sample of fathers (Stahlschmidt, Threlfall, Seay, Lewis, & Kohl, 2013). An examination of the contextual factors of risks and resiliencies in a diverse sample of fathers can lead to further understanding of the interactions of these vulnerabilities and resiliencies and the role that these may have on father identity and father involvement to better inform practitioners. A focus on more diverse and understudied populations of fathers has begun to emerge, though the impact of geographical culture and community on fathering is an area of research that needs further investigation (Adamsons & Palkovitz, 2014). With the limited understanding of fathering within specific groups and social locations of fathers, this study sought to address this gap in the literature.

The role of complex contextual factors in influencing father identities and behaviors, while emerging, is an area with limited scholarly research. Marsiglio, Roy, and Fox (2005) proposed a model of situated fathering that emphasizes the importance of the physical space of the father in creating symbolic meanings of fathering. Marsiglio and colleagues (2005) called for further research into the influence of cultural contexts that have been understudied. The rural

Appalachia region is an area that historically has experienced multiple constraints and risk factors. Limited research has focused on investigating fathering within the scope of the situated context of fathers. Social inequalities are best investigated as an interaction, specifically when examining poverty (Norris, Zajicek, & Murphy-Erby, 2010). In consideration of the multiple situational contexts of rural Appalachia, this study sought to investigate the development of fathering identities and father involvement situated within this geographical place with an emphasis on the role of complex contextual influences.

Guided by the current literature on father identity, father involvement, social context, and family strengthening programs and policies, this study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the process of fathering within a specific cultural context. Employing a qualitative analysis design, this study investigated the many ways in which fathers, primarily diverse low-income and working class fathers, in rural Appalachia participate in raising their children when facing multiple contextual influences and barriers such as financial constraints, legal challenges, and/or multifaceted caregiving arrangements (Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2013; Mills-Koonce, Willoughby, Zvara, Barnett, Gustafsson, Cox, & Family Life Project Key). Within this population of fathers, this study pursued an understanding of fathers' own perceptions and conceptualizations of fathering and their understanding of their role in their children's development. This study was grounded in the symbolic interactionism framework to better understand the development and meaning making of the fathering process, specifically father involvement and father identity. In order to consider the father as situated within a context that experiences marginalization, this study integrated an intersectional lens with symbolic interactionism theory to best examine the interactions amongst multiple contextual factors including class, gender, educational status, and institutional factors (Norris et al., 2010). With

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this intersectional lens, the perspective of fathers who may face marginalization and multiple institutional inequalities was examined (Choo & Feree, 2010). The knowledge gained from this analysis informed theory development on the process of fathering within this rural context as well as identified typologies of fathering. The discovery of these fathering typologies can help identify those critical moments that typify readiness for change and thus, define incentives for mens' retention in prevention or intervention programming (Mathmatica Policy Research, 2015). Thus, an aim of this study was to assist current and future programs to better target and serve this understudied and underserved population of rural Appalachia in order to promote positive father identity and father involvement.

Overview of the Study

Rationale for the Study

While research has begun examining fathers within their situated context, there continues to be limited information about how context influences fathering and fathering typologies (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). Marsiglio and colleagues (2000) emphasized the need for researchers to look beyond father involvement and toward a deeper investigation of the interaction among social contexts to better understand how fathers develop their identity and perform fathering behaviors. Life events and transitions provide an opportunity to study variation and change in fathering. Contextual factors of socioeconomic status, structural institutions, and geographical locations will likely lead to change and variations in fathering. Fathering an infant is a time of change and transition in a father's life course (Palkovitz & Palm, 2009). Gaining a specific understanding of how the father and infant relationship is formed and the predictors of a positive relationship as well as the barriers experienced is an area of research that needs further development (Cabrera et al., 2004). Additionally, the limited understanding of these contextual

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factors on fathering in a rural location highlighted a gap that needs to be further explored in order to affect programs and policies that target fathers within a rural context.

A gap in the literature that is in need of future research is investigation of fathering from the perception of fathers. Research that reports on father involvement and father identity are often taken from the mother's perspective (Charles et al., 2016; Flouri & Malmberg, 2012). As fathers construct their own identity, it is important to investigate fathering from the perspective of the father. A father can have a different report of his involvement and identity than the mother reports (Charles, Spielfogel, Gorman-Smith, Schoeny, Henry, & Tolan, 2016). In order to better inform practitioners and programs that target fathers, attention needs to be focused on the how and why of fathering as well as the different typologies of fathering from the fathers' perception.

While current research has contributed to more knowledge about the consequences of positive father involvement, the information is still limited in the variety of ways father involvement is operationalized and conceptualized. This proposed study sought to contribute to the literature through the development of possible typologies of fathering to better understand the influence of multiple contextual factors. Additionally, this research can be utilized to inform family strengthening practitioners and policy makers to better serve fathers and families within unique social contexts. The results from this study will contribute to the literature by developing a more inclusive theoretical model of fathering that encompasses identity, social context, father involvement, and possibly indicate points of intervention. Through a deeper understanding of the process of parenting and possible levels and predictors of fathering, a more focused approach to supporting and encouraging father involvement can be made by family strengthening practitioners.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to develop a conceptual framework of the processes of fathering that was constructed by fathers of infants in this specific rural social context through an examination of their father identity and father involvement that guided the identification of typologies of fathers that move through the model, resulting in the identification of needs and desires in family strengthening parenting programs. Fathers who believed that their role was important and central to their identity were more likely to be actively involved with their child and promoted more positive father and child interactions (Pasley, Petren, & Fish, 2014). This study was designed in anticipating that socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, aspects of Appalachian culture, and other social categories (e.g., incarceration status, ability) would influence this construction of identity and father involvement. Contingent upon where these fathers find themselves in the intersectionality matrix (Few-Demo, 2014), these fathers will experience different vulnerabilities and resiliencies, which will influence how they embrace their fathering identity, interpret their fathering experiences, and enact fathering activities. Through the examination of the interaction of their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social contexts, distinct typologies of fathering are expected to emerge. I believe that fathering processes may lead to specific fathering typologies that can affect child outcomes in different ways specific to the type of father involvement and father and child relationship (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). Therefore, the results from this study could guide practitioners toward more focused interventions to improve father and child interactions and outcomes. Disadvantaged fathers may have different needs or unique challenges that programs which work with diverse populations of fathers needs to be aware of (Dufour & Bouchard, 2003).

This research was supported by a grant from the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Through the support of this grant, partnerships were formed with family strengthening practitioners in the Appalachia region. Specifically, I formed a partnership with the Tap Into Hope Fathers First program that serves fathers by providing programs focusing on healthy relationships, communication skills, parenting responsibilities, and employment skills. Additionally, partnerships were formed within the community with agencies serving families including Head Start and governmental agencies in order to inform the development of the interview protocol, assist in recruitment, and to share results to inform family strengthening practices. The current fathering literature, family strengthening program practitioners, and identified needs of the families of the Appalachian region informed the objectives of this study.

Research Questions

In this study, fathers of infants living in rural Appalachia were interviewed to explore the following research questions:

1. What does the identity process of fathering an infant look like for diverse men living in rural Appalachian communities?

2. How do contextual factors affect the process of fathering and father involvement?

3. How might father involvement inform typologies of fathering?

4. What would fathers living in rural Appalachia desire or want in a parenting program?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Current Literature

Over the past 50 years, the conceptualization of fathering has continued to transform and progress. Fathering has been investigated primarily through the conceptualization of father involvement or father identity. Father involvement is predominantly conceptualized as contact and engagement activities and father identity as roles, motivations, and behaviors (Lamb, 2010). Differences exist in the literature due to numerous ways of thinking about and measuring these two distinct aspects of fathering. Research into the fathering process primarily uses either father identity or father involvement as a variable versus utilizing both constructs.

This review of the fathering literature will provide an overview of the current fathering literature that was utilized to inform this study. In this literature review section, I review both the empirical and theoretical literature that is utilized to contextualize and inform this study of fathers. I first begin with a review of father involvement and father identity literature. The review then moves to the literature that examines diversity in fathering and fathering that is situated within a father's context. Finally, I review the literature on typologies of fathering and end the review with the literature that focuses on prevention and intervention science with fathers. Following this review of the literature, I present the literature that informs the theoretical framework of this study.

Father Identity

Fathering also has been theorized and researched through the lens of identity theory (Stryker, 1968). Identity theory is grounded in the framework of symbolic interactionism (Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, & Buehler, 1993; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Within this lens of identity theory, fathering has been investigated through the roles that the father identifies with such as

breadwinner, protector, teacher, or nurturer. Fathers establish their fathering identity through

interactions with social structures, social statuses, and internal processes (Pasley et al., 2014). It

is through the meaning making process that fathers assign meaning to social categories and the

identity of what it is to be a father develops and is behaviorally expressed (Maurer, Pleck, &

Rane, 2003). As a father internalizes identity from social contexts, he assembles internal

thoughts about his identity. For instance, from a symbolic interactionist framework, it is

theorized that how a man interprets and makes sense of his interpersonal interactions, societal

symbolism of fatherhood, and societal expectations of the roles that father *should* play in

families will influence how that individual forms a father identity and enacts fathering behaviors

with his children (Pasley et al., 2014). Hence, a father who identifies as a father through the role

of breadwinner will work to engage in behaviors that support this identity such as work overtime

or additional jobs. Conversely, a father who identifies as a father through engagement with their

child may forgo the extra overtime to come home and spend time with his child.

According to the tenets of identity theory, identities are organized hierarchically and

displayed based on this hierarchy. Identity salience refers to the strength of an identity. The

more salient an identity, the more likely it will be enacted upon behaviorally. An identity that is

highly salient will be enacted behaviorally in multiple situations and contexts (Burke & Stets,

2009; Styker & Burke, 2000). Pasley et al. (2014) defined salience as the self-meaning making

of the father in his identity. Individuals will seek out opportunities to enact their more salient

identities and spend more time in those behaviors that are associated with their more salient

identity. Coparenting support or perceived support can influence identity and identity salience,

therein affecting performance of identity. Fathers who hold to the belief that their fathering role

is important are more likely to be actively involved with their child (Pasley et al., 2014). This

salience is associated with role satisfaction and enactment of behaviors. Fox , Nordquist, Billen, and Savoca (2015) found that role satisfaction was linked with positive fathering behaviors and engagement in a sample of children with disabilities.

Salient identities are stable across different contexts as well as through time (Stryker & Burke, 2000). However, life changes or contextual influences can alter the structure of identity. As identities are socially constructed, there are multiple social contexts that can influence a father's identity. Life events such as incarceration or job loss may alter the hierarchy of identity (Adamsons & Pasley, 2013). Incarceration, for instance, can modify a father's identity due to his inability to perform his fatherhood role behaviors (Dyer, 2005; Roy, 2006).

Social relationships are another contextual factor that influences identity. The previous generational influences of one's father can influence internal thoughts about parental identity (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998). This social context may contribute to the father adhering to the same fathering roles as his father or choosing to divert from this role model of fathering in order to father differently (Roy, 2006). Fathers can be influenced by the previous generation by setting lower expectations based on the modeled father identity (Roy, 2006). A father may also utilize the social context as a lens into how others view the fathering role as an influence of how they internalize their fathering role identity (Adamsons & Pasley, 2013). The beliefs, values, and psychological processes of one's culture may influence father identity.

The literature examining identity posits that an individual's identity salience and commitment will guide his behavior by influencing how he enacts his behaviors to correspond with his perception of his identity (Stryker, 1980). Conversely, fathering behavior can influence identity salience. In a longitudinal analysis, father involvement was a better predictor of father identity salience above identity predicting father involvement (DeGarmo, 2010). However,

DeGarmo found that when investigating custody status, the shared custody fathers showed that identity salience predicted more positive father involvement. This association between identity and behavior may be a bidirectional feedback loop. Future research needs to further investigate the interaction between father involvement and father identities while taking into account multiple contextual factors (e.g., intergenerational, cultural, coparenting). As the father involvement and father identity literature indicate, fathering is a process that exists situated within context. For example, coparenting is an interrelational context that may impact fathering. These coparenting processes can be a key factor in the process of father identity and father involvement (Schoppe-Sullivan, Brown, Cannon, Mangelsdorf, & Sokolowski, 2008). Father identity and involvement are influenced by the perceptions of others (McBride, Brown, Bost, Shin, Vaughn, & Korth, 2005). Specifically, the perception of the child's other parent is particularly influential to father involvement. Additionally, social factors influence the individual's view of their social and cultural backgrounds, which in turn will influence their identity and behavior (Marsigilo et al., 2005).

Father Involvement

Father involvement, in particular, is difficult to operationalize and measure with a unidimensional form of measurement (Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, & Ho, 2004). A factor analysis of father involvement models indicated that father involvement was better conceptualized with a multidimensional construct that is measured with distinct factors of father involvement (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004). However, numerous studies that operationalize father involvement as one variable use a unidimensional measurement of an overall measurement of father involvement. A unidimensional measurement is often an additive approach of time spent in engagement activities with the child, indicating a need for measurement that explains

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and predicts fathering across the life course with the consideration of complex factors such as child (e.g., age), parent location (e.g., residential status), and contextual (e.g., subculture) influences (Bruce & Fox, 1999).

With the understanding that father involvement is a multidimensional construct, theorists and researchers have proposed distinctive models of father involvement. Lamb, Pleck, and Levine (1985) proposed a model of father involvement that conceptualized father involvement as the dimensions of encouragement, accessibility, and responsibility. Daily interactions, availability of contact, and caretaking responsibility were utilized to measure father involvement under this model. A more comprehensive understanding of father involvement was postulated by Palkovitz (1997, 2002) in which he identified 15 categories of father involvement: communication, teaching, monitoring, thought process, errands, caregiving, child maintenance, shared interests, availability, planning, shared activities, providing, affection, and protection. While Palkovitz's model provided a comprehensive list of fathering behaviors, it does not take into account the context or meaning making of the father. Meaning making is the use of symbols such as identities, roles, and societal expectations to make meaning of and utilize in identity development and behavior (Collett, Vercel, & Boykin, 2015). Palkovitz emphasized three primary domains of father involvement, which included cognitive, affective, and behavioral involvement. These domains provided a basis for looking at the cognitive process and emotional connection of the father. Dollahite and Hawkins (1998) included an additional dimension in their generative fathering model that added ethical involvement along with the dimensions of affective and cognitive. The generative fathering model was an effort to move past the measurement of father involvement as time spent with the child and toward a more cognitive and emotional level of fathering. An additional conceptualization of father involvement is capital

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involvement, the human, social, and financial capital that a father provides to his child (Amato, 1998).

With multiple conceptual models of fathering, it is difficult to measure father involvement in a consistent manner. In addition, it is challenging to implement effective programming to fathers without a clear conceptualization of father involvement. Pleck (2010) proposed a multidimensional model of father involvement that included six factors and they were father engagement, warmth and responsiveness, control, process responsibility, and indirect care. Pleck highlighted the unique aspects of each of these factors and suggested researchers measure father involvement as multiple unique dimensions of father involvement. This theorizing advanced the conceptualization of father involvement as a multidimensional construct with different aspects of fathering beyond engagement. It was recommended that practitioners be aware of these multiple dimensions of fathering, specifically in regards to the meaning making of individual father involvement including breadwinning or engagement behaviors (Pleck, 2010). As the conceptualization of father involvement continues to progress with this multidimensional model, research regarding the multidimensionality of father involvement within complex families and differing social contexts is needed to address possible variations in father involvement.

Fathering Situated in Context

Diverse life experiences, cultural influences, and social locations are factors that may influence fathering processes, specifically with a group of fathers that may face marginalization and structural constraints. A National Fatherhood Initiative began in 1994 to encourage involved and responsible fathers and to further the knowledge on diverse fathers and groups of fathers through research, programs, and public awareness (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). While the Fragile

Families and Child Well-Being Study has provided a sizable amount of data on fathering in a diverse sample of unmarried, primarily urban fathers, there still exists a dearth of information on rural fathers (McLanahan, Garfinkel, Reichman, Teitler, Carlson, & Audiger, 2001). The normative assumptions of the fathering research that consists of predominantly white, middle class individuals cannot be translated to all fathers. It is important to consider diverse life experiences, cultural influences, perceived marginalization, and structural constraints that may influence fathering processes.

Social context is an important part of this dissertation study. For the purposes of this study, culture is defined as the geographical and cultural location of the individual. When social context is considered in the fatherhood research, specific influences of culture on both father identity and father behavior are further understood and identified. A study sampling Latino fathers found that the fathers strongly identified with their fathering identity prenatally, which then predicted more involvement after birth (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012). In a Latino sample of fathers who were migrant workers, fathers were still able to maintain strong relationships with their children while they were non-resident fathers (Arditti et al., 2014). African American fathers have been shown to have higher levels of involvement with infants and children, specifically in play, education, moral teaching, and extracurricular activities (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000; Roopnarine, 2004).

As the role of culture has been found to be of importance in working with families, further research into the role of context on parenting practices is an area in need of further investigation. Utilizing the conceptual model of situated fathering, Creighton, Brussoni, Oliffe, and Olsen (2015) investigated how place influences identity of fathers in urban and rural Canada. Results indicated that all men went through a transition into fathering with an active

reconstruction of their identities. Urban fathers held to more contemporary gendered fathering roles where smaller urban and rural fathers held to more traditional gendered ideologies of fathering. A more traditional masculinity was apparent in the rural fathers' identities. While this study was sampled from Canada, it places importance on considering the geographical and social context that the father is situated in (Creighton et al., 2015). Rural fathers may have differing ideologies of fathering and therefore different father identities or typologies of involvement. Understanding how a father situates himself is important in recruiting and retaining fathers in prevention and intervention programs.

Taking into consideration the cultural context of families and individuals can contribute to better results within family strengthening programs, policy making, and future research. A study that investigated a family strengthening parenting program that was provided to families within the rural Appalachia region of Virginia indicated the need to make cultural adaptations to the program (Marek, Brock, & Sullivan, 2006). Those participants who were given the additional culturally adapted segments of the program showed higher retention rates indicating the benefits of considering the cultural context in program delivery. However, differences were not found for parenting or child outcomes. These results could have been influenced by how these cultural adaptations were implemented. The program utilized overall characteristics of the Appalachian region such as isolation, lower parent education, neighborliness, and limited interest in traditional education practices to make adaptations to the program (Marek et al., 2006). These results could have benefitted from garnering a thorough understanding of how the individuals identified with the Appalachian culture and constraints in order to make the necessary cultural adaptations that would be most effective.

In order to investigate the connection between place and identities, social identities were examined with a sample of individuals with cancer from the Appalachian region of Ohio (Krok-Shoen, Palmer-Wackerly, Dailey, & Kreiger, 2015). Krok-Shoen et. al (2015) used social identity theory to examine the geographical place and social group as part of individual's social identity and found that the participants had differing definitions of an Appalachia identity. Appalachia can mean geographical location as well as social identity. Results from their examination of Appalachian identities revealed the need to consider how individuals define their identity within the rural community (Krok-Shoen et al., 2015).

Fathers living in the rural Appalachian region may face multiple constraints and opportunities that influence their fathering process through father identity and father involvement. With the knowledge that a majority of individuals living in rural Appalachia may face multiple constraining factors (e.g., unemployment, poverty, lower education, and health disparities), understanding the role of fathering within this context becomes important for fathers, mothers, and children of this region. Transitions in and out of a family due to contextual experiences such as unemployment, job transitions, transient, incarceration, and residential status can influence how men father and how they perceive their fathering identity (Roy, 2006). Incarceration can lead to changes in father identity as well as father involvement (Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003; Arditti, Smock, & Parkman, 2005; Roy & Dyson, 2005). This life situation can lead to some fathers terminating involvement with their children or maintaining a more limited amount of involvement (Arditti et al., 2005). Incarceration may also lead to a more idealized construction of the fathering identity for when they return home. Virginia ranks as the nation's 13th highest in incarceration rates with one in 89 adults experiencing incarceration (Roeder, 2015). Appalachia is an area that experiences high rates of incarceration, this life situation is an

example of an important contextual factor that can alter or change father identity and fathering processes in this region.

Typologies of Fathering

Identity and context can influence different typologies of fathering. Multiple factors can play an important part in predicting how patterns or types of fathers can emerge. Factors such as the age of the child at the time of parental separation, maternal education, and child support payments have been associated with the level of father involvement (Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010). As society continues to change (e.g., more cohabitating families, more mothers in the workforce, and increased unemployment), the need to consider family complexity and contextual factors is underscored. The intersectionality of multiple societal and institutional forces can contribute to the differing processes (Few-Demo, 2014). In a qualitative analysis of primarily unmarried and low-income fathers, different types of fathers emerged categorized as breadwinner, role model, and new father (Collett et al., 2015). A new image of the father, the new father, consists of an emotional, nurturing, and involved father. Collett and colleagues (2015) also found that that some men had well-defined identity standards while others had very vague standards and definitions of being a good father. Those with specific definitions and standards of their fathering role were more likely to enact those roles with specific and tangible behaviors.

Fathers may identify with different role-behaviors as a father. In the United States, a majority of fathers have traditionally identified with the patriarchal notion of being the breadwinner (Walker & McGraw, 2000). Fathers who experience inconsistent employment or lower-income may not be able to be in the role of breadwinner, which could impact their investment in the fathering role. However, men can compensate for this lack of financial support

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through other fathering roles such as playmate and emotional support (Summers, Boller, Schiffman, & Raikes, 2006). Men who identify strongly in their fathering role may be empowered to father in a different manner despite the negative effects of financial strain (Fox et al., 2015). These employment factors and fathering identities may lead to differing typologies of fathering.

Residential or custody status can have a role in predicting different typologies of fathering. An examination of the differences between resident and non-resident fathers has shown that considering the contextual factors fathers experience is important to researching and measuring father involvement. Longitudinal studies of non-resident fathers have found that father involvement is often complex with multiple trajectories of fathering (Cheadle et al., 2010). Non-resident fathers may face a multitude of barriers to father involvement such as separation arrangements, age of the child, maternal gatekeeping, and geographical distance (Bruce & Fox, 1999). With non-resident fathers, a focus on other dimensions of involvement such as parenting skills and emotional closeness can produce differing results than those found with a focus on time spent with the child (DeGarmo, 2010). In a meta-analysis of the non-resident father involvement literature, authoritative parenting was robustly associated with positive child outcomes (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). There was also an association found with emotional closeness of non-resident fathers and child development outcomes within the literature analyzed in this study. In both residential and non-residential fathers, a father's actual parenting actions can be more influential to child development outcomes, more than frequency of contact.

There are numerous factors that can be associated with these differing trajectories or typologies of fathering. In previous studies, these contextual factors have been identified as vulnerabilities and resiliencies that exist within a model identified as the Vulnerability

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Conceptual Model (VCM; Few & Rosen, 2005; Few-Demo & Arditti, 2013). The study of

complex situations and families and the multiple trajectories these factors may illicit is a

phenomenon that is in need of further advancement. Diverse contextual factors and how these

factors simultaneously interact contribute to bidirectional and transactional interactions that can

predict differing results (Adamsons & Palkovitz, 2014).

Fathering Prevention and Intervention Programs

Family strengthening programs are uniquely positioned to address the constraints

experienced by different fathers. As evidence has shown that constraints can impede father

involvement, fathering typologies can provide evidence-based knowledge to programs to better

serve participants (Fitzgerald, Roy, Anderson, & Letiecq, 2012). Additionally, the development

of typologies can be useful in identifying strengths or resiliencies that can be tapped into in order

to encourage and support fathers. Programs that are positive and empowerment focused promote

individual control of strategies that can influence interpersonal and social skills (Fox et al., 2015;

Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). Identified typologies can be beneficial to family strengthening and

fathering programs in that the results can provide knowledge on distinct categories of fathers.

Evidence-based research can support programs to develop best practices to meet the needs of

different groups of fathers in order to encourage participation, retention, and sustainable

outcomes.

Based on the evidence of positive developmental outcomes that are associated with father

involvement, programs that support families need to emphasize encouraging father involvement

specifically from the time of infancy (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008). Parenting programs largely

identify the mother as the primary parent, often undervaluing the role of fathers (Cabrera &

Peters, 2000; Panter-Brick et al., 2014). However, more recent efforts of parenting programs and

research of family strengthening programs have begun to include fathers (Bronte-Tinkew, Burkhauser, & Metz, 2012). This attention to fathers is in part due to the national attention of fathers that began with the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative funded by the U.S. Health and Human Services Department.

Family strengthening programs that serve fathers focus on promoting employment, enhancing healthy relationships, reducing risky behaviors, and parenting skills (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2012; Cabrera & Peters, 2000). As more programs are beginning to include fathers in parenting programs, the research on the factors that encourage participation and retention in these programs is beginning to emerge (Wong, Roubinov, Gonzales, Dumka, & Millsap, 2013). Factors that were significantly associated with enrollment and participation in a fathering program that served fathers of Mexican origin found that predicting factors of involvement included lower economic strain, lower coparenting conflict, and higher education (Wong, Roubinov, Gonzales, Dumka, & Millsap, 2013). The child variable of child externalizing behavior was found to not be significant indicating the father variables were more predictive of participation in programing. Fathers with lower income and inconsistent work are less likely to be involved with their children and have more negative interactions with their children (Castillo et al., 2014; Dyer, McBride. & Jeans, 2009; Fox et al., 2015). The Appalachian region is an area that experiences unemployment and underemployment. There is a need for further research on fathering and programming, specifically in regards to complex situations and cultures. A review of the social work literature showed that within this literature, a focus on fathers is lacking regarding fathering in different cultures and contexts (Strug & Wilmore-Schaeffer, 2003). As social workers work with fathers in multiple contexts, knowledge is needed on working with diverse fathers in order to enhance best practices. Family strengthening programs have

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historically undervalued fathers and targeted the mother or only the coparenting relationship (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). Evidence of success in interventions is found in programs that are culturally informed along with acknowledgment of the social location of the father as a partner (Fox et al., 2015). This research will provide a theoretical and conceptual guide to the current dearth of literature on fathering interventions and sustainability of these interventions (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework

With this study, I sought to challenge the notion of the present conceptualization of father involvement as solely defined by what fathering is, explicitly for diverse populations. It has been recognized that future theorizing needs to take into consideration multiple factors, influences, relationships, and cultural processes in order to advance the examination of fathers within the family strengthening field (Adamsons & Palkovitz, 2014). The process of fathering is an interrelationship among many complex factors including social relationships and social structures. It is through social interactions that people make meaning of and use in order to define identities, roles, and behaviors (Collett et al., 2015). This meaning making is a core tenet of symbolic interactionism theory. Thus, symbolic interactionism theory was utilized to inform this study (Burke, 1991; Stryker, 1980). With an emphasis examining within-group differences within a specific group of fathers, intersectionality theory was integrated with symbolic interactionism theory to examine the multiple privileges and oppressions that fathers may face along with an examination of the fathers' interactions with social institutions based on their intersecting identities. Additionally, fathers' meaning making of multiple vulnerabilities and resiliencies were examined as inspired by the VCM to illustrate the differing social context, constraints, and facilators for different types of fathers.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a theory that has been influenced by multiple scholars and philosophers. While a multitude of scholars have contributed to the historical understanding and development of symbolic interactionism, many point to the work of George Mead and his students as identifying the components of symbolic interactionism (Charon, 1995). Mead's work comes from pragmatism, which emphasizes the role of interpretation of experiences. The role of perception is important and the individual is seen as an actor. Mead was influenced by both pragmatism and behaviorism emphasizing "doing" by the individual. Individuals interpret their environment versus just responding to it, which then influences behavior. Mead also emphasized the significance of situating identity within social context leading to the concepts of society, self, and social behavior (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

As researchers and theorists' continued to utilize symbolic interactionism in their research, two versions of the theory began to emerge (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). The Iowa School is a version that is identified with Manfred Kuhn and emphasized the use of stable hypotheses, leading to more quantitative methods employed to test the theory. The Chicago style is more interpretive which lends itself to more qualitative analysis. Even amongst these multiple views of symbolic interactionism, LaRossa & Reitzes (1993) identified the seven assumptions of this theory. These are as follows: action is based on meaning; meaning is formed from social interactions; meanings are formed and changed based on perceptions of interactions; self-concepts are formed from social interactions; behavior is based on self-concepts and self-beliefs; cultural and societal processes influences behavior; and social structure is formulated from interactions that may influence attitudes and perceptions. In addition to these assumptions, symbolic interactionism is grounded in the four concepts of identity, roles, interactions, and contexts (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993).

It is the social interactions within contexts and the perceptions of these interactions that contribute to identity, roles, and behaviors (Charon, 2007; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). The role of structural contexts, identified as the community or social location of the individual, is an important interaction in this connection between shared meanings and actions. Shared meanings can be referred to as symbols. It is this connection between the symbols and the interactions of the individual that is a focus of symbolic interactionism. This connection guides an individual's perspective. Individuals' perspectives can change throughout life as they are continually influenced by different social contexts, roles, and interactions.

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that can be employed to examine the meaning making process for diverse fathers as it considers how majority cultural discourses about what fathering should be are replicated, interrupted, challenged, or discarded by minority discourses and experiences (Stryker, 2008). Defined as *situated fathering*, Marsiglio and colleagues (2005) proposed that fathering identity and behaviors result from interactions within a father's physical space in the symbols and meanings he garners from this space. Symbolic interactionism assumes that there is a bidirectional relationship that exists between society and behaviors. Importance is placed on social context and the self as the self makes meanings of the social environment (Stryker, 2000). Changes in social relationships can change role-related behaviors (Styker, 2008).

Symbolic interactionism brings together the propositions of identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Structural symbolic interactionism posits the role of social structures and the behaviors of the self are based on how the social structures affect social behaviors over the life course. Becoming and being a parent is a life course role transition. According to structural symbolic interactionism, the society is the initial point of influence for this feedback process

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between society and the self (Stryker, 2008). The structures of society can be a barrier or a facilitator and on different levels for different individuals. In addition, structural symbolic interactionism is appropriate to employ when investigating changes and challenge experienced by minority groups in society in order to develop theory that is relevant to how groups respond to those changes. Appalachia can refer to a geographical space as well as a social identity. Fathers in Appalachia may face multiple structural challenges in this region. For example, high rates of unemployment and underemployment can constrain fathers' ability to financially support children. While lower education can limit fathers in multiple ways including job attainment and parenting knowledge. Health issues are abundant in this area including addictions, which has affects on the whole family. Intergenerational homes and parenting beliefs in these homes can affect parenting skills. It is amongst these structural challenges that fathers will create the meaning of fathering.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework utilized to examine multiple dimensions of identities and social locations and the manner in which they intersect (Crenshaw, 1991). While coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), a legal studies scholar, intersectionality grew from the theoretical frameworks and praxis of Black feminism and critical race theories. Through an examination of the interactions between social identity and social institutions, intersectionality theory highlights the role of how power and privilege are negotiated at both the individual level and societal level. Intersectionality is multiplicative in nature as it considers the intersections of multiple identities, categories, and social interactions (Greenwood, 2008). In this study of fathers, the role of masculinity was addressed through an examination of cultural values constructed from fathers' identities including ethnicity, race, and class.

To better understand the theoretical premise behind intersectionality and how it was applied in this study of men, it was critical to first examine the theories that informed intersectionality. I began with an overview of feminism as it applied to the study of the family, specifically in critically examining gender relations between men and women. I then moved to the work of Black feminism as this theory analyzed power within racial and ethnic individuals and groups. Next, I discuss the manner in which critical race theory preceded and is incorporated into intersectionality. As Few (2007) underscored, the integration of critical race theory and Black feminist theory provided the basis for family researchers to examine the role of power. Therefore, in order to understand the assumptions of intersectionality as they applied to this diverse sample of men, I first examined intersectionality by elucidating feminist theory, Black feminist theory, and critical race theory.

Feminist theory offers the foundation for critical analysis of knowledge regarding social locations, context, identity, and historical time with an eye toward marginalization and empowerment for individuals and groups (Allen, 2016). Feminist theory examines the understanding of how gender and inequalities based on gender are negotiated both individually and at a societal level. The deconstruction of gender with an analysis of power and power differentials is at the core of feminist theory. Feminists have contributed to a greater awareness of the role of power and privilege within the family sciences (Allen, 2016). Power can exist at a societal level as well as within families based on gender, generation, or social class. Feminism provides a lens to examine gender and the intersections with race, ethnicity, class, and sexual relations (Allen, 2016). Feminist theory implores a social justice focus with the goal of information, empowerment, and change within society. There have been multiple waves of feminism and different types of feminist theories; these variations contribute to a theory that

continues to answer to critiques so as to focus on empowerment and social justice (Allen, 2016; Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2014; Few-Demo, Lloyd, & Allen, 2014). Black feminism is a feminist theory that places an emphasis on power and knowledge.

Black feminist theory places the experiences of African American women at the center of analysis and articulates a unique situated knowledge and standpoint. An aim of Black feminist theory is to raise consciousness, empowerment and social justice (Collins, 2000). Black feminism is focused on complexities and connections between race, class, and gender (Collins, 2000). Black feminist theory challenges hegemonic notions of western patriarchy by highlighting the exploitation and oppression that African American women and their families have experienced (Collins, 2000). This theoretical framework provides the space for the examination of power, privilege, and oppression in society. This power analysis is evident in the work of Collins (1994) in theorizing the labor of Black women and mothers. Collins (1994) conceptualized the term Motherwork that consists of the three features of survival, empowerment, and identity. For Black women, the goal of survival is enacted through the use of identity politics, which is defined as acknowledging the balance of gender and race (Few, 2007). Empowerment exists both individually and within the community. Motherwork focuses on the empowerment against institutions that contribute to oppression and considers the ability to control choices for empowerment (Collins, 1994). Identity is the work that provides both children and communities with the ability to face oppressions. Black feminist theory is an analytical tool that provides the framework to analyze power structures within society.

Critical race theory examines social inequalities with the view of the interaction of racial minority groups and social institutions (Few, 2007). This theory provides the space for explaining social systems and groups with the understanding that racism is institutionalized and

sustained through social practices (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010).

The role of subjectivities, identities that are salient as a result of a social context, is examined

when employing critical race theory (Few, 2007). The role of socialized systems in family

processes as well as social inequalities at the institutional level provides the basis for a cultural

standpoint of research (Few, 2007).

Guided by Black feminist theory and critical race theory, intersectionality provides the

framework to further examine and understand the role of multiple identities and categories in

addition to the interactions of individuals and groups with public policies, practices, and social

institutions (Crenshaw, 1991). As an individual's perception and identity develops from

interactions with the social environment, the experiences of power and privilege and how these

are created, maintained, and negotiated within society are taken into consideration.

Intersectionality underscores the need to consider the experience of differences, inequalities, and

marginalization. Individuals and groups, situated within specific contexts, negotiate systems of

power through the experience of both privileges and oppressions. This negotiation is with an

understanding that there may be conflict among identities, relationships, and social structures.

Social changes and individual changes through the life course contribute to fluidity and

complexity. Intersectionality theory can guide understanding of how disadvantage can exist

from multiple identities or social categories (Crenshaw, 1991). For this study, intersectionality

provided me with a guiding framework to closely examine individual roles, identity, family

processes, interactions within relationships, and social structures within the context of a specific

social location and institutional oppressions that may occur in this geographical space. This

theory underscores the awareness of variability among individuals and groups as meaning

making can vary in individuals across life course and among or within groups. By recognizing

that intersectionality is grounded in Black feminism and critical race theory an emphasis on the negotiation of power as well as a focus on empowerment through social justice outcomes can be highlighted (Few, 2007).

Using an intersectional framework contributes to the development of a study's methodology (McCall, 2005; Few-Demo, 2014). McCall (2005) identified three categories of intersectionality that can be utilized: anticategorical, intracategorical, and intercategorical. A research design may address more than one category, so while this study uses an intracategorical approach, based on the sample collected, an intercategorical approach will most likely be utilized (McCall, 2005). The intracategorical approach uses social categories as a way to focus the research on a particular category. By focusing on one particular group, the researcher is able to explore and reveal the complexity of this group. Using this focus, the researcher is able to more fully examine the manner in which this group constructs identity due to their membership in this social category (Few-Demo, 2014). To study the complexity of a social group, an intercategorical approach can be utilized to further examine the multiple aspects of identity that exists across the categories (McCall, 2005). With this approach, the researcher can understand the complex relationships that exist among categorized groups (McCall, 2005). In this study, class, race, or ethnicity was hypothesized as a category that may warrant an intercategorical emphasis. Therefore, this study took an initial intracategorical approach and incorporated an intercategorical approach based on the participants recruited.

Application of an Integrated Theoretical Framework

In order to examine fathering within a specific context, I applied a symbolic interactionism theory integrated with intersectionality theory. An integrated framework allows a researcher to consider multiple perspectives, explicitly for this study, the perspectives of

meaning making, individual roles, identity development, cultural sensitivity, power, and

privilege (Burton et al., 2010). With identities and realities being socially co-constructed,

categories and identities can be constructed through intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships

with the self, others, and society (DeReus, Few, & Blume, 2005). Social structures contribute to

the symbolic construction of social processes, which impact the fluidity of meaning making,

identity, roles, and privileges. Intersectionality compliments symbolic interactionism with a

deeper focus on social phenomena such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, and ability. For

example, whereas symbolic interactionism provides the framework to understand meaning

making, it does not provide a specific concentration on the awareness of cultural perspectives

and the complexities of power and privilege that influence the process of identity development.

Intersectionality compliments the tenets of symbolic interactionism due to the need for a cultural

framework in examining a specific group (Few, 2007). Through the use of this framework, the

tenets of intersectionality theory assisted with avoiding the potential for misinterpretation of

racial or ethnic minority individuals. Intersectionality was utilized in this study to compliment

and expand upon the traditional family theory of symbolic interactionism by pushing the role of

complex processes (Few, 2007). These theories provided a foundation to contextualize the

experiences of specific groups and the discrete experiences of individuals within groups. This

integrative theory was utilized to inform the methods of this study.

The use of qualitative methods provides an opportunity to investigate deeper into the

complexities of individuals. An intersectional theoretical approach integrated with symbolic

interactionism can further guide this examination into the socially constructed identities of

fathers situated within context (McCall, 2005). Intersectionality supports positioning symbolic

interactionism into a context that considers multiple intersections of identities and roles within a

social system of privilege and oppression. The tenets of intersectionality and symbolic interactionism were both utilized in the development of the interview protocol in order to maintain awareness of culturally relevant interview questions that are associated with the research questions of this study (Few, 2007).

A symbolic interactionist and intersectional integrative framework emphasizes identity development, individual and family processes, and social inequalities that exist in diverse social structures and contexts (Few-Demo, 2014). This integrated framework guided the research questions and corresponding interview questions examining identity process of diverse fathers of infants living in this specific context of rural Appalachia as well as the contextual factors that may affect the process of fathering and father involvement. Complexities exist for individuals, groups and within groups that can be impacted by both privilege and oppression. These complexities also are fluid and can change throughout the life course. In line with Black feminism, intersectionality emphasizes the multiple disadvantages that exist as a result of power and privilege (Collins, 1991). Fathering processes are influenced by the structures of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and age as well as how these social locations interact with the institutional structures within a community (e.g., school, clubs, neighborhoods, criminal justice system). By considering how the individual interacts with social context, structures, and policies, I incorporated an intersectional lens that complimented the tenets of symbolic interactionism to assist in the interpretation of how fathers' social positioning and their interactions with institutional structures impacted father identity development and decision-making processes in regard to fathering and father involvement.

An intersectional lens provides a theoretical space to intentionally analyze how individuals negotiate the fluidity, variability, and temporality of identity development, social

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positioning, and contextual constraints that occur across the life course (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Few-Demo, 2014). The specific context of this study, rural Appalachia, faces multiple vulnerabilities that may be experienced on an individual, relational, or societal level as individuals experience power and oppression related to their intersecting identities and categories. Few and Rosen (2005) introduced the Vulnerability Conceptual Model (VCM) to examine the risks and resiliencies of women in abusive relationships. This model provided a guiding conceptualization of women's relational and situational vulnerabilities that were situated on a continuum. The VCM was also applied in research that investigated incarcerated mothers and the impact of situational and relational vulnerabilities (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2013). The VCM was utilized as a model for examining the vulnerabilities and resiliencies that fathers experienced in this study that led to differing typologies of fathers.

Intersectionality takes into account biographical diversity and complexity while symbolic interactionism examines the meaning making and identity development that occurs through experiences in a social context. An intersectional frame can allow the research to deviate from the understanding of fathering from a traditional middle-class white understanding that is often used as a template for other fathers leading to marginalization of specific groups and alternatively can guide a deeper understanding of fathering in a specific context with an emphasis on strengths, resourcefulness, and empowerment. In a qualitative study of fathering in two specific employment and class categorizations, the researchers found that father behavior stems from the intersection of class, gender relations, employment, and processes thereby demonstrating different variations of fathering (Show & Gerstel, 2009). Variations in meaning making and experiences can be a result of the meaning making in the intersections of multiple categories including gender, race, ethnicity, class, and employment status. An intersectional lens

integrated with symbolic interactionism facilitates this culturally relevant interpretation (Few-Demo, 2014).

Symbolic interactionism and intersectionality provided the framework for further examination of symbolic meaning making by the individual. As this meaning making was influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, societal, and institutional relationships, an examination of current involvement in interactions with social structures as well as desires in future interactions was investigated. As intersectionality was informed by critical race theory and Black feminist theory, intersectionality was appropriate to apply to inform prevention and intervention programs that existed at the community and societal institutional level. Intersectionality requires a culturally accessible view so as to not further marginalize individuals and groups (Few, 2007). Moreover, this research had a goal of promoting social justice, which was applied through the development of community partnerships and the dissemination of findings to these communities and family scholars. Through incorporating identity, meaning making, cultural symbols, and contextual constraints, this research study employed this integrated framework in order to define the identity process of fathers within their social context, informed possible fathering typologies, examined contextual factors and processes that contribute to fathering and father involvement, and investigated fathers needs and desires in parenting programs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS
Overview

This study is qualitative in design in order to gain a deep understanding of important processes of identity and father involvement within a specific cultural context. Qualitative analysis allows for a deeper understanding of specific participant identified and family processes versus isolating processes into a small set of variables (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). Moreover, with limited research on fathers from this specific cultural context, results from a qualitative analysis that focuses on the intersectionality of identity and social structural factors can guide both future quantitative research and the development or evaluation of family strengthening programs that target a more rural population. This study was informed by symbolic interactionism and complimented by intersectionality, as effective qualitative research should be situated within a theoretical framework in order to guide and fortify the study design and analysis (Goldberg & Allen, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I employed a social constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) to inform my decisions in regard to qualitative methodology.

Context of the Study

There are multiple regions of Appalachia, each with identified histories, social locations, and economic conditions that have known customary stereotypes regarding their regions (Anglin, 2002). Complexities of gender, class, race, and ethnicity in addition to differing economic constraints, resources, and geographical differences contribute to a variety of community needs and community strengths. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) the Appalachian region is considered to be severely economically distressed due to contextual factors of poverty and unemployment. The Appalachian region is identified as a 205,000 square-mile region that extends from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The majority of this

area is classified as rural (42% compared to the 22% of the nation). Poverty rates in Appalachia are greater than in more urban areas. In Appalachia Virginia, the poverty rate from 2010-2014 was 18.8% compared to the national average of 15.6% (ARC, 2015). Moreover, there are drastic contrasts in the poverty rates within this region. Of the 25 counties recognized as Appalachia Virginia, one is considered distressed (26% poverty rate), 10 are at risk, 13 are transitional, and one is competitive (7.2% poverty rate) (ARC, 2015). Overall, the Appalachian region has been considered to be a marginalized population (Abramson & Haskell, 2006). High chronic poverty, low-skilled jobs, unemployment, as well as lower educational attainment have contributed to high psychological and physiological stressors (Bornstein, Putnick, & Suwalsky, 2012; Goodman et al., 2008). Substance abuse has been steadily becoming a problem in Virginia with about 2.5% of individuals 12 and over reportedly being dependent on or abusing illicit drugs within the years of 2009-2013 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015). In 2014, fatal drug overdose was the most common cause of accidental death for the first time in Virginia (Hobron, 2016). Particularly southwest Virginia, the Appalachian region, has been impacted the most by substance abuse. In four of the Appalachian counties of Virginia, 85% of all drug cases involved prescription drugs (U.S. Attorney's Office, 2016). This area of Virginia only accounts for about 1% of the Virginia population. Substance abuse has multiple negative consequences for families and children indicating a need for programs and policy makers to focus on this particular area of Virginia. Furthermore, federal and state policies that have targeted welfare recipients in this region have further marginalized the Appalachian communities due to the regions constraints of limited employment opportunities, child care, and transportation (Anglin, 2002). Therefore, the pressures that men may face in this region may be

unique to those experienced by other diverse populations (e.g., African American, Latino, immigrant, or urban).

Community members of the Appalachian region experience areas of strength and resilience even amongst the challenges present within this geographical location. Anglin (2002) described the experiences of grassroots activism in the regions of eastern Kentucky, southwest Virginia, and western North Carolina in an effort to focus on the contributing factors of poverty and underemployment. Community-based programs were found to be a strength of this region as evidenced in the development of a project that focused on building small businesses in light of the limited employment opportunities in the region (Anglin, 2002). Anglin (2002) highlighted the efforts of working class, low income, and unemployed Appalachian residents to form social networks and grassroots organizations to support their communities. An identified area of strength in the Appalachia area is marital status, as a majority of the families living in the Appalachian region are married. With marital status being identified as a strength of this region, family strengthening programs that only support marriage may not have as great an effect on families, as the families are more likely to remain married. Within this region, these two-parent families are predominantly living in poverty, which indicates other limits and risk factors that may benefit from interventions (ARC, 2015). In an Appalachian sample of mothers, father presence and marital status were associated with positive maternal parenting (Bornstein, Putnick, & Suwalsky, 2012). Father involvement and marriage buffered the stressors associated with the constraints of the rural Appalachian environment. Results from this study indicated that father involvement and marital status might be areas that can benefit from strengthening programs in a rural community (Bornstein et al., 2012).

Participants and Recruitment

Sample Inclusion

The target population for this study was fathers of infants who reside in the Appalachian region of Virginia. The inclusion criteria for this study were as follows 1) identify as a father of an infant between the ages of 0 to 18 months old and 2) live in the Appalachian region of Virginia. The Appalachian region of Virginia was determined using the criteria identified by the Appalachian Region Commission, which consists of the following counties: Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. Exclusion criteria was any fathers who did not have an infant (0-18 months) as well as individuals who lived in an area that is not identified as the Appalachia communities of Virginia. Fathers of infants were chosen for this study due to the importance of positive parent and child interactions in the early years of child development. Infant brain development research has shown the critical importance of quality interactions that begin at birth (Swain, Lorberbaum, Kose, & Strathearn, 2007). By understanding the factors that encourage or hinder father involvement, intervention and prevention programs can target these particular factors to encourage positive involvement and positive parent and child interactions early in a child's life. The sample inclusion included all fathers of infants and was not limited to residential status, partner status, or first-time fatherhood.

Recruitment Process

Given that I sought participants who could provide information-rich cases to gather insight on the specific research questions of this study, purposeful sampling strategies were utilized (Patton, 1990). While there have been recent studies regarding fathering in the context

of rural areas, limited research has focused on the unique context of the Appalachia region in regards to father development. Early childhood is a salient time of intervention in father development (Bauman & Wasserman, 2010). Moreover, research on infant development has emphasized the importance of quality interactions early in life to promote positive child developmental outcomes and reduce potential negative outcomes (Dishion, 2016; Pontoppidan, 2015; Swain et al., 2007). In order to better serve the fathers and families who reside in the Appalachia region of Virginia, it is important to first fully understand their process of fathering. As previously noted, the region of Appalachia Virginia has been identified as an at-risk community. I sought to gather information directly from the residents of this geographic area in order to sensitively understand which factors contribute to the development of their father identity, father involvement, and fathering process in this specific context in order to inform theory, programs, and public policy.

To build relationships with the communities and families, a partnership was formed with agencies that serve the identified areas. Partnership with the local Community Action Agencies Head Start and Tap Into Hope's Fathers First program (TAP) assisted in facilitating the researchers knowledge of the area, recruitment strategies, and structural spaces for interviews (see Appendix P). The partnership with Tap Into Hope's Fathers First program (TAP), which serves 5 of the counties that are identified as in the Appalachian region, specifically was utilized in the initial development of the recruitment strategies. This project was supported by the Strengthening Family Scholars grant Grant Number: 90PD0296) from the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained and the recruitment process was initiated in November 2016 and continued through April 2017. In

addition to the partnering agencies, contacts were made with additional social agencies within the identified counties including the Department of Social Services. Contacts were made with the Department of Health, specifically with the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to assist in recruitment. Each of these agencies had flyers located in their offices and handed out flyers directly to their participants (see Appendix O). Recruitment for this study was also facilitated through flyers placed within physician offices, hospitals, day cares, places of worship, and local libraries. Recruitment flyers were additionally placed within the identified communities (e.g., grocery stores, convenience stores, community offices, and organizations). Finally, recruitment consisted of word of mouth referrals.

Study participants contacted the researcher via phone or email indicating their interest. The participants were screened for eligibility based on the criteria. If the participants met the criteria, they were sent the consent form and scheduled for an interview at a time and place that was convenient to the participant. Interview sites consisted of local libraries, coffee shops, or at the participant's home. The researcher, at the beginning of the interview, reviewed the consent form and the participant's signature was obtained. The consent form contained information about the study, the risks and benefits associated with participation, and information regarding confidentiality (Appendix L). Participants were ensured that consent could be withdrawn at any point during the study without penalty.

All interviews were audio recorded for later transcription. Confidentiality was maintained by assigning a pseudonym to the participant. A participant ID was created for each participant. During transcription, all names used during the interview were changed to a pseudonym. All research protocols and standards were strictly adhered to and every effort was

made to comply with the *"Ethical Standards"* in the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (APA, 2002).

Sample Description

This sample included 50 fathers of infants ages birth to 18 months (*M*=9.94). The fathers' ages ranged between 22 and 47 years old (*M*=31.62). The number of children that the fathers reported ranged from one to six (*M*=2.38). A small number of the fathers reported being a first time father (*n*=15). All but one of the fathers was residing with their infant. A majority of the fathers with more than one child were living with all of their children (*n*=44) while six fathers reported not living with all of their children. A majority of the parents were married (82%) with the rest of the sample identifying as cohabitating (12%), single (4%), and other (2%). The father who reported other spent some of the time staying at his infant's home, but was unable to reside with his coparent permanently due to his status as a felon. The single father reported being single yet disclosed he was permanently living with his infant's coparent. The educational status of the fathers was as follows: some high school (6%), high school or GED (10%), vocational (2%), some college (16%), college (15%), and graduate school (36%). The 2017 federal poverty guidelines for a family of 4 is below $24, 600. About 36% of this sample met this standard. Almost half of the sample reported the current use of public assistance (42%). The demographics for the participants is located in Table 1. A summary of the fathers' characteristics and assigned pseudonyms is located in Table 2.

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Data Collection

</div>

This study utilized two forms of data collection: a structured demographic survey and a semi-structured interview. The demographic survey and semi-structured interview protocol were informed by a pilot study with two participants and feedback by the dissertation committee

members. After informed consent was granted (Appendix L), the participants completed the structured demographic survey with the interviewer (Appendix K). This survey was designed to gather information to inform the researchers of contextual factors identified by the participants (e.g., race, relationship status, income, employment, incarceration history, and participation in parenting programs). The second form of data collection was a semi-structured interview (Appendix J). The interview questions were informed by the research questions with an emphasis on the following domains: identity processes, fathering an infant, challenges and goals, father involvement, coparenting and other relationships, contextual constraints and catalysts, community, and parenting and family strengthening programming. The interview consisted of 14 questions with several probes for each question to elicit a deep description and explanation of the participant's experiences. The interviews lasted between 32 to 107 minutes. The interviews were transcribed by an approved transcriptionist within two weeks of the interview and verified by the researcher.

Field notes and memos were utilized in addition to the transcriptions of the interviews to analyze the data. The field notes were recorded after the interview. Field notes included information about the participant with reflections on the interview and were used to create a biographical sketch of the participant. As the data analysis progressed, the field notes became more in-depth and represented the coding process and theoretical notes.

Memo-writing was employed throughout the data collection and data analysis process. The use of memos was a tool to record the researchers thoughts during the analysis process as it related to the data and the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2014). Contrasts and comparisons between the participants were noted during the analysis process. During the analysis process, theoretical memos were used to record the process of theory construction (Charmaz, 2014; Guba,

1981). For example, a memo was created to begin thinking about power and privilege when coding an interview where the participant discussed his experiences with incarceration. The memos were recorded as word documents as well as within the qualitative software MAXQDA and used throughout the analytic process (VERBI Software GmbH, 2016).

Rigor and Trustworthiness

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, multiple methods of rigor were employed. An audit trail and transparent description of the analysis process were kept throughout the research process (Guba, 1981). Reflexivity during the coding process was recorded in the audit trail to maintain a critical examination. Methods of triangulation of the data were applied for confirmability of the results (Patton, 2002). Throughout the data analysis process, my dissertation chair supervised the audit trail and analysis process. Two faculty mentors reviewed the initial coding phase to ensure rigor. Supervision by my dissertation chair was provided through the coding process and helped to confirm the collapsing and merging of codes during the axial coding phase and theoretical coding phase.

Reflexivity and positionality of the researcher was maintained throughout the research process in order to be aware of the role of the self as researcher through critical monitoring (Allen, 2000; Daly, 2007). It has been recommended that researchers report on positionality and power dynamics in relation to the research topic and sample population (Goldberg & Allen, 2015; Few, Stephens, & Rouse-Arnett, 2003). It is important to acknowledge that there is a relationship between the researcher and the participant that may be affected by power or insider and outsider status (Burke, 2005). Efforts were made to acknowledge positionality through transparency, reflexivity, and bracketing. Bracketing is a form of reflecting on your own thoughts and beliefs throughout the research and coding process (Fischer, 2009).

Data Analysis

Constructivist grounded theory approaches guided the analysis of this data. Grounded theory is an appropriate method for developing and extending theoretical and conceptual frameworks through the use of systematic and inductive analysis of data (Charmaz, 2000). Constructivist grounded theory is a postpositivistic analytic process that is data driven and emergent in nature in order to gain in-depth interpretive meanings. The collection of rich data is the first key in grounded theory. To gather rich data for this study, pilot interviews were utilized to guide the interview protocol as well as the current literature. Coding is an iterative process that began after the first interview and progressed throughout the process of coding (Charmaz, 2000). Constructivist grounded theory methods guided the use of several coding procedures for analyzing the data (Charmaz, 2014).

Initial coding is the process of pulling meaning from the data that will guide the emergent data and future data collection and coding. Transcripts in addition to field notes and memos were utilized in this process. Initial coding began once the first interview was transcribed. At this stage, analysis stayed close to the data and focused on language, actions, feelings, and emotions of the participants. This initial coding process included line-by-line coding, comparative coding, and in vivo codes. The initial coding of the data continued to stay close to the data looking for patterns and nuances in the participants words and stories. In order to preserve the words of the participants, in vivo codes were used when the participant's words had significant meaning or emphasized their perception (Charmaz, 2014). Some of these in vivo codes were used in the final titles of the codes to represent the participant's words that contributed to the theme.

During the initial coding process, weekly meetings with the dissertation advisor were utilized to discuss initial codes and confirm the data. As more interviews were coded, the data was closely looked at for links between the codes and subcodes. After initial coding of 10 interviews, the codes and subcodes were compared to each other to look for processes in the data. This process of constant comparison continued for the next sets of interviews to look for similarities and differences within the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Efforts were made to stay engaged with the participant's words and perceptions of their personal experiences, goals, and desires. As the interviews progressed, further probes were utilized based on the data analysis to confirm the data and look for outliers. For example, after the code "being there" appeared to be significant in the data, I began probing for more information about what being there meant to the fathers.

The next phase of coding included focused coding procedures in order to begin segmenting the data into emergent codes. This was an emergent process that continued to stay close to the participants' data while making comparisons within the data. The focused coding lead to a more refined coding and progressed the development of the conceptual theory (Charmaz, 2014). As Charmaz described, the process of focused coding moves the researcher out of an immersion in the data to an analysis of the data. Due to the large sample with this data, the focused coding process assisted in segmenting the data, which then contributed to the development of the grounded theory conceptual model. This process was discussed with the dissertation advisor in order to question and discuss decisions that were made.

Analysis then moved through focused coding with the use of axial and theoretical coding. Axial coding is a structured procedure of sorting and synthesizing the data into larger concepts (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Links between the codes and subcodes were analyzed

and categories were formed based on this coding. These categories reconnected the data by

linking the codes to understand the relationships between codes leading to the development of

the conceptual grounded theory. Finally, theoretical coding methods guided the integration of

the data into theory by organizing the codes and fitting it into theoretical codes.   This process

was emergent and focused on how the categories fit with one another to understand the fathers'

processes according to their words and perceptions. This theoretical coding included the process

of developing charts to examine the developed typologies (Table 3 and Table 4) and to the

development of the conceptual framework (Figure 2).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The findings of this study reflect an intersectional approach to the investigation of fathers' perceptions of fathering. Informed by an integrative model of symbolic interactionism and intersectionality theory, the analysis of the fathers of this study highlights the understanding of the meaning that fathers assign to fatherhood that is interdependent upon three domains that interact over the life course. The results of this study indicated that father identity must be framed differently than in the past in that the meaning making of fatherhood is fluid, inextricable, and can change over the life course.

The results of the findings of this study are presented in three sections. The first section, the domains of fatherhood, addresses the first two research questions (1) What does the identity process of fathering an infant look like for diverse men living in rural Appalachian communities? and (2) How do contextual factors affect the process of fathering and father involvement? Three domains emerged that represented the interactions of the contextual factors involved in the identity processes and father involvement of fathers of rural Appalachia. These domains are identified as (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal, and (c) institutional and sociocultural. The themes that emerged within these domains are described along with emergent subcategories for the themes. The data from this study indicated that father identity is fluid and complex, thereby indicating that identity is not monolithic. From this analysis, a conceptual framework of the process of fathering is presented.

The second section will address the third research question (3) How might father involvement inform typologies of fathering? Two typologies of fathers emerged from this analysis (a) thriving fathers and (b) evolving fathers. These typologies are presented as situated in a model of vulnerability and resiliency.

The final section will address the fourth research question (4) What would fathers living in rural Appalachia desire or want in a parenting program? This section, parenting programming, specifically represents what the fathers living in a rural Appalachian context desire in a parenting program and is presented as three themes (a) current parenting knowledge, (b) previous parenting programs and information sources, and (c) parenting program needs and desires.

Intrapersonal Domain

The intrapersonal domain is representative of fathers' internal processes of self-awareness. These processes are psychological, spiritual, and cognitive processes that form a father's internal structures of identity. From these intrapersonal processes, fathers gained an awareness of both areas of strength and inadequacy. This process can be a conscious process as well as an unconscious process. The themes that emerged within the intrapersonal domain were (a) active self-reflexivity, (b) masculine norms, (c) personal motivations, and (d) intrapersonal challenges. These themes represent the fathers' personal thoughts and experiences that contribute to a reflexivity and self-awareness of their own behaviors, attitudes, and goals (Jia, Kotila, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Kamp Dush, 2016).

"I Want to be There": Active Self-Reflexivity

This theme represents the manner in which fathers (n=50) think about being a father and the method in which fathers cognitively process and actively negotiate their father identity. Fathers' active self-reflexivity is related to the processes the father participates in to reflect on his life and make active choices to either enhance his life or make changes to his life for the benefit of his child. Three subcategories emerged from this theme: (a) actively changing (b) father's desires and (e) father's perceptions. These subcategories reflect the complexity of the

lives of the fathers and the processes that the fathers engage with to create a better life for their

child.

Actively changing. Fathers (*n*=16) identified with actively making a significant change

in their life for their child. For some fathers, this active life change was due to challenges in

their past. Each father openly spoke about life challenges and described in detail the active

choice to change in order to be a better father. Tom, Father id# 14, explained this process

stating:

> If you are a person who was down and out before, or you feel depressed a lot, or
>
> whatever, that kid will lift your spirits. I was in a…where I was really depressed a lot,
>
> and I didn't even…I didn't want to see my kids; I didn't want them to see how I was
>
> because I was in a bad spot… When I went to jail, that's all I thought about, so then,
>
> when I came home, I made sure that was my number one priority-- was my children
>
> because, you know, it's like, "Man, I can't stop thinking about them." … You've got to
>
> cherish it because that's an opportunity of a lifetime to have a kid. And it's not just
>
> something… It's not a piece of garbage you can just throw in the trash. You've got to
>
> take responsibility. Like I said, you've got to love them. Love your kids.

These life changes were often portrayed as a complex process as the fathers described past

experiences with their own families in detail and explained how they were going to be different

and make changes. Cody, Father id #38, experienced child abuse and neglect from his

recurrently incarcerated father and described how he thinks about his past often, "just go through

these things in my head," wanting to make sense of his past and use this thought process to be a

different father for his child than his father was to him. He explained this active self-reflexivity

saying, "I know what it's like to grow up without a dad. I'm not going to let my son grow up the way I grew up towards my dad."

Cody also used this active self-reflexivity when reflecting on his past issues with incarceration and three life threatening drug overdoses. In Cody's detailed explanations of his negative past experiences, he continued to focus on his new baby and how he was going to be there for his child and be a better father than he had.

Phillip, Father id #23, discussed how he was not a good father the first time around when he became a father at the age of 17. As an older father of three young children, he discussed how he had to actively choose to move away from his "self-absorbed" ways to be a better father to his current children.

Numerous fathers made career changes including pursuing further education, withdrawing from further education, seeking more family friendly employment, and seeking financial advancement. This decision was specific to the father and related to how he identified as a father and what his goals were as a father. For example, Ben, Father id #3, enrolled in further education to become a medical doctor to provide for his children as he stated, "This is the real reason why we're doing this, is to provide for them, and have a good job for them." Whereas Dustin, Father id #25, decided to leave medical school in order to be there for his daughter. "I stopped going to medical school because my daughter was born and I realized that I wanted to spend more time with my daughter than I did with a cadaver."

Ron, Father id #28, worked to move his family out of a living situation that he did not view as ideal for his child and into a more suitable place for his newly arriving twins. Ron also sought to get his suspended driving license back and buy a car when he found out his girlfriend was expecting the twins. These were active choices that required dedication and commitment to

come to fruition and were motivated by knowing he had to care for and provide for two more children.

Father's desires. Throughout the interviews, the fathers ($n=25$) had an opportunity to express their goals and desires from their own perception. The fathers reflected on their aspirations including the desire for patience, time alone, and empowerment. All of the fathers additionally reflected on their desires for their children. Several of the fathers ($n=15$) identified the desire and need for patience as a father. Carl, Father id #18, stated, "You know, just being a parent, it takes a lot of patience, and that's one of the things that you deal with throughout your whole parenting experience, you know." Patience was described as a virtue that was held as important and in need of being fostered. For instance, Jimmy, Father id #26, said:

> I don't have a short fuse, but I let things get to me quicker than what it really should, and
> my wife has to, "hey, you need to calm down just a little bit. She's four years old." I'd
> say patience.

Some of the fathers ($n=8$) indicated they needed time alone. This desire was expressed as a need. "I'm just going to do me for a little bit." This need for time alone was sometimes used as a way to be a better father. Harry, Father id #20, a stay-at-home father of two indicated in one of his stories his need for alone time.

> I think that I need a break. I need a way to walk away from a situation and take a breath
> and acknowledge that I've got 25 years on her to be rational …You know, just need to
> walk away sometimes so that I'm not my own worst enemy.

Three of the fathers were able to express their desire for more empowerment as a father. Mark, Father id #2, expressed this need clearly stating, "I wanted to be a good dad, but I don't know what that entails. So, it's kind of like, you know, you have this urge or this strong desire to

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do something, but no clear goal how to get there and I don't know of any good group or resource that's for dads." Later in the interview he again expressed the need for "empowerment." He believed that this could come from knowledge so as to give him a feeling of power in making parenting decisions. Through expression of their needs and desires, the fathers demonstrated their participation in active self-reflexivity as a father.

A father's perception of fathering. A father's perception of fathering is a theme that emerged from the words and descriptions of the fathers' perceptions of fathering. Four subcategories are identified as (a) cautious perception, (b) positive perception, (c) stressful perception, and (d) mixed negative and positive perception.

The subcategory cautious perception (n=14) reflected the perception that fathers were trying hard to be a good father, but that they often felt like they were "falling short". Clive, Father id #15, said, "I just try to do everything I can, make sure the little dude's happy." The fathers described trying to be the best father while being cautious or nervous about not succeeding or meeting their own expectations. Clive later said, "In one way, I feel like I'm just going to kill it and ace it and not have anything to worry about. In another way, at the same time, in the back of my mind, I'm like, 'what if you don't?'" This self-evaluation can serve as a motivator for fathers. Tony, Father id #7, explained this motivation.

> I think you can have some anxiety that you're falling short. Often, I'm not... It's always good to be self critical. Examine yourself; examine your shortfalls in parenting. And what you need to do. And I see mine. Not all of them, of course, but I see enough to know that, you know, you still need a lot of work. And just like they're working and growing and you're working on them working and growing. You need to be working and growing on yourself as well. As a parent and as a person…

While the fathers indicated they were nervous and cautious, they also indicated that they were trying to do their best so that they could be the best father to their child.

The subcategory positive perception (n=18) signifies the group of fathers who primarily evaluate themselves as a "good father." According to Marco, Father id #10, being a father is "great" and "awesome." These fathers felt confident as a father and were happy in their role. Leo, Father id #33, who reported challenges for both himself and his baby, discussed his positive self-evaluation as a result of overcoming these challenges.

> It's just makes me feel good about myself… To be through as much as me and her's been through and as much as that baby's been through, you know? It just makes you feel good. You know, I was able to stay strong and stand by her and the baby...

The perception of being a good father provided the fathers with a positive approach to fathering.

Stressful perception (n=5) is a subcategory that represents the fathers who reported fathering as stressful and challenging. In discussing how he dealt with the current stress in his life including his health, his children's health, and job stress, Jordan, Father id #37, stated, "Dammit, it's so hard. And it's not to get sleep, I don't feel...the energy to do other stuff. So it is...it is really hard." Sean, Father id #9, described his stress as a father, dealing with his child's personality.

> It's crazy. He's crazy. He's...he looks just like me, he's got a temper like mine, he doesn't play well with other children. I didn't play well with other children.

He later explained his frustration with engaging in an activity that his son liked that he did not. "He likes books. I don't like books, so it's a challenge for me to want to sit there and read him a book, because I don't like to read."

In describing his experiences as a father, Carl, Father id #18, said:

It's...all-in-all, it's just...it's more than what I thought it was going to be. That's for

sure…with everything. You have to try to plan ahead because if you're not ready...if you

don't expect anything about to happen, it's going to catch you off guard. Especially with

the hours that I work and everything. It's stressful. It's hard. It really is because my

woman, she doesn't like staying home and being trapped the whole day and not being

able to get out or do anything except for the grocery store. It's just more than what I

expected.

The fathers' perceptions of fathering were that it was difficult and in one father's words a

"controlled chaos." This perception led to some fathers reporting a negative self-evaluation of

their fathering.

The final subcategory of this theme was mixed negative and positive appraisal (*n*=14)

captures the totality of the opposing emotions involved in a father's perception of his fathering.

The fathers of this subcategory often used two opposing words to describe being a father. Word

combinations included, "It's great and terrifying," "It is enjoyable but also testing," and "equal

parts challenging and rewarding." The fathers perceived their fathering to be a positive

experience combined with this negative experience, thereby leading to a mixed self-evaluation.

As Phillip, Father id #23, said, "I'm a successful failure." Dustin, Father id #25, captured these

mixed perceptions when he recounted the parenting events of the day.

A lot of times you feel very underprepared and a lot of times… But most of the times it's

really exciting to come home and have her smiling and running toward me at the door.

Today was just an overwhelming sort of feeling because things were crazy at work,

things were crazy for my wife with her at home, and I ran late for work and was putting

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her down for sleep. And so a mixture between great overwhelming and great happiness, if that makes sense.

An interesting aspect of this subcategory was the manner in which the fathers switched between negative appraisals and positive appraisals in one comment. For example, when Jimmy, Father id #26, described what it was like being a father to his baby, he stated, "It's been one of the best things that's ever happened to me. It can be challenging, I wouldn't trade it for nothing. It's great." He continued, providing more details regarding his evaluation, "The stress, unhappy baby and trying to make him happy. Going out's changed, my wife and I used to just get ready to go, now we've got baby and a four year old." The challenges of parenting created some negative self-evaluations, however they were often balanced with the love of their child. Cody's, Father id #38, comment highlighted this balance of his thought processes.

Well, you know, sometimes it's difficult. I love it. I wouldn't take it back for the world. I love my little baby, but it is difficult. Being a parent is never easy. I don't care.... Growing up, I always thought it was easy, you know? Because, I wasn't a parent. Being a kid you can do whatever you want, however you want, whenever you want. Being a parent to a kid, you can't do all those things. You have to do whatever they want, whenever they want, however they want. Life really changes when you have babies, but I love parenting him. We have our difficult days, but we have our good days.

These subcategories of fathers' perceptions indicated that fathers think about being a father and self-evaluate.

"Dads are Parents Too": Masculine Norms

Several of the fathers in this study denoted making meaning of masculinity through challenging or adhering to traditional masculine norms (*n*=45). As masculinity is socially

constructed, traditional masculine norms are shaped by the culture and context of the individual (Cochran, 2010; Levant, 2011). Of particular importance to this study was how the individual father conceptualized masculinity and his role of father. The fathers expressed their individual understanding of fatherhood as it related to their own sense of masculinity. From the fathers' interviews, viewpoints regarding the traditional father as a breadwinner and the "new father" as an engaged nurturing father were evident in the fathers' dialogues. This perception was grounded in the fathers' values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the fathering responsibilities of a man. The subcategories that emerged from this theme included (a) adherence to traditional masculine norms, (b) challenging traditional masculine norms, and (c) adherence to both traditional and new fatherhood norms.

Adherence to traditional masculine norms. Many of the fathers (*n*=17) expressed views that were concurrent with traditional masculine norms of father identity. The fathers held to the belief that the father was vital and important to the family in his role as leader, provider, or protector. The fathers who were coded in this category often felt that the father role was unique to that of the mother role. The importance of the father was signified with Zach's, Father id #35, statement, "I don't think that's how it should be. Fathers, more now, more than ever need to be the guiding influence in the child's life." Fin, Father id #4, made a statement where he said; "Even though most moms do all the work, the dads make the biggest impact and the biggest influence on a child, whether they're male or female." By acknowledging that he felt mothers do all the work while at the same time acknowledging that fathers make a big impact on children, Fin demonstrated an adherence to traditional masculine norms. He additionally stated that according to his religious beliefs, the man is "To be the head of the household."

John, Father id #6, described the father as the "disciplinarian" and "someone who's full

of character, and integrity, and does what he says, and provides for his family." Marco, Father 10, labeled his fathering roles as one to "preside, provide, and protect." These fathers spoke with pride about this traditional masculine norm of fatherhood and were working to enact these behaviors. Several of the fathers who were identified as adhering to masculine norms also had a family make-up of a working father and a stay-at-home mother. Jimmy, Father id #26 was a father that fit this family demographic. He stated, "A man's responsibility is to provide for his family, provide a roof over their head and food on the table."

Some fathers highlighted the belief that fathers provided something that was unique and different than what mothers provided children. When questioned about what he thinks fathers offer that is so special, Zach's, Father id #35, initial response was one of not knowing, but then he went on to explain:

> I think a father provides a lot of stability. Men and women are different fundamentally in a lot of different ways, and I think mothers, women are more naturally inclined to be caring and loving, which is a good thing. You need to be that way, not always, but that's how women are naturally and I think the child needs that. The child also needs his father. He needs someone who is there as more of a, I don't know, maybe a… I just picture a father being like the anchor, the foundation of the family. The one that…he's the one that's going to stand up for his family. He's the one that is going to, you know, if the kid as a problem, he's going to fix it, I guess…Not that both parents don't do that. I just picture that in my mind. Kids need both, they really do.

Cody, Father id #38, was adamant that the father had an important role to give to his children, especially to sons. He stated, "How does a kid learn how to be a man without his father?" This was specifically a salient notion to him as he grew up without a father in his life.

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Fathers remarked that participating in this study made them think more about fathering than they had before. This self-reflective remark was validating for some of the fathers who expressed their appreciation of putting a focus on fatherhood.

To some fathers, fatherhood meant sacrifice and a moral commitment to be the strong leader of your family. Randall, Father id #30, explained what "father" meant:

> Well, you can be a dad. There's a difference between a dad and a father. .. I think a dad is just somebody that's, like, "Hey, this is my kid." You know and push them to the side and move on with life or...Don't see them much. A father, I believe, you have unconditional love. I mean...everything you do for...is for your children. It's not for you. It's for your children. I mean...my job. I hate it but I go to work because it provides well for my family. The kids have everything they want. I mean, so that's my way of looking at it.

Additionally, Dan, Father id #7, highlighted the need for fathers to sacrifice and be the strong father. The traditional role of masculinity as strong and sacrificing was one that was salient to these fathers and one that they enacted as a father. Marco, Father id #10, referred to this concept as "virtuous manhood" describing it in terms of the Roman roots of the word, a "moral excellence." The fathers' descriptions of traditional masculine norms were reflective of their beliefs and contributed to how they identified as a father.

Challenging traditional masculine norms. This subcategory emerged from the fathers' (n=18) expressions challenging traditional masculine norms. Fathers who challenged traditional masculine norms expressed a desire to be more involved with their child and provided their child with emotional fulfillment. Some fathers challenged the socially constructed notion that fathers are not expected to do as much as mothers resulting in those fathers that are involved fathers

often being viewed as extraordinary fathers. Alex, Father id #22, a stay-at-home father of two, discussed his process with challenging traditional masculine norms as a father.

> I think it's also very important to let your family feel powerful at the same time, especially with these girls. Let them know that...the jig is up for me. I know that it's really women who are much more powerful and strong than men are, you know? I want these girls to grow up and know that they're in complete control and don't be fooled. I think as a dad, I guess you have to let go of your ego.

Jack, Father id #19, expressed his self-reflections regarding his father identity and the affirmations he wanted from others regarding his identity.

> I 'd want an equal voice with what's important and talking through. I don't want to feel lessened because I feel like I spend less time with her. That I don't know as much or that I don't know anything...equal voice…trust that you're capable.

> Several of the fathers expressed their frustration with the bar for fathers being set too low. Alex, Father id #22, conveyed his beliefs, "I feel like the secular world is more or less just saying if the dad even just shows up and does something that he's father of the year, which I think is depressing. I think that bar is way too low." Bob, Father id #5, agreed with this notion stating:

> I think the bar for dads, you know, I juggle a lot, the bar for dads is relatively low, or a lot lower than it is for moms. So a lot of times I do things that I don't think are that extraordinary, like I juggle my schedule to pick them up at school or something. And people will make a big deal of it. That doesn't seem like it's that remarkable an accomplishment.

Travis, Father id #16, jokingly expressed this notion of limited expectations for fathers saying:

> Just the basic...get it normalized that fathers do stuff. It's like, "oh, wow, you know how to change a diaper."… That's kind of normal, if I was doing something else you should be impressed.

Allen, Father id #27, commented throughout the interview about his frustration with masculine expectations and stereotypes. He emphasized that it was important for his children to understand that "fathers can be compassionate and be a caregiver too." In addition to how social stigma associated with being an engaged father affected him, he discussed how these stereotypes were beginning to also affect his son.

> There's a little bit of a stigma associated to taking a boy to dance class… I went there and one of the mothers was saying, "Oh just think this is so great and you're a father taking a boy to dance. I'm just glad to see this father so involved." To me, it's just what I should be doing. It's not unique or odd. It makes me feel a little weird…

Adam, Father id #29, challenged fathers to participate more. When explaining that he attended his girlfriends WIC appointments, he stated, "I think that every dad should have to do exactly what the woman does because it's fair and it teaches him that it's not just a one sided thing, it's not just a mother's responsibility." These fathers believed that the fathers' role should be held to the same standards as the mothers' role thereby challenging the traditional masculinity notion that mothers are more important and more responsible for parenting.

Adherence to both traditional and new father norms. Fathers (*n*=15) that were coded into this subcategory identified traditional masculine norms that they adhered to while also discussing how they deviated from these norms with behaviors consistent with the "new father" norms. Some of these fathers appeared to go back and forth between these two ideologies in their interview. For Dustin, Father id #25, it was important to be the supportive strong and rough

and tumble Dad, while still being the father who changes diapers and cleans the house. Adam, Father id #29, also vacillated between these two beliefs when he explained what he thought his responsibilities were:

> I think a dad should be the one, which we kind of dispute over this, but I think a man should be the one to discipline. I mean, a mother should be able to too. He should be there for his kids. Pay attention to them. A lot of fathers don't participate, like in changing diapers. To me, that's wrong. It's your child. You brought the life into the world. It's your responsibility.

Adam seemed to be self-reflexive in that he was still trying to figure out what his role as a father was. This negotiation of two seemingly conflicting ideologies may be a result of the influence of previous generations and the new changing social expectations for fathers. Adam discussed how he deals with the interference of grandparents saying " lot of people these days don't do that because they worry about what everybody thinks of them."

For some fathers, this adherence to both norms means that he has to be committed to his job while at the same time committed to caring for his child and his home. Jacob, Father id #40, shared his approach to this.

> I think their responsibility is to provide for their family, to provide for them in many other ways, supporting his wife and raising them. It's not just, "Hey, I'm going to go to work and work all day and come home and do nothing." Your responsibility is to come home and take care of the kids, try and share the load with your wife, if she's at home all day…There's no law, there's no rulebook that says men can't make food and women have to do it every day, all day. It's a thing with me, I guess. I understand that not everybody knows how to do it.

These dual responsibilities may contribute to the multiplicity of a father's identity in that he identifies with multiple aspects of father identity including provider, protector, nurturer, caregiver, teacher, and supporter.

"Figuring it Out": Personal Motivations

Taking the time to work through and learn how to be fathers from the fathers' own personal experiences were representative of this theme (*n*=32). Several of the fathers (*n*=16) indicated that they taught themselves how to father and were "winging it." These fathers were "figuring it out" on their own. Through day to day learning as they experienced fathering, fathers made decisions and enacted behaviors based on their own experiences. Collin, Father id #36, stated:

> Uh, you just...you just pay attention. I mean, that's...and just...just spending the time, I think, is the biggest thing. You just...as you do it more and more, you start to recognize what they're...what they're trying to do. And you just catch on to what you've done in the past and see how they react to it. And it just kind of starts to fall into place. Little puzzle pieces.

A few fathers reported that fathering was just a natural instinct. Randall, Father id #30 expressed this when he explained; "I had mine when I was 17. So, I guess just, you know. I guess I just.. Honestly, I think it's a natural instinct…If you want to be a father, you can be a father." Several of the fathers in this category pointed to their cultural, religious, or personal beliefs as an influence on their parenting. As Jack, Father 19, stated:

> I'd say my religion plays a part as well. I believe in a heavenly father…I try and emulate him. Just as he has provided and protected for me and guides me I will try and do that with my daughter.

Fathers identified their own beliefs and understandings as an influence to how they identified as a father. This highlighted the importance of fathers' own individual experiences.

"Everybody Deals with Their Own Things": Intrapersonal Challenges

Throughout the interviews, several fathers (*n*=28) described multiple intrapersonal challenges. Within this theme, two subcategories emerged (a) life stress and (b) personal challenges. Fathers' self-awareness of these challenges contributed to their active reflexivity and behavior change. This reflexivity process was both explicit and implicit for many of the fathers.

Life Stress. Life stress was a category that primarily addressed financial stress and strain that the fathers expressed (*n*=14). Due to this financial stress, one father reported trying to pick up extra jobs. Another father explained that as they had more children, the number of mouths to feed increased while his income did not increase adding to financial strain. Ron, Father id #28, discussed trying to cope with the financial strain, "The only thing that really bothers me, like when I'm not working, the power…something that we can't afford and we have to borrow the money." Two other fathers described feelings of chaos and needing to "check-out" when the stress got overwhelming.

Personal Challenges. The second subcategory of personal challenges was a subcategory that was specific to each father (*n*=16). The fathers of this study provided rich descriptions of their personal lives and the personal issues that they were dealing with. These problems included mental health issues, medical concerns, past drug abuse, previous incarcerations, and homelessness. Often, the fathers reflected on these issues that were from the past, while others were still working through their challenges. Sean, Father id #9, frequently reflected on his past and current life stresses throughout his interview. He utilized these descriptions of his challenges as a justification for the manner in which he now choses to parent. For example,

when he explained that his hopes and dreams for his child was "to do something relevant" he began talking about how he disciplined his child with time-outs and "popping him." To justify his behavior, he intensely explained his past and current experiences with his family members that raised him and the difficulties he has had with his family. At one point he explained, "Yeah. I didn't grow up with parents, I didn't grow up with family. I don't even like half my family now that I'm an adult." Sean pointed to several personal challenges throughout the interview including a mental health diagnosis. Carl, Father id #18, a new father that had been incarcerated for five years, described how he struggles with his personal challenges, which affects his relationship with his girlfriend and with their children.

> That's what my woman says. She says sometimes I just shut down and I don't open myself up like I should. And I know that would help her out in the long run, too, but if I opened up and showed my stress a little bit more than what I do... Everybody deals with their own things…You know, if I get frustrated or let something get to me to the point where I'm twisted up, I'm not going to handle it in the best.

A few of the fathers discussed their challenges with contact and custody of their other children. These issues greatly affected their own stress and ability to father the way that they wanted to. Ron, Father id #28, expressed his frustration with having limited contact with his older daughter who was having mental health difficulties stating, "I wish I could be there but…. she won't let me see them." Adam, Father id #29, described his challenge in trying to maintain contact with his older children, "I've tried working things out with her so we can get on, like, an agreement because we had a custody order and she had broke it. I really didn't... I didn't really have the money at the time to just take her to court." Not being able to be the father he wanted to be to some of his children while being a good father to his current child caused personal

stresses and challenges within some of the fathers. These personal challenges overflowed into their fathering identity and behaviors.

Interpersonal Domain

The interpersonal domain is representative of the interpersonal relationships that fathers experience. Interpersonal relationships have an influence on identity development (Doherty et al., 1998). Fathers engage with their social context, which can have an influence on their beliefs, values, and cognitive processes that contribute to identity development. Influences from family, kin, and friends can contribute to a father's identity through role-modeling and through interpersonal interactions. Specifically, the father's coparent can influence his identity through both supportive and unsupportive processes. Within this domain, several themes and subcategories emerged. The emergent themes of the interpersonal domain include (a) interpersonal support, (b) interpersonal challenges, (c) coparenting processes, and (d) models of fathering.

"It Takes a Village": Interpersonal Support

Social support is often seen as a factor that encourages parenting self-efficacy (Angley, 2015). This support can inspire a more salient father identity that encourages fathers (n=46) to feel confident as a father. In this study, interpersonal support emerged as a theme with two subcategories (a) family support and (b) friend support.

Family support. From this data a large number of fathers (n=41) indicated at some point during the interview that family was a source of support. This support originated from a number of family members including parents, step-parents, uncles, cousins, and siblings. Sometime this support came in the form of physically providing support such as babysitting. Fin, Father id #4, a stay-at-home dad and pastor who works from home, reported that once a week his grandmother cares for his two children. Clive, Father id #15, explained how important it was for his family to

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be there to help him with the baby. Being that his family was nearby, he received help from both sets of his baby's grandparents as well as great-grandparents.

Advice was reported as a form of support that Jimmy, Father id #26, received from his family. He talked about the benefit of having a lot of family around for advice, specifically when he spoke of their weekly family dinners that sometimes had up to 18 family members in attendance. For fathers that had a family far away, technology and travel assisted with providing the beneficial family support. Jake, Father id #8, indicated his family used technology to communicate and provide support, "we usually talk via Google Chat or Skype once a week with both sets of grandparents."   This family support was seen as a benefit for the majority of fathers. Allen, Father id #27, explained the manner in which support helped him be a better father specifically with his words "It takes a village."

> It's cliché, but it takes a village. It really does take a village. You need everybody
> coordinating…I know it's got to be hard for folks that are doing it on their own and they
> don't have that support.

While this support was perceived as assistance in caring for the baby, the support also provided a structure for the father to feel successful as a father.

Friend support. Support in the form of friends was reported by some of the fathers (n=10) that constituted the subcategory of friend support. Phillip, Father id #23, also used the term "it takes a village" in his description of the many friends that he engaged with at the playground, his child's preschool, and who visited him at home. He explained, "Oh, it's positive, because I don't have to be at home all the time. It takes a village, right? It's good." Ben, Father id #3, described how he and his friends supported each other as parents by providing babysitting services to each other every other weekend.

This friend support also came in the manner of hanging out with each other to watch television or play games with adults. This social support provided an outlet for fathers that sometimes just needed time alone with friends to reenergize and feel supported as a father. This time with friends can be an important aspect of a father's identity. Support from friends was not reported to include advice or an opportunity to talk about their fathering experience. This is an aspect that is often a part of mother support groups that may be not be present in these interviews as none of the fathers reported being a part of a father support group.

"It's a Little Stressful Sometimes": Interpersonal Challenges

The theme interpersonal challenges (*n*=35) emerged with two prominent subcategories (a) parenting challenges and (b) extended family difficulties. Coparenting dynamics while having the potential to be an interpersonal challenge was separated in this analysis into a distinct theme of coparenting dynamics.

Extended family difficulties. The father's extended family was a source of stress and challenge for many fathers (*n*=28), which is represented in this subcategory, extended family difficulties. A majority of the fathers discussed the challenges associated with parents, grandparents, and siblings inserting their opinions and telling the father how to parent. This difficulty was often described as not an intense difficulty, but rather a difference in opinion that the father had to just tolerate. As Clive, Father id #15, stated, "The unsolicited advice is probably what makes it the most difficult out of everything, because I've got all these people that want to help and are willing to help and support, but meanwhile they all want to give their advice. It's a little stressful sometimes." Previous generations have certain beliefs or traditions that can conflict with the information that is available to the current generation. Alex, Father id #22, explained his experiences with this advice.

Sometimes bad advice. We have a grandparent who's very against swaddling or sleeping on the back like, "In my day, the kids slept on their stomach." We try to explain this is where they go but they don't...they just..."Oh, that's just research. Research can say anything," which is insulting. To us, research is...

This challenge can either support a father's identity or lead to questioning and uncertainty about their identity. In Alex's, Father id #22, case, he was identifying as a good father when he was utilizing research to make his fathering decisions.

Some of the fathers reported that their families lived farther away in another state. These fathers reported challenges with not having family near to help care for their children. Charlie, Father id #32, expressed these frustrations when talking about his desire to have his family closer.

It's different for us, because we don't have a whole lot of family here. So, we don't have, I think, as much input as I think a lot of people do when their family lives in the immediate area. So, we don't necessarily have that to rely on…

There were some fathers that reported negative interactions with extended family. These interactions were described as intrusive to the family and often stemmed from past negative interactions and even an abusive childhood. For instance, Sean, Father id #9, described an intense interaction with his own mother, "and I was like… I called my mom, I said, 'How much Mountain Dew do you give my damn kid?' and I was mad."

While some fathers continued to interact in a negative manner with their family, others choose to withdrawal from these negative interactions. As Adam, Father id #29 stated, "I don't have anything to do with most of my family except for my sister and my mom. And that's about it." Three fathers, each with a family history of incarceration, made attempts to withdrawal from their families to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Tom, Father id #14, indicated:

Then, that's when I said, "I need to clean my act up." My sister, she's locked up now.

My sister's doing eight years. And then, my second oldest brother, he's doing 11 years.

So, it's a cycle that has to stop, you know? I told myself, "It can start here with me,"…

Even though removing himself from his family and his family dynamics was seen as a positive by these fathers, by withdrawing from these interactions, the fathers also lose a potential source of support from his extended family members.

Parenting challenges. The first subcategory, parenting challenges, was reflective of the fathers' reports of challenges involving their children and the parenting of their child or children. Several fathers (n=22) had issues or concerns about their children's health or development. Fathers described their situation as "stressful" or "nerve-wracking." These health concerns can cause daily concern and worry as in the father Leo, Father id #33, whose daughter was born premature and diagnosed with hydrocephalus. His daughter received in home health visitations and took many trips to doctors. She also spent several months after birth in the hospital and had six blood transfusions and two brain surgeries. Leo spoke highly of his daughter's strength and talked about how he works with her to encourage her physical development. These parenting stresses can contribute to the fluidity of a father's identity based on the current needs of the child. Jack, Father id #19, explained how he limited his interactions with friends and family due to his daughter's health concerns and worry that she will get sick. He discussed how he had begun withdrawing from his church community, a sense of support to him, due to his fear of her getting sick. Worrying about a child's health can be a mental strain for fathers. Jordan, Father id #37, explained that his children were both diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He stated, "So, we are all the time, concerning about their behaviors, and sometimes hard to see them, that they don't behave like us. Not like normal, but like most of the children does." This strain was one

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that affected Jordan's daily experiences, which contributed to the complexity of his father identity.

Seven fathers with more than one child pointed to the challenge of caring for other children and the challenges involved in meeting everyone's needs. As Jacob, Father id #40, stated "He can make it difficult because he's at an age now where he's talking a lot, wants a lot of attention. Sammy has a big personality, so when he's screaming over something and then Jimmy, who's this little baby screaming at the same time, you're split between the two if you're on your own, so that can be a little bit stressful and hectic." This busy time with caring for multiple children can contribute to the father worrying about not giving the new child the attention that he wants to give to the child. This contributes to the fluidity of the activities and caregiving of fathers as children grow and new children become a part of the family. Bob, Father id #5, worried, "Not because she's a baby, but because she's the third one, and so it can be tougher to be patient and sometimes, I worry that I'm not devoting as much attention to her as I did for the first two".

"It's a Team Effort": Coparenting Processes

The coparenting processes theme (*n*=50) emerged with four subcategories (a) positive coparenting processes, (b) challenging coparenting processes, (c) parenting decision-making processes and (d) maternal management behaviors. The coparenting process is a critical interpersonal process of the family. The fathers' appraisals of these processes contribute to his evaluations of how he perceives the coparenting dynamics. All of the fathers in this study identified one coparent that identified as the mother.

Positive coparenting processes. Almost all of the fathers (*n*=47) identified the existence of positive coparenting processes with their coparent. Several fathers highlighted that the

coparents worked together as a team to parent their child. David, Father id #11, described this teamwork process:

> I'd like to say we work very well together. Be it tasks around the house, we know what each other likes to do. I mean, there's always some friction in any relationship. But at the same time, I like to say we try to be patient with each other. And we know where each other messes up, and we try to work through it.

While acknowledging that he and his coparent may encounter challenges, they still worked together for the benefit of their child. Several fathers confirmed the need for teamwork for the benefit of the child. An appreciation of the coparent was expressed by several of the fathers. As Harry, Father id #30, said, "Got to thank her for her amazingness." The amount of support that each coparent gave each other was stated as an important piece of this positive appraisal. Alex, Father id #22, described this support:

> I feel supported...just that I feel respected by her. I feel like we both support each other's roles in life right now very well. I think that's important that neither one is resenting what the other is doing, or not supporting what the other is doing. I think we're in a pretty good place with feeling mutually supported, aside from the obvious times with three kids where you get tired and just snap at each other for no reason.

Dustin, Father id #25, discussed how his wife's support was meaningful to him and helped him in his development.

> My wife is already successful. She's already kind of completed her professional goals and I…Well, she supports me at this…Well, she's like, "I'm glad that you're trying this and you're going for this." It doesn't always feel like… Always feel a little bit less, a little bit…just like I'm not there yet. And I feel like I'm left behind a little bit sometimes.

These descriptions of support, endurance, appreciation, and caring all contributed to this positive coparenting process. The coparents appraisal and support of the father impacted their feelings about their identity as a father. This more positive appraisal of the coparenting processes can lead to a more positive perception of the father's identity as a father.

Challenging coparenting processes. About half of the fathers (*n*=22) expressed challenging coparenting processes. Several of these challenging processes were due to the stress involved with trying to balance parenting with the coparent. In discussing the difficulties in fathering, Travis, Father id #16, indicated:

I don't know. It may be with my wife, that dynamic sometimes, that may be it sometimes. It's not knowing her feeding schedule as well as she would know it.

Jillian, Father id #24, explained how the communication processes of his relationship with his coparent could end with a negative result.

I feel like the biggest problem with relationships, and our relationship is communication and there's not enough of it. It's not easy, and you can't even explain to each other what's going on…Just the lack of communication, I guess, and it's on both ends. I believe it's my fault, and sometimes it's her fault.

When the coparents disagree on parenting decisions and choices, it can lead to more challenging interactions and negative appraisals of a father's identity as a father. Phillip, Father id #23, described how he and his coparent disagreed on multiple aspects of parenting including religion and discipline. Jillian, Father id #24, discussed how he disagreed with the sleeping arrangements with his infant. He stressed how they both came from different backgrounds and explained the difficulty with negotiating with each other on the way to parent. For some fathers this disagreement in parenting led to undermining behaviors. Ron, Father id #28, described his

frustrations with these undermining behaviors, "sometimes I'll tell them they can't do something, then she's done told them they can, something like that." Bob, Father id #5, explained how these processes contribute to his feelings of lack of support. "When she, so she, like me, has a short fuse, so when she blows up at me in front of the kids, then I feel not supported." These challenging coparenting processes affect the father and contribute to his overall fathering experience and perceptions.

Parenting decision-making processes. The subcategory parenting decision-making processes (*n*=50) emerged from the fathers' descriptions and explanations concerning primary caregiving, parenting duties, and management of parenting roles, needs, and expectations. In regards to the primary caregiver, the parent who identified as the stay-at-home parent also identified as the primary caregiver. Amongst the fathers who were interviewed, four fathers identified as stay-at-home parents and an additional five fathers identified as the primary parent even though they worked. Several of the fathers (*n*=22) identified their wife as the stay-at-home parent. Three fathers, whose coparent worked full time, identified their coparent as the primary caregiver. Eleven of the fathers indicated that they served as the primary parent on the weekends and evenings. Jimmy, Father id #26, explained, "I know having the kids every day, all day, all the time, it's real hard on her. I try to, when I wake up every day, to care for them as much as I can. On the weekends, I try to watch them a little bit more than what I do."

Seven of the fathers indicated that both the parents participate equally as primary caregivers. Matt, Father id #21, described how he and his coparent worked opposite schedules and managed the child care. The decision making in caregiving often revolved around the families' schedules. In some families, this involved one parent dropping off the child at child care and the other picking the child up from child care. These child care decisions were made

through communication of each others needs, roles, and expectations as was parenting decisions. Alex, Father id #22, explained how his coparent makes the primary decisions and he does the hands on work of parenting. "She does that more macro level stuff since I just have too much going on at work to do that." Glen, Father id #31, pointed to making parenting decisions together with his coparent based on their knowledge of the child's needs. He explained, "And so, we…both my wife and I filter advice pretty well. We just...we feel like we've got a good understanding of her right now, and so we can do that a little easier."

Some of the duties of parenting fell towards the mom due to breastfeeding. This was specifically prominent during the nighttime feedings. Travis, Father id #16, described how it is just easier for the mother to get up to breastfeed. "I would say I have to take a backseat to my wife because of the whole breast-feeding thing." Some fathers, as Allen, Father id #27, indicated, participated at night by bringing the baby to the mother.

A majority of the fathers explained how they worked together with their coparent in sharing duties. Tasks involved in child care duty sharing included juggling duties, assigning roles, splitting duties, and completing daily routines together. Diego, Father id #1, described in detail how he and his coparent shared duties.

> I think it's just kind of a breakdown. It's sharing the responsibilities, sharing the duties of parenting, I guess. It's just making sure, you know, if one person's cooking, that the other person's with him, and keeping him engaged and keeping him happy and everything like that…so it's just splitting up the duties as much as you can.

Some of the fathers actually gave a number to the shared duties. For example, Fin, Father id #4, offered a percentage of 51/49 split with 51% being his share of the duties, whereas John offered a percentage of 60/40 with 40% being his share. David, Father id #11, explained how he and his

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coparent diligently work to equally saying, "My wife and I split it fairly evenly." The fathers often used logic to explain who takes care of the child and the child care duties. Ben, Father id #3, explained it as an assigned division, "Here's your role; here's my role."

Maternal management. The final subcategory that emerged was maternal management (*n*=18). Several fathers (*n*=16) described coparenting behaviors that were consistent with maternal management processes. What stood out in this data analysis were the maternal management behaviors that were positively perceived and even encouraged. There were a few instances of negative management behaviors that criticized the fathers parenting and managed the fathers' participation in child care. Sean, Father id #9, expressed his frustration with these criticisms and control stating, "She just comes home and she's like, 'What did you do all day?' and I was like, 'This, this, this, this, this, this.' She's like… 'I could have done that in, like, two hours.'"

Samuel, Father id #42, described how he changed his participation in parenting based on these maternal management processes.

> I've stopped changing her at night, though. We use cloth diapers, and I apparently don't always put them on in the perfect...whatever...angle, so then, they leak at night. I used to change her at night a lot, and then demoted to only daytime changing.

The positive maternal management behaviors that the fathers spoke about were considered as desired or appreciated by the fathers. For instance, when describing how he works with his coparent, Bob, Father id #5, stated, "I can't be overloaded with too much information at once, so my wife will, sort of, parcel out things as she sees areas where I did something well, she'll note it. If there's an area where it could be a little bit different, she'll point out ways that would be appropriate, too." Jake, Father id #8, also expressed his appreciation of these

management behaviors, "She just tells me what to do, right? And I love that bottle, right, it's like, I will do everything you want me to do, just tell me how you want it, and I will do it." Marco, Father id #10, gave his coparent the title of "manager." Jack, Father id #19, also appreciated when his wife managed his time for him. Randall, Father id #30, described how his wife calls him several times a day to be sure that he is sticking to her schedule. He described in detail one of their typical phone conversations.

> "What's Samantha doing?" "Feeding her." "Well, she should've done been done eating. It's 9:45." "Well, I got started a little bit late because I was sidetracked at doing this."
>
> "Randall, you know you gotta stay on track."

While these behaviors would all be considered maternal management behaviors, the fathers considered these behaviors to be helpful rather than negative or constraining behaviors. Both negative and positive maternal management processes have an impact on the fathers' identity and how they view themselves as a capable father.

"I Didn't Do It In a Vacuum": Models of Fathering

The models of fathering theme (*n*=49) emerged from the participants' discussions of who taught them how to father in addition to the relating of stories and scenarios of influences of their parenting beliefs and behaviors. Within this category, four subcategories emerged (a) father of origin positive influence, (b) father of origin negative influence, (c) kin influences, and (d) other fathers' influences. These subcategories were reflective of the fathers' conscious thoughts about how they viewed fathering and where those views came from. Fathers internalized these influences by modeling the same behaviors or making an active choice to divert from modeled behaviors. These fathers often indicated that they were influenced by more than one of these identified individuals. These multiple influences signify the numerous ways that fathers are

taught how to be a father. Only one father communicated that he was not influenced by anyone in his fathering. Meaning making of the fathers' experiences or lack of experiences contributed to the fathers' thoughts, ideas, and behaviors of fathering.

Father of origin positive influence. Over half of the fathers reported that they had learned how to be a father from their positive experiences with their father (n=38). These fathers had good memories of their father often recounting in-depth stories of how their father displayed the characteristics that they believed made them a good father including being supportive, a provider, hardworking, patient, and always there. Their fathers' served as a role-model for themselves as one father David, Father id #11, stated:

> He has always been in my life... just by his example. He never sat down and said, "Okay, this is what you need to do when you're a dad." It was more just, especially looking back and even now, just the way I see he lives his life. It's okay. If I could be half the dad he is, that would be fine, in every aspect.

The fathers explained how they made meaning of these experiences and reflected on how to emulate their own father as a parent. Ben, Father id #3 affirmed, "So, I try and think about: 'How would my dad respond to these situations?' and, 'What are some of the things that he would do?'" This active reflection on how their father parented thereby influenced their father identity and the way that they choose to father their child.

Father of origin negative influence. In considering his own fathers' influences, a number of fathers explained that how they parent is due to their own negative experiences with their own father (n=12), often citing that they were going to father differently than their father did. For Mark, Father id #2, his past experiences with his father created an intense negative

reaction in himself when he realized he was exhibiting behaviors similar to his own father. He expressed his battle with these experiences stating,

You know, it's a challenge because there is a lot of, I think, a lot of inherited traits. You know, certain mindsets, and I think there's a lot of the same demons that my dad had that I have and I hope that I'm handing it a little bit better, but, again, it's something that definitely colors your past.

A few of the fathers (*n*=5) reported that they did not have an active father in their life and one father explained that his father died when he was young. These fathers indicated that this lack of a father figure provided them with either no model or a negative model to follow in learning how to be a father. Being a better and more active father became important to these fathers due to their absence in having a father. One father discussed how he currently viewed fathering as important based on his experience and the experience of many of his friends who did not have a father in their lives. Tony, Father id #17, stated:

I think fathers are a very, very interesting thing. Out of all my friends growing up, I mean, very few of us had active fathers. In that role. Which I think is really, really sad, you know. Like, I look at 50 of us, and the percentage is gonna be astronomically low as far as those with fathers in the household and/or in contact with their fathers.

Kin influences. Several fathers (*n*=35) named certain extended family members as the person who taught him how to father. These family members included a variety of relations including siblings, cousins, grandparents, and in-laws. These fathers often pointed to several people in their lives that provided them with positive experiences to reflect upon in how to be a parent. A few fathers reflected on how their own mother (*n*=10) parented and how they themselves have incorporated these experiences into their fathering. Other fathers identified a

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male family member as their fathering role model (*n*=18). One father discussed how his father-in-law has been a positive role model to him and how his father-in-law has given him a "different perspective." While most of the fathers reported that they learned through their experiences and by watching these men, a father who lacked a positive father in his life spoke about how he and his brother-in-law talked about being fathers and that his brother-in-law "gives me pointers."

Other fathers' influences. Fathers (*n*=23) also indicated that watching others including friends, community members, and coworkers influenced their fathering identity and behaviors. Fathers described certain behaviors that they witnessed and utilized as a goal for themselves. These fathers often took bits and pieces from their observation of other fathers and molded that into their own father identity based on whether they thought it was a good way to parent or a way in which they did not want to parent. As Phillip, Father id #23, indicated, "I did it in fellowship with other people, so I had the opportunity to watch other fathers. So, even though I was doing the learning, I didn't do it in a vacuum."

Institutional and Sociocultural Domain

The context that the father is situated in is complex in nature and must include institutional and sociocultural factors. Using an intersectional approach provides the foundation for examining the multidimensionality of the development of identity (Harper, 2011). This analysis investigated multiple social structures and fathers interactions with these social structures as well as structures of power that exist within these contexts. The institutional and sociocultural domain consists of the following emergent themes (a) institutional support, (b) employment status, (c) community resources, (d) Appalachian cultural identities, (e) societal

masculine norms, and (f) perceptions of marginalization and discrimination. Each of these themes and subsequent subcategories described the views of the fathers of this study.

"We're Very Blessed": Institutional Support

There were several institutional supports (*n*=36) that were discussed by the fathers and emerged as themes that affected fathering. The subcategories that emerged included (a) professional support and (b) church community support. These supports provide a foundation and a source of strength that influences the fathers' experiences that thereby influence the manner in which they identify as a father.

Professional support. Professional support (*n*=30) derived from interactions with a number of professionals and social organizations. Some of the professionals identified as a support to the father included child care providers, therapists, and physicians. Allen, Father id #27, indicated an appreciation for the support that he received from his child's pediatrician and nurses when he needed support or had questions about his child.

Leo, Father id #33, commented on the support he received from therapists for his daughter. "We have a lot of doctors and, like, she has a physical therapist and occupational and speech therapist that come here...and work with her and teach us to do things with her that will help her."

Several fathers discussed professional and social organizations such as WIC, CHIP, social services, and the Ronald MacDonald house as sources of support. Adam, Father id #29, indicated that the services he received were beneficial to him as a father.

> I was actually amazed that when I went with my wife for the first time, before they give you, like, your WIC checks and everything, they set you down in this room and make you watch at least one or two videos. To me, that was really helpful.

At times of stress or need, some fathers highlighted the needed support that they received from these professional organizations. Allen, Father id #27, described his situation with his child's health and resulting support.

> We were already exhausted and worried although we didn't feel like, oh my gosh our baby is in a critical situation. We felt supported and we felt like they had it under control and we could relax enough to get rest, but if they hadn't Ronald House hadn't been there to help us out we would have had to travel back and forth and just the added stress of that would have been too much.

Church community support. Church community support was a subcategory that was discussed frequently by some of fathers (*n*=24). The support of the church community came in the form or friendship and needed social support. As Ben, Father id #3, stated, "we have a good friend support at church that will come and help us out whenever we need it." Dan, Father id #7, indicated that the teachings of his church promoted family, which he utilized as a support and strength as a father.

> Religion teaches you how to...gives you a way to live, right? That's what it means. And I think a large part of that is our church is very focused on families and the importance of them, and I feel like everything we do there helps with families.

The physical, social, and value support provided by the church was described as an influential factor for the fathers. Having like-minded fathers to associate with that also put family first was important to Cam, Father id #41.

"A Man's Job, a Man's Role": Employment Status

A majority of the fathers pointed to their employment status (*n*=48) as an influential factor of their father identity. The fathers in this study had diverse employment statuses

including full-time employment, part-time employment, self-employed, full-time student, unemployed, and intentionally unemployed. Often the fathers' employment situations were identified as a source of support that promoted their role as father. For other fathers, their employment status was seen as a challenge to their father identity. Within this theme, two subcategories emerged (a) employment status supports and (b) employment status challenges.

Employment status supports. Flexibility and understanding of family time were key points that contributed to a feeling of support for many of the employed fathers and full-time students (n=26). Tony, Father id #17, indicated that his employer's family leave policy provided him more time with his family and his fathering role. A farmer, Cam Father id #41, indicated that the flexibility of his work provided for more time with his children.

> The farming employment is actually really nice for fathering. I guess it could be the other way because sometimes it calls for 12-hour days a lot, but at the same time, the last three days, I've been able to take Kendall with me the last three or four hours of the day. So, we get to go out and check cows...

David, Father id #11, a current graduate student, appreciated the availability to be with his children when they needed him and was considering this benefit in choosing his next career.

A few fathers indicated that their employment status influenced their fathering. Ron, Father id #28, indicated that his boss is more than an employer and serves as a support to him as a father. "My bosses help me out a while, like he's pretty much a second dad to me because I've been working 16 years and…If I need anything I just call him or if I don't know how to do something or I can't figure something out…" Matt, Father id #21, a police officer explained how his experiences on the job influenced how he parents, "We've run into some rougher sides of society in that line of work. You constantly see yeah, I don't want to let my kids come up like

this, or learn these type of values, that type of thing."

Two fathers, who were both unemployed, expressed how their experience with unemployment influenced them to take this time to be with their child. As Tom, Father id #14, explained, "It's a blessing because the fact of me being out of work these last couple weeks, gives me more time with my kids."

  Employment status challenges. Several fathers (*n*=35) discussed challenges as a result of their employment status. Six of the fathers expressed challenges associated with unemployment. Clive, Father id #15, a father of a one-month old who was out of work as his previous employment was as a machinist that made parts for the coalmines. He discussed the possibility of attending the local community college to be retrained in a new career due to the limited employment opportunities for his specialty. While he expressed enjoyment of his time with his infant, he conveyed the desire to work soon for the sake of his son. "I want him to see me work as hard as his mother. I want him to see both of us work like that, and I want him to get that mentality that you've got to work for things." It was clear that being a provider and role model was an important desire attached to his father identity. The current economic context limited his ability to enact this identity. Leo, Father id #33, was also a machine operator at a different plant and had recently been laid off. He expressed his desire to provide for his family as well, "…makes me feel disappointed in myself in a way because I don't feel like I'm really supporting my family like I should." Cody, Father id #38, has a history of incarceration and currently no valid identification, which limited his ability to gain employment. He described his frustrations.

  The world doesn't support me. I don't feel supported because I don't have my own full-

    time job. I hate that…You know, I tell Callie all the time, because a man is supposed to

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provide for his family. A man's job, a man's role…what a man's role is in my eyes, is a man works full-time, takes care of all the bills, doesn't have to worry about, you know, his wife going out and paying the bills. Don't have to worry about the lights getting cut off, a man takes care of all of that. A man's going to make sure there's food on the table for his family, at the end of the day.

Cody is deeply affected in his limited ability to be a provider for his family due to the institutional factors that were preventing him from obtaining employment.

Fathers who were employed also expressed frustrations with underemployment as Samuel, Father id #42, a father of two with a degree and experience in education described. He was currently working as a transit bus driver and a bartender.

It doesn't let me father how I would like to. I have all this training that I've made sure I got in preparation, not necessarily for my fatherhood, just for the future in general, and for helping children. But now that I finally have an interest in my own children, and they're there, and they're growing up, I can't use it…My work interferes drastically with the way I would like to parent.

Several of the fathers discussed the difficulty with the demands of work that interfered with their ability to father the way they wanted to. Dan, Father id #7, discussed how the stress of his job impacted his life when he got home, "the more things weigh on your mind, and so you're less likely to take the time to put forth the effort to, you know, be a father figure." Ron, Father id #28, a physical laborer explained how his exhaustion from work affected his ability to father, "I mean some evenings I come home and I'm just wore out, I don't feel like playing or nothing like that." Alex, Father id #22, a new tenure-track professor explained how his commitment to his job and his students interfered with his ability to be the father that puts his family first, which is

what he desired. Marco, Father id #10, a graduate student who was invested in his intellectual

advancement also discussed his stress associated with his employment and status as a student.

He explained how this stress affected his fathering as he sometimes could not get out of his head

in the evenings and instead of spending time with his children, he spent time "mulling things

over" in his head. These stresses, strains, and demands of the father's job or school was a

contextual factor that impacted father identity and behavior as well as interpersonal and

intrapersonal processes.

"Love Where You Live": Community Resources

Fathers reflected on their experiences and involvement with their community (*n*=48).

The role of community can be a source of support for parents and can influence their identity.

However, having a family can also lead to a withdrawal from the community due to the new time

commitment and requirements or caring for a family. Two subcategories emerged from this

theme (a) involved in the community and (b) no community involvement.

Involved in the community. A majority of the fathers (*n*=32) indicated that they were

involved in their community. For some of the fathers, this was a way to give back to the

community and "mentor" others. Other fathers connected with the community by participating

in community-sponsored events such as parades or attending community organizations such as

the library. While for others, community involvement was as simple as taking walks with the

family within the community or going to a local park. Trevor, Father id #12, talked about how

he had been working to engage more with his community. He stated, "My wife was reading a

book about learning to love where you live, and being a part of the community is being part of it,

you know? So, we try… trying to focus on visiting places and cultural things here has helped a

ton, and I know it's helped my wife a lot." Trevor recognized that involvement with his

community resources was beneficial for not only himself, but also his family in keeping a connection to the community. Another father, Tom, Father id #14, saw his community involvement as an extension of his fathering by being a father figure to the other children in the community. He explained helping to care for the children in his neighborhood saying, "The kids there, some of them love me." Another father Travis, Father id #16, served as a coach on his son's sports teams, thereby influencing the development of other children. By being an active member of the community, the fathers that contributed to the development of other children were reinforced in their fathering identity.

No community involvement. While being a part of the community was a desired experience for most of the fathers, some of the fathers (*n*=16) reported no involvement with their community. Time commitments were the reason some fathers expressed for their lack of community involvement. Fathers were either busy with their work, school, or their own family as Jordan, Father id #37, indicated, "since the kids were born, I have restrict myself of whatever other activity." A few of the fathers (*n*=5) indicated that they desire more involvement in the community. This need to connect to the community implied that fathers envision a positive benefit to community involvement.

"Just Heritage": Appalachian Cultural Identities

The fathers of this study were currently living in an area that is identified as an Appalachian community by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Some of these fathers have lived in their community their entire lives and reported that their family had lived there for generations, while others had recently moved into the area. Within this theme (*n*=45), three subcategories emerged (a) positive identification, (b) limited identification, and (c) identified challenges. As context is important in understanding identity, this theme provided the situational

context and meaning making of this context to the participants, in order to further understand how this cultural context supported or challenged their fathering identity and behaviors.

Positive identification. A majority of the fathers (*n*=36) identified positively with the Appalachian culture. When these fathers talked about their Appalachian culture, they spoke with pride and looked at their community as a part of themselves and their family. This theme emerged for the fathers who could trace their family back to the 1700's and with the fathers who had recently moved to the area. The mountains, hiking, and wildlife was an aspect of the community that some of the fathers highlighted. A few fathers discussed their time spent hunting with friends and family as important. Four of the fathers emphasized the role of agriculture in their lives. These fathers believed that their families' commitment to agriculture developed a drive to be "self-sufficient". Three of the fathers identified with the labor industry and coal industry of the area. While all three fathers discussed the layoffs associated with these industries, they spoke of it in a proud manner. In explaining what his community meant to him, Matt, Father id #21, said:

> Just heritage. I grew up in Tennessee but then moved to the extreme southwest Virginia area in the coal country and stuff. It was the Appalachia Mountains, right in the heart of it, I guess you'd say. That's all I knew growing up was coal country, small mining towns. They'd be booming and then they'd be dormant, nonexistent.

Several other fathers discussed the small tight knit communities and emphasized how everyone is "there for each other." Fathers often talked about how they could drive by any local store in the county and would know or be related to just about everyone parked outside the store. These fathers considered this a positive aspect of their identity and a strong support for them as a parent. Clive, Father id #15, explained more about his trust with the families of the community that he

had known since he was "knee-high to a grasshopper." Clive described how the Head Start that he planned to send his infant to had been there since he himself attended. He talked about how important it was to him that the cook that had been at that Head Start for years, would be the cook serving his child.

A public, land grant, research university is located within this identified Appalachian region. Several of the fathers interviewed were associated with this institution either as students, employees, or graduates of the university. Four fathers specifically talked about the strength of the area associated with the university and surrounding small town. Cam, Father id #41, a farmer who had grown up in the area and graduated from the university described the unique strengths of being a part of this community. "I kind of have the best of both worlds…And especially with farming and working for other farmers, and, you know, I go out to Giles County or Craig County, so that's definitely some deep Appalachia out there. So, I feel like I'm a part of it and that heritage. The mountains, bluegrass music, coon hunting, microbreweries, and fiddling were identified as just some of the traditions that were talked about with pride by the fathers. These aspects of tradition and heritage were important to who they were as a father and important to how they wanted to be as a father.

Limited identification. Some of the fathers (*n*=15) indicated that they did not identify with the Appalachian culture. This lack of community identification had an influence on their identity as a father. A few of these fathers had lived in this area for years while others had recently moved to the area. Peter, Father id #34, who had recently moved here indicated while he did not feel part of the Appalachian community, he did desire a deeper relationship with the community. Mark, Father id #2, a military father indicated that he had never felt a part of the

community due to his movement in and out of communities explaining, "I don't really talk with people in the town that I grew up in. And, even then, like I moved around a lot."

Identified challenges. A few of the fathers (*n*=6) identified with challenges of the Appalachian culture. Fin, Father id #4, felt committed to personally addressing the challenge of fatherlessness he sees in his community. He explained, "I think that there are so many fatherless children, whether it's by decision or by design. That's one thing that has really hit home with me and really has a special place in my heart for this community." Dustin, Father id #25, discussed the challenge of having views and beliefs that did not fit in with the Appalachian culture and beliefs. He stated, "my wife and I tend to be more on the progressive end of the political spectrum, most of the churches or church groups are more conservative, and I mean some of those conversations get very tense." This conflict created a limited sense of community and lack of social support as well. Allen, Father id #27, spent a significant amount of time discussing the challenges associated with living in a very rural area. He described the lack of infrastructure such as limited extracurricular activities and lack of child care centers as an aspect that significantly affected him as a father and the opportunities that he wanted to provide to his child. Allen expressed concern with how the lack of resources affected his community. With these challenges, the fathers in these communities felt personally responsible for wanting to address these issues. This commitment to community is related to the pride that was identified in those who positively spoke about the Appalachian community and culture. This sense of pride or limited sense of cultural identity was influential to their identity as a father.

"You're the Tough Man": Societal Masculinity Norms

The theme, perceived societal masculinity norms, addressed the messages of masculine norms that fathers received, perpetuated, or challenged within society (*n*=11). Masculinities are

socially constructed and reorganized by men. This theme captured this process of the fathers.

While fathers held to different norms, the role of the fathers' social locations and influences were

considered.

For some fathers, the societal masculine norms were tied to social beliefs about biological

differences between men and women. Mark, Father id #2, explained masculine norms as cultural

and biological.

So, it's really trying to come up with tools where they feel that they're not at the mercy of,

and I think it's kind of a cultural thing where, if you have an infant, infants or the moms

around, or girls around, it's not just a cultural thing but a biological, women see an infant

and they melt. Absolutely melt. I see an infant, even my oldest daughter, and I was like,

"I love her. She is beautiful. She looks like an alien. Take her. Wow, that is not an

attractive baby."...There's also, I think, a different biological response.

 Cultural and biological beliefs about masculinity were evident in Jordan's, Father id #37,

relating of advice to fathers.

I think, for fathers, it's harder in the sense that I think we ask, as a man, we are more

immature, so we are more easy-going…Moms or women are more...they are not easy-

going at many things, so that's...that's hard. So, yeah, I would say for a parent, for a

father, try to...try to be willing to change…Endure as much as you can.

Jordan expressed this desire to learn more and change. Allen, Father id #27, commented on

wanting to learn more about babies due to his lack of knowledge that he had received based on

his gender.

You know I hate to go this way but most girls are trained when they're young. You play

with a baby doll, you change a diaper, you change the baby, you feed and learn. There is

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kind of that ingrained here is how you care for…There is not really that for boys per say

you know it's kind of discouraged. I know my son will sometimes because there are girls

at the babysitter sometimes he'll role play that, I think that's fine.

Later in the interview, Allen specified his beliefs regarding the role of fathers that was based on

his perception of the changes in the societal masculine norms and expectations of fathers. These

societal masculinity norms can be reinforced by a father's perceptions of himself, as was the case

for Randall, Father id #30.

My wife is so much better at it than I am…So much better at it. She can clean the whole

house...fold all the laundry...and, you know, just have everything done. In one day. And

I feel like... I guess, I don't know, I guess a female can do it...run a household better than

a male can.

Tim, Father id #39, used masculine norms to compare himself to other fathers. He explained that

he believed other people though he was a good father because he did more than most men, "I

take a lot of time. I think they see that. Because a lot of people I know, like, guys really don't

take care of their babies, like, you know... They don't do everything." By societies standards, he

was being a "good father" because he was an involved father.

Some of the fathers discussed their negotiations with societal masculine norms. Allen,

Father id #27, referred to his social context and the beliefs of his culture when he said, "I think in

our region that's hard because there is that social expectation. You're the tough man, you're

there when they are ready to start shooting things." Clive, Father id #15, discussed trying to put

the norm aside and father the way he choose to. Masculine norms and the role of societal

influences are important to consider in understanding how fathers identify as a father and enact

their familial roles.

"I Feel Oppressed": Perceptions of Marginalization and Discrimination

Reported perceptions of marginalization and discrimination (*n*=19) was a theme that

emerged from fathers' descriptions or statements of experiences with marginalization. Due to

the diverse backgrounds of the fathers that were interviewed, this theme was specific to the

father and to his intersection of multiple aspects of his social identities. The intersection of class,

race, ethnicity, education, gender, and social location was evident within this subcategory. The

fathers' social identities were multiplicative and interrelated. Perception of privilege and

oppression was understood through the analysis of their stories and their reported experiences

with power.

Social structures such as poverty and unemployment were highlighted in the interviews

of several fathers. Tom, Father id #14, told a story of how his unemployment and poverty

impacted his father involvement.

> I didn't have money to get my oldest son anything for his birthday. So, they went inside
>
> to the birthday party and stuff, and they didn't know I was outside. I sat outside the
>
> whole time; never went in there. I feel bad that I didn't want to go in there because I
>
> didn't have a present.

Eight of the fathers discussed their difficulties with social services agencies and services. Jillian,

Father id #24, who was seeking Medicaid for his children had placed an application for insurance

45 days prior and was still having difficulties with the agency and obtaining the required

documentation. In his frustrated account of his experience, he stated, "It's unfair and it frustrates

me. I feel oppressed as someone who is a small family, trying to get by."

Phillip, Father id #23, mentioned his feelings of isolation being a stay-at-home father

looking for camaraderie with other stay-at-home fathers. "I mean, it's almost all white guys of privilege. And I'm not of privilege. I'm actually poor. I get all my insurance through the ACA." This expression of isolation was in part due to the perceived marginalization of poverty. Samuel discussed his lack of medical services that he was unable to obtain due to his need for a Spanish-speaking representative for his family, specifically for his infant who was diagnosed with epilepsy.

A few of the fathers discussed their experiences with homelessness and the institutional foster care system. Cody, Father id #38, discussed his experiences with the oppression associated with these social locations.

I'm a product of my society. That was part of my learning. My dad, he grew up just like

that, he grew up in foster care, I grew up in foster care, you know! He was beaten and

abused, I was beaten and abused but that does not make it right. Where does it end?

Tom, Father id #14, discussed his experience of marginalization associated with homelessness as a youth and young adult. Tom related that his difficulties with this life of poverty, while living in a town that is considered a more affluent town in the county, affected his identity and the way that he wanted to parent his children.

Five fathers discussed their interactions with the prison system. Tom explained his experience with being incarcerated once as a youth and two more times as an adult. Carl, Father id #18, provided detail on his feelings of oppression due to his interaction with the prison system. He went on to explain that he was unable to live with his infant, his coparent, and her two other children due to his status as a felon.

Yeah. I'm a felon and they won't let me stay over at her place. So, I tried to get an

apartment...tried to get her apartment and tried to pay $600-$700 a month. I got denied

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because I'm a felon.

He further explained that his coparent currently lived in HUD housing, which did not allow individuals with a record to stay more than fourteen days out of six months. His frustration was evident when he said; "it's been hitting me hard. I'm like, 'they're really trying to keep felons just stuck where they chose to be stuck at.'" This description demonstrated the experiences that many men with criminal backgrounds experience in regards to marginalization. Due to this oppression, Carl is unable to live with his child, which limits his ability to father the way that he desires.

Three of the fathers reported negative interactions with the law that resulted in fines or court cases. Issues of class intersected with this marginalization for these fathers. For Leo, Father id #33, it was an issue of not having the money to apply for a driver's license. He was arrested, served a few days in jail, and fined for driving without a license. Sean, Father id #9, was pulled over for driving without an inspection that he reported he was unable to afford. Sean also commented on feeling targeted by a local police officer that he had many negative interactions with. This was apparent in his description of this one incident saying, "I had to go to court. I was like, Your cop's harassing me. This is the sixth time he's pulled me over in less than a month for nothing." Sean's perception of being targeted by law enforcement appeared to be a source of stress and conflict for him.

Ethnicity was a social category that led to perceptions of discrimination for a few of the fathers. Jordan, Father id #37, is from a South American country and discussed his challenges with the culture in the United States. In explaining his cultural differences, he stated, "I see many contradictory messages there, so... It is interesting, this culture, so, but for me, it's hard." Allen, Father id #27, described a situation where he felt oppressed due to his Appalachian

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ethnicity.

> We understood the discrimination there, well maybe not the discrimination that kind of
>
> harsh, but there's just kind of how people treat you when you come from a rural area, you
>
> have that accent you kind of stick out. If you come from the economic background that
>
> you come from, you stick out there.

Allen later discussed how finding a pediatrician was difficult due to this discrimination. "Just

kind of understanding that we're not ignorant, the social situation we're coming from, talking

with us and not…I don't know if it's the accent or if it's where we're coming from, but other

pediatricians have talked down to us even with the second child."

Tom, Father id #14, reported experiencing racial discrimination. His reaction to this

oppression led to one of his times in prison.

> A group of guys started yelling stuff, and then I heard them say the "N" word. So, then I
>
> said, "Uh uh."…My cousin, he runs across, and then he hits the guy. So, then we end up
>
> fighting with them, and they all ran. I got arrested. I went to jail.

One of the fathers described an incident of marginalization as a result of his gender. He

explained his situation of getting "pushback" when he chose to take paternity leave.

> Even the family leave, I wanted to take two weeks off with the baby…He was a little bit
>
> no in support of that. He wasn't going to stop me, but I could tell he was questioning me.
>
> Other co-workers there was one father that said, "Well, my wife had a C-section. I was
>
> back in three days. Why are you taking? Are you just going to kick back and enjoy?" I
>
> was like, "No, I'm going to be involved."

This theme demonstrates the intersection of the participants' social location through emphasizing

the link between the social structure and the lived experience of the father.

A Process Model of Fathering: An Intersectional Approach

From the data analysis using grounded theory methods, a conceptual model of the process of fathering emerged from this study. This model is derived from the emergent themes depicting a process of fathering resulting from the manner in which fathers process their identity, conceptualize the meaning of fatherhood, and thereby enact their fathering behaviors. From the analysis of the data of the 50 fathers situated in a rural Appalachian context, an intersectional lens contributed to the examination of the complex social processes and patterns of behavior that fathers negotiate. Utilizing the tenets of intersectionality theory provides the foundation for understanding father identity through the consideration of the complexity of multiple intersecting variables amongst social structures of privilege and oppression (Few-Demo, 2014; McCall, 2005). These variables are organized into three domains: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional and sociocultural. Thus, this model depicts a conceptualization of fathering that considers the situational context of a father within his social location, his father identity, the father's meaning making of fatherhood, and his fathering behaviors (Figure 1).

The integration of symbolic interactionism theory and intersectionality theory guided the development of this model along with the data of the participants. This process model of fathering underscores the contextual factors of the self, interpersonal relationships, and the social context of the father (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Each of these factors is integral to the grounded theory of the process of fathering and must be considered in understanding the conceptualization of the identity of the father. An emphasis is placed on the complexity of father identity. Father identity is integrative and inextricable in that fathers do not have one salient identity. Rather, father identity is a temporal and nuanced process that accounts for multiple influences and factors of an individual's social context situated in place and time. This model is a demonstration of the application of intersectionality theory to individual processes.

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The bidirectional nature of these domains and themes within these domains highlights the interplay of multiple factors in the development of the conceptualization of fatherhood. As the father constructs his meaning making of his identity, he develops his conceptualization of fatherhood. This conceptualization of fatherhood exists within a system of interactions that contribute to a father's meaning making of fatherhood. There are multiple influences that are interconnected to the father's process in developing his self-concept of fatherhood. The meaning making of fatherhood is fluid in nature and consists of a continual process that changes throughout the life course as the factors within the domains change. This conceptual model emphasized the meaning making that the father creates from his interactions with the self, others, and the social context. The meaning making of fatherhood changes based on a father's perceptions of the interactions between the factors identified within the model. As intersectionality posits, this meaning making process is complex and includes the consideration of the complexity of identity, interpersonal relationship processes, and the social interactions within the larger institutional and sociocultural forces (Few-Demo, 2014). While these forces may conflict with each other, the individual negotiates these multiple factors of his social location. The oppression or privilege that the father experiences within these social locations impacts his negotiations and meaning making process.

This process model of fathering takes into consideration the tenet of symbolic interactionism theory that proposes behavior is based on one's self-concept (Stryker, 2000). Hence, a father's conceptualization of fatherhood influences his fathering behaviors. These behaviors are understood as resulting from the individual, relational, and sociocultural processes that contribute to a father's attitudes and perceptions of fatherhood. The fathers in this study identified with multiple fathering identities that influenced their fathering behaviors. For

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example, Diego, Father 1, identified as an engaged and nurturing father. This father identity was influenced by the intersection of the multiple factors of each domain. From these factors, he developed his conceptualization of fatherhood as one in which the father is engaged and loving toward his child. Thus, as he explained, he participated in social and emotional activities and caregiving behaviors, which were consistent with a father who identifies as engaged and nurturing. This model demonstrates the process of fathering. Within this model, the data analysis of this study showed two typologies of fathers that move through this model.

Fatherhood Typologies

The third research question, how might father involvement inform typologies of fathering, guided the examination of typologies of fathering that were present in the data. The application of the process model of fathering to the data of the fathers of this study indicated that there is no one monolithic father archetype. Inspired by the VCM (Few & Rosen, 2005), I developed a new model to help identify and chart relational and situational vulnerabilities and resiliencies that were experienced by fathers. Being sensitized by my conceptual model of father identity and fathering processes, I noticed that two kinds of fathers emerged, the evolving father and the thriving father. Individuals move through this process model of fathering differently. Examining the complexity of individuals' vulnerabilities and resiliencies within select variables of the domains of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional and sociocultural within the process model of fathering highlighted the manner in which the two types of fathers move through the process of fathering.

The manner in which the multiple factors of these domains intersect to inform father identity and father involvement is the foundation for identifying the typologies of fathers (Figure 2). This model provides the foundation to acknowledge that vulnerabilities and resiliencies

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change across individuals and throughout the life course. With the knowledge that fathers are continually engaged in a process of negotiating multiple factors, it is understood that fathers will move through this model and can change their identity and involvement through the life course as their vulnerabilities and resiliencies transform. The vulnerabilities and resiliencies that fathers experience may lead to changes in a father's identity, meaning making of fatherhood, and his fathering behaviors.

In order to identify possible typologies of fathers that move within this model, the themes of the domains were scrutinized through the charting of each father. The data of the fathers was then plotted to examine the fathers' vulnerabilities and resiliencies and to assign each father a typology of evolving or thriving (Table 4 and Table 5). From this data, fathers who experienced multiple vulnerabilities with limited resiliency factors were coded as evolving while fathers with multiple resiliencies and a limited amount of vulnerabilities were coded as thriving. Each case was confirmed by a thorough re-reading of each father's transcript to confirm the assigned typology. The thriving father has multiple resilient factors including positive coparenting processes, positive engagement with community resources, and kin support. These factors contribute to his identification as father and highlight his ability to thrive as a father. Figure 3 illustrates how a thriving father may be represented in this model. A father who is identified as evolving often faces multiple vulnerabilities including negative fathering influences, personal challenges, and negative coparenting processes. This father is identified as evolving to represent the father's continued effort to be a good father despite these vulnerabilities. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the evolving father. With more supports, this father can move toward a thriving father typology. Recognition that each father is unique and will move through this

Vulnerabilities and Resiliencies Model (VRM) has implications for points of intervention and programming.

Parenting Programming

During the interview, fathers were asked about their current knowledge of child development, how they learned about child development, past parent program experiences, and their desires in a parenting program. This is representative of the fourth research question, "What would fathers living in rural Appalachia desire or want in a parenting program?" Three themes emerged from the analysis of the fathers' descriptions (a) current parenting knowledge, (b) previous parenting program participation, and (c) parenting program needs and desires. These themes are representative of the fathers' experiences as well as their thoughts about future programmatic needs or desires. Findings from these themes have implications for future research and that will inform future research and have programmatic implications.

Current Parenting Knowledge

The parenting knowledge of the fathers was coded from the father's descriptions of their current knowledge regarding caring for their child and their child's development. A number of fathers ($n=32$) described their developmental knowledge as it related to their child's development. The fathers' knowledge crossed all domains of development including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Some of the fathers related information that they were knowledgeable about caretaking activities such as diapering and feeding. For the fathers, the information was related to how their child was currently developing or how older children had developed as babies. Marco, Father 10, described his knowledge saying, "I know that babies learn very fast. Their rate of growth in their mind, in their brains, is very, very fast. I know that

it's typical for them to be crawling between six and nine months-ish...five and nine months. Or that's how ours have been."

A few of the fathers (*n*=7) presented lower developmental knowledge. This lower developmental knowledge was evident when Sean, Father 9, stated, "My family don't know nothing." Some of these fathers were unable to answer the question regarding what they knew about how their baby developed as displayed in Jacob's, Father 40, answer, "I don't really, I mean...if I sat here and talked about it, I could probably give you a couple things, but…"

The fathers also indicated the multiple sources of parenting knowledge. These sources included the internet, books, and physicians. Some of the fathers (*n*=10) described the ways that their coparent relayed information and child development knowledge. Jake, Father 8, said, "my wife has been very good about instructing me about all that kind of stuff." Ron, Father 28, described how his coparent provided him with information. "Her mostly. She'll read it and then explain it to me." The fathers described these interactions in a positive light and trusted their coparent to provide them with the appropriate information. While the fathers described the multiple ways in which they learned about their child, some fathers described their experiences with parenting programs.

Previous Parenting Program Participation

When asked about participating in a parenting program, several fathers (*n*=27) described some type of parenting program. Sixteen fathers reported never participating in any type of parenting program. The majority of the fathers (*n*=18) described taking a prenatal class at the hospital before the birth of their child. Jack, Father 19, described his participation in a prenatal birth class. "We did take a birthing class at our birth center. That was really good. Talked about the bare necessities. That was probably what I got the most out of." A few fathers (*n*=6)

described taking a safety class or health and nutrition class. Only three fathers reported participating in an in-home parenting program, all of which was offered by the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Some of the fathers reported limitations and barriers to participation in these programs. For instance, Jillian, Father 24, expressed his feelings that the program was really not targeted toward fathers. "I feel like it was more focused on the mother, more mother-focused, which makes sense to me. It really does. Again, she is the primary caregiver and she should have the most support for having to be a good mother. I don't necessarily feel like I was looked over as a father, but sometimes I felt like something didn't apply to me and it didn't matter." Other fathers indicated that they were happy with some of the components of these programs as seen in Jack's, Father 19, statement, "I liked how real the nurses were. It wasn't just a class with a PowerPoint. It was experiences and the way a baby wants this or why a baby does that. And all of the what's to expect and what to plan for." This theme represented the fathers' level of participation and feedback from their program participation.

Parenting Program Needs and Desires

A topic that the fathers enthusiastically answered was their ideas regarding programs to help dads be the best dad they want to be. Within this theme, information was given regarding desired programming components, knowledge, and potential limitations. A majority of the fathers ($n=43$) provided feedback on the program components that they believed should be a part of a parenting program for fathers. Some of these suggestions were practical in nature such as "snacks for Dad" and "quick" information. While other fathers focused on the need for these programs to be current with "real world scenarios" and "practical" information. Fathers also indicated the desire to have programs where they could bring their child with them so that they

could spend time with their child and learn about their individual child. Dan, Father 7, expressed this when he stated, "Honestly, I think with dads, sometimes it would be nice to have kids and to do stuff, like, and have hands on training. Just like collaborative dad support groups with kids, I think, would be actually pretty cool." Finally, another idea that was articulated was the desire to have a network of other fathers. Ben, Father 3, passionately described his desire for a father network. Hearing directly from fathers about what they need and desire in a parenting program can be beneficial to current and future program developers. These themes are informative for future research to explore the specifics of parenting program essentials for fathers.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

From this examination of fathering in a rural context of Appalachia, the results of this study extend current conceptualizations of father identity and father involvement toward a process model of fathering that utilizes dimensions of intersectionality to inform the process of fathering for diverse fathers in a specific social context. The novelty of my approach to examine the stories of fathers resulted in a process model of fathering that allows the researcher to pay attention to interactions within and between themes of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional and sociocultural domains. These three domains intersect in such a way as to inform how a man develops a father identity, assigns meaning to his experience of fatherhood, and enacts the behavior of fathering over his life course.

In this section, the results of this study are discussed utilizing the grounded theoretical model of the process of fathering. The constructs of father, fatherhood, and fathering are utilized to extend current understandings of father identity and father involvement. In addition, a look at how two typologies of fathers within a rural context move through this process is discussed. Lastly, implications for family strengthening and fathering programs and policies are presented along with limitations and future directions of this study.

A Process Model of Fathering: An Intersectional Approach

Considering the themes of the process model and the typologies of fathers, this study contributes to the literature by confirming previous research on identity processes and extending research by challenging the current conceptualizations of father identity and father involvement toward an intersectional process model of fathering within a specific social location. Grounded in an intersectional lens, the notion of distinct specific types of father identity is challenged to expand to a view of father identity as multiplicative and complex. An intersectional approach provides the foundation for understanding father identity as a process and allows for the

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complexity and multiplicity of identity (Crenshaw, 1991; Few-Demo, 2014). Multiple domains and multiple factors within the identified domains influenced how the fathers identified as a father in this study. As the fathers were all located within the rural context of Appalachia, the complexity of this group from an intracategorical perspective revealed multiple influences on father identity that existed across the categories of the group as represented in the emergent themes of this study including the Appalachian cultural identities and perceptions of discrimination (McCall, 2005). Due to the differing race, class, and educational statuses in this group, an intercategorical approach was utilized to examine the differences within the social categories. For example, fathers who reported having an income below the poverty level were more likely to report challenging interactions within the emergent themes and subcategories. The intersection of social categories as well as the privilege and oppressions associated with these categories contributed to the complexity of the process of fathering confirming the literature that emphasizes the need to account for social systems and inequalities in understanding family processes (Few, 2007). Father identity, fatherhood, and father involvement are unique and different constructs and are each represented in the results of this study (Marsiglio et al., 2002). Each of these three constructs is discussed in the following section.

Father: Father Identity

This study conceptualizes identity as an active complex process that is fluid and multiplicative as interactions between factors within intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional and sociocultural domains fluctuate. Father identity has been investigated through the lens of identity theory in multiple studies in the past (Marsiglio, 1991; Pasley et al., 2014). Researchers investigated father identity using different operationalizations of the construct of identity including self-perceptions, role centrality, and identified commitment. As several

studies employ these different measurements for investigating father identity, the manner in which father identity is conceptualizing is not consistent across all studies (Pasley et al., 2014). These inconsistencies of measurement across studies provide a lack of a clear definition and understanding of father identity. Along with these inconsistencies, within the research, fathers are primarily categorized based on their salient identity as one type of father (i.e. provider, protector, nurturer, part-time father) (McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014; Rane & McBride, 2000; Trolio & Coleman, 2012). This study challenges the notion that the father has a unique and distinct identity and father involvement behavior. Father identity is multiplicative and complex, challenging the monolithic father identity as breadwinner or "new father." Moreover, the meaning making of fatherhood is an active self-reflective complex process that must take into account multiple vulnerabilities and resiliencies in a fathers social context utilizing an intersectional theoretical lens. Finally, researchers and practitioners must move beyond the conceptualization of father involvement toward the conceptualization of fathering that takes into account the process of fathering using an intersectional approach. As the results of this study indicate, father identity is not monolithic. Conversely, conceptualization of father identity is a process that should acknowledge the intricacies and complexity of the inextricable factors that interact to form the multiplicity of father identity.

This multiplicity of father identity may be due to the shifting social standards for fathers. While previous generations of fathers were socially expected to be the breadwinner of the family, recent research has emphasized the standard of the "new father" (Banchefsky & Park, 2016). Contemporary research has examined father identity in order to categorize fathers into the "new father" type as one who is more nurturing and engaged as well as adhering to more egalitarian beliefs (Eerola & Huttunen, 2011). This study challenges this notion of "new father" as a

distinct category of one specific type of father. Collette, Vercel, and Boykin (2015) indicated that the roles associated with the "new father" were ambiguous leaving fathers with an indistinct understanding of the identity standards for the nurturing father and limited role enactment. As this study indicates, this apparent disconnect between identity and behavior can be due to the complexity of father identity in that fathers may not adhere to one identity category. Fathers can hold to traditional standards of identity as the provider and protector while at the same time adhere to the standards of the "new father" of nurturer. In this study, a majority of the fathers appeared to adhere to traditional standards of fatherhood when they identified as being the leader and protector of the family, while at the same time seemed to be engaged in "new father" standards when they discussed participation in caregiving activities and "loving" interactions. Evidence of this complexity that leads to the multiplicity of father identity was also present in fathers' negotiations of masculinity.

The results of this study indicate the need to consider multiple masculinities that are influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and institutional influences. Masculine norms are influenced by culture and context with individuals meaning making of masculinity through interactions with their social context (Levant & Richmond, 2007). The plurality of masculinity, masculinities, refers to the construction of the dimensions of masculine norms that are situated within multiple contexts both in place and in time leading to multiple masculinities (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). The complexity of the negotiation of masculinities along with father identity and father behaviors was present in this study as fathers both adhered to traditional masculine norms while at the same time challenged these norms. The image of the traditional father and the "new father" is far more complex and exists as a self-reflexive fluid process that takes into account negotiations of masculinities. In this study, fathers often reflected

on their role as a father in terms of masculine norms. Some of fathers challenged masculine norms and others identified as adhering to masculine norms. The number of fathers that adhere to traditional masculine norms in this study is consistent with previous research that found fathers within a rural context were more likely to confirm more traditional masculine norms (Creighton et al., 2015). Moreover, about one-third of the fathers in this study both indicated identifying with masculine norms at the same time as challenging these norms. This was often exhibited in several interview segments in which fathers contradicted themselves as they discussed their perceptions of their responsibilities as a man vacillating between traditional masculine norm statements and statements that were congruent with more "new father" norms. These findings confirm previous research that indicated that the manner in which fathers negotiated masculine norms was a complex process that influenced parenting behaviors (Doucet & Lee, 2014).

The manner in which fathers perceive masculine norms is indicative of their meaning making of father identity. Fathering is socially constructed. For example, maintaining an adherence to a traditional masculine norm can be considered a strength if it is perceived as congruent with a father's identity. Walker and McGraw (2000) called for an awareness of implicit and explicit biases regarding the ideology of "responsible fathering". These biases including: ideology that believes fathers are vital to child development, only biological fathers are important, mothers are responsible for constraining or promoting father involvement, marriage is important for promoting responsible fathering, and fathers financial support is critical, all contribute to the belief that there is one type of preferred fathering. However, there is no one preferred definition of responsible fathering. Responsible fathering may be providing financial resources to the child for one father while it may mean staying home to care for their child to

another father. This was evident in this study, as fathers described a man's role of fathering with differing definitions (i.e. provider, nurturer, teacher, protector, caregiver) and performed the behaviors of fathering in manners that were consistent with their own definition of a man's responsibility as a father. For some of the fathers in this study, their masculinities were tied to their identification of thier rural Appalachian identity. Some fathers reported this identity of rural Appalachia as being a protector and a self-efficient man. These fathers expressed their desire to protect and provide for their child. However, some fathers also combined this masculine identity with one of "being there" for their child through nurturing and caregiving behaviors. Fathers participated in the negotiation their masculinities, which influenced their multiplicity of father identities. It was evident that the fathers of this study participated in a reflective process of negotiating masculinities as it pertained to their identity as a father. The complexity of this process needs to be taken into consideration when seeking to further understand the apparent multiplicity of father identity as seen in the fathers of this study.

In addition to the negotiation of masculinities and roles, the father identity process is further complicated by the interacting factors within a father's context. A father's social context influences his father identity, as fathering is socially constructed (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998). Personal challenges both past and present can alter a father's path and goals as he enacts his father identity. Identity is known to be stable throughout life, however the structure of identity can be altered due to life events (Dryer, 2005; Roy, 2006). Several of the fathers that identified with personal challenges (e.g. incarceration, financial strain), processed the manner in which these events altered the structure of their identity, highlighting both the fluidity as well as the multiplicity of father identity.

Just as mothers' identity should not be conceptualized as an either or of breadwinner or nurturer, neither should fathers' identity be conceptualized as breadwinner or nurturer. As previous research has viewed maternal identity as complex and an integration of the identities of provider and nurturer, this study emphasizes that fathers also identify with multiple aspects of father identity that must be viewed as integrated and inextricable (Ladge & Greenberg, 2015). Due to the complexity of family processes and negotiations of social norms, this study confirms previous theorizing that father identity should not be conceptualized as monolithic and as different than that of mothers and inversely should be viewed as multiplicative and fluid (Fagan et al., 2014). This fluidity and multiplicity of father identity contributes to the processes that fathers make meaning of in order to conceptualize their meaning making of fatherhood.

Fatherhood: Meaning Making of Fatherhood

This study highlights fathers' participation in active self-reflexivity and negotiations of complex interactions within the fathers' social context, vulnerabilities and resiliencies, in order to process the meaning making of fatherhood. Previous father identity literature has emphasized identity as the meaning making of a father's social interactions and roles that are enacted (Adamson & Pasley, 2013). In this study, fatherhood is conceptualization as father role identity that develops from an interactional process of a father's intrapersonal, interpersonal, sociocultural, and institutional relational space. Pasley and colleagues (2014) emphasized the gap in the current literature in assessing the role of internal processes that are influential to identity. From their review of the father identity research, Pasley and colleagues (2014) recommended that future research consider the process of identity for fathers that considers multiple contextual factors and the interactional processes of these factors. As exhibited in this study, this process exists as a father's active self-reflection and negotiation of intersecting

influences, vulnerabilities, and resiliencies, which contribute to their frame of fatherhood. This study emphasizes that this meaning making consists of a transactional process that considers an intersectional approach to represent the process and meaning of fatherhood.

Fatherhood takes into consideration the fathers' negotiations of identities, masculinities, interpersonal relationships, and cultural norms. Contextual changes in an individual's life can affect a father's meaning making of their identity reinforcing that identity is a fluid process that is altered by multiple factors (Pasley et al., 2014). This study highlighted these contextual factors as vulnerabilities and resiliencies. In using an intersectional approach, the power that is associated with these interactions and meaning making of the multiple factors within the three domains highlights the need to consider the privilege and oppressions that can be associated with these vulnerabilities and resiliencies. Interactions amongst fathers' social relationships can influence fathers' identity. Previous interactions with a father's father of origin often have a strong influence on a father's identity (Long et al., 2014; Roy, 2006). This influence was evident in this study as almost all of the fathers related with the manner in which their father parented and believed that this model was a primary influence on the way they currently father. In this study, fathers often described this experience as a positive experience with the fathers wanting to emulate the way that their father parented. The vulnerability of negative interactions with a father of origin can also affect a father by contributing to his meaning making process of identity and providing the father with a model that he does not want to emulate (Roy, 2006).

In addition to family interactions, the coparenting relationships of the fathers were highlighted as an important factor that influenced this process of fathering. Even amongst a diversity of partnering situations (i.e. married, cohabitating and single), the fathers were influenced by the interactions with their coparent and the coparents' perceptions of their

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parenting confirming previous literature that emphasized the coparent perceptions of fathering as a key influence to father identity (Isacco, Garfield, & Rogers, 2010; Shoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008). The role of maternal gatekeeping behaviors in critiquing fathers' roles and behaviors was evident in this study. Maternal gatekeeping has been defined as those attitudes and behaviors of the mother that can influence the extent of involvement bythe father (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, & Sokolowski, 2008; McBride et al., 2005). In this study, fathers described their perceptions of maternal management processes that are consistent with the literature that identifies these management behaviors as maternal gatekeeping. While a few of these interactions were described in a negative manner, a number of fathers viewed gatekeeping behaviors as a positive interaction that they did not perceive as negative. A limited amount of research has recently begun to highlight maternal gatekeeping behaviors as positive behaviors; however, these are described as a behavior that encourages and facilitates father involvement (Puhlman & Pasley, 2013; Fagan & Cherson, 2017). The fathers in this study recalled moments of control or critical assessment of their parenting that these fathers perceived as warranted and acceptable. The terms "gate-closing" and "gate-opening" have beenidentified as aspects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors that either inhibit or facilitate father involvement (Schoppe-Sullivan, Altenburger, Lee, Bower, & Kamp Dush, 2015). This study's results highlight the complexity of maternal gatekeeping in that maternal gatekeeping is more complex than simply constraining or promoting father involvement. Maternal gatekeeping can be considered a *maternal management processes* that is perceived by the father as warranted and desired. The understanding of the processes involved in the role of maternal management in this study emphasizes the need for further investigation and identification of positively perceived maternal gatekeeping behaviors that facilitate father identity and fathering behaviors. Another

consideration to take into account is the father's status of privilege in his family as fathers often hold a place of authority within families (Walker & McGraw, 2000). Power status in a family is both contextual and relational that is influenced by power balances where the most powerful is not aware of their power position (Knudson-Martin, Huenergardt, Lafontant, Bishop, Schaepper, & Wells, 2015). Another consideration is the impact of institutional and societal marginalization that some men may experience. For example, a father in this study experienced both racial discrimination as well as institutional marginalization during his time in prison. As this study highlighted the self-perceptions of men, the fathers may not recognize the power that men hold within a family due to their gender or the impact of institutional and societal marginalization or privilege that they may experience. Power balance can impact perceptions and enactment of maternal gatekeeping behaviors. The manner in which fathers reflected on these coparenting processes and behaviors impacted their meaning making and conceptualizing of fatherhood.

Evidence that fathers participated in active self-reflections is consistent with previous research that emphasized the importance of taking into account fathers' perceptions in the development of fathers' identity (Long et a., 2014). These results confirmed that fathers make active choices to alter their situations in order to enact their perception of their identity. The fathers of this study reflected on their fatherhood and presented with a self-evaluation of their fathering as was found in previous qualitative research that found men's conceptualization of fatherhood to be an individual perception based on their own experiences (Williams, 2008). The meaning making process of fatherhood is constructed from the perception of fathers, which highlights the important role that fathers have in the construction of their own identity (Flouri & Malmberg, 2012). This grounded theoretical process model of fathering provides a nuanced framework to be utilized for examining fatherhood. As the results of this study indicate,

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fatherhood is representative of a father's perception of his role as a father that is situated in context and includes the meaning making of multiple vulnerabilities and resiliencies that contributes to father involvement. This model thereby accounts for temporal change in the fathers conceptualizations of their fatherhood that is a result of interactions and changes within their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and sociocultural and institutional domains. This conceptualization of fatherhood will thus be enacted as fathering behaviors.

Fathering: Father Involvement

This study emphasizes the need to go beyond father involvement to a more comprehensive examination of fathering. Father involvement is primarily measured with a heuristic model focused on quantity of time spent participating in specific parenting behaviors (Cabrera et al., 2007; Fagan et al., 2014). This fathering consists of the behaviors and actions that a father enacts that is grounded in a father's commitment to father identity which influences fathering behaviors (Pasley et al., 2014). In an analysis of the father identity literature, Pasley and colleagues (2014) noted that the link between identity and behaviors has been confirmed by previous research. Results from this study emphasize the active role that fathers have in their identity and conceptualization of fatherhood, which can result in the father engaging in fathering behaviors that is consistent with his conceptualization of fatherhood. Multiple aspects of fathers' fathering behaviors were evident in this study in fathers' descriptions of activities and stories regarding engagement in fathering behaviors.

As indicated, the results of this study highlight father identity as multiplicative (Cole, 2009; Hancock, 2007). This multiplicity of father identity impacts a fathers fathering. The "new father" is emotionally engaged with their child and adheres to egalitarian beliefs, while the traditional father is primarily viewed as breadwinner or provider (Collett et al., 2015). This

study highlights that a father can identify and enact behaviors of both. The manner in which fathers enact their fathering relies on their negotiations with these multiple categories of identity along with their self-reflexivity, perceptions, and meaning making of their multiplicative identity. Fathers who adhere to traditional roles can still self-evaluate as a good father (Carlson, Kendall, & Edleson, 2015), just as a "new father" can be perceived as a good father. Results from this study confirm that fathers often perform fathering behaviors that are consistent with the provider role while still indicating a desire to *be there* for their child and be an emotional and engaged father. The multiplicity of identity of fathers contributes to the notion that fathers are attempting to *do it all*. This aspect of fathering was evident in the fathers' reflections of parenting being both fantastic and challenging. A father who upheld the identity of breadwinner made an effort to commit to work to provide for the family, yet when he returned home on the weekends and evenings, he often committed to being the primary parent and engaged fully with his child. The results from this study challenge the notion of father involvement as being measured as quantity of time and as being based in the notion of categories of father identities of a breadwinner, protector, or "new father". The fathers in this study held to multiple identities and therefore engaged in fathering in multiple ways. Fathers participated in caregiving and involvement activities such as diaper changing and playing as well as provider behaviors of working long hours. The multiplicity of father identity thus influences the multiplicity of fathering behaviors.

The Process of Fathering

As the literature has been moving toward a more inclusive multidimensional approach, it continues to be in need of further theorizing (Roy, 2014). This process model of fathering extends theorizing as the model considers how gender, class, ethnicity, race, education status, and geographical location interact on a personal, relational, institutional,

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and societal level with a focus on the vulnerabilities and resiliencies associated with the fathers' experiences and the multiplicative nature of his identity. This process model of fathering is grounded in the fathers' perceptions and experiences versus models that are based on models of mothering, due to the potential of differing perceptions (Mikelson, 2008). Additionally, this model provides a basis for a process model that encompasses a multiplicative approach to father identity. Thereby, one type of father identity is not validated over another such as the provider father or the new father. Father identity is not static and monolithic and must be considered as a process. This process model recognizes that through the integration of interactions among multiple factors, multiple identities can be salient and enacted upon at the same time contributing to the multiplicity of father identity and the enactment of fathering that is multidimensional.

Theorists have called for the examination of fathering as situated within a father's context (Marsiglio, Roy, & Fox 2005; Roy, 2014). The context in this model is not focused on one domain or factor and instead views fathering as an integration of multiple factors and societal forces. In this study, a father was influenced by intrapersonal factors such as mental health and personal life changes. Additionally, he was impacted by his relationships with others including his coparent, extended family, and friends. Finally, a father's interactions with sociocultural and institutional factors such as his geographical location and employment status all intersected to contribute to his father identity, meaning making of fatherhood, and his enactment of fathering. Therefore, this process model of fathering reflects the intersection of identity and the role of power within these identities. This process model can be applied to diverse family structures and processes for further research, public policy, and parenting programs and interventions as it recognizes the

complexity of family structures and family processes. The intracategorical approach to intersectionality is utilized to examine a group of fathers living in a historical time and geographical place (Few-Demo, 2014). Within this study of this particular social group, within group variability was present emphasizing the complexities with in this group. Additionally, the perceptions of social locations and the processes within the three domains can have a greater effect than the socio cultural context. As seen in the results of this study, the social location of rural Appalachia that is associated with vulnerabilities such as unemployment and poverty can be perceived as a factor of strength and resiliency. Individuals enact their identities differently among different interactions within their context. When a new baby arrives, new interactions begin and identities will be altered. If an infant has medical issues as in one of the fathers in this study, he can alter his identity to behave in more of a protector role. This father was very involved with his infant, yet his 6-year-old child was in the adoption process. This emphasizes a fluid identity that can change due to processes and the ways fathers interact with interpersonal and socio/institutional. Hence, this process model can be applied to fathers that fit multiple identities and privileges within a father's context.

This process model of fathering represents the multiplicative nature of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Few-Demo, 2014). As the father negotiates the factors of the three identified domains, fathers create meaning from these interactions and negotiations within these domains, which lends to their perception of their father identities. Among this process, the father processes his meaning making of his self-perception of fathering; thereby, impacting how he enacts this meaning or fathering in the form of fathering behaviors and actions, the "doing" of fathering. This model contextualizes the fathers meaning making processes as it takes into account the individual differences,

inequalities, and marginalization that develop from the interactions of the father within his social context. Moreover, this process model emphasizes the fluidity of experiences and negotiations and recognizes father identity is fluid and multidirectional. For example, a father with a history of drug addiction and incarceration can alter his meaning making and enacting of fathering for his fourth child and identify as an engaged father. This process model informs the identification of father typologies within this data. An intersectional framework can guide the understanding of variability in family processes thus guiding the identification of typologies of fathering.

Typologies of Fathering in a Rural Context

In this study, a model of vulnerabilities and resiliencies, the Vulnerabilities and Resiliencies Model (VRM), inspired by the Vulnerability Conceptual Model (Few & Rosen, 2005) illustrated the unique individualized movement of fathers through this process model of fathering when considering the risks and protective factors of intersecting themes identified from this analysis. These results confirm previous literature that emphasizes that multiple contextual factors can influence father typologies (Cheadle et al., 2010). From this model, the typology of the evolving father and the thriving father are described in terms of how each typology of father may move through the process model of fathering. These typologies highlight the knowledge that multiple structural forces contribute to differing processes (Few-Demo, 2014). This process of fathering was present in the fathers of this study and contributes to a deeper understanding of two typologies of fathers that are present in a rural social context.

In this study, thriving fathers are defined as those who experienced more resiliencies than vulnerabilities that interacted to contribute to a father who was thriving in his meaning making process of fathering. Evolving fathers experienced several vulnerabilities and limited resiliencies.

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As the fathers in this study perceived themselves as trying to be a good father in this study, these fathers are defined as evolving with a desire to be good fathers yet in need of more supports. This model illustrates the complex intersection of multiple factors that interact to form a father's typology. The fathers in this study were socially located in a rural geographical area that is considered distressed (ARC, 2015). Father self-perception is important to consider in these typologies as some fathers may not perceive their situation in a negative or constraining manner. In plotting the vulnerabilities and resiliencies, it was vital to consider the father's perception and self-reflection in identifying the father as evolving or thriving. Results from this study emphasized that fathers may face multiple vulnerabilities due to his social location. These typologies can be utilized to inform parenting programs that may need to alter programming in order to address the needs and desires of unique typologies of fathers that are situated in their social context (Fagan and Kaufman, 2015).

This process model emphasizes the interaction of the vulnerabilities and resiliencies that are associated with a father's identity and meaning making process of fathering. Within this data analysis, plotting of the fathers' vulnerabilities and resiliencies guided the results of two typologies of fathers that were identified based on their perceptions of their vulnerabilities and resiliencies. The VRM recognizes that there are variations that exist amongst fathers due to the intersections of multiple identities and categories. The meaning making processes of a father is considered within this model as the fathers participate in a self-reflective meaning making process. With further research utilizing this process model of fathering and VRM, future typologies of fathers are expected to emerge. This model has implications for parenting programs and interventions in that it implies one particular program design may not meet the needs of both typologies of fathers.

Implications for Family Strengthening Parenting Programming

Results from this study have several implications for family strengthening parenting programs and public policy. This study highlights the programmatic desires of fathers, the importance of considering the process of fathering, and the attention to contextual vulnerabilities and resiliencies along with typologies of fathers. Fathers in this study expressed the desire to learn and become an important part of their child's life. Parenting focused programs need to emphasize the value of the father in a child's life and development (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). This desire for validation was evident in the fathers need for empowerment in this study. The process of negotiating social norms and personal processes was identified as a way for fathers to be a better father, reinforcing that father identity can be multiplicative and altered as interactions within the fathers' contexts change. This finding reinforces the opportunity for points of intervention to alter father identity and thereby alter fathering behaviors.

Parenting programs can take an empowerment focus toward promoting skills and providing supports that meet the needs of fathers where they are within their context by utilizing the understandings of the two typologies of fathers identified in this study. For instance, thriving fathers can build upon their strengths and add further knowledge that is specific to their desires. Evolving fathers can address their vulnerabilities if provided resources to strengthen these vulnerabilities. This differentiation in meeting the needs of fathers who face multiple risks was highlighted in a study that found fathers with risk factors were lower in engagement (Waller & Swisher, 2006). Waller and Swisher (2006) highlighted the need for programs to seek to enhance father engagement by addressing institutional barriers and coparent relationship processes. For several fathers in this study, diverting from the negative influences of their father of origin was a motivation to change, which can be a point of intervention for fathers, as they

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desire to deviate from their previous modeling of fathering; however, they may not have the resources or knowledge to enact this change. Learning from other fathers through parent and child activities and events can provide the fathers with the structure to engage in parenting programs and enhance their parenting. In this study, a majority of fathers indicated that they desired parent and child activities so that they could spend time with their child; while at the same time try out new parenting knowledge. To enhance family strengthening programs, consideration of the contextual factors that are involved in an intersectional approach to the process of fathering can be employed by policy makers and program coordinators.

Current parenting programs may be designed to target only one aspect of fathering such as promoting healthy relationships or job skills (Bronte-Tinkew, Bowie, & Moore, 2007). This study highlights the need to examine the multiple identities and interactions that a father can have within and between the intersections of multiple factors (Crenshaw, 1991). Parenting programs need to meet the father where he is socially located taking into account historical and current experiences of privilege and oppression. In this sample, the evolving father was presented as in need of supports and strengthening due to perceived oppressions at the sociocultural and institutional level. For example, some of the unemployed fathers expressed the desire to be valued and a good father, which can indicate a desire for program participation. By recognizing that the father is evolving and wants to be a good father, programs can enhance a father's parenting skills by meeting the father's specific needs (Castillo et al., 2014; Dyer et al., 2009). The results from this study have implications for prevention and intervention parenting programs and policy makers by emphasizing the need to recognize the complexity and multiplicity of father involvement, fatherhood, and fathering behaviors. As Fagan and Kaufman (2015) recommended, responsible fatherhood programs can benefit from the use of theory and

valid measures to be used to conceptualize fathering in order to measure program success. The use of this process model of fathering can inform both program development and program evaluation for responsible fathering programs. The results from this study can be utilized to inform practitioners, program developers, and policy makers in furthering understanding of the specific fathers' desires and needs that fathers located in a rural context have identified.

Limitations

While the findings of this study are robust, there are limitations to this study. Fathers voluntarily self-selected to participate in this study. Therefore, the majority of the fathers were most likely fathers who were living with their child and engaged with being a father. While this can be considered a self-selection bias, awareness of this was taken into account, limiting an assumption of error (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). The number of fathers who perceived fathering as challenging was limited and could be a result of this self-selection bias. However, the recruitment process did attempt to engage fathers who may face challenges by targeting places where fathers who are facing challenges may seek services. This effort did contribute to a sample that was diverse including fathers who were unemployed, employed, and utilizing public assistance.

The fathers participated in only one interview contributing to this being a cross-sectional study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The fathers all had an infant from birth to 18 months, thus creating a sampling of fathers in a specific time point of their parenting. Some of the fathers were parenting their first child while others had older children. This sampling can limit the generalizability of parenting infants as some fathers relied on previous experiences of parenting their older infant. However, fathering of an infant does involve a particular experience (i.e.

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infant caregiving needs, infant feeding considerations) that is the same for all fathers of infants regardless of whether this is their first child or not.

This study while having a large sample for a qualitative study may be considered small in regards to generalizability of the findings; however, the goal of qualitative research is for transferability (Creswell, 2008). This study sought to understand the processes, experiences, and perceptions of fathers within a specific rural context. The findings from this sample have implications that inform understandings of diverse fathering in rural contexts and can be considered an adequate sample size for a grounded theory analysis of processes (Roy et al., 2015).

Future Directions

As evident in this study, scholarship on father identity and father involvement needs to move beyond the categorization of father identity as monolithic types and beyond the construct of father involvement toward a conceptualizing of fathering that considers process. This study expands the theoretical understandings of fathering processes. Results of the process model and themes within the domains can be applied to inform future research. Analysis of the interactions within the intrapersonal, interpersonal, sociocultural, and institutional factors in the process model of fathering can be examined to more fully understand the intersectionality of the factors and their contribution to father identities.

As researchers continue to examine fathering, the need to understand the experience of diverse fathers from their perspective is important to consider, highlighting the need to use an intersectional approach. This study provides insight into the experiences of fathers of infants who are situated within a rural context. Future research can further examine fathers within a rural context and other diverse social locations. Future research must take into consideration the

complexities and nuances of the intersections of multiple vulnerabilities and resiliencies that interact within these contexts. While this study sought to understand fathers' perceptions of their needs and desires in a parenting program, the findings are limited to fathers' verbal expressions. Future research can further examine the implementation of the process model and typologies in both prevention and intervention parenting programs.

Conclusion

This study of rural Appalachian fathers of infants extends the burgeoning literature on diverse samples of fathers by examining fathers who were diverse in partner, socioeconomic, educational and employment statuses within a similar geographical context (Arditti et al., 2014; McLanahan et al., 2001; Creighton et al., 2015). This study provides an approach to understanding the process of fathering through the knowledge of the contributing factors that interact to contribute to fathers' identity, role, and involvement. Results from this study indicate the need to examine fatherhood within a situated context utilizing an intersectional approach to the process of fathering in order to progress father identity and fathering scholarship. Through the emphasis of fathers' situated contexts, this study highlights the social context of fathers and the differing typologies of fathers that may process fatherhood differently. In order to recruit, retain, and meet the needs of fathers, parenting programs must consider the fathers' situated context, intersectional processes, and meaning making of fathering. Programs that take into consideration this model can make cultural adaptations that meet the specific needs of fathers situated in context (Marek et al., 2006).

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Table 1

Table 1.

Demographics of Participants (*N*=50)

Variables	*n*(%)	*M*	*SD*	Range
Race				
White	41 (82.0)			
Black	5 (10.0)			
Hispanic or Latino	2 (4.0)			
Asian American	2 (4.0)			
Age of father (in years)		31.62	4.81	22-47
Age of infant (in months)		9.94	5.63	0-18
Infant gender (female)	24 (48.0)			
Number of children		2.38	1.30	1-6
Education				
Some high school	3 (6.0)			
High school or GED	5 (10.0)			
Vocational	1 (2.0)			
Some college	8 (16.0)			
College	15 (30.0)			
Graduate school	18 (36.0)			
Relationship status				
Married	41 (82.0)			
Single	2 (4.0)			
Cohabitating	6 (12.0)			
Other	1 (2.0)			
Employment				
Full time	26 (52.0)			
More than full time	3 (6.0)			
Part time	8 (16.0)			
Self-employed	4 (8.0)			
Unemployed	7 (14.0)			
Other	2 (4.0)			
Income				
$0-$24,999	18 (36.0)			
$25,000-$49,999	15 (30.0)			
$50,000 and above	17 (34.0)			
Currently Using Public Assistance	21 (42.0)			

Table 2

Table 2

Participant Identification Table

Father ID	Pseudonym	Race	Age of Father	Age of Infant	Number of children	Partner status	Living with all children	Number of mothers
1 *	Diego	White	36	17	1	Married	Yes	1
2	Mark	White	35	18	2	Married	Yes	1
3	Ben	White	30	0	4	Married	Yes	1
4	Fin	White	33	14	3	Married	Yes	1
5	Bob	White	37	17	3	Married	Yes	1
6	John	White	32	18	3	Married	Yes	1
7	Dan	White	30	6	4	Married	Yes	1
8	Jake	White	35	3	2	Married	Yes	1
9 *	Sean	White	25	15	1	Cohabitating	Yes	1
10	Marco	Asian American	38	16	6	Married	Yes	1
11 *	David	White	27	11	1	Married	Yes	1
12	Trevor	White	35	14	5	Married	Yes	1
13	Ammon	White	39	17	3	Married	Yes	1
14	Tom	African American	26	13	4	Single	No	3
15 *	Clive	White	23	2	1	Cohabitating	Yes	1
16	Travis	African American	32	3	2	Married	Yes	1
17	Tony	African American	30	1	2	Married	Yes	1
18 *	Carl	African American	26	4	1	Other	Yes	1
19 *	Jack	White	26	2	1	Married	Yes	1
20	Harry	White	30	12	2	Married	Yes	1
21	Matt	White	30	4	2	Married	Yes	1
22	Alex	White	31	5	3	Married	Yes	1
23	Phillip	White	47	12	4	Cohabitating	No	2
24	Jillian	White	29	14	2	Married	Yes	1
25 *	Dustin	White	33	14	1	Married	Yes	1
26	Jimmy	White	31	5	2	Married	Yes	1
27	Allen	White	31	8	2	Married	Yes	1
28	Ron	White	33	11	5	Single	No	2
29	Adam	White	30	12	5	Married	No	3
30	Randall	White	28	6	4	Married	Yes	1
31 *	Glen	White	32	18	1	Married	Yes	1
32 *	Charlie	White	29	10	1	Married	Yes	1
33	Leo	White	26	10	2	Cohabitating	No	2
34 *	Peter	White	34	14	1	Married	Yes	1
35 *	Zach	White	29	14	1	Married	Yes	1
36	Collin	White	35	14	3	Married	Yes	1
37	Jordan	Hispanic/Latino	38	17	2	Married	Yes	1
38 *	Cody	White	22	5	1	Cohabitating	Yes	1
39	Tim	White	36	4	3	Cohabitating	No	3
40	Jacob	White	33	8	2	Married	Yes	1
41	Cam	White	26	2	2	Married	Yes	1

42	Samuel	Hispanic/Latino	31	15	2	Married	Yes	1
43	Paul	White	35	4	2	Married	Yes	1
44 *	Fred	White	24	2	1	Married	Yes	1
45	Greg	White	28	7	3	Married	Yes	1
46	Mack	White	29	4	3	Married	Yes	2
47 *	Robert	African American	38	18	1	Married	Yes	1
48	Derek	White	38	14	2	Married	Yes	1
49 *	Evan	White	36	15	1	Married	Yes	1
50	Brad	Asian American	34	8	2	Married	Yes	1

Note. * denotes first time-father

Table 3

Table 3.

Major Themes and Subcategories Representative Quotes

Major Themes and Subcategories	Frequency	Representative Quotes
INTRAPERSONAL DOMAIN		
Active Self-Reflexivity	**50**	And that's not good blanket advice for anybody, because I'm a good father now because I walked down my own path. You know what I mean? (Father 4)
Actively changing	16	When he got out, all he ever did was go back. He was never out for long before he'd go back with another sentence. When he was out, all he wanted to do was get drunk and be abusive, try to make the world his. I mean, I got...a lot of the time, during the day, I just go through these things in my head, and the ultimate thing is, I don't want him to grow up the way I did, you know? I can't go back and change it, my dad can't go back and change it. (Father 38)
Father's desires	25	I'm always willing to learn new things. If there's somebody I know that's got good advice, I'm going to tell them to bring it. Like I said, "If you teach me something, I'm willing to learn." I'm always willing to learn new things…from anybody. It doesn't matter. I'm an easy-going guy. I get along with almost anybody. (Father 14)
Father's perception	50	We'd go to PT and then we'd come back and, at first we were talking about how hard it is being a dad in the military. And, like, all the challenges that's, you know, involved. The sacrifices you end up having to make. And, then as I was driving by his house after mine. As I drove by my house, my daughter was out in the yard with my wife. It was my older daughter and she sees me and she starts waving. She like, "Hi Daddy." I'm like...and that was my paycheck right there. That was...All the challenges and all the difficulties, that is what makes it worth it. You know, is knowing that you've got a family, a child, that you know, looks up to you. You know, feels that you can satisfy her needs as a parent. That she feels comforted and safe there. (Father 2)
Masculine Norms	**45**	I think it's to guide and protect the family. It's definitely important. Over a mother, again, I don't... I think the roles are largely interchangeable with

		exceptions. I know the dad is supposed to be, like, tougher on them but very much give her a lot of love and affection. I think it's to prepare them for the world. Again, that's a job assigned to both. I know it depends on the particular couple, but as far as the dad I think I should make them aware of the dangers in the world. It's a very dangerous place. Very dangerous place we live in, so preparing them as much as you possibly can for the world. In many sectors. (Father 17)
Adherence to traditional masculine norms	17	To provide for the family, physically, so with my job is to provide financially for my family.And also, to just be there when I'm needed, whether it's fixing things around the house, or resolving disagreements, when we have multiple children, of course. (Father 44)
Challenging traditional masculine norms	18	To be right there and involved the whole time, from birth until you can get them out of the house. Try not to miss a beat. Both parents are going to miss things. Just help enforce whatever your guidelines are in your house, and be involved whenever it comes to cooking, and cleaning, and doing the house stuff, the laundry, just chores around the house, whatever… Oh, yeah. We try to share responsibilities and not try to be blanket this is yours, this is mine. Obviously, there's... I mow the yard, the types of things like that. I don't know. I just feel like I go 24/7. You name it, I feel like we do it. (Father 21)
Adherence to both traditional and new fatherhood norms	15	What the wife tells me to do. No. But really, whatever is needed. To me, to say there is set responsibilities; I think that's foolish because it really depends on your situation. With my wife and I both being... If my wife was a stay-at-home mom obviously, her responsibilities would be very different than they are now. If I was a stay-at-home dad my responsibilities would be quite different. That being said, my daughter is a girl, and there are certain things that I will leave to my wife to teach her. That I'm not even going to put my hands up. (Father 11)
Personal Motivations	**32**	I don't think I've ever been to any parenting class or anything like that, where people teach you this about a baby, or that. Like I said, it's always been self-taught with the baby ... You always learn more along the way. That's just like, I never thought that a month-and-a-half old baby could eat so much. I'm serious, he eats so much. (Father 14)

Intrapersonal Challenges	28	When does the change take effect? My grand-daddy, he told me before he died, he says, "You have to make a change. You have to be the leader that changes everything else. Look, if you change this generation with your kids, the abuse ends for good, but," he says, "if you don't break the change then where does it end?" (Father 38)
Life stress	14	Money. Probably that's the only influencing factor. Everything else is positive. Money and time, the way money affects my time. Being an early childhood development teacher, I would love to be home and teach my girls. I don't have time to set that up. My wife can't work yet. I'm gently nudging her to get her butt trained as a doula so she can, by the time her work thing...card...comes in. I doubt if she'll be ready by then. If she starts making an income, I can take more free time and dedicate it to the girls. I'd say probably the only factor is money. (Father 42)
Personal challenges	16	Yeah. And it wasn't always that way. I'm one of those stories that I can say I've been there and done that, and probably have three tee shirts. Even into some hard-core drug use in my late teens, early 20s. Probably the church and really, honestly, doing it. And that's not good blanket advice for anybody, because I'm a good father now because I walked down my own path. (Father 4)
INTERPERSONAL DOMAIN		
Interpersonal Support	**46**	It's actually nice with my family around because, like I said, I'm the youngest of eight, so I get to see all these parents around me and get some advice, and be able to see the things that I like and don't like. (Father 41)
Family support	41	My dad. My parents still live together, still married. He and I actually work together. The kids are over there until about 5 or 5:30 every day at least. She'll go get them, or I will go get them. A lot of the time we'll end up staying over there until about 6, 7, 8 o'clock at night. Mom cooks 2 or 3 times a week. We'll go out to eat with them all the time. We four are pretty much all the time. We try to stay in with the rest of the family too, my sister and her family. The cousins come over and they love each other. They are usually at the grandparents twice a week with us. So they can all play together. We usually try and all go out Fridays. Then I have my extended family. (Father 43)
Friend support	10	We recently had another...they're a younger couple.

		They just barely got married maybe a year ago. They just moved here. He's going to school here... They've been super kind. We've become pretty good friends with them. They've been super willing to come over and babysit our kids. It's been great for my wife and I, because we've been able to on a few more dates lately. We haven't recently. Normally, we relied on family members. We don't have that here. (Father 45)
Interpersonal Challenges	**35**	I think they provide insight most of the time. Annoying insight. The other day...it's good to have someone to bounce stuff off of other than just us here in the house. But, it also plays on your insecurities. Other people's opinions and things like that. (Father 20)
Extended family difficulties	28	My family's...just...not... Rough. It's a rough bunch…Uh...they just fight a lot. Argue a lot. And, uh, I really don't get along with too much of them. Just when... I talk to my mom every now and again. My Aunt Dee, she's... I love her to death. She's my favorite one, out of all of them…But, I got a bunch of cousins and a brother. I don't even talk to my brother. We kind of had a disagreement and I just told her, I said, "You know, I'm getting tired of trying to fight with him, trying to talk to him and everything." I said, "You know, I love your family and they love me." So, you know. That's it. I mean, they wasn't ever, you know. They'd message us here and there and again. My family would, you know, to hear about her but, as far as really being there, they wasn't never there, so. (Father 33)
Parenting challenges	22	Oh, the one thing that always drives me crazy is they're not listening. I can take, like, horsing around, and screaming, and running, and making a mess—none of that stuff bothers me, but when I ask them to do something and they just blatantly ignore me, it drives me crazy. So, that, above all. (Father 6)
Coparenting Processes	**50**	I think I try to avoid, many times, all that stuff with the kids, because it gets so...frustrated with them. Sometimes she thinks I don't do it right. It is hard. I want to do the things by my way, she wants to do the things by her way. (Father 37)
Positive coparenting processes	47	She tells me that she appreciates what I do, I was today just helping her get together as we were going out the door she said, "I really appreciate all that you do," so those little comments throughout the day, and she's told me when she goes to moms group she's

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		like, "After hearing what some of these moms say about their husbands, I'm really thankful for you!" And I go, "That felt good." (Father 25)
Challenging coparenting processes	22	I think I try to avoid, many times, all that stuff with the kids, because it gets so...frustrated with them. Sometimes she thinks I don't do it right. It is hard. I want to do the things by my way, she wants to do the things by her way. (Father 37)
Parenting decision-making processes	50	She works during the day and I do at night. Usually, I'll feed them and give them baths in the evening, and usually she'll feed them in the morning, and then daycare takes care of it in the middle. Sometimes I feed in the night. The majority of times she ended up feeding in the middle of the night just because I'm not there. She drops them off at daycare. I pick them up from daycare. She's in charge of the morning, and I'm in charge of the evening, for awhile anyway. (Father 21)
Maternal gatekeeping behavior	18	I'll tell you, the only person who has ever made anything hard is probably my wife. And I don't know what it is, but I guess we all have our certain things. The way we were raised. She doesn't like the way I'm doing something or saying something, she'll interfere and, to me, when you interfere when someone is trying to get on to their kid, then that makes the kid think, "Well, I don't have to listen to them." And that one is the biggest one. Whenever Mom's around, she thinks that she does not have to listen. Now when she knows Mama's not around, perfect. (Father 29)
Models of Fathering	**49**	I have the example of my dad, though. My dad was there. Looking at him, I guess being a kid, and even right now, I don't necessarily want to be my dad. My dad's my dad, and I don't want to be like my dad. There's things about him that drove me nuts, but then when I look at myself, I do those exact same things. [laughs] I am my dad. (Father 24)
Father of origin positive influence	38	You know I, just thinking about my dad, I guess one of my lessons learned is that he always liked to go and serve people so I just remember getting drug here or there or wherever to go see people and help with their yardwork, you know kicking and screaming, but you know over time you're like actually I do like this, I do enjoy doing this. It's really just the importance of helping other people, that was something I learned from my dad. You know, no specific stories just like generally yeah he'd drag you places until you enjoy it.

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		And it worked, so yeah. (Father 7)
Father of origin negative influence	12	You know. My dad really wasn't around so I've always thought to do better than that. You know and, so, basically I got thrown into it when I was 19 and just, you know, went with it. Really. I didn't know, really, much and over the years I learned a lot, you know, on how to raise your children and them be respectful and everything like that. Which can be a hassle sometimes, but you know, I pretty much just went with it and did the best I could... I raised them the way that I thought was right. (Father 39)
Kin influences	35	I have, like, influences from my uncles. They were a pretty big part of my life. My mother's brothers. There's a few of them. Three or four of them. And, yeah, they were always, like... They're old school stand up guys. I really appreciate that. I think that's something that's been lost. You know, just relaxed guys but very strong, take care of their family sort of deal. And I think they've been a positive influence…So, as far as fathering, they were always very protective. I felt safe around them. They can handle themselves And then, as far as, just treatment of the kids, they were always really, really nice. You know, he would never beat the kids during the time. There was not a lot of spankings going on. He was just intimidating, so intimidating He'd just have to raise his voice a little, we just all start crying. (Father 17)
Other fathers' influences	23	You know, you observe. People around you, you know, your coworkers, everything, you observe other people's lives, lifestyles, how they choose to live, and how they chose to live, and how that affected them. You know, I think that's a big part of how you relate to yourself and just knowing yourself. You know what I'm saying? Definitely, it plays a big effect on it, because it shows you how you want to be, you know, how you want to be later on down the road, what you want, you know, in the long run, too. (Father 18)
INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL DOMAIN		
Institutional Support	**35**	Church. I think it's a huge one. Religion teaches you how to...gives you a way to live, right? That's what it means. And I think a large part of that is our church is very focused on families and the importance of them, and I feel like everything we do there helps with

		families. (Father 7)
Professional support	30	The Health Department, yes, my wife, when she was pregnant, so she followed for the younger two kids, so this took almost the whole pregnancy years. So, everyone there knows my wife and she knows them. (Father 13)
Church community support	24	Mia was just commenting the other day that...at church, I gave the baby to someone to hold and she was like, "Don't do that," and then she realized that it's not just some random person. These are people that I grew up with that were like second parents at sometimes just because I was just always over at their house or their kid was here. So, they've definitely had an influence in me and my parenting, and, obviously, if they're still around today then...you know, we see them a lot at church activities and whatever. (Father 41)
Employment Status	**48**	During the week, I don't necessarily get to see him a whole lot. I kind of see him in the morning right before I leave, and then I get home, and I don't usually get home until about seven o'clock, and he's getting ready for bed now. So, you know, I don't see him a whole lot during the week, so we really kind of have to make the most of our time on the weekends. So, that's kind of how the experience goes. (Father 1)
Employment status supports	26	I definitely appreciate the support that I get from work. They've been very supportive with parenting. I'll go talk to the administrative staff. They're three old...well, they're not old, but three ladies that are just fantastic and they're always kind enough to listen to me talk about my kids. I show them lots of pictures, tell them lots of stories. But yeah. I think for me, it's just the support of the people around me is very important. (Father 8)
Employment status challenges	35	My job can be...I work out on the factory floor so I don't have a lot of responsibility but my job can be stressful. I know sometimes she tells me...if something's going on or stressing me out, she tries to tell me, "just go in there and do your job and come home." There's sometimes I wish I could have a little bit more support as far as my job goes. She'll tell me to "suck it up, be glad you've got a job," and she is right, in this day and age especially. (Father 26)
Community Resources	**48**	I'm not looking for it and I'm not being given those opportunities, since not working. I think I do miss it a little bit, just...whether I'm making a huge difference

		or not, just being a part of what's going on around me. These days, my life has been at home a lot. We want to start...I want to get involved playing sports that I like. Getting up to...getting some racquetball guys that I can play racquetball with. Getting up to the gym and getting and exercise routine back. (Father 20)
Involved in the community	32	As far as truly interacting with each other, you know, you do get that opportunity as well, but more so with just everybody occupying the space together. It's a good feeling. The kids all interact and they have a great time. You know, like, we make friends constantly…Park with their kids. We'll exchange information and the Bug Fest and just made a new friend at the museum in Roanoke…So, you get a real sense like that. You know, of coming together. (Father 17)
No community involvement	16	I guess, my wife probably is a little more involved in that than I am as most of my free time is spent on the farm or with my parents who...and grandparents who are all part of that enterprise. And, you know, when we're not working, that's...that's what takes up the rest of my time. (Father 31)
Appalachian Cultural Identities	**45**	We have a couple of brothers-in-laws and siblings and cousins that all work together. They all know each other and are connected. I've been surprised even someone's mom dies and four or five people ask for off to go to the funeral. IT's just really close and tight knit. Really good community up there. (Father 19)
Positive identification	36	Absolutely, absolutely do. My family has been in the area for at least a 100 years in Grayson County, Carol County they come into the area in the 1700s. They were you know British German Irish heritage possibly some Native American I don't know but there is a difference in that kind of close knit community. I grew up in a smaller community than where I am now. Just kind of those values of you know somebody down the road needs help you go help them. You know and then whenever you need help you call them up and the food, just the language, the music, everything is…that was all involved in my childhood and I kind of want to give that to my children too, with the understanding that there is something outside of that too, so that they don't become so entrenched in that that they become extremely defensive when something outside of that kind of Appalachian culture comes. (Father 27)
Limited identification	15	I would say in regards of living here, yes, but in

		regards of doing anything with any Appalachian-type initiatives, no. I'm aware, living here. I would say I live in the Appalachian region if people ask me. "Where's Virginia Tech?" Yeah, it's southwestern Virginia, in Appalachian -- I would say that, but it's not like I would identify with being from the Appalachian, because I'm not from here. I consider being a part of it because I live here. (Father 16)
Identified challenges	6	There are a couple of areas near us where there is low income housing…there are a lot of old mill houses there. They get rented out really cheaply so you have families that live in that have problem, either running from something, there are drug issues there are family issues. So the law enforcement gets involved quite a bit there, social services gets involved quite a bit. (Father 27)
Societal Masculinity Norms	**11**	That's one of the big stereotypes is that as a daddy, it's okay to want to hold your kid, it's okay to want to feed your kid, it's okay to say, "maybe it'll be better if I do stay home and take care of my kid and help out. I don't have to try to put on that macho thing and be Superman." That would be the biggest thing that I would say. Forget the stereotypes, love your kid, take care of your kid. (Father 15)
Perceptions of Marginalization and Discrimination	**19**	Yes. And just...just being a felon has made it rough on me. I didn't even...I didn't expect... I've been out for a year and two, three months. I did about five years. It makes it a lot harder just knowing what's on the plate. Not being able to do everything that I want to do. (Father 18)
Parenting Programming		
Current Parenting Knowledge	32	I know that babies learn very fast. Their rate of growth in their mind, in their brains, is very, very fast. I know that it's typical for them to be crawling between six and nine months-ish...five and nine months. Or that's how ours have been. They'll be walking anywhere between nine months and a little after a year, usually before a year. They'll start talking or making sounds. Well, they make sounds pretty early on that they seem to think means something. But right around the year mark and after, as well for ours. (Father 10)
Previous Parenting	27	We did take a birthing class at our birth center. That was really good. Talked about the bare necessities. That was probably what I got the most out of. It was

Program Participation		the class I think we went to three weeks in a row. One night for an hour or two and they covered everything pretty well. We asked a lot of questions because they had a background around newborns all the time. We asked a lot of questions and we trusted them. It was good. (Father 19)
Parenting Program Needs and Desires	43	I think hearing from other dads. Things that they've gone through, like personal experience time. You know, "Here's what happened. Here's how we handled it. Here's what I recommend," or, "Here's what we're doing to fix it." You know? Something to that effect. I think, as parents in general, sometimes you look at your kid and you're like, "Man, why is my kid the only one who's acting like this?" When really, everybody's kid's acting like that. You just don't see it. So, some way for them to realize that they're not alone. That everybody is there…or most people are probably going through something similar to what you're going through, so you can talk about it and ask what's going on. So, yeah, establishing a network of, like, friends that they can lean on for that. (Father 3)

Table 4

Table 4.

Typologies Coding Participants 1-25

Major Themes/ Subcategories	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Vulnerabilities																									
Intrapersonal																									
Life stress	X	X	X							X		X	X												X
Personal challenges			X	X					X				X	X				X						X	X
Interpersonal																									
Parenting challenges		X	X	X	X	X		X						X		X		X	X			X	X		X
Extended family difficulties	X	X		X	X	X			X			X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Negative coparenting		X			X	X		X	X					X	X	X		X					X	X	X
Father of origin negative influence		X		X										X		X	X				X				
Institutional and Sociocultural																									
Employment challenges	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X	X	X			
Appalachian cultural challenges			X						X															X	
Marginalization/ Discrimination		X							X					X				X					X		
Community Resources limitations	X								X	X	X							X		X		X			

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Resiliencies

Interpersonal

Resiliency																										
Family support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X				
Friend support		X							X	X			X							X			X			X
Positive coparenting processes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Father of origin positive influence	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X				X	X		X		X		
Kin influences			X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X		X		
Other fathers' influences		X	X		X	X				X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X					

Institutional and Sociocultural

Resiliency																										
Professional support	X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X					X
Church community support		X	X	X			X				X	X				X										
Employment status supports		X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X			X			X						X		
Community Resources		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Positive Appalachian Cultural	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X
Typology	T	E	T	T	E	T	T	T	E	T	T	T	T	E	T	E	T	E	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	E

Note. Total number of evolving is 14 and the total number of thriving is 36.

Table 5

Table 5.

Typologies Coding Participants 26-50

Major Themes/ Subcategories	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Vulnerabilities																									
Intrapersonal																									
Life stress		X	X									X					X						x		x
Personal challenges	X		X	X				X				X	X	X									x		
Interpersonal																									
Parenting challenges		X		X	X			X				X								x					
Extended family difficulties	X	X		X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X			X		x		x	x		x	x
Negative coparenting	X		X	X						X		X			X	X	X	x					x	x	
Father of origin negative influence				X				X				X	X	X	X										
Institutional																									
Sociocultural																									
Employment challenges	X		X	X		X		X					X		X		X			x		x	x	x	x
Appalachian cultural challenges		X										X								x					
Marginalization/ Discrimination		X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X					x	x		x
Community Resources limitations			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	x	x			x		x	

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Resiliencies

Interpersonal

Family support	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Friend support				X																		X		X
Positive coparenting processes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Father of origin positive influence		X			X		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kin influences	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Other fathers' influences	X				X		X		X	X	X				X				X	X				

Institutional and Sociocultural

Professional support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X							
Church community support								X	X	X				X				X				X	X	X
Employment status supports		X	X		X	X				X	X		X		X		X			X				
Community Resources	X	X						X	X	X				X	X						X			X
Positive Appalachian Cultural	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Typology	T	T	E	E	T	T	T	E	T	T	T	E	E	E	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	E	T	T

Note. Total number of evolving is 14 and the total number of thriving is 36.

Figure 1

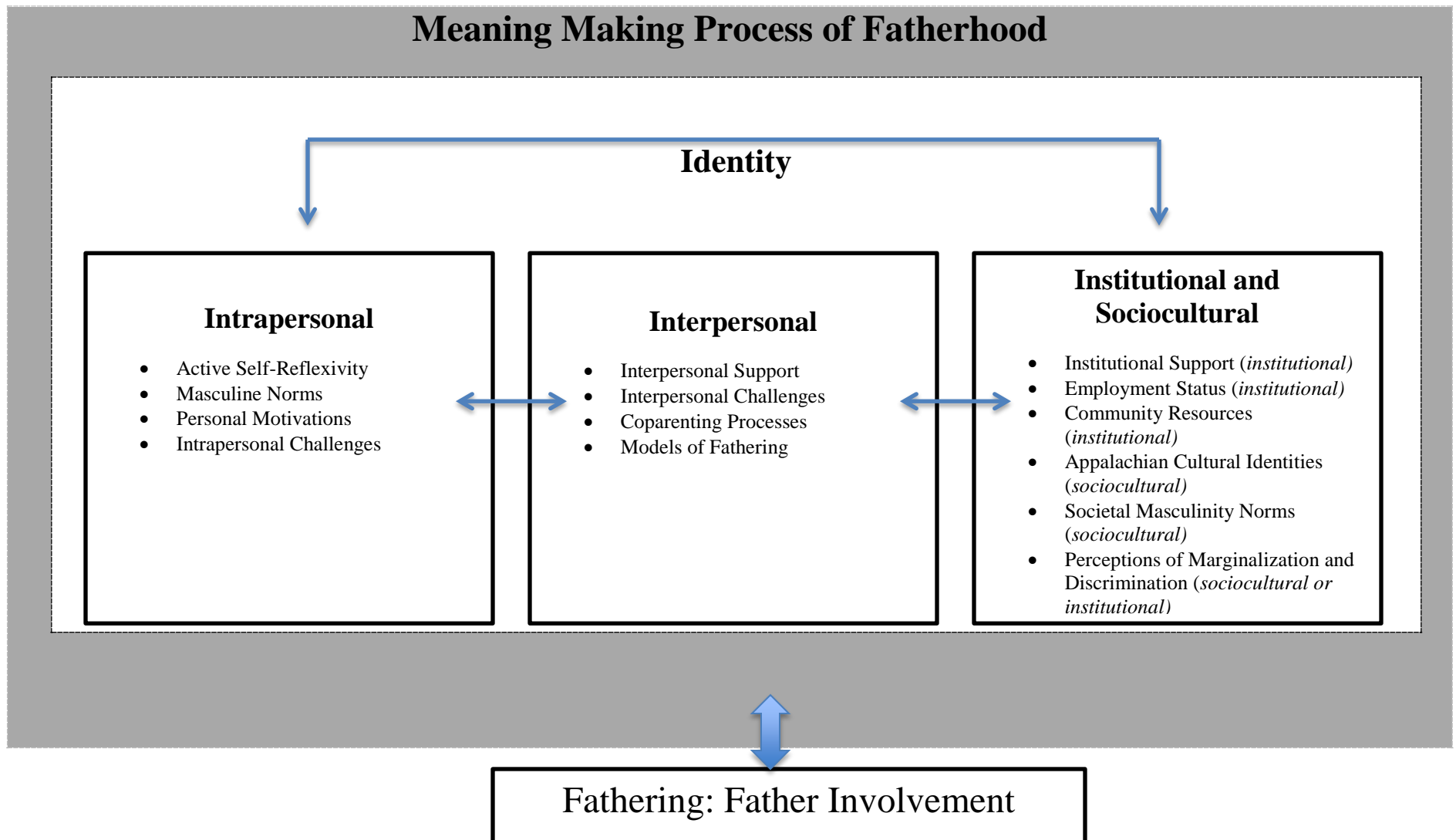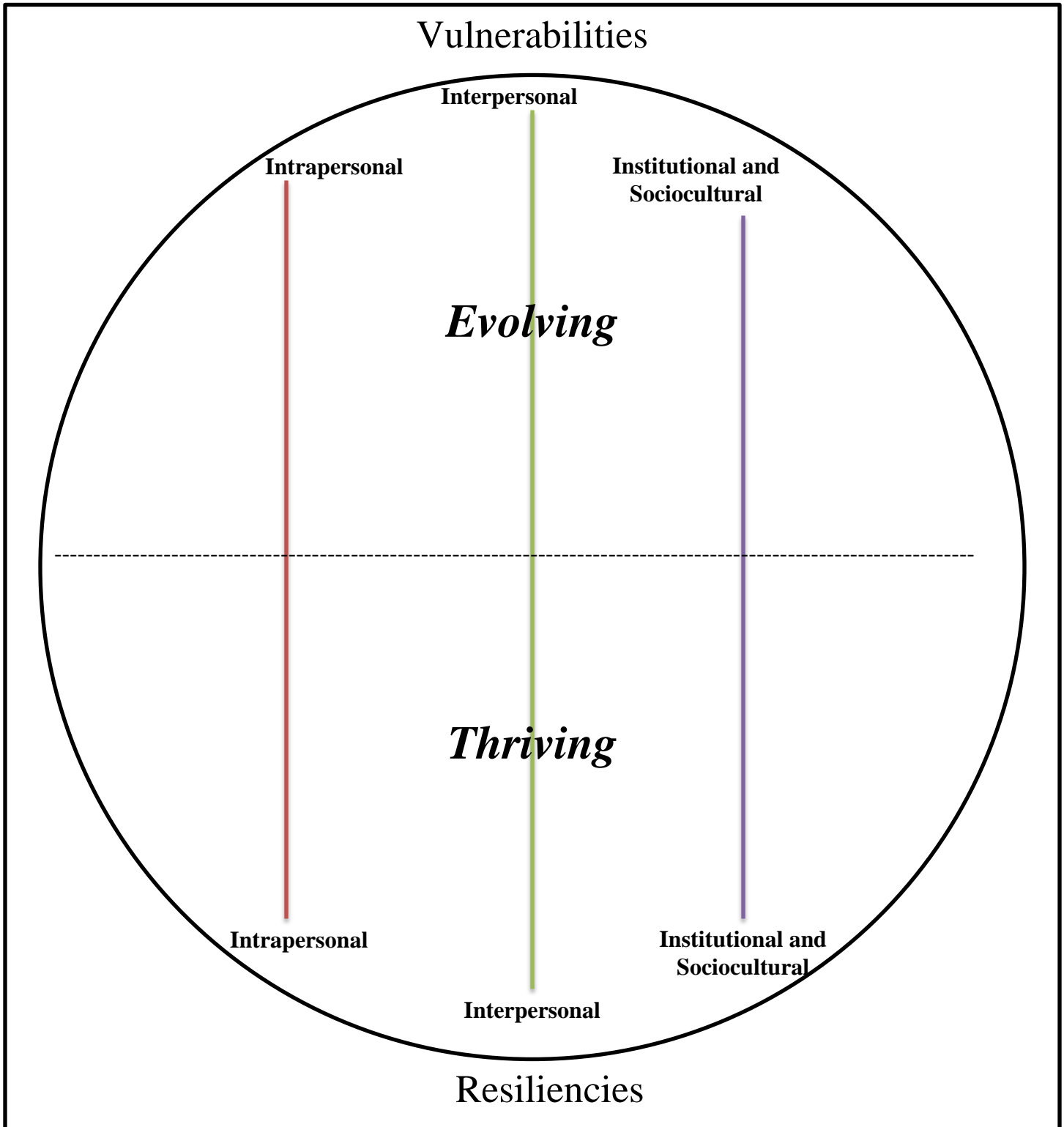## A Process Model of Fathering: An Intersectional Approach

Figure 1. A Process Model of Fathering: An Intersectional Approach. This figure illustrates the emergent theoretical conceptualization of fathering.

Figure 2

Vulnerabilities and Resiliencies Model (VRM)

Vulnerabilities

Interpersonal

Intrapersonal   Institutional and
                                  Sociocultural

Evolving

Thriving

Intrapersonal   Institutional and
                                  Sociocultural

Interpersonal

Resiliencies

Figure 2. Vulnerabilities and resiliencies model. This model illustrates the interaction of vulnerabilities and resiliencies of individuals that inform two typologies of fathers. This model is inspired by the Vulnerabilities Conceptual Model (Few & Rosen, 2005).

Figure 3
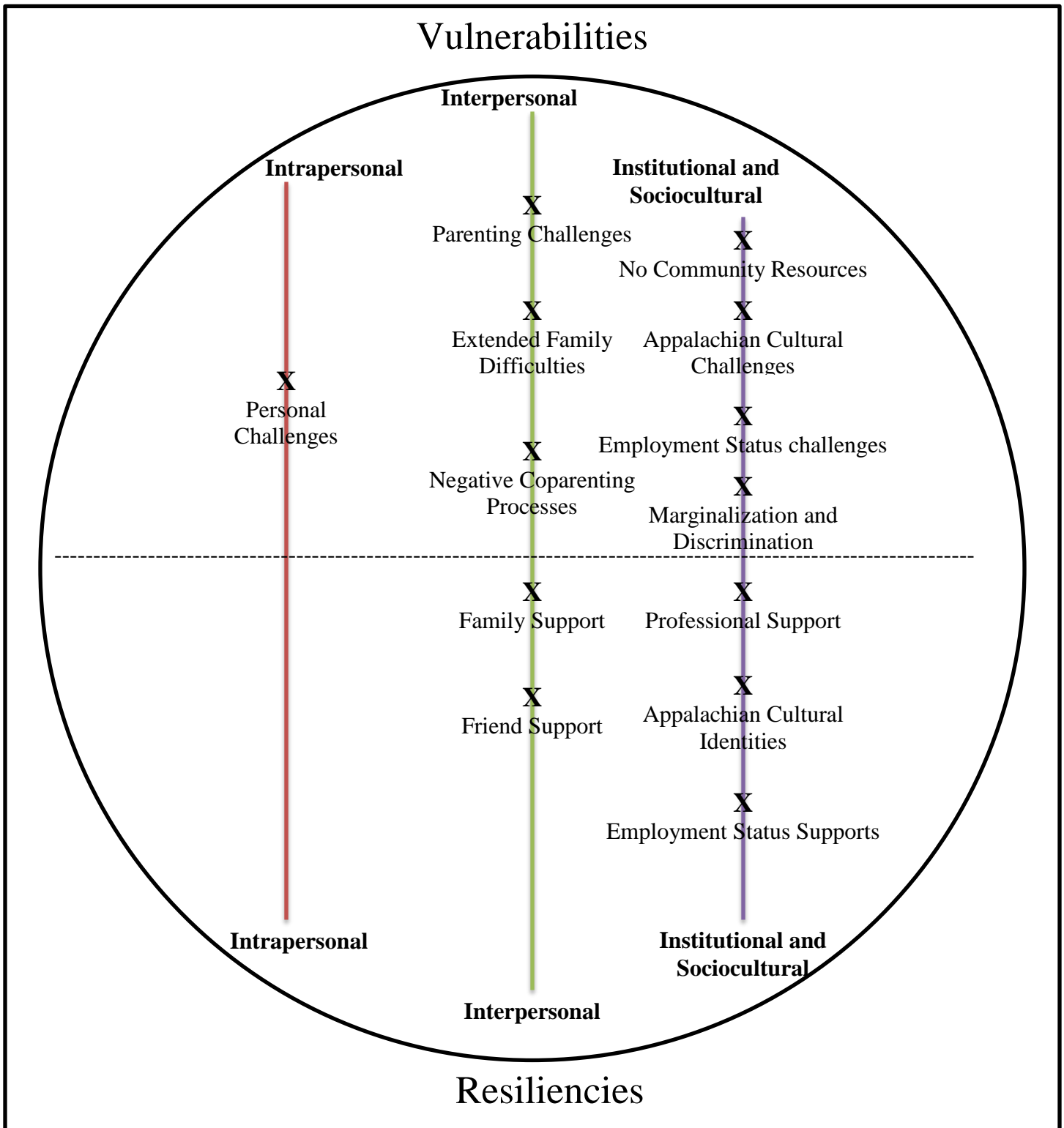
Vulnerabilities and Resiliencies Model (VRM): Thriving
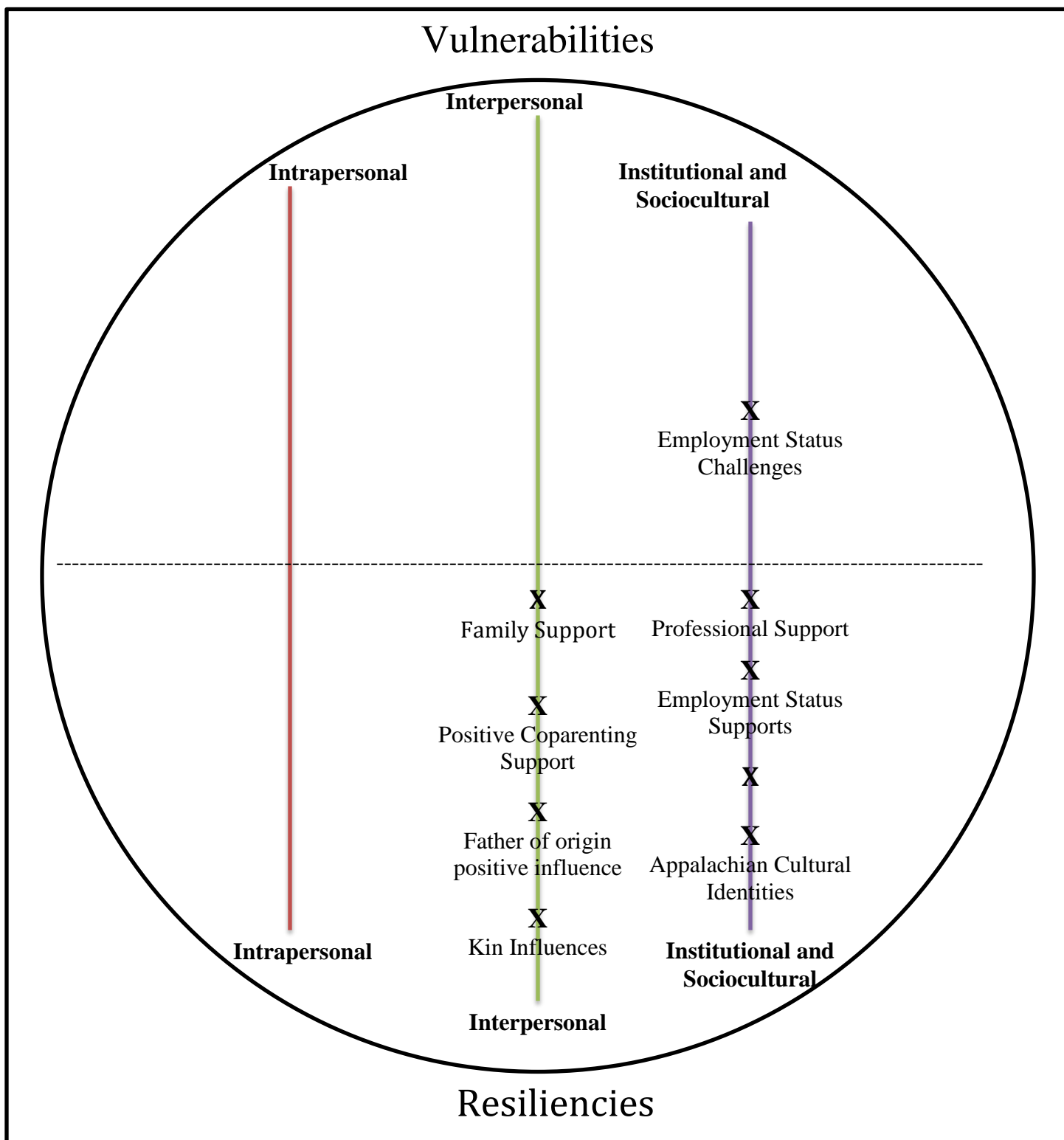
Father 11 – Thriving

Figure 3. Vulnerabilities and resiliencies model. This model illustrates the interaction of vulnerabilities and resiliencies of individuals that inform two typologies of fathers. This model is inspired by the Vulnerabilities Conceptual Model (Few & Rosen, 2005).

Figure 4

Vulnerabilities and Resiliencies Model (VRM): Evolving

Vulnerabilities

Interpersonal

Intrapersonal

Institutional and Sociocultural

X

Parenting Challenges

X
No Community Resources

X
Personal
Challenges

X
Extended Family
Difficulties

X
Appalachian Cultural
Challenges

X
Employment Status challenges

X
Negative Coparenting
Processes

X
Marginalization and
Discrimination

X
Family Support

X
Professional Support

X
Friend Support

X
Appalachian Cultural
Identities

X
Employment Status Supports

Intrapersonal

Institutional and Sociocultural

Interpersonal

Resiliencies

Father 9 - Evolving

Figure 4. Vulnerabilities and resiliencies model. This model illustrates the interaction of vulnerabilities and resiliencies of individuals that inform two typologies of fathers. This model is inspired by the Vulnerabilities Conceptual Model (Few & Rosen, 2005).

Appendix A

Interview Protocol for

A Qualitative Inquiry of Fathering in the Rural Context of Appalachia Virginia

Welcome statement - Introductory protocol

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. You have been selected to participate in this research because you are a Dad to a baby. Our research project focuses on how fathers perceive their role in fathering and what they do as a father of a baby. Additionally, we are interested in what fathers would like in regards to programs and services that may be offered to them. We are interested in your experience and thank you for sharing.

This study is approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. In order to proceed with this study, you must sign a form of consent that explains to you that all of your information will be kept confidential, that your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time, and that we do not intend to inflict harm of any kind. I want to confirm that this is your signature. To help us with understanding our research, we would like to audiorecord this interview today. Only the researchers on this project will have information to this audio and it will be destroyed after it is transcribed. The research consists of a demographic survey and an in-person interview. This interview should last about an 60-90 minutes and the demographic survey should take you about 30 minutes. As compensation for your time, effort, and travel to complete this interview, we are offering you a $50 gift card to Walmart, Food Lion, or Amazon. We are offering you $20 gift card to Walmart, Food Lion, or Amazon for completion of the demographic survey. What more would you like to know about your consent?

Thank you again for agreeing to participate. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Interviewer-Ask each question and probe for more information using the questions below the

main question if needed.

1. First I am going to ask you some demographic questions: See Demographic Survey

2. What is it like being a father to your baby?

    a. What activities do you do with your baby? (playtime activities and caregiving activities)

    b. Explain what an average day is like for you

    c. How do you see yourself as a dad to this baby? To your other children (if applicable)?

3. Tell me about the other people in your baby's life (coparent, siblings, caregivers, and extended family).

    a. Who is primarily responsible for caring for your baby? (How do you make decisions about the baby's care?-what taken into consideration-who makes these decisions)

    b. How do these relationships affect your ability to father? (Who supports and encourages and who interferes)

    c. Who or what sometimes makes the way you want to parent a little harder for you? How do you manage that?

4. Tell me about the relationship between you and your baby's other parent.

    a. How do you work together?

    b. How do you solve disagreements?

    c. How do you feel supported?

    d. How do you feel not supported?

5. Who taught you how to be a father?

    a. Are there any family members? Friends? Community members?

    b. Can you tell me a story about how they influenced you?

6. Tell me about your employment and how this affects your ability as a father.

    a. What are your recent experiences with employment?

    b. How do you think this influences the way you want to father?

7. Tell me about your involvement with the community and other agencies.

    a. What does being a part of this community mean to you?

    b. Do you consider yourself a part of the Appalachian community?

    c. Are there any agencies that you have been involved with? (Head Start, Social Services, WIC)

    d. Have you had any experiences with the law?

    e. Have you ever been hospitalized?

    f. Are there any other community groups or agencies that you have worked with or been a part of?

8. If you were asked to give advice to a new father, what advice would you give?

    a. What advice have people given you?

    b. What groups or organizations have helped you be the father you are today?

9. Tell me about the things you know to care for your baby and help your baby develop.

    a. How did you know these things?

    b. What would you want to learn more about?

    c. Who would you want to learn from about your baby's development?

    d. What support do you want as a father?

10. What are your hopes for your baby? (goals, desires)

    a. How do you parent to achieve these hopes? What do you do to help you achieve these goals?

    b. What do you think a man's responsibility is as a dad?

11. Do you have an image of what the ideal dad is and if so how would you describe him?

    a. What has influenced this idea?

    b. How do you feel about this ideal dad/image?

    c. Explain how this affects you.

12. Have you ever participated in a parenting program (Head start class, prenatal hospital class)? If so, please identify the program.

    a. What were your experiences with this program?

    b. What did you like about this program?

    c. What did you not like about this program?

    d. How would you change this program if it were up to you?

13. This question is a fun one. How would you describe yourself as a father in three words? Why did you pick these words?

14. Part of the reason I am doing this research is to help dads be the best dads they can be. If you were designing a parent program for dads, what would you recommend?

Thank you for your valuable time.

Appendix B

A Qualitative Inquiry of Fathering in the Rural Context of Appalachia Virginia

Background/Demographic Questionnaire

Sonia Molloy, msonia73@vt.edu

Please answer all of the following questions as they describe you.

Participant ID: _____

County of Residence: _____

Rolling Consent: Hello, you just gave me permission to interview you for a research study at Virginia Tech. Are you still Ok with participating in the interview? This demographic survey should last about 30 minutes or so and you can stop at any time.
[Interviewer: proceed only if parent indicates a desire to interview at this point]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your Age? _____

2. What is your Race?

    1 _____ Hispanic or Latino

    2 _____ White

    3 _____ African American

    4 _____ Native American

    5 _____ Asian American

    6 _____ Other_____

3. How many children do you have? _____

4. What are your children's ages?_____

5. Do you live with your children? Which ones (if applicable)? List as child 1 is the oldest.

    _____

6. Do your children live with the same mother?

   _____

7. Baby's birthdate/age _____

8. Baby's gender _____

9. How many days a week do you see this baby?

   _____

10. How many days a week do you see your other children (if applicable)?

    _____

11. Highest year of schooling completed?

    1 _____ 1st – 8th

    2. _____ Some High school

    3_____ High school (graduate or GED equivalent)

    4 _____ Vocational school

    5 _____ Some college

    6 _____ College

    7 _____ Graduate School _____

12. Are you currently?

    1 _____ Married

    2 _____ Divorced

    3 _____ Separated

    4 _____ Cohabiting

    5 _____ Single

    6 _____ Other_____

13. Are you living with your baby's other parent? _____

14. Who else is living with you and what is your relationship to them?

(Remind parent not to use real names)

_____

_____

[Rolling Consent: I just want to check in before I continue the interview. We are almost done—Is it OK if I ask you a few more questions?]

ECONOMIC

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your economic situation

52. Do you currently work?

1 _____ Yes

2 _____ No

[If no, skip to question 82]

53. What best describes your employment status?

1 _____Full time employed

2 _____More than full-time employed

3 _____Part-time employed

4 _____Self-employed

5 _____Unemployed

6 _____Disabled _____

7 If not listed, please fill in _____

54. Are you on public assistance? (HUD, WIC, Food Stamp, TANF)

1 _____ Yes

2 _____ No

55. Tell me which letter best reflects your current income:

_____A. Less than $5,000   _____ F. $25,000 to $29,999

_____B. $5,000 to $9,999   _____ G. $30,000 to $39,999

_____C. $10,000 to $14,999   _____ H. $40,000 to $49,999

_____D. $15,000 to $19,999   _____ I. $50,000 and above

_____E. $ 20,000 to 24,999   _____ J. N/A

56. Are you receiving child support?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

If so, how much per month? _____

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation! Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated.

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: A Qualitative Inquiry of Fathering in the Rural Context of Appalachia Virginia

Investigator(s): Sonia Molloy, MA Graduate Student Researcher
msonia73@vt.edu / 724-594-3607
Dr. April Few-Demo, PhD, Associate Professor
alfew@vt.edu / 540-231-2664
Dr. Mark Benson, PhD, Associate Professor
mbenson@vt.edu / 540-231-5720

Consent form for research participation.

This is a consent form to participate in this research. This form contains important information about this study as well as what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.

Please read this information carefully. Please ask any questions at any time. If you decide to participate, please sign this form. You will receive a copy of this form.

I. Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this study is to develop theory about the process of fathering an infant within a specific social context. The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of how fathers do fathering as well as inform current and future programs to better target and serve fathers. The results from this research will be used for a doctoral dissertation and future publications. The expected number of participants will be 50 fathers of an infant age birth to 18 months old.

II. Procedures

You are being invited to participate in an individual interview and completion of demographics. The interview will take place at the agreed upon community location that best fits the participant's needs. The demographic survey will take about 30 minutes. This interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes and will be audio recorded. Following the interview, researchers will transcribe the audio recording. All identifying information will be removed from the transcript. You may choose to stop the interview at any time with no penalty to you.

III. Risks

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study.

Risk of breach of confidentiality. The only people with access to identifying information will be the interviewer and the principle investigators. The protection of participant information will be taken seriously during all phases of the study and after the study. Confidential study information is not discussed outside of the research settings unless prompted by you, the participant.

Risk of disclosure of personal information. Participating in this interview may cause you to reveal personal information. You do not need to answer every question if you do not feel comfortable doing so. If at any time you appear upset or distressed as a result of the interview questions, the researcher may ask you about it to be sure that you want to continue. A list of local resources will be provided to you. Any expenses accrued for seeking or receiving treatment will be the responsibility of the subject and not that of the research project, research team, or VirginiaTech.

IV. Benefits

For many participants, completing our study may promote reflection upon parenting and encourage positive parenting behaviors.

No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

If you choose to participate in this study, you will choose a pseudonym to correspond to the information you share. One electronic document will exist that connects your information to your pseudonym and an ID number. This file will be kept on a password-protected computer of the researcher and be encrypted with another separate password. The research team will be the only people who have access to the data.

At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

Note: in some situations, it may be necessary for an investigator to break confidentiality. If a researcher has reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected, or that a person poses a threat of harm to others or him/herself, the researcher is required by Virginia State law to notify the appropriate authorities. This researcher must report any suspected child abuse or threat of harm to the proper authorities.

VI. Compensation

Compensation for participation in this study will be a $70 gift card (Walmart, Food Lion, or Amazon).

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

IX. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date_____

Subject signature

_____

Subject printed name

(Note: each subject must be provided a copy of this form. In addition, the IRB office may stamp its approval on the consent document(s) you submit and return the stamped version to you for use in consenting subjects; therefore, ensure each consent document you submit is ready to be read and signed by subjects.)

Appendix D

Local Resources in the Appalachia Region of Virginia

Appalachian region (Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe)

<u>Resources</u>
If you are suffering with a mental health crisis, or are thinking about harming yourself or attempting suicide, please tell someone you can trust right away.
For Emergency Services Call 911
or
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-8255 or 1-800-799-4889 (TTY)

Report Child Abuse & Neglect
800-552-7096 Virginia
804-786-8536 Out-of-State
800-828-1120 Hearing-impaired

Tap Into Hope-Fathers First
http://www.tapintohope.org/FathersFirst.aspx
Roanoke Higher Education Center
108 N. Jefferson Street, Suite 503, VA
Fathers First Program Manager Nick Kline
(540) 767-6229 or (540) 767-6230
Residents of Alleghany County, Bath County, Botetourt County, Craig County, Roanoke County, and Rockbridge County, and the cities of Buena Vista, Covington, Lexington, Roanoke, and Salem are eligible for this service.

<u>Online Resources</u>
National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse – online support, programs, resources, and blog
https://fatherhood.gov

Fathers Mental Health – online support, resources, and blog
http://fathersmentalhealth.com

The fatherhood support network – online support
http://www.fatherhoodsupportnetwork.org

National Center for Fathering - programs
http://www.fathers.com/resource-center/

County Resources
<u>Alleghany</u>
Department of Social Services
110 Rosedale AvenueCovington, VA 24426   -1244
(540) 965-1780(540) 965   -1772 (FAX) (540) 965   -1787

<u>Bath</u>
Department of Social Services
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 7, Warm Springs, VA 24484
Physical Address: 65 Courthouse Hill Road, Room G, Warm Springs, VA 24484
Jason Miller – Director
Phone: (540) 839-7271
Fax: (540) 839-7278
http://www.bathcountyva.org/community-resources.html

<u>Bland</u>
Department of Social Services
612 Main St. / P.O. Box 55
Bland, VA 24315
Phone 276-688-4111
Fax: 276-688-1468
http://www.blandcountyva.gov/departments/social-services/

<u>Botetourt</u>
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 99
220 Commons Parkway
Daleville, VA 24083
Phone: (540) 591-5960
Fax: (540) 591-5969
http://www.co.botetourt.va.us/government/services.php

<u>Buchanan</u>
Department of Social Services
3174 Slate Creek Rd
Grundy, VA 24614
Phone: 276-935-8106
http://bcdss.org

Carroll
Department of Social Services
605-8 Pine Street
Hillsville, VA 24343
(276) 730-3130
Fax: (276) 730-3135
http://carrollcountyva.org/index.php?/govt_template/social_services/

Craig
Department of Social Services
James Weber
Phone: (540) 864-5117
http://craigcountyva.gov/departments/social-services/

Dickenson
Department of Social Services
120 Clover St.
Clintwood, VA 24228
Ph: (276) 926-1661
Fx: (276) 926-8144
Fx: (276) 926-6414
http://www.dickensonva.org/index.aspx?NID=119

Floyd
Department of Social Services
120 West Oxford Street, Building A-2
Floyd, Virginia 24091
Phone: (540) 745-9316
Fax: (540) 745-9325
http://www.floydcova.org/floyd-county-departments/social-services/

Children's Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) of Floyd County (for families of children prenatally to 6 years old)
323 Floyd Hwy S, PO Box 849, Floyd, VA 24091
Phone 540-745-2211
Fax 540-745-2106
Floyd Head Start
Family Educators and Family/Health Advocate
323 Floyd Highway South
PO Box 849, Floyd, VA 24091
Phone: 540-745-2120
Fax 745-2106
L SEP

Head Start Early Learning Center
New River Community College
5251 College Drive, Dublin, VA 24084
Phone: 540-674-3600

Giles
Department of Social Services
211 Main Street, Suite 109
Narrows, VA 24124
(540) 726-8315 or
(540) 626-7291
FAX: (540) 726-8253
http://www.virginiasmtnplayground.com/social-services/

Children's Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) of Giles County (for families of children prenatally to 6 years old)
211 Main Street, Narrows
Phone 540-726-2252
Fax 540-726-2254
Narrows Head Start
111 Mary St., Narrows, VA 24124
Phone: 540-726-2700

   Pearisburg Head Start
1105 Henson Ave., Pearisburg 24134
Phone: 540-921-2355
Fax 921-2435

Grayson
Department of Social Services
129 Davis St.
Independence, VA 24348
(276) 773-2452
(276) 236-9541
Fax: (276) 773-2361
http://www.graysoncountyva.gov/grayson-county-social-services/

 Henry
Department of Social Services
20 Progress Drive
Martinsville, VA 24112
(276) 656-4300
http://www.henrycountyva.gov/Social-Services.html

Highland
Department of Social Services
158 Courthouse Lane, Courthouse Annex, P.O. Box 247
Monterey, VA 24465 540-468-2199
http://www.highlandcounty.org/relocation/government/

Lee
Department of Social Services
108 Hill St., P.O. Box 348
Jonesville, VA 24264-0348
(276) 346-1010
http://leecova.org

Montgomery
Department of Social Services
Health and Human Services Bldg.
210 S. Pepper St., Ste. B
Christiansburg, VA 24073
Phone: (540) 382-6990
Fax: (540) 382-694
http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/content/15989/16065/default.aspx

Children's Health Improvement Partnership Montgomery & Radford (for families of children prenatally to 6 years old)
114 A. North Franklin Street, Christiansburg
Phone 540-394-3255
Fax 540-394-3256
Blacksburg Head Start
701 Church St., Blacksburg 24060
Office phone: 540-552-0490
Fax: 552-3279

 Christiansburg Head Start
Office Phone: 540-381-7559
Fax: 381-2085
135 Church Street, Christiansburg, 24073
Family Educators and Family/Health Advocate
Phone: 540-381-7585
Radford Head Start
306 West Main Street, Radford 24141
Phone: 540-731-4107

Patrick
Department of Social Services
106 Rucker Street
Suite 128
Stuart, Virginia 24171
Ph: (276) 694-3328
Fax: (276) 694-8210
http://www.co.patrick.va.us/social-services

Pulaski
Department of Social Services
53 Commerce St.
Pulaski, VA 24301-0110
(540) 980-7995
(540) 980-7908 (FAX)
http://www.pcdss.org/index.php?id=contact-us

Children's Health Improvement Partnership Pulaski County (for families of children prenatally to 6 years old)

412 N. Jefferson Ave,
Pulaski, VA 24301
Phone 540-994-9200
Fax 540-994-9334
Pulaski Head Start
14 Sixth St, Pulaski, VA 24301
Phone: 540-994-5740

Rockbridge
Department of Social Services
20 E. Preston St., Lexington, VA 24450
(540) 463-7143
http://www.co.rockbridge.va.us/157/Social-Services-Board

Russell
Department of Social Services
79 Rogers St., P.O. Box 1207
Lebanon, VA 24266-1207
http://www.russellcountyva.org
(276)889-3031

Scott
Department of Social Services
190 Beech St., Suite 101
Gate City, VA 24251
(276) 386-3631
http://scottcountyva.com

Smyth
Department of Social Services
121 Bagley Circle, Suite 200
Marion, VA 24354
http://www.smythcountydss.org
(276) 783-8148

Tazewell
Department of Social Services
253 Chamber Drive, P.O. Box 149
Tazewell, VA 24651
http://tazewellcountyva.org
(276) 988-8500

Washington
Department of Social Services
15068 Lee Highway, Suite 100, Bristol, VA 24202
http://www.washcova.com
(276) 645-5000

Wise
Department of Social Services
5612 North Bear Creek Rd, P.O. Box 888
Wise, VA 24293
http://wisecounty.org/DSS/dss.html
(276) 328-8056

Wythe
Department of Social Services
275 S. Fourth St., Wytheville, VA 24382
http://wythedss.org
(276) 228-5493

Appendix E

Letter to Community Member

December 1, 2016

Dear Community Member:

Thank you for assisting in the recruitment for this research study: *A Qualitative Inquiry of Fathering in the Rural Context of Appalachia Virginia.* My research project's aim is to help the parenting field move beyond the current conceptualizations of father involvement and father identity in order to develop theory about the process of fathering within a specific social context, rural Appalachia. The purpose of this study is to examine father involvement to:

- Identify possible typologies of father involvement, which in turn can either enhance or modify current intervention programming.
- Discover whether father involvement typologies can help identify those critical moments that typify readiness for change and thus, define incentives for men's retention in intervention programming.
- Assist current and future programs better target and serve this understudied and underserved population of rural Appalachia. The sample for this project will be 50 fathers of an infant age birth to 18 months who reside in the rural Appalachia region of Virginia.

The Virginia Tech IRB has approved this study (IRB# 16-675). I thank you for your assistance in reaching out to your families with the enclosed study flyers. If you have any questions or would like me to attend a parent meeting, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sonia Molloy, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, Family Studies
Department of Human Development
Virginia Tech
409 Wallace Hall (0416)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Email: msonia73@vt.edu

Fathers of Infants

- We are seeking fathers of infants to participate in a study on fathering in the Appalachian region of Virginia.

  - **At least 18 years old**
  - **Be a father of a child age birth to 18 months old**
  - **Living in one of the following counties of Virginia** (Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe)

- You will be compensated for your time, efforts, and travel in participating in this interview with a **$50 gift card** for Walmart, Amazon, or Food Lion and a **$20 gift card** for Walmart, Amazon, or Food Lion for the demographic survey.

- Individuals who choose to participate may participate in an interview that will last about 60-90 minutes and complete a demographic survey that will take about 30 minutes.

- The purpose of this study is to develop theory about the process of fathering an infant to gain an understanding of how fathers do fathering as well as inform current and future programs to better serve fathers.

For More Information Contact:
Sonia Molloy,
msonia73@vt.edu
724-594-3607

This research and recruitment has been approved by the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board –Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Project No. 16-575

Appendix G

Memorandum on Rural Fathers Research Dissertation 2016-2017

Project Title: Fathering in a Rural Context

Principal Investigator: Dr. April Few-Demo and Dr. Mark Benson, Department of Human Development

Graduate Researcher: Sonia Molloy, Department of Human Development

Date: May 18, 2016

Dear Nick Kline and Tap Into Hope colleagues,

Dr. Few-Demo and I (Sonia Molloy) would like to invite you to consider partnering in a research study investigating fathering in a rural context. I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Human Development at Virginia Tech. My proposed research project's aim is to help the parenting field move beyond the current conceptualizations of father involvement and father identity in order to develop theory about the process of fathering within a specific social context, rural Appalachia. We will be guided by the reconceptualization of father involvement by Pleck (2010) and the fathering identity literature (Pasley, Petren, & Fish, 2014). This qualitative research seeks to investigate the many ways in which diverse low-income and working class fathers in rural Appalachia participate in raising their children when facing financial constraints, legal challenges, and/or multifaceted caregiving arrangements (Mills-Koonce et al., 2015; Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2013).

Using a symbolic interactionist and intersectionality framework, the purpose of this study is to examine father involvement to (1) identify possible typologies of father involvement which in turn can either enhance or modify current intervention programming; (2) to discover whether father involvement typologies can help identify those critical moments that typify readiness for change and thus, define incentives for men's retention in intervention programming. Additionally, the aim of this study is to assist current and future programs better target and serve this understudied and underserved population of rural Appalachia. The sample for this project will be 50 fathers of an infant age birth to 12 months who reside in the rural Appalachia region of Virginia.

In order to be fully informed regarding the services of current programs and needs of fathers in this area, we seek to form partnerships with Head Start in the counties of rural Appalachia as well as Tap into Hope's Total Action for Progress Father's First Program that serves fathers in the Roanoke, Virginia area. The goals of this study are to gain knowledge and understanding of fathers' involvement with infants and the fathering process within their social context. This research will examine the desires and needs of fathers to inform strengthening family and fathering programs for both practice and policy.

Partnership Goals

Benefits for Partners

- o All partners will receive a summary of the results of the research. This summary will include results as well as recommendations to inform future research and programs.
- o The researcher will offer a presentation of the research project and results at the completion of the program. This presentation can be presented to staff, participants, or policy makers.
- o Updates on the progress of this research will be given to the participating family strengthening and fathering programs twice throughout the project year of 2016-2017.

Our Expectations of Partners

- o We ask that partners meet with the researcher to discuss current programming and the needs and successes of their programs.
- o We ask that partners disseminate information to their participants of this research opportunity.
- o We ask the partners to inform the researcher of the availability of spaces that can be utilized for a 90-minute interview with research participants either at their location or within the community.
- o We ask for a letter of support of a collaborative relationship to be submitted to the Administration for Children and Families, Family Strengthening Scholars dissertation grant.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to read this memorandum. Please address any questions that you might have about this research project to Sonia Molloy. We hope to hear from you soon. We are looking forward to forming a collaborative and strong partnership.

Sincerely,

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