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Parent Interaction In Primetime Family Themed Television Portrayals: A Replication And Extension Of Dail And Way's (1985) Content Analysis

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PARENT INTERACTION IN PRIMETIME FAMILY THEMED TELEVISION PORTRAYALS: A REPLICATION AND EXTENSION OF DAIL AND WAY'S (1985) CONTENT ANALYSIS

by

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my best friend, Kimberly, whose unwavering love and kindness was taken from this world too soon. Losing her was almost crippling, but her spirit and belief in me made it possible to regain focus amidst the grief to finally make her proud and reach goals that were beyond our elementary friendship imagination. Her beautiful children, Hannah, Jaxon, and Isabella, are the reminders of her wonderful parenting and infectious positive spirit.

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It was Dr. Heather Dillaway, though, who really saved me by agreeing to come into the project at the very end, with very little direct experience with my academic career. Her expertise

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Television remains an important force of socialization as it reflects and perpetuates societal norms and ideals and continues to be a primary social institution that impacts learning of social roles and interactions. Social role learning is embedded in the television viewing experience, through which particular social roles, behaviors, norms, and stereotypes are advanced and reinforced, as some are silenced. When observing families on television, viewers form attitudes, perceptions, and expectations, which help construct particular family-related social roles as the norm. Thus, the family interactions depicted on television are a productive site for examining how particular aspects of social roles are valued and devalued.

Family interactions help shape lifelong interpersonal communication patterns and it is the parent roles in these interactions that are especially important. While recognizing there are other equally ubiquitous environments helping to define parent roles, television is mentioned as a source of messages about parenting only slightly less than ones' own parents or family members (Heisler & Ellis, 2008), affecting expectations of family life (Albada, 2000). As a primary source for learning about parenting, media messages can influence expectations of parent roles almost as much as family members themselves. Thus, a source of learning this powerful should be more closely scrutinized. As such, the present study examines how parent roles are depicted in television content. Specifically, the present research seeks primarily to replicate, and secondarily to extend, the content analysis of parent roles on television done by Dail and Way in 1985. As suggested by Dail and Way (1985), "longitudinal analyses of these messages would be useful to identify changes in content over time and in relation to changes in social structures" (p. 498).

Situating Significance of the Project

There are many interacting social structures that orient individuals into particular roles. Not only are televised social roles and gender roles pervasive and difficult to ignore, often seeping into role expectations beyond awareness, the nature of television consumption is that it happens in private family settings, with each family member identifying with relevant social roles and gender roles. Families are the other ubiquitous, defining, diverse, dynamic, interconnected social institution that is the cornerstone of American society. These particular social structures, family, television, and gender, have been traditionally aligned with patriarchal notions, which are in flux among other evolving systems, such as capitalism, consumerism, religion, and marriage, for example. With the magnitude of influence these social structures have in our daily lives, analyzing family and parent roles in television content is broadly applicable and necessary to answer the questions posed by Dail and Way (1985) over three decades ago. What do televised parent interactions suggest about family, parent, and gender roles with respect to changing social structures?

The present research is both timely and vital to further understanding how parent interactions are portrayed on television. The significance of the research is situated as follows: first, in a discussion of family structure; next, in a discussion of parent interaction; and finally, theoretical frameworks relevant to the present research. Some underlying themes to note across all of these discussions will be the ubiquitous, omnipresent, pervasive, constructed nature of social roles.

Family structure. Contemporary family communication scholars further discussions of family interaction among social psychology systems theorists, family sociologists, and anthropologists. Examining family communication in television informs family education media

literacy initiatives. More particularly, insight into parent-child interaction furthers the understanding of the relationship between parent interaction and family structure. Particularly open family communication and cooperative family interaction result in favorable child development, family wellbeing, and communicative behaviors. Often, contemporary discussions of family policy disregard the importance of family interaction patterns and rather focus predominately on family structure demographics (Cowan & Cowan, 2010). The current research addresses this gap, directly examining how family structure demographics relate to family interaction patterns as depicted in television portrayals.

Family structure was mentioned briefly, but not included in the initial questions answered by Dail and Way's (1985) research. Their discussion pointed out a disparity between families of television and the corresponding decade's census, sharing the aggregate of parents' occupations and marital status. Unfortunately, beyond an analysis associating parent sex and parent interaction, the data were not further analyzed to examine whether family structure correlated with particular parent interaction. This left questions of how specific aspects of family structure correlate with particular parent interactions. Posing questions similar to the original research also allows for examination of whether television families and parent interactions have changed in thirty years. Research has pointed to relationships associated with family structure variables, finding family structure is correlated with behavior problems (Fomby & Osborne, 2017).), health care access (Bzostek & Percheski, 2016), student achievement (Brown & Iyengar, 2008; Golden, 2016; Spera, 2005) and stress (Golden, 2016). As the main extension from the original research, the present research isolated family structure variables in order to investigate the relationship between family structure and parent interaction.

While exploring the questions of this research, it is important to conceptualize the notions of family, parenting, and gender as dynamically interconnected concepts that are socially constructed. The American family is a social phenomenon that has often been narrowly defined towards a largely mythical, supposedly traditional norm (Coontz, 2010); when in actuality, the family is a dynamic, diverse, interconnected, continuously changing approach to cooperation, with special privileges and obligations among biological, fictive, functional, or sexual connections (Coontz, 2010; Risman & Rutter, 2015). The notions of traditional, married, nuclear families with females having the majority of the unpaid work and a natural mothering ability, and males having innate parenting deficiencies and sole paid work obligations, are examples of phenomenon that are reinforced, especially when these notions champion the hegemonic power structures of the time. For a long time, such parent roles simply went unquestioned: father as the provider; and mother as the nurturer of child, husband, and home. Now there is a shift in understanding how gender and family roles actually work together. Changes in gender roles around parenting and families are some of the most far-reaching transformations in modern life.

Family communication, family sociology, feminist, and mass communication scholars address areas of mutual interest, calling attention to the influence media has by imposing an absolute way of perceiving constructed notions of family life. The present research examined current constructions of family interaction in primetime family television programming. To ensure the original Dail and Way research was revisited amidst current family research, the discussions are centered on the questions, which also align with the categories of interest addressed by The Council on Contemporary Families (CCF) in their latest edited volume, *Families as They Really Are* (Risman & Rutter, 2015). The Council on Contemporary Families, an interdisciplinary community of experts working with and studying families, organized a

compilation into four main categories that align with the categorical discussions of the present research: family structure, historical view of how the "traditional" family has changed; family relationships, in this case focused on parent-child interaction; child response, noting the construction of youth as a social class that greatly affects parent roles; and changes, or how changing gender roles have had massive impact on family relationships. The next sections, and subsequent chapters, orient the present research around these broad categories of family structure and parent interaction, which inherently includes child response. Associating these concepts of family structure and parent interaction adds to the discussion of changing role expectations having great impact on families.

Parent interaction. A parent can be broadly defined as any adult who has responsibilities and rights to the regular caretaking of a child (Brooks, 2012). Parent interaction refers to any communication acts between a parent and child, or even a parent communicating about, or on behalf of, a child or family role (Dail & Way, 1985). Although parent interaction is often discussed synonymously with parent-child interaction or family communication patterns, for ease of discussion, the present research broadly uses parent interaction to encompass both concepts of concern here, parent role and child rearing. The concepts combine some of the major theories in family communication, including viewing the family as a system of interdependent, dialectical relationships that help shape the narrative, rules, and interactions of a family (Risman & Rutter, 2015).

It can be a challenge to conceptualize parent roles and parent interaction without regard to gender. These definitions do not make reference to gender, or any difference between mother and father, but often parent role expectations are aligned by gender. Parent roles being naturally gendered are most apparent in the synonymous nature of the mother role as *the* parent role.

Mothering has been tantamount to nurturing and caring for children, which often left fathering out of the definition of parenting all together. In fact, the entry for fatherhood in the first and second editions of the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1994; 1998) included little to no mention of child or family interaction, focusing primarily on transmission of rights and social membership, historically and cross culturally, all in a hundred words or less. In defense of the sociology dictionary, the lack of data on fathers is acknowledged and conceptually addressed in terms of their role as husband and provider. The minimalist definition for father presented in the last quarter century is disconcerting, and the present research has furthered understanding of parent roles among the changing nature of families in modern society, which have rippling effects, whether in real life or represented in television programming. Since television is a driving force of family entertainment, an examination of family-themed programming has powerful implications for understanding the interaction among family, parent, and gender roles.

Family roles and institutions, such as parenting, nuclear family, and marriage are topics that are inescapable in most people's daily lives. These roles, and more importantly, the norms and expectations for these roles, are so embedded into the culture, they are difficult, even almost impossible to disregard. Marriage is a sociological apparatus around which the American family is built. Parent interaction is a primary communicative act that helps shape family roles. Yet, there are so many different types of American families and each one approaches the institution of marriage, family, and parental interaction in a way that fits their life circumstances. There is no universal, typical, narrowly defined nuclear family, though emotional closeness and a middle-class childhood is often presented as a norm (Cherlin, 2010; Coontz, 2015; Cowan & Cowan, 2010; Mintz, 2010). So, the following questions were posed: How are families and parent roles presented in contemporary American television family and how have children reinforced or

rejected particular roles? Are consistent norms and expectations present among different family structures? These are questions that sparked an investigation of parent interactions, with special attention focused on family, role, and gender expectations among moments of parent-child interaction and parent roles on television.

The concepts of family, parent, and gender roles should be noted throughout the project as primary themes and organizational constructions. This introduction into the ubiquitous nature of family and parent roles clearly gives this project its urgency; though, the theoretical frameworks around social role learning, media, and gender further cement the value and reach of discussions such as this one.

Theoretical frameworks. This section discusses the theories that are the foundation of the present research project. Even though not much media research has focused primarily on learning the social role of parent, connections have long been made among media and gender role stereotyping and it is clear that television viewing affects expectations of social roles. In order to situate the discussion, the argument of significance will focus within three prominent theories that demonstrate well the cognitive and sociological, unintended, long term dimensions of effects that help shape the gendered role of parent.

Social learning theory. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Walters, 1963) synthesizes media effects particularly well, focusing on how the media environment has pervasive, substantial influence on cognitive and social levels. Rather than gleaning social roles from direct experience, social learning occurs through reinforcement, when behaviors are acquired through a learning process in which modeling and social comparison occurs with persistent observation. The theory is based in early theories of social cognition, or more specifically, the social comparison process in which groups are seen as having normative and

comparative functions (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). It is the persistent observation and social comparison process that deems media as powerful sites for social role learning, such as defining the norms of family and parent roles by advancing particular roles and silencing others.

Social learning theory has been widely connected to social, family, and gender roles, and thus shows how mediated parent roles also have normative and comparative functions. This theory recognizes media portrayals as a site of shared learning and a powerful means of social comparison (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Socialization happens through modeling and vicarious reinforcement (Bandura & Walters, 1963), with an interplay among social and family structures, thus becoming the sources for absorbing and internalizing a particular set of roles, especially those roles furthered in media (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Social learning theory provides an important theoretical basis for identifying how particular social roles are valued over others. Rather than first-hand socialization experience, the media portrayals lead to particular roles being reinforced, and other manifestations of these roles either non-existent or rejected. Essentially, there is a particular way to be a good parent and a particular way to be a bad parent, and historically different ways to be a mother versus a father. The interplay with the children's responses to the roles will help identify this reinforcement or rejection of parent roles.

While considering social learning theory, understanding families on television becomes almost as vital as understanding flesh-and-blood American families. With family being the first group of belonging (Socha, 1999), family communication is central to social development (Bandura, 1977), predicting cognition and communication behavior (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002), mental wellbeing (Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007), and sense of social support (Gardner & Cutrona, 2004). Learning social roles among immediate families and media families is an on-going process with lifelong manifestations. Parent-child relationships and family interactions

continue to influence communication behavior of adults after they are away from their original family communication patterns (Ledbetter, 2009; Myers & Glover, 2007). Media portrayals of parent interactions are fodder for helping socialize parents and children into roles. These roles, along with the added effect of persistent exposure, are powerful sites for examining the effects of the mediated socialization process.

Cultivation effect. To further explain the sociological, aggregate effect of television viewing, the cultivation effect explains how the individual encoding, or making meaning of the programming, is processing at a mass level, with a public agenda of shared meaning and understanding. It is the cultivation effect (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986) that further relates media exposure and altered perceptions of reality and values, or how one comes to know what is known by consuming particular media. The cultivation effect explains how television helps socialize people into standardized roles and forms a common symbolic environment, which both reflects and reinforces attitudes (Gerbner et al., 1986). The individual effects add up to societal effects, and societal effects add up to individual effects in a symbiotic process. Cultivation effects associate heavy television viewing with particular world-views, making the connection between heavy media exposure and altered perceptions of reality and particular values. The more people watch television, the more they feel reality reflects television. In other words, the process is individual, the outcome is social; heavy television viewers develop perceptual biases towards television's portrayals. The perceptual bias has been widely studied with gender roles, but there is a remarkably small subset of cultivation effects research that connects the gendered roles of parenting, specifically, with family and parent role expectations. It is this small subset of research that gives the present research its significance, showing televised parent roles are linked to gendered attitudes and expectations.

People formulate attitudes and self-image among media constructions, with heavy television consumption associated with particularly gendered expectations. Traditional gender roles in media lead to negative attitudes toward women, stereotyping, and traditional expectations of mothers (Morgan, Leggett & Shanahan, 1999; Yamamoto & Ran, 2014); non-traditional gender roles in media are associated with modern thinking (Morgan, Leggett & Shanahan, 1999; Tomar, 2007) and lead to positive attitudes toward women (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Dill & Thill, 2007; Ex, Jassens & Korzilius, 2002; Wartella, 1980). As one study points out, "parenting roles portrayed in [media] . . . have a direct effect on the attitudes, expectations, and even the behaviors, of parents and children" (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005, p. 150). Some parents believe that mothers should be home with their children after watching work-family conflicts on television (Descartes & Kottak, 2009). Heavy media consumers are more likely to praise men for adhering to gender roles, while negatively regarding women who stray from expected gender roles (Zaikman & Marks, 2017). Heavy television consumption affects attitudes about parenting, encouraging viewers to construct gender and parent expectations similar to those portrayed on television.

This cultivation effect research points out two things most clearly: indeed, television viewers are learning what is expected in terms of social roles; and even if one claims to be immune from, or attempts to ignore television's teachings, mediated parenting has an effect on real-life parenting and is a powerful source of social role learning. Even as television viewers denied the influence of media in their life, their in-depth awareness of specific media content was difficult for them to hide (Descartes & Kottak, 2009). Just as many television viewers falsely believe, some critics also expect that parents can disregard its teachings, but this is not necessarily the case if one is a viewer, even a sporadic, guarded, critical viewer. It is just not as

easy as it sounds to simply ignore the social roles that one does not want to learn. Parents cannot help but internalize the constant expectations consumed, as Douglas and Michaels (2004) note, "even mothers who deliberately avoid TV and magazines, or who pride themselves on seeing through them, have trouble escaping the standards of perfection, and the sense of threat, that the media ceaselessly atomize into the air we breathe" (p. 3). Fathers also internalize the invasive role expectations found in media, as LaRossa (1995) puts it, "men are being . . . reminded on a regular basis that they are *failing* as fathers . . . when compared with the image of fatherhood which has become part of our culture and which they, on some level of consciousness, believe in" (p. 456). Whether examining the role of mother or father, media portrayals help to define what it means to be a parent, and the parent role expectations are equally difficult to live up to, especially when being judged against the powerfully invasive media.

   Social role theory. It is difficult to discern exact sources of learning of a particular social role, but televised stereotypical gender roles have long been associated with parenting. In order to examine parenting in primetime television, a gender role perspective was also necessary to include. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) suggests that stereotypical societal expectations and the sexual division of labor produce gender roles. Essentially, gender roles are developed through the effects of socialization, when cultures expect and endorse particular roles, thus creating stereotypically aligned sex characteristics, or gender roles. The gender roles are constructed and aligned as such, not arbitrarily, not because of how our psychology evolved, but because of division of labor (Eagly, 1987). Thus, women are generally associated with domestic duties, emotional care, and nurturing, while men are generally associated with public sphere, independence, and assertiveness.

Parent roles are also uniquely gendered. Social role theory suggests that there are particular expectations of being a mother and father. Gender roles often become more differentiated when women and men become parents (Katz-Wise, Pries & Hyde, 2010), but still, gendered parent roles are not arbitrary or natural, as they are sometimes presented. Just as with gender roles, parent roles are constructed, supporting the status quo and keeping the patriarchal structures working together to support each other. Applying social role and social learning theories among arguments of cultivation effects, strengthens the significance of this research. Knowing that gender stereotypes can negatively affect men and women's performance (Steven et. al, 1999) explains how stereotype awareness can threaten to be a self-fulfilling prophecy (Lips, 2008). Gender stereotypes negatively affect boys' reading self-concept (Retelsdorf, Schwartz & Asbrock, 2015), while they negatively affect girls' math performance (Galdi, Cadinu & Tomasetto, 2014). This self-fulfilling prophecy applies to parent role stereotypes as well. The assumption of mothers as better caregivers discriminates against fathers, while these same high expectations of mothers can, in fact, discriminate against mothers (Coltrane & Hickman, 1992; Gungor & Biernat, 2009; Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). The consensus seems to be that when it comes to parenting, there are higher standards for women than men (Schafran, 2003), and these gender role expectations greatly influence the social role of parent (Coltrane & Hickman, 1992) among the structures that help to define parenting.

Parenting experiences and expectations are social factors that result in structured inequities; thus to generate social change, social institutions need to be examined. As a pre-eminent father scholar notes, "when it comes to parenthood, today it would appear that both men and women can be victims as well as beneficiaries of society's ideals" (LaRossa, 1995, p. 457). The hierarchy of gender becomes problematic, at times, for both mother and father and

parenthood in general. Social learning theory, cultivation theory, and social role theory, together, demonstrate how media can be such a powerful conveyor of sex and gender norms, with social and cultural ideals of men and women, and ultimately, mothers and fathers (Ward, 2003; Zaikman & Marks, 2017). These three theories help to understand how parent interaction in media can help further explicate changing family, parent, sex, and gender norms.

Goal of Present Research

The present research addresses how family and parent interactions are presented in primetime television by replicating and extending the quantitative content analysis published by Dail and Way in 1985. Near the beginning of the 80s, when their data was collected, parent interactions were found around thirty times per hour in primetime television (Dail & Way, 1985). Assuming parent portrayals have persisted, or more likely, have increased, it will be telling to see how they have evolved. These televised parent interactions cannot be ignored as an agent of parenting socialization. Just as thirty years ago, careful attention to family behaviors in television could assist in the development of interactive family education programs (Dail, 1983; Dail & Way, 1985), essentially, media literacy curriculum to encourage positive family functioning. Media literacy curriculum has been shown to increase understanding of gender-stereotyped messages (Puchner, Markowitz & Hedley, 2015) and sexualized media messages as inaccurate and glamorized (Pinkleton, Austin, Chen & Cohen, 2012). Although media literacy curriculum concerning parent and family roles is elusive, the present research could facilitate the endeavor. An analysis of current family and parent portrayals in television helps inform media literacy curriculum to encourage constructive family interaction among discussions of gender and parent role constructions, which can impact the fields of family sociology, family psychology, media education, and family communication.

Families have changed dramatically since the original Dail and Way research was conducted, with marriage becoming less likely and co-habitation more likely, and fewer children, while more children are born outside of marriage (Jacobsen, Mather & Dupuis, 2012). With the changing family forms and rapidly growing, shifting, aging population (baby-boomers), an examination of the family on television becomes essential.

Structure of Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review and Research Questions, Method, Results, and Discussion. The introduction situates significance of the project among the ubiquitous concepts of family, parenting, media, and gender. The review of literature examines family and parent interaction in media, which progress to the research questions. The method chapter presents the elements of conducting the present study, paying particular attention to replicating the tools, while noting extensions as necessary. Chapter four presents the results, organized by research questions, leading to the final chapter for discussion, conclusions, implications for industry and research, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As the present research study is a replication and extension of family and parent interaction research from the early eighties, the review of literature continues the pattern of discussing family structure and parent interaction. A broad scope was necessary in the literature review, since parent role portrayals are often addressed secondarily in media research, and much more minimally as the primary focus. Even more minimal are content analyses focused primarily on parenting in television programming. The review is exhaustive by also including critical cultural research on mediated parenting, which seems to be more abundant, but methodologically less transparent. This also called attention to the additional ways this dissertation addressed questions left to be answered about how media constructions of families and parenting have changed. The original research on parenting in primetime television, asked specifically, "What do parents observe about parenting in primetime television" (Dail & Way, 1985). Based on the assumptions of social learning theory, utilizing child development and sociological definitions of parenting, observations of parent interaction were associated with parent sex in the original research. The present study does the same, but first broadened the concept of parent sex to include other markers of family structure.

The literature review begins with a discussion of family structure in media. Family structures have been examined since the beginning of television, and much of the research views family structure as a discussion of traditional vs. non-traditional families, meaning, married or single parents. In the original research, family structure data was extracted from the television families, but simply asked whether the parents were married or single, and did not associate the traditional vs. non-traditional categories with the other data sets. The examination of literature broadens this concept to discuss family structure around the three areas of family structure

examined here, including parent sex, or gender roles, parent partnership, and occupation. The literature review is narrowed by focusing on the critical concepts, beginning each subsection with a discussion of the original research, then moving through other literature from that era, up through the most recent literature, and finally justification for asking the research questions in such a way.

Family Structure in Media

Family structure discussions found in media and gender research are centered around categorization as traditional or non-traditional, based solely on whether the parents were part of a married couple or not. After examining the original research's discussion of family structure, brief discussions of parent sex and parent occupation aspects of family structure will complete the section by leading to the research questions.

Family structure: Parent partnership. In the original research, parent partnership was discussed along the traditional vs. non-traditional categories, depending on whether the parent was married or single. Dail & Way (1985) found non-traditional family forms in the television sample at a rate of two to one over traditional families. There were only 30% of the families that were represented in traditional households with married parents, while 70% of the families were represented in non-traditional family forms. Of the non-traditional households, 21% were single-female headed households, 35% were single-male headed households, and 14% were deemed "other" family types, such as cohabitation and nonfamily groups. The U.S. Census Bureau (1980) also noted an increase in single parent households in the eighties, but not to the extent that was portrayed in television families. The disproportionately high incidence of single male parents in the television sample was pondered as foreseeing into a future trend. Despite the greater presence of non-traditional family forms than were present in society, fathers were shown

as more active as parents and mothers were portrayed stereotypically. In essence, single fathers made up for the fact that there was no mother by taking on the mothering role, but single mothers still tended to be stereotypically aligned by gender roles.

Although traditional families were not prevalent in the original research (Dail, 1985), other research from the eighties found primetime network television to have conservative, nuclear family units 65% of the time (Skill, Robinson, & Wallace, 1987). Throughout the 2000's, traditional families comprised almost half of all television families, while single parent families were on the rise and had fewer children than two-parent families (Wiscombe, 2014). Another change from the eighties and nineties was the higher incidence of single mothers than single fathers (Wiscombe, 2014), which is more in line with U.S. Census (2010) statistics. Stay-at-home fathers are becoming more prevalent, with an estimated 24% of pre-school-aged children having fathers as caretakers, while mothers are working (Carr, Cohen & Green, 2010). According to the Census Bureau, traditional families are actually becoming the minority. These so-called "traditional" families, with only the husband in the labor force, made up just 7% of all US households in 2002, and 13% of all married-couple households (Population Reference Bureau, 2003). Family structure has changed over the years, both in television and in society, but there are some genres where particular family types are more common.

Families are featured in sitcoms more than other genres, while sitcoms may be particularly influential on family roles social learning (Pehlke, Hennon, Radina & Kuvalanka, 2009). Non-traditional families have become more abundant in television, but have been found in less-threatening situation comedies (Skill, Robinson & Wallace, 1987; Wiscombe, 2014), with a number of extended family members (Wiscombe, 2014), or reality programming (Betancourt, 2015; Jorgenson, 2014). There were half as may family sitcoms in the 2014-2015 season as there

were in the 1989-1990 season, noting the proliferation of reality shows about families (Betancourt, 2015). Even though family sitcoms have changed over the decades, they still don't accurately reflect the American family (Betancourt, 2015), and reality programming is not much more realistic, where conservative gender roles and narratives of marriage, parenthood, and domesticity present a very traditional, narrowly defined role for women (Brancato, 2007; Maher, 2004). During the 2014-2015 season, there was still more likelihood for parents to be represented in traditional, two-parent households in family sitcoms (Betancourt, 2015), but non-traditional families are becoming more abundant. Reality programming often features extraordinary parent partnerships, from positive portrayals of multiple-marriages (Jorgenson, 2014) or non-traditional, gay families (Wiscombe, 2014), validating nontraditional family composition, while still reinforcing traditional gender roles (Brancato, 2007; Jorgenson, 2014; Maher, 2004). By associating non-traditional parent roles with controversial depictions of family and gender, the stereotypical families are reinforced. Although it may seem that representations of gay families is non-traditional, there is a warning of overemphasizing the potential for lesbian family forms to be progressive (Gabb, 2004), as shows become both a purveyor of traditional values while also espousing rhetoric against it (Press, 2009). Lesbian mothers felt confined by the typical binary between mother and father roles, and came up with their own, third category of "mather" (Padavic & Butterfield, 2011). The genres and the family structures are shifting, while the outcomes for traditional vs. non-traditional families continue to demonstrate which family structures are most valued.

One way to recognize the traditional family structure as most valued is in the positive outcomes and positive portrayals associated with traditional families. Traditional families were found to be most harmonious, with conforming behaviors (Skill & Wallace, 1990), and family

members who recognize they fit the most valued familial script (Slavkin, 2001), which encourages stereotypical expectations (Sinno & Killen, 2009). Most poignant, though, are the abundant associations of non-traditional families with negative outcomes and portrayals. Non-traditional families were portrayed as least harmonious, as having more power and rejection acts (Skill & Wallace, 1990), and as having more detrimental parenting behaviors and inappropriate combinations of behaviors and consequences (Bundy, Thompson & Strapp, 1997). Family characters deviating from traditional family and gender roles were portrayed as unhappy and pathetic (Walsh, Fursich, & Jefferson, 2008). Non-traditional family structures have long been associated with negative outcomes, but children from these families don't tend to have narrow, stereotypical expectations for parent roles (Sinno & Killen, 2009). It is often the non-traditional families that show the strongest associations with particular outcomes, and many of these associations are based on parents' sex roles.

Family structure: Parent sex. It is no question that particular family structures are found to produce particular outcomes, but when considering parent sex roles, there is further evidence of the differences in parenting practices and their effect on children. Family structure was found to have an effect on children's television viewing habits and physical activity, with girls from single parent families viewing more television than girls from two-parent families (Bagley, Salmon & Crawford, 2006). Single fathers were found to spend slightly less time caring for children than mothers, but more time than married fathers (Hook & Chalasani, 2008) and had fewer activities and less closeness with adolescents than mothers (Hawkins, Amato & King, 2006). Single mothers were found to use expert power primarily in the absence of the father (Skill & Wallace, 1990). Single parents were often sex-typed even more than traditional parents. Even adolescents' perceptions of gender roles were found to differ between children from one-

parent to two-parent families. Individuals from single parent homes were more likely to categorize themselves as sex-typed, such as highly masculine or feminine, while mother-headed families were more likely to produce individuals with fluid gender roles (Slavkin, 2001). Females were associated with role of mom more than males were associated with role of dad (Park, Smith & Correll, 2010). There is no doubt that parent and family roles are associated with gendered expectations, which are discussed thoroughly in the parent interaction section, but before moving on, one other aspect of family structure was addressed in the present research, parent occupation.

Family structure: Parent occupation. The original research only reported an overview of parents' occupation by noting the majority of the parents were in professional or semi-professional work (Dail & Way, 1985). Since parent occupation was not analyzed further, it was unknown if there were differences in the way mothers and fathers were portrayed in terms of their occupation. Other research found portrayal of parent occupation in television has been historically stereotypical, with men portrayed as the primary, paid work outside the home. There has been great change in the presence of women in the workforce, but parent expectations and gender stereotypes have changed to a much lesser extent. Television representation of women working is undercut by sense of nostalgia for family life (Press, 2009). Just as with non-traditional parent partnership, the families presented as outside the norm or pushing the boundaries, are actually reinforcing the norm, while being outside of it. Males have been portrayed successfully balancing family and career (Signorielli, 1982), while females were found struggling to manage juggling their time spent professionally, domestically and leisurely (Nathanson, 2013), and were least likely to succeed with the work-family balance (Signorielli, 1982). In a study by Elasmar et al. (1999), almost 45% of females had employment outside the

home, though primarily blue collar (19%), or the entertainment industry (15%). Generally, though, occupation was not a defining factor for female characters: There were more female characters represented as having an unclear occupation (30%), no job (16%), home-maker (11%) or housewife (3%) than there were females with occupations. Unmarried females were twice as likely to have professional careers or work in the entertainment industry and less likely to have unclear working status as married women. This would suggest that parent roles were stereotypical, especially for women, not allowing them to be mothers *and* working, or were found in stereotypical jobs, while fathers were "naturally" experts at the work-family balance.

A gendered division of labor is cemented with parent roles, largely by reshaping mothers', not fathers', routines (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997). Until the work/family balancing act is recognized as necessity as well as preference, as a family issue rather than a "woman's" issue, mothers will continue to pay a higher price than fathers for negotiating family and parent roles (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Spain & Bianchi, 1996). The bigger wage disparity for mothers, earning about 60% of full-time fathers wage, compared to the 75% wage gap between men and women (Akass, 2011) speaks to the further marginalization of mothers in our society. By keeping women concerned with viewing working as a "choice", the real issues facing mothers are obscured, such as the greater wage disparity between mothers and non-mothers than the disparity between men and women (Akass, 2011; Jackson & Darbyshire, 2006). Women either had the choice to be workers without the ideal privileges or take a dead-end mommy-track job, which essentially discriminate against women, especially mothers. The notion that mothers have a choice to "opt out" of the work force ignores the structural constraints in which the mothers "naturally" fall into the care-giving role while fathers "naturally" fall in the worker role (Jackson & Darbyshire, 2006). Family oriented television drama also unrealistically depicted the work-

family balance dilemma facing families today, portraying very little work-family conflict at all, which was especially absent during high family stress when conflict would likely occur (Prince, 2012). Women were found to experience almost twice as much work-to-family spillover than men, but men were found, atypically, to experience more family-to-work spillover (Prince, 2012). The expansionist theory (Barnett & Hyde, 2001) states that multiple roles (work, family) are beneficial for both men and women, particularly employment for women and family involvement for men. The present research questions call for addressing any conditions limiting these beneficial effects of sharing family and work roles. This gap in the research pointed to the opportunity to ask the family structure question a bit differently.

Family structure has changed from a fairly narrow, prescribed notion of family to an ever increasingly diverse portrayal of new family forms. There are such high demands on families managing a work-family balance, the notions of family structure can become paramount in family outcomes. The changing family structures affect the nature of the relationship between parents and children (Jackson & Darbyshire, 2006). A traditional family structure became a master narrative, or a powerful form of social control, using elusive ideals leading to unrealistic expectations (Chambers, 2000; Coontz, 1992; Coontz, 2015; Hertz, 2006; Nicholson, 1997). Those who defied the master narrative, such as single mothers, were socially or structurally punished (Chambers, 2000; Hertz, 2006). Family structure is a key component of how family interaction is experienced. The current situation calls for one to question the shifting meanings of family partnership, gender roles, and occupations. In the last decade, the census bureau estimated 154,000 fathers left the workforce for at least a year to be the primary care taker while the mothers worked (U.S. Census, 2010). Since mothers have increasingly gone into the labor force, there is also a cultural shift in expectations around fathering (Angier, 2013; Coltrane 1995;

LaRossa, 1988), from a distant breadwinning role to being more emotionally involved and committed to spending time nurturing children (Sunderland, 2006). The research is slowly catching up by re-focusing on how fathers' involvement affects child-development. For example, research shows that developmental problems were linked to fathers opting out of family leave (Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007). However, the research also shows the still existing double standards for mothers and fathers, since fathers are not primarily responsible for child rearing, when it comes to balancing their parent role with other roles, fathers show much greater flexibility (Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007). With the sheer abundance of research discussing the importance of family structure associations with family outcomes, combined with the understanding of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), it remained appropriate to keep family structure at the center of the research questions. The above discussion thus suggests the following question:

> *Research Question 1:* To what extent are *family structure* (parents' sex, partnership, occupation) variables portrayed and which predominate in family oriented primetime television programs?

Parent Interaction in Media

There are three primary aspects of parent interaction that were the focus of both the original and present research: parent role, child rearing, and child response. The first of these primary aspects of parent interaction is how parents perform in their role. The parent role is associated with the way a person performs or acts in their role within the interconnected roles of family, characterized by which tasks take primary concern when contributing to family care. It is framed within socially assigned expectations, meaning there are normal practices for a parent or child. Child rearing is associated with direct parent-child interaction, noting patterns of behavior

and relationship of parental control to child dependency. Understood as a general continuum, with an inverse relationship, child rearing can go from most strict, with no child independence, to the opposite end of parents' having little control over children, leaving child with utmost independence. Flexible child rearing is often said to be the good balance of interdependence and balanced discussion and discipline. The parent-interaction patterns are more specifically analyzed with child responses, speaking to which parent is reinforced or undermined in their role. First, the discussion focuses on the parent role, which encompasses and defines the characters most broadly. Next, the section on child rearing extends the discussion to parenting styles, in terms of parents' direct interaction with raising children. The section concludes by discussing how child response can show undermining or reinforcement of particular parenting.

Parent role in media. Parent role is conceptualized along two distinct categories, instrumental and expressive. An instrumental parent role is generally concerned with the public sphere, decision making, dominant, disciplinarian, while an expressive parent role is general concerned with the private sphere, and creating a nurturing, supportive, enriching environment. In the original research from the eighties (Dail & Way, 1985), fathers were portrayed in the parent role more often than mothers, while both mothers and fathers were more expressive than instrumental. Though, parent roles were still aligned with gender expectations, in that mothers portrayed proportionately more expressive behaviors, while fathers portrayed proportionately more instrumental behaviors. The child responses to these portrayals showed instrumental, non-traditional mothers were significantly more likely to receive a positive response than expressive, traditional mothers. Fathers were portrayed progressively, as more involved in parenting behaviors, clearly portrayed as involved, nurturing, attentive parents. Social role theory suggests that fathers would be more instrumental and mothers would be expressive and nurturing. Instead,

fathers were found to be more instrumental *and* more expressive, while mothers in non-traditional, instrumental roles were being reinforced, and mothers in traditional, expressive roles were being rejected. Possibly the child response patterns are pointing to the changing needs of society, asking for more equality in parent roles, at least from the television children's perspective. Dail and Way (1985) speculate the television producers evoke future trends in family structure, perhaps suggesting mothers are to relinquish some of the parent role to the just as, or much more, capable father.

Parenting was initially of little concern in television shows during the early eighties. If family was a concern at all, not surprisingly, family orientation was found to be more important for women than men, with almost twice as many men (53%) than women (19%) who had an unclear parental status (McNeil, 1975). Parent characters in general were fairly rare, with only 24% of characters presented as parents, either caring for or having children (Signorielli, 1989), down to only 13% of characters in the late nineties depicted as caring for or having children (Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain, 1999). Of all female characters, only 13% were shown in parent roles at the end of the eighties (Signorielli, 1989). There was a lower percentage of female than male characters depicted as employed, and males were being presented increasingly as spouses and parents (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). In just a decade, less than 1/10 of adult males were depicted as parents compared to 1/5 of adult females as parents (Gooden & Gooden, 2001). This dramatic decrease in female parent depictions, and increase in male parent depictions, may have been considered progress in terms of balanced gender portrayals. Historically, female characters were portrayed so little that total impact was likely quite minimal. In primetime television programming, men outnumbered women three to one, and women's roles were likely to involve themes of home, family and marriage, usually having no occupation (Signorielli, 1989), with

women were still more likely than men to be seen in domestic settings, advertising products used in the home (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). Women and men were portrayed along traditional gender lines, though this did change some throughout the decades.

Women were slowly taking on new roles, but there were still clear distinctions for gendered parent roles. American television from the mid-seventies and eighties found that mothers were pro-social characters in stereotyped roles as soothing caretakers of their families, who were overshadowed in importance by their husbands and children (Roy, 1988; Wartella, 1980). In a sense, marriage was portrayed as rewarding for female characters to settle in and enjoy their narrowly defined domesticity (Signorielli, 1982), in which the traditional role was emphasized with a distinct separation of public and private spheres (Roy, 1998). Women's tasks were primarily domestic activities rather than intellectual or challenging public sphere tasks, naturalizing women's role in the private sphere (Johnston & Swanson, 2003; Roy, 1998). Mothers were presented as nurturers, disciplinarians, and capable of a wide range of emotions (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005); as housewife extraordinaire, or strong mother characters paired with a bumbling father (Lamb & Brown, 2006), where mothers helped keep fathers as the less knowledgeable domestic parent (Kaufman, 1999). Prominent children's books also found that the roles for mother and father were narrowly defined and had very differentiated role expectations (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). Reality programs of parenting were found to reproduce traditional gender roles, presenting a traditional female life narrative of getting married and becoming a mother (Maher, 2004) and conservative gender roles, with women in the domestic sphere (Brancato, 2007). Print media also found stereotypical parenting roles (Coltrane & Allan, 1994; Kaufman, 1999; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Sunderland, 2000). Mothers in children's books were ten times more likely to care for babies and twice as likely to be caring for

children as fathers (Gooden & Gooden, 2001). In other words, fathers can be involved to play

with the child, but need not bother with domestic tasks (Kaufman, 1999). It seemed the mother

needed to be absent or ineffectual for the father to parent fully, which is further addressed below.

The research shows, no matter the platform or year, media has had narrowly defined roles for

parents, both mother and father.

Males were also taking on changing parent roles, being presented as parents more often

(Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Ingrassia, 1994; Lippert, 1997; Skelly & Lundtrom, 1981; Wolheter &

Lammers, 1980) and as instant experts at balancing family and career (Signorielli, 1982).

Portrayals of men were changing from purely instrumental parent roles to include more

expressive parent role behaviors, but fathers were still largely under-represented and, when

present, were the opposite of mothers, less nurturing and emotional, withdrawn, incompetent, or

unconcerned (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). Fathers were portrayed in children's print media

with many stereotypical gender roles in terms of paid work, using tools of production and

engaging in competitive, strenuous activities (Gooden & Gooden, 2001; LaRossa, Gordon,

Wilson, Bairan & Jaret, 1991). Fathers were rarely seen caring for children, showing affection,

or grocery shopping (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Gooden & Gooden, 2001). In fact, fathers

and married males were portrayed as less powerful and less important than single males, with

marriage portrayed as something males endured, and were even held back by (Signorielli, 1984).

Though fathers are being portrayed more, they still have very narrow roles in the parenting team,

as the playmates or teachers, while mothers are the caregivers and the nurturers (Kaufman, 1999;

Vavrus, 2007). The father was often portrayed in a parenting role to be mocked or befuddled

(LaRossa et al., 1991), suggesting a discomfort with the idea of fathers' changing roles. Fathers

were to be the part-time, less competent, secondary parents who have fewer responsibilities and

whose relationship with children remains less important than mothers. (Coltrane & Allan, 1994; Kaufman, 1999; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Sunderland, 2000). Men were less likely to be shown with children and primarily when women are around, keeping the father as the less knowledgeable parent, especially in domestic tasks (Kaufman, 1999). While at the same time, there are still *father-knows-best* themes in which fathers become the main provider of authority, guidance, and structure, particularly in a mother's absence (Banks, 2004; Braithwaite, 2008; Feasey, 2012; Pasquier, 1996), thus making the parenting heroic, exceptional, and newsworthy (Chambers, 2000; Sunderland, 2000; Vavrus, 2002; Vavrus, 2007). Just as with mother portrayals, father portrayals may seem progressive, but the anomalies help further reinforce the traditionally aligned parent roles.

Child rearing in media. Child rearing extends the concept of parent role to include specifics on parenting styles, which have been conceptualized, just as the original research did, into three categories of Baumrind's (1973) parent-child interactions, including authoritarian, flexible, and permissive. Child rearing refers to any direct interaction between a parent and child, with an authoritarian parent being an especially demanding disciplinarian, a flexible parent encouraging open exchange of ideas, and a permissive parent being non-directive, even avoiding confrontation. The original research (Dail & Way, 1985) found flexible child rearing to be most prevalent for mothers and fathers, but fathers were more authoritarian while mothers were more flexible. A more developmental approach was used to study parenting style by associating child rearing with child outcomes, examining the effectiveness of specific parent practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parent interaction styles are linked to children's information processing concerning familial and peer relationships, ultimately relating to peer acceptance (Rah & Parke, 2007). Fathers' interaction styles predicted both boys and girls information processing, while

mothers' interaction styles predicted only girls information processing (Rah & Parke, 2007). Father-child interactions in family-oriented cartoons were found to display pro-social behaviors (Klinger, 2006). Knowing parent-child interactions continue to influence adult communication patterns (Ledbetter, 2009; Myers & Glover, 2007), the child rearing portrayed in television is of great concern. Briefly discussing child response will help to understand how responses are associated with supporting or rejecting particular parent interactions.

Child response in media. Examining child response to parent interaction speaks to the interactive, systems perspective of family communication. Child responses were associated with parent roles and child rearing and could be portrayed as positive or negative. The original research (Dail & Way, 1985) found child responses to parent roles to be overwhelmingly positive overall. Fathers were more likely than mothers to receive a child response, but there were no other significant associations of child response to fathers' parent role. Mothers were more likely to receive a positive response to an instrumental parent role and a negative response to an expressive parent role. Non-traditional mothers were being reinforced, while traditional mothers were being undermined, and fathers were generally met with positive child response whether or not parent interaction was traditionally aligned. Child responses to child rearing were more evenly distributed between mothers and fathers, but there was a highly significant difference in child responses to fathers' child rearing. Fathers' authoritarian child rearing was met with overwhelmingly negative responses, while fathers' flexible child rearing was met with overwhelmingly positive responses. Mothers' child rearing had no significant correlations with child response. Child responses support the research that shows flexible child rearing is healthiest for the child and family (Bornstein, 2002; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Ledbetter & Beck, 2014; Prusank & Duran, 2014). Discussing the research showing correlations between and

among parent role, child rearing, and child response, with and understanding of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), leads to the following research question:

> *Research Question 2:* To what extent are parent interaction (parent role, child rearing, child response) variables portrayed and which predominate in family oriented primetime television programs?

Family Structure and Parent Interaction in Media

Family, parent, and gender roles are social, cultural constructions. These social constructs are not biological, but rather an ongoing social process of learned behaviors and expectations, embedded in social institutions that rely on and reinforce the social structures (Anderson, 1993). There is nowhere more prominent to learn about prescribed gender and parent roles than the media. Media images construct meaning and a sense of reality as well as reflect and influence our perception of self (Zavoina, 1999). Media and gender socialization are ubiquitous, as Carstarphen (1999) notes, media messages are synonymous with representations of sex, gender, and identity. Media are recognized as a site of shared learning, a powerful means of social representation, which becomes an interplay among family structures and family role identity, in which media become a place for learning and internalizing particular roles (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Media are cultural sites for learning social roles and social role theory (Eagly, 1987) states that society holds stereotyped expectations for the appropriate behaviors for men and women, and therefore mothers and fathers; Men are expected to adopt the role of breadwinner, and women the role of caretaker (Bailyn, 1993; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999). Behavior is strongly influenced by gender roles when cultures endorse gender stereotypes and form firm expectations based on those stereotypes (Eagly, 1987). The cultivation effect (Gerbner et al., 1986), coupled with social learning (Bandura, 1977), and social role (Eagly, 1987) theories demonstrate there is

nowhere more prominent to learn about prescribed gender and parent roles than the media. Asking how these prescribed notions of family structure and parent interaction are related is the focus of research questions three and four:

Research Question 3: Is family structure (parents' sex, partnership, occupation) related to parent interaction (parent role, child rearing, child response) in family oriented primetime television?

Research Question 4: How does child response differ by parent role and child rearing in family oriented primetime television?

Changing Family Structure and Parent Interaction in Media. Even though families are changing, mediated parenting does not change at a similar pace. There is a cultural lag, especially in particular media. There is a call for more content analysis to further explore Ogburn's (1964) hypothesis of cultural lag, which states that culture fluctuates interdependently but at different rates, meaning a rapid change in one area can require readjustment in various correlated areas. There are "shifting meanings of family life" (Chambers, 2000, p. 198), but even if actual families are changing, it is not necessarily so that ideologies will change at the same pace. As was aptly put by a feminist scholar, "social change in our roles in families is . . . a process [that] will require social support . . . and transformation in our attitudes about gender and parenting" (Anderson, 1993, p. 162). In order to transform our social institutions to meet our needs more adequately, we need to recognize that the distinction between "traditional" and "alternative" is no longer meaningful if most of us are considered deviants (Nicholson, 1997). The discordance between family myth and family reality results in guilt and anger (Coontz, 1992). The disjunction between the ideal mediated families and real, complex, hybrid families indicate a cultural, parental crisis (Chambers, 2000; Foster, 1964). It is explained best by bell

hooks (2000), "indeed the crisis the children of this nation face is that patriarchal thinking clashing with feminist changes is making the family even more of a war zone than it was when male domination was the norm in every household" (p. 74). When cultivation effect (Gerbner et al., 1986) is conceptualized with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and social role theory (Eagly, 1987), these real consequences of the discrepancies between changing family and parenting roles make it important to include the final questions in this research.

Research Question 5: How has family structure and parent interaction in family oriented primetime television changed from the original research?

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

In order to replicate and extend the original Dail and Way (1985) research study, the method for the present research was aligned as closely as possible with the original methods and procedures; thus, a content analysis was conducted. Since a goal of the present research was to examine how the variables of interest have changed, similarity of research tools allowed for replicable and valid inferences (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21). Content analysis is commonly used as a method to answer questions about social roles in media content. Dissecting social roles, especially gender roles, has been studied throughout the history of content analysis, as Neuendorf (2002) explains, "perhaps no substantive area has been more frequently studied across all the mass media than that of the roles of males and females" (p. 201).

The methods chapter discusses the methodology of the present study in detail, by identifying how the methodology closely aligns with the original data collection, and noting extensions that were made for the current data collection. To facilitate closely aligning of the methods, Dail and Way, the authors of the original study were approached early in the research process to obtain any information that could be shared regarding the method and codebook, which was minimal in the published article. This correspondence uncovered that Dail and Way's 1985 published article was derived from the media portion of Dail's (1983) dissertation, which had more detail and became the foundation for the methodology of the present study. The methodological tools, including the codebook with variable identifiers, data collection sheets, and tables of population and sample, have been created by the present researcher, adapted from the original research (Dail, 1983) and include items from other parent interaction research, pilot study, and coder trainings.

The structure of this chapter is somewhat non-conventional. First, there is a discussion of

variables. Next, details of sampling are provided. After this, details of instrumentation are provided, noting replications, adaptations, and extensions, with clear justification. Finally, there is a discussion of instrumentation validity and reliability.

Variables

Table 1 provides an overview of the variables investigated in the present study. The *family structure* variables are those concerned with parent sex, parent partnership, and parent occupation, and the *parent interaction* variables are those concerned with parent role, child rearing, and child response.

Table 1
Variables and Values

Family Structure Variables	Parent Interaction Variables
Parent Sex	*Parent Role*
Male	Instrumental
Female	Expressive
Parent Partnership	*Child Rearing*
Male/Female	Authoritarian
Male/Male	Flexible / Authoritative
Female/Female	Permissive
Male Single	*Child Response*
Female Single	Positive
Grandparent	Negative
Parent Occupation	
Professional	
Semi-professional / White Collar	
Non-professional / Blue Collar	
Unemployed	
Stay-at-home	
Retired	

Each variable is discussed next in terms of replication as well as adaptions and extensions from the original research.

Family structure. Family structure variables have been key in research across disciplines, and it became the major point of extension from the replicated research for the present study. Family structure refers to the many different social categories that make up the

characteristics particular to a family, which can also be referred to as family form. In the present research, family structure refers to three main social categories that make up the characteristics of each parent. Although not a formal aspect of Dail and Way's (1985) data analysis, in other research (e.g. Brown & Iyengar, 2008; Bzostek & Percheski, 2016; Fomby & Osborne, 2017; Golden, 2016), family structure has been a critical variable. Often categorized into traditional and non-traditional categories, with potential to indicate gender stereotypes, family form or family structure variables are widely utilized across disciplines. With the previous varying focus on family structure, and the way parents' sex, partnership, and occupation can greatly affect parent interactions, the broadened concept became the centering variable for the present study.

The original research discussed family structure, but focused on parents' sex as the primary variable for analysis. There was no analysis of how the parents' households and occupations may have a relationship with the dependent variables of parent-child interactions. The present research saw this as the main opportunity for extending and enhancing the original research, thus family structure was broadened to include parents' sex, partnership, and occupation for each parent interaction. Parents' sex variable remained identical to the original research, notating a parent as male or female. The parent partnership variable, akin to their traditional/non-traditional variable, was broadened to include not only whether parents were married or single, but also whether in heterosexual or homosexual partnerships. The parent occupation variable utilized the categorizations from the original research, but again, the current research recorded occupation for each parent-child interaction. Most importantly, the three aspects of the family structure variables were associated with each incidence of a parent-child interaction.

The alteration and extension of the family structure concept allowed for a more detailed

examination of the association of family structure and parent interaction variables. The original research (Dail, 1983) did record family statistics of the television families, but simply reported on the traditional and non-traditional make-up of families to comment on the prevalence of non-traditional (single parents) family forms at a higher rate than national average of the decade. There was mention of the parents' occupations and living arrangements (rural/city), but only the parents' sex was used in data analysis. Current data collection procedures were sure to capture the family structure variables in a broader, and more definitive sense, which allowed for cross-tabulations among variable sets other than parents' sex. As the broadened context of family structure incorporates the changing concepts of family form to include parent sex, partnership, and occupation, the research is better capable of asking questions of relationships among variables. This allows for a discussion of gender, sexuality, and work/life balance in terms of family and parent roles. The child response to the different parent interactions can tell how different parent roles and child rearing are promoted or rejected among different family structures.

The original research also listed two other elements as independent variables, *primetime presentation* and *family-oriented situational episodic program*, but with further clarity, it became apparent these were clearly markers of the population and sampling strategies, to be explained below. Though, using the programs as independent variables makes sense if answering questions of genre, or simply to point out the differences between the shows fictitious families. The original dissertation research (Dail, 1983) did include a breakdown of critical variables by program, which was simply a curiosity addressed in the discussion, rather than answering a research question. For the present research, primetime, family-oriented programming was understood as the general population from which the parent interactions were drawn. The

population and sampling discussion below will detail these concepts further, but it is the critical variables that orient the remaining chapters.

Now that there is clear delineation of the extension from the original research's family structure variable formation, a discussion of each critical variable in terms of operationalization and data collection procedures follows. Family structure measures three aspects of parents' family characteristics. Each parent character was coded accordingly for the three family structure variables in each episode: *parent sex*: male (M) or female (F); *parent partnership*: M/F, M/M, F/F, M single, F single, and grandparent (GP); and *parent occupation*, professional, semi-professional, non-professional, unemployed, stay-at-home, and retired. Table 2 is an overview of the family structure variables, values, and definitions.

Table 2
Family Structure

Family Structure	Value	Definition
Parent Sex	Male	Parent or child expressly stated or represented as man, father, boy, son by appearance, clothing, voice, etc.
	Female	Parent or child expressly stated or represented as woman, mother, girl, daughter by appearance, clothing, voice, etc.
Parent Partnership	Male/Female	Parent is among a coupled, co-habitating mother/father unit
	Male/Male	Parent is among a coupled, co-habitating father/father unit
	Female/Female	Parent is among a coupled, co-habitating mother/mother unit
	Male	Parent is among an un-coupled, potentially separated or separate home/shared parenting, single father unit
	Female	Parent is among an un-married, potentially separated or separate home/shared parenting, single mother unit
	Grandparent	Grandparent is presented as a single elder generation living among a child parent and grandchild
Parent Occupation	Professional	Management Business/finance professional Judge, doctor, scientist, business owner, etc.
	Semi-professional / White Collar	Service/sales Office/administrative support Teacher, social worker, office professional
	Non-professional / Blue Collar	Farming, fishing, forestry Construction, extraction Installation, maintenance, repair Production, transportation Armed forces
	Unemployed	No job, but actively looking
	Stay-at-home parent	Primary duties are un-paid home and child care duties, not attending to career
	Retired	Elder generation, assumed retired, not attending to career or any public work

For ease of recording the variables that would not change with each parent interaction, family structure characteristics were recorded on a separate coding sheet (which is explained in more detail in the instrumentation section). This also allowed for recording the program, episode title, time codes, family names, family roles (mother, father, daughter, son, grandfather, grandmother), and character names separately. The separate coding sheets for the two sets of

variables made data collection more efficient by collecting the character data and extra family and program identifiers only once, since they generally remained constant throughout the episodes, and in most cases, the entire series. The key to making these character elements useful was to include them with each parent interaction for data entry, to associate each dependent variable with the three elements of family structure.

Parent sex. The first variable of family structure is the same as the original research. The parent sex variable was coded for each parent character in each episode. Each character was coded as either presenting as male (M) or female (F) as determined by the coder, who was to identify the character by the sex role and gender role expressly stated or represented as male/female, man/woman, father/mother, grandfather/grandmother, by appearance, clothing, voice, story line, etc. There were also no instances in which the parent sex variable changed over the course of the episodes or series. Just as the original research did, parent sex was also recorded with each parent interaction coded. For data entry, parent sex was entered with each instance of parent role or child rearing.

Parent partnership. The second variable of family structure is one of the primary alterations of the present study, beyond not only the parents' sex, but beyond the traditional/non-traditional married/single dichotomy to include more accurate portrayals of different family forms. The original research recorded whether the parents were married or single, but only reported the data as an aggregate for discussion. Extending the family structure variable was especially necessary to ensure data collection would allow for meaningful analysis. It was apparent from the literature and initial observations of the population that categorizing same-sex partnerships would be necessary to truly capture changing family form in television. The grandparent role was also added as another component of the partnership variable after initial

observations and the pilot study; although a small percentage of all parent portrayals, there were enough grandparents present to warrant a separate category, even if only to keep parent data from being skewed. The partnership variable was broadened beyond merely using parent sex as the primary variable, and even beyond the traditional/non-traditional, married/single parent roles. Most importantly, the difference was in how the parent partnership variable was then associated with each parent interaction for data entry and analysis.

Parent partnership was recorded on the family structure code sheet for each character in each episode. The parent partnership was coded as one of seven potential combinations, as determined by the coder to be presented as a: M/F - parent among a coupled, cohabitating male/female mother-father unit; M/M - parent among a coupled, cohabitating male/male father-father unit; F/F - parent among a coupled, cohabitating female/female mother-mother unit; M - parent among an un-coupled, potentially separate home/shared parenting, single male, father unit; F - parent among an un-coupled, potentially separate home/shared parenting, single female, mother unit; or GP - grandparent presented as a single elder generation living among an adult parent and grandchild. The variable was coded by episode, but recorded with each parent interaction for data entry. There were also no instances in which any parents' partnership status changed over the course of the episodes or series, though there could have been if a parent were to become coupled or uncoupled, such as married or divorced.

Parent occupation. The final variable of family structure is parent occupation, which is another aspect of the variable that was extended. The original research mentioned parent occupation, along Holmstrom's (1972) categories of parents' work patterns, but only as aggregate data in the discussion rather than associating it as a control variable. The other minor change was an additional 'retired' category to account for the newly created grandparent

category of parent partnership. Otherwise, parent occupation categories remained the same from the original research, with the primary change being the process of data entry to associate the variable with each parent interaction for data analysis.

Parent occupation was also recorded on the family structure code sheet by episode, and time code when necessary. Parent occupation was the only component of the family structure variable that changed during the episodes, in which case the time code would indicate where the parent went from one category to another. For example, a parent could get fired from an auto sales position, and the occupation coding would go from semi-professional to unemployed at a particular time code. Continuing with the same example, all parent interactions prior to the job loss would be coded with the semi-professional occupation category and all parent interactions after the moment of the job loss would be coded with the unemployed category. Each parent character was coded for occupation as expressly stated or represented through audio, video, setting, story, show premise, etc. into six possible categories: *professional* - management, business owner, judge, doctor, lawyer, scientist; *semi-professional* (white collar) - service, sales, office/administrative, teacher, social worker; *non-professional* (blue collar) - farming, construction, production, maintenance, armed forces; *unemployed* - no job, but actively seeking employment; stay-at-home - primary duties as unpaid home and child care, not attending to career; and *retired* - elder generation, not attending to career or public work. Again, the variable was coded by episode, or particular scene when necessary, but recorded with each parent interaction for data entry.

Family structure was broadened from the original research, which focused primarily on gender, to account for changing aspects of family form and work/family balance, both of which add to the discussion of gender, family and parent roles. Utilizing extended family structure

variables to examine parent interaction allows for comparison to the original research while furthering understanding of parent interaction.

Parent interaction. The parent interaction variable focused on three primary aspects of parenting, just as the original research: parent roles, child rearing and child response. The original research (Dail, 1983) created the instrument for examining parent interaction on television by reworking established family sociology and child development surveys. The *Perception of the Parental Role Scale* (PPRS) (Gilbert & Hanson, 1983) was used to create the original instrument for observing parent roles, while the *Iowa Parent Behavior Inventory* (IPBI) (Jasper, Crose & Pease, 1978) was used to categorize child rearing into one of Baumrind's (1971) three primary parent types. The content validity was originally ensured by only retaining descriptors that were uniformly accepted by all raters.

Similarly with the current research, the parent interaction coding instruments were reworked and updated, and descriptors were retained when uniformly accepted by all raters. Parent role categories remained very similar to original descriptors, but the new codebook included a more exhaustive list of variable identifiers. Child rearing categories were updated and enhanced using the *Parental Authority Questionnaire* (Buri, 1991), which was used to help further delineate categorical identifiers. After updating the data collection instruments, the descriptors came to include all of the originals, as well as others that were found to increase reliability throughout pilot studies and coder training. Other than enhancing the data collection forms and amending the codebook to include additional descriptors and identifiers, the parent interaction variable remained identical to the original research.

Now that there is clear delineation of the extensions from the original research's parent interaction variables, the discussion turns to each variable in terms of operationalization and data

collection procedures. There are three variables of parent interaction: *parent role*: instrumental

(I) or expressive (E); *child rearing pattern*: authoritarian (A), flexible (F), or permissive (P); and

child response: positive (+) or negative (-). Table 3 is an overview of the parent interaction

variables, values, and definitions. Next, these are discussed in terms of the primary identifiers, as

well as the similarities and differences from the original research methods.

Table 3
Parent Interaction

Parent Interaction	Value	Definition
Parent Role	Instrumental	Interaction aligned with external family tasks, such as making money, decisions and rules, usually the leader and disciplinarian, dominant, aggressive and firm in rule enforcement, or absence of emotional involvement
	Expressive	Interaction aligned with internal family functioning, such as rearing children and taking care of spouse and children by providing comfort, security, nurturing and emotional care, usually supportive, flexible and accepting
Child Rearing Pattern	Authoritarian	Most strict, with parent exercising ultimate control for good of the child, expecting obedience using stern rules and punishment, relinquishing very little explanation or transparency, encouraging complete dependence. Firm enforcer of rules, demanding, uses negative sanctions
	Flexible / Authoritative	Considered a balance of reasoned limits, encouraging a child to think independently, while practicing autonomy with guided discussions, transparency and justification of parenting practices; Encourages discussion with child, flexible, encouraged individuality in child
	Permissive	Parent relinquishes control, giving a child high degrees of independence and encouraging complete autonomy over decision making, using parents as resources or support rather than a source of commands or regulation; allows child to be annoying, avoids confrontation, largely
Child Response	Positive	Accepting responses, clearly discernable with words or gestures as indicating affirmative, yes, conformity, agreement
	Negative	Rejecting responses, clearly discernable with words or gestures as non-compliant, rebellious, non-conformist, disagreement

Parent role. Parent role is the variable associated with the way a person performs or acts

in his or her role within the family, characterized by which tasks take primary concern when

contributing to their interconnected family role. Social roles are framed within socially assigned

expectations, meaning there are normal practices for a proper mother or father, son or daughter, or any other role, such as teacher, student, etc. The parent role variable in the original research was based on categories that emerged in the fifties (Parsons & Bales, 1955), thus, parent role became defined along traditional gender role expectations, since that was what social structures called for at that time. Eagly's (1987) social role theory discusses this very concept of assigning roles along traditional gender lines that support the work-force needs. For now, it helps make sense of how the original research adapted the categories using the *Perception of the Parental Role Scale* (PPRS; Gilbert & Hanson, 1983) to align the identifiers with the appropriate instrumental or expressive parent role category. These same two parent role categories remained one of three critical variables to observe and identify in each parent interaction. The child response to each parent role representation was also coded as positive or negative to determine how particular parent roles are reinforced or rejected.

Parent role could vary from *instrumental* (I), often generally masculinized, aligned with external family tasks, such as making money, decisions and rules, usually the leader and disciplinarian, dominant, aggressive and firm in rule enforcement; to *expressive* (E), often generally feminized, aligned with internal family functioning, such as rearing children and taking care of spouse and children by providing comfort, security, nurturing and emotional care, usually supportive, flexible and accepting. The full list of parent role identifiers is in Table 4, which was created to closely align with the original research's "Description of Behaviors for Television Coding" (Dail, 1983, Appendix H), while updating with additional identifiers gleaned from the pilot study and coder training. Each instance of parent role could potentially have a positive or negative child response, from each child present, and if no child was present, the child response variable was coded as neutral.

Table 4
Parent Role Identifiers

Parent Role	
Parent Role is associated with the way a parent performs or acts in socially assigned interconnected family expectations, characterized by which tasks take primary concern and in what context (public/private sphere) a parent contributes to family care.	
Instrumental	**Expressive**
External of family (work, politics, career)	Internal to family (cook, clean, child care)
Dominant	Supportive
Discourage emotional dependency	Encourage emotional dependency
Expresses Anger (blaming)	Reluctant to express anger
Directive, decision making	Non directive
High value on obedience	Lax rule enforcement
Rigid	Flexible
Independent	Acceptance/recognition of belonging
Decision making	Permissive
Demand autonomy	Provides security
Conformity to rules	Uses reason (teaches by leading)
Respect authority	Cooperative relationship with child
Control (lecturing, protective)	Gives gratification
Discipline	Positive rewards
Firm rule enforcement	Nurturing
Purposive	Cooperative
Resistive	High esteem
Achievement oriented (praises self)	Enriches environment (praises child)
Deny reciprocity	Friendly
Degrading, not encouraging	Encouraging

Particular measures were taken throughout the methodology to delineate the critical variables of parent role and child rearing. Even though the parent role variable is categorized by decades old gender role expectations, it was stressed in coder training to focus on the parent role observed rather than the sex of the parent when coding each instance of the parent role variable. The other important distinction with the parent role variable was how to distinguish its observation and coding from the other critical dependent variable, which is addressed more fully in the instrumentation section after examining the remaining components of the dependent variable. The primary distinction between parent role and child rearing was that a parent role could be coded without a child being present, such as an instrumental code for when parents were represented working, since the parent was performing the breadwinner role associated with

the instrumental designation. To further the same example, if a parent was at work and interrupted by their child-rearing duties, such as answering a phone call from a child, the direct parent-child interaction would also be coded for both parent role and child rearing separately. More clarity is likely to come after further exploring the child rearing aspect of the parent interaction variable and with explanation of the instrumentation.

Child rearing. Child rearing patterns, practices, philosophies, and manifestations of behaviors around direct interaction with children were the main observations when coding each instance of parent-child interaction. A great point of distinction between parent role and child rearing is that parent role is more encompassing, and therefore possible to observe and code without children present, but observing and coding child rearing is only possible when parents are directly interacting with children. Especially concerned with the power balance in the family, child-rearing behaviors indicate who has authority and how they go about exercising it. Parent interactions were categorized into three main categories of child rearing patterns that align with the original research (Dail & Way, 1985; adapted from, Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby, 1980): *authoritarian* (A), *flexible* (F) (authoritative), or *permissive* (P). The flexible category was discussed interchangeably as an authoritative designation at points throughout the literature, so to ensure coders could efficiently code with one letter, and because authoritative and authoritarian look so similar, the authoritative category is referred to as *flexible* for ease of coding, rather than for any differentiation conceptually from the original categorical identifiers. Child rearing patterns were aligned into categories by the behaviors, practices, and expectations parents have towards obedience, discipline, rules, punishments and limits, which leads to varying degrees of autonomy and dependency in children, and varying degrees of transparency or justification in parental decisions.

Parent interactions concerned with child rearing patterns can be understood as a general continuum, with an inverse relationship of parental control to child dependency. *Authoritarian* parenting is most strict, with the parent exercising ultimate control for the good of the child, expecting obedience using stern rules and punishment, relinquishing very little explanation or transparency, encouraging complete dependence. *Flexible (authoritative)* parenting is considered a balance of reasoned limits, encouraging a child to think independently, flexible autonomy with guided discussions, transparency and justification of parenting practices. *Permissive* parenting is on the opposite end of the continuum, when a parent relinquishes control, giving a child high degrees of independence and encouraging complete autonomy over decision making, using parents as resources or support rather than a source of commands or regulation. The parent interaction variable of child rearing speaks to the power balance, or who holds the power in the family. The full list of child rearing identifiers can be found in Table 5, which was developed from the original research's "Description of Behaviors for Television Coding" (Dail, 1983) as foundation, and adapted throughout the process of pilot testing and coder training. These method tables became the primary components of the final codebook. As with the other critical variable, each incidence of child rearing was also associated with a child response, allowing for examination of whether parents are reinforced or undermined in their child rearing.

Table 5
Child Rearing Identifiers

Child Rearing		
Child Rearing is associated with immediate interaction with a child and the patterns and manifestations of attitudes, values, and beliefs around raising children. Especially concerned with patterns of parental control to child dependency, or how authority is exercised. Practices and expectations parents have towards obedience, rules, discipline, punishments, and limits, leading to varying degrees of autonomy/dependency in children, and varying degrees of transparency/justification in decision making.		
Authoritarian	**Flexible (Authoritative)**	**Permissive**
Forced conformity, respect for authority	Direction through reasoning and discipline	Role reversal
Unquestioned, immediate obedience	Encouraged discussion, questioning	Children get their way
Decision making unquestioned	Clear expectations, ideals	Decision making left to child, with little direction given
Forcefully ensures child behaves	Consistent, objective, rational guidance, teaching, suggesting	Lack of authority, obedience, rules questioned or absent
Child learns to respect authority quickly	Child opinion considered	Seldom directing, guiding, restricting child
Child obeys, not disagrees	Clear behavioral standards, but individual adjustments	Family decisions child-controlled
Strictly, forcible punishments	Parent directs behavior, but child concerns discussed	Little restriction of child's activities, decisions, desires
Gives exact directions	Understanding, willing to discuss or apologize	Little parental authority exercised
Firm enforcement	Encourages individuality in child	Encourages child's independence of thought
Uses power to obtain obedience	Encourages intimate verbal contact	Passive acceptance
Disapproves of defiance	Allows oppositional behavior	Avoids open confrontation
Requires deference to parent	Specific aims and methods of discipline, nurturing	Shame about/does not express anger
Uses negative sanctions	Values expressivity more than instrumentality	Allows child to be annoying and disobedient
Unresponsive, rejecting, harsh, condescending	Shares decision making with child	Gentle manner
Personal infallibility	Child meets expectations	Non directive toward child
Praises self	Praises child	Makes fun of child

Child response. A child response was coded for each incidence of parent role or child rearing pattern observed. Each child present was coded as having a positive or negative response to each parent they may be interacting with in terms of a parent role or child rearing pattern. This resulted in two separate child response categories: parent role child response, and child rearing child response. The child response identifiers were established starting with the descriptors from the original research's method discussion, as the child response variable was not included in the "Description of Behaviors for Television Coding" (Dail, 1983). A *positive child response* was

one in which there was a generally supportive, accepting attitude, speech, or behavior; while a *negative child response* was one in which there was a generally negative, rejecting attitude, speech, or behavior.

The child response descriptors were broadened to be more effective for coding and adapted further for modern television conventions, where most parent-child interactions are generally positive and there are few clear yes/no utterances in the quirky writing of family situation comedies. Table 6 shows the identifiers for each child response category, which were included in the codebook and used for easy access during coding. The categorical delineation remained the same from the original dependent variables for ease of comparison, but the codebook identifiers were updated extensively throughout pilot testing and coder training to increase inter-coder reliability and overall validity.

Table 6
Child Response Identifiers

Child Response	
Child Response refers to how a child's positive or negative reactions could act as reinforcement or deterrent for the parental role or child rearing being observed	
Positive	**Negative**
Accepting responses, okay, sounds good, etc.	Rejecting responses, forget it, try to make me,
Clearly discernable words, yes, yea, sure, etc.	Clearly discernable words, no, no way, will not,
Clearly discernable gestures, nodding, smile	Clearly discernable gestures, shake head, roll eyes
Agreement or compliance expressed	Disagreement or non-compliance expressed
Helping, kind, loving, smiling, sharing	Rebellious, non-conformist, defiant, sad, scoff
Attentive, enjoying company of parent	Ignoring, not acknowledging or enjoying parent
Apologizing, questioning for assurance	Blatant sarcasm, questioning, condescending
Praise parent, laughing with them	Make fun of parent, laughing at them

Methodological alterations from the original research. Each moment of parent presence was coded for these four parent interaction variables, much the same as the original research. There were minor methodological alterations and points of departure, but the parent interaction variables are the same critical variables in both the original and current research. One large procedural alteration concerned how the parent interaction data collection translated into

aligning each family structure variable with each parent interaction separately, which could then potentially be associated with subsequent child response from multiple children. This minor alteration resulted in newly created coding sheets to collect the family structure data by episode, which allowed for more efficient and intricate data collection, entry, and analysis.

The parent interaction data collection form was also altered significantly from the original research (Dail, 1983, Appendix G Data Collection Form), updated for efficiency with easily identifiable parent interaction variables, easily coded observations, and easily extrapolated data entry. The parent interaction code sheet was also adapted to contain space for up to four parent and four child characters to be coded for each parent interaction. Similar to the original research, though, each time there was a parent utterance, and a different child response, there was a separate parent interaction coded. The updated code sheet included room for recording the time codes that would separate when each parent interaction began (with each new parent utterance) and ended (with any differentiated child response). Each interaction entry also included room for the family ID and general action being coded (for later cross-check of data), as well as a separate line for each parent/child character role and plenty of room for the subsequent parent interaction codes assigned. For example, a scene with two parents and three children was coded for both parent role and child rearing for each parent and each child separately, which could ultimately result in six data entries for each parent role/child response pair as well as six data entries for each child rearing/child response pair, three each for each parent with each of the three children's responses.

Another alteration from the original research was not defining neutral categories so broadly. There was minimal use of the neutral category across all critical variables, making the variable identifiers more meaningful, while Dail and Way (1985) used a neutral category much

more extensively for each parent interaction variable. Neutral was used minimally in the current research because the variable identifiers were updated to be exhaustive with little room for a neutral option. In the original research, a neutral parent role was not necessarily aligned with the instrumental or expressive, rather it was a general absence of emotional care or discipline, or guiding children with polite requests or comments on a neutral subject. It was apparent this neutral category added little to analysis or discussion, and the definition included notions that fell under one or more of the mutually exclusive categories. Ultimately, the variable identifiers were updated to be much more specific and exhaustive, so a neutral child response was rarely needed and ultimately used sparingly. The one time the neutral category became useful was for a parent role coding in which a child was not present, and the child response was then coded as neutral. Child rearing and child response had similarly unhelpful definitions of neutral, such as general comments on a neutral subject, which would often easily be aligned into one of the mutually exclusive categories. Coders were instructed to identify each parent interaction variable into one category or the other, only utilizing neutral if there was not enough information to appropriately code, including when no child was present during parent role representation or if no child response could be discerned from utterances or behaviors.

Now that all the variables have been operationalized, the method chapter will now address the procedures behind the multistage cluster random sampling procedures and population definitions. Then the intricacies of establishing each unit of observation of parent interaction on television help explain how the research was carried out, taking the reader through a step-by-step discussion of identifying research processes, concluding with discussion on instrumentation validity and reliability.

Population and Sample

Narrowing the population sufficiently is key in the sampling and validity of research. Conducting a census of all parenting behaviors on television would certainly be a daunting, if not impossible, task. Not only did the original research narrow their population to family-oriented primetime network programming, but also justifications exist for each aspect. The population of television under scrutiny has three main descriptors that also justify their use: network programing (does not include advertising, cable channels, film, etc.); primetime programming (does not include morning, afternoon, or late evening); and family oriented programming (does not include news, sports, local, work dramas, etc.). The population descriptors align with the original research and are reinforced with best practices for media content analysis (Macnamara, 2005), including: *media weighting*, sampling high rating, high circulation, highly influential media, such as major network programming; *media prominence*, sampling of prominently placed programming, such as primetime television; *media positioning*, sampling variables of prominence within a story, such as parent interaction central to story lines; *media length*, sampling uniformly or notating screen time or duration of video/audio segments, such as using all 30-minute programs; and *media sources*, ensuring the sample is from a credible and well-positioned source, such as focusing on primetime programming that is renewed for future seasons. The following sections take up each of these aspects of narrowing the population to major broadcast network, primetime, family-oriented programming.

Major broadcast network programming. The original research sample was drawn from the major broadcast networks of the time, which is the primary reason this research follows similar sampling, but this section further explains how the population remains relevant. When the original research was conducted in the early eighties, there was very little proliferation of

cable programming. The boom of cable television was just beginning, so broadcast networks were much more obviously and exclusively mainstream. Having been around since the inception of television, the major networks have the longest history of programming, with the television industry essentially built around what was established early as *the mainstream*. Major broadcast networks continue to have some of the highest rated programming, thus considered highly influential programming because of its potential to reach a significant percentage, or share, of the television viewing population.

Mainstream networks compete to keep the highest market share, or the most viewers for an evening, increasing their credibility as the most well positioned programming for advertisers. One of the ways market shares are measured is during designated *sweeps weeks*, when networks premier the best programming during the weeks from which advertising rates are set based on viewers. Initially, all cable networks' viewers combined were far from the lowest major network's share, but this is changing with more networks, proliferation of programming from cable networks, and convergence of platforms, such as digital viewing interfaces. In fact, the rapid change of digital, mobile platforms has the industry facing one of its most critical times in measurement history (Winslow, 2013). These changes and difficulty in measuring the market share supported the move away from Dail and Way's (1985) decision to use a shows rating (Nielsen Television Rating of 0.10 market share overall) and target audience (male or female audience between 18-34years) as narrowing factors. With volatile ratings in the increasingly digital industry, programming is quickly cancelled if low ratings persist. Focusing on only the most highly rated and influential programming also aligned with the best practices for media content analysis methodology (Macnamara, 2005). Utilizing the prominence of the programming to guide the decision, the current sample only included a program if it was renewed for another

season, rather than utilizing target audience or Nielsen Television Ratings to narrow the network television population. This minor alteration from the original research population still recognizes the dominance of network television, which was admittedly more exclusively dominant then, while addressing the difficulty of truly capturing rating shares by instead requiring show renewal for inclusion in the sample. Several of the most current television ratings sites (deadline.com; ew.com; tv.com; tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com; tvguid.com) were referenced to determine which shows were renewed and cancelled. The selection criteria of show renewal was a minor alteration that worked to ensure the longevity of the shows in the sample, and there was also a minor alteration for which networks were now included as major broadcast networks.

The broadcast networks continue to have the highest number of viewers and the most mainstream audience, compared to cable channels with narrower, niche audiences. Though today, more cable networks and digital platforms produce primetime, serial programming, such as AMC's *Mad Men* or Netflix's *Orange is the New Black*. Regardless, in order to align the current population with the original data set, only major network television programming was potentially part of the sample, because network television remains most prevalent and accessible in homes across the United States. Instead of just the three major networks included in the original research (ABC, CBS, NBC), the current research recognized five major broadcast networks that now share national programming across a system of local affiliates. The local affiliates are ranked by markets, or the number of potential viewers within the signal area, and are usually arranged around major cities. ABC, CBS, and NBC were the first major broadcast networks and have the most affiliates, with FOX close behind in the number of affiliates (Shapiro, 1989), and CW has been gaining station affiliations across the nation (TVGuide, 2015). Any of these major broadcast networks' primetime programming potentially became part of the

sampled population. After narrowing the population to only include family oriented programming, the CW ultimately had no programming included in the current research sample. Before discussing family oriented programming, another aspect of further narrowing the sample is that of *primetime programming*, for its prominence and position in the daily television lineup, which is further discussed in the next section.

Primetime programming. Primetime network programming was also the primary population for the original research, which can be descriptively defined in two ways: 1) the television channel on which the programming airs is a major broadcast network, as just discussed; and 2) day part, or day and time of airing. For the current research, primetime day part was considered to be between 8:00 pm and 11:00 pm (Shapiro, 1989), or a total of three hours per evening, each night of the week, with Saturday not usually associated with new programming. These primetime hours were a slight alteration from the original research, which defined primetime between 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm. Primetime hours were adjusted according to current definitions, which are apparent in the TV Guide (2015) used to determine programming lineups. Primetime hours became regulated by the FCC, with the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR), to address the dominance of broadcast network programming in these prime television hours (Shapiro, 1989). PTAR attempted to level the playing field for independent stations not affiliated with a major broadcast network (Shapiro, 1989). This description of primetime network programming, detailed by day part and network, translated into a total of 105 hours (5 networks x 3 hours x 7 nights = 105 hours) of potential programming in the population from which the sample would be drawn. The TV Guide was used to identify the primetime network schedule of programs from the 2014-2015 television season (Appendix A).

The primary reason for primetime network programming to remain the population for this

research is that it directly duplicates the original research methodology. Additionally, the best practices for media content analysis methodology state several reasons behind justifying primetime network programming as an ideal sample. Primetime network programming has prominent positioning in the daily and weekly television lineup and thus includes highly influential media, with both high circulation, or audience reach, and high ratings. The networks are a prominent source of programming, but it is the primetime designation that is reserved for the most prominently positioned programming. Ever since the beginning of television, particular days and day parts were known for a particular genre of programming, such as early weekday afternoons for soap operas, Saturday mornings for children's programming, and primetime weeknights for family friendly programming, when families are most likely to be home to watch television together. Primetime network programming is so clearly the most prominently placed, highly influential programming that *primetime* has become synonymous with *mainstream television*, or the best (day part) of the best (major broadcast network) of mass mediated family entertainment.

Utilizing primetime network programming as the primary population from which to draw the sample, greatly increases the reliability and validity of the research, and is most likely to include shows that are family-oriented with family-themed premises. It was not clear why the original research used primetime network programming as the population, but their requirement for a show being family-oriented with a particular high rating, made it likely the programming would be primetime anyway. Since the original method was adapted from the media portion of dissertation research that also examined parent-child interaction through surveys, it is likely the sample was chosen thinking the parents surveyed would likely be observing parent-child interaction on family-oriented programming on nightly television. The next section discusses this

family-oriented designation in more detail.

Family oriented programming. Just as with the original research, of the potential primetime network population, only family-oriented programming was sampled. With a quick overview of 2014-2015 network schedules (Appendix A), primetime family-oriented programming is in bold and was abundant and identifiable by the shows premise. The current research adopted Dail and Way's (1985) definition of family-oriented programming as: any series with a primary theme that centers on family life, with primary characters that include parent(s) and children. Skill and Wallace (1990) further refined this definition, to include programs with a family configuration as the primary story vehicle, one characterized by a social unit with the following elements: adult head of household with at least one dependent child, single or married, and cohabitating or living separately. Family interaction research (Skill & Wallace, 1990) also included married couples without children in their definition of family programming, which does not make the categories exhaustive, since there is no category for childless, cohabitating couples. Since the primary goal was to examine parent interactions, including families without children in the sample would not have added anything to the analysis of parenting. For the purposes of aligning methods most closely with the original research, the current research also excluded childless couples, as the critical variables would not likely be present.

Utilizing the same definition of family-oriented television as the original research, each primetime network program's premise or synopsis was recorded. Only those programs with a family-oriented theme would have the potential of becoming part of the sample, which was almost 9% of the total primetime programming hours. Appendix A includes a list of all programming, which was then categorized by genre to differentiate the family oriented

programming from all other genres. The other genres of primetime programming would result in very few parent interactions and were not included in either the original research or this research. An analysis of network schedules resulted in seven separate categories useful to identify the specific population for this research. The TV Guide (2015) was used to find each programs' general synopses to identify which programs from the networks' primetime lineup would be included in the narrowed sample. Only programming with a synopsis primarily about families with children were included in the potential sample. Programming from any genre other than family-oriented programming was not included in the potential sample, including: sports; talent, variety, reality shows; workplace dramas or comedies; news; or programs primarily about adults without children; and local programming or reruns of syndicated programming, which is not constant across networks and affiliates. These other genre's and programming are not included in the potential population since their inclusion in the sample would result in few parent interactions and thus would not be helpful in answering the questions of this research.

Identifying all of the family-oriented programming resulted in twenty-three different programs as potential series from which to glean the random sample. There were fifteen family oriented programs that were no longer included in the sample because they were not renewed for new seasons. Synopses for each family-oriented program in the non-sample can be found in Appendix B. The family themed programming included both thirty-minute and sixty-minute series, which were spread somewhat evenly across the networks, other than CW, which had a high concentration of science fiction programming. As discussed, though, if a show was not renewed for an additional season, it was not included in the ultimate sample. This narrowed the programs in the sample down to eight, with the others excluded since they were not renewed for another season, either ending in 2014 or 2015. Of course, some of the cancelled shows, such as

Two and a Half Men (CBS) and *Parenthood* (NBC), were excluded because they just happened to be ending after very successful, multiple season series runs.

There were two other anomalies in narrowing the family themed programming, including *American Dad* (FOX, 2014; TBS, 2015), which was not cancelled, but changed networks, from a major broadcast network to a cable network, meaning it was no longer within the major broadcast network population narrowing criteria. *The Mysteries of Laura* (NBC) was originally included in the sample, since it had a family-oriented program synopses of a mom of two boys juggling home life and being a detective (TV Guide, 2015). But after initial viewing, the show was removed from the cluster sample as it was apparent that the family-oriented program synopsis was misleading, as it was actually more of a workplace drama with virtually no parent child interaction represented. Overall, narrowing the population happened in much the same way of the original research, with altering definitions to fit the changing industry and particular anomalies. Now that all aspects of narrowing the population have been discussed, the next section addresses the sampling techniques used.

Random sampling from the population. In order to sample data from the narrowed population, it was necessary to use multistage cluster random sampling techniques (Krippendorf, 1980; Neundorf, 2002). There are no universal criterion for identifying and narrowing media samples, but the validity is enhanced when the researcher presents reasoned arguments for the sampling procedures. It was important to the reliability and validity of the research to closely align the sampling techniques to the original research methodology. Although the population and sample were not always clearly justified in the original method discussions, it was important to specify sampling techniques to increase prospects of meaningful replication.

Multistage cluster sampling refers to a process in which each stage of sampling further

narrows the sampling unit. The first stages of clustering were discussed in the previous section, noting how all television programming was clustered to only include network television, then programming in primetime hours, then further clustered to only include family-oriented programming. Of the family oriented programming, the sample was further narrowed to only include renewed series. Of the renewed series, each program's most recent lapsed 2014-2015 season of episodes was then used as the population from which the random sample was drawn. There were eight final clusters, which were the 2014-2015 season of the eight programs matching all the sampling criteria, each having between eighteen and twenty-four episodes across the entire season. Table 7 includes an overview of the sampled programs and the show's premise that identifies them as family oriented television.

Table 7
Sample Programs Family Themed Premise

Sample Program (Network)
Family Themed Premise
Bob's Burgers (FOX)
Following a hamburger restaurateur and his quirky family in this animated sitcom.
Family Guy (FOX)
Animated antics of the constantly grousing Griffins, a family that put some fun in dysfunctional.
The Goldberg's (ABC)
A nostalgic comedy series about kids growing up in a dysfunctional family in the 1980s.
Last Man Standing (ABC)
A manly sporting-goods store marketing boss decides to spend more time at home with his daughters.
The Middle (ABC)
A slapstick sitcom about a working-class family in the U.S. heartland follows the daily strife of frazzled mom Frankie who, alongside her husband, raises their three kids, the youngest being an outcast at school because of his unusual behavior.
Modern Family (ABC)
A mockumentary-style sitcom chronicling the unusual kinship of the extended Pritchett clan, a brood that includes patriarch Jay; his younger Latina wife, Gloria, and her preteen son; Jay's daughter, Claire, and her family; and Jay's son, Mitchell, who lives with his partner, Cameron.
Mom (CBS)
A comedy centering on a newly sober single mother trying to raise two children while dealing with her overly critical mother and working as a waitress in Napa Valley.
The Simpsons (FOX)
Matt Groening's subversive, animated satire about Springfield's hapless first family became a cult favorite when it premiered on Fox in 1989 after first being seen in 1987 as a short on *The Tracey Ullman Show*.

(TVGuide.com, 2015)

If multistage cluster sampling is done properly, these final clusters should be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive and are said to be a small-scale representation of the total population. The clusters are certainly mutually exclusive, each being a separate family-oriented program, and collectively exhaustive of all the current family-oriented primetime programming renewed for future seasons. Of this collectively exhaustive population, the final stage of cluster sampling applied a random sampling technique to each cluster.

The remaining eight family-oriented programs became the clusters from which five episodes each were drawn, just as the original research used no more than five episodes from any one series (Dail & Way, 1985). The shows included in the final sample happened to include: three FOX shows - *Bob's Burgers, Family Guy,* and *Simpson's* (Fox, 2015); four ABC shows - *The Goldberg's, Last Man Standing, The Middle,* and *Modern Family* (ABC, 2015); and one

CBS show - *Mom* (CBS, 2015). Five episodes each resulted in forty episodes of programming, similar to Dail and Way's total of forty-four episodes. Table 8 gives an overview of the sampling techniques, including: the non-sample programs and the years aired, noting each show ended in either 2014 or 2015; and the sample programs, including descriptors of the total seasons and years aired, season sampled, the total number of episodes, and the random episodes that were chosen for coding, listed in the order they were chosen. Of the sample programs, the most recent, fully elapsed season was used, which was the 2014-2015 television season, resulting in a variety of seasons represented, anywhere from the 2nd to the 26th season of a television series. Utilizing the *most recent* season was important to ensure the population being studied was the most current programming; utilizing a *fully lapsed* season was important to ensure any episode in the population was equally as likely to be randomly sampled. The random episodes were drawn from an envelope that included one numbered piece of paper for each numbered episode of that season (between 18 and 24 total episodes). Sampling decisions were made in an attempt to keep the project manageable while attempting to closely match the number of episodes and hours of programming included in the original sample, which was forty-four episodes, or thirty hours of programming. Since there were eight clusters, five random episodes each would glean forty episodes of half-hour programming, which resulted in twenty hours of programming, rather than thirty. Since the original sample included some hour-long series, there was greater discrepancy in the total hours of programming coded even though the total number of episodes used from each series is the same.

Table 8
Population and Sample Programs

Potential Program Population; Years Aired	Current Sample; Most Recent Complete Season; Total Season Episodes of Renewed Show; Coded Episodes of 2014-2015 Season
American Dad (FOX), 2005-2014; (TBS), 2014-current	*Bob's Burgers* (Fox, 2011-current); 5th season; Episodes 1-21; Coded 9, 20, 5, 14, 15
The Crazy Ones (CBS), 2013-2014	*Family Guy* (Fox, 1999-current); 13th season; Episodes 1-18; Coded 3, 7, 12, 15, 2
Dads (FOX) 2013-2014	
Growing Up Fisher (NBC) 2014	*The Goldberg's** (ABC, 2013-current); 2nd season; Episodes 1-24; Coded 13, 12, 5, 20, 21
How I Met Your Mother (CBS, 2005-2014)	
The Michael J. Fox Show (NBC, 2013-2014)	*Last Man Standing* (ABC, 2011-current); 4th season; Episodes 1-22; Coded 3, 18, 16, 4, 5
The Millers (CBS, 2013-2015)	
The Mysteries of Laura (NBC, 2014-current)	*The Middle** (ABC, 2009-current); 6th season; Episodes 1-24; Coded 8, 13, 11, 14, 17
The Neighbors (ABC, 2012-2014)	
Parenthood (NBC, 2010-2015)	*Modern Family* (ABC, 2009-current); 6th season; Episodes 1-24; Coded 16, 10, 15, 24, 13
Raising Hope (FOX, 2010-2014)	
Sean Saves The World (NBC, 2013-2014)	*Mom* (CBS, 2013-current); 2nd season; Episodes 1-22; Coded 18, 7, 10, 19, 21
Suburgatory (ABC, 2011-2014)	
Trophy Wife (ABC, 2013-2014)	*The Simpsons** (Fox, 1989-current); 26th season; Episodes 1-22; Coded episodes 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
Two And A Half Men (CBS, 2003-2015)	

As involved as the sampling techniques became, establishing which programs would be included in the sample was relatively straightforward in relation to breaking those programs down into the smallest unit of parent interaction for accurate coding. The final aspects of the method section will explain the instrumentation, unit of measurement, unit of analysis, and statistical analysis, concluding with a discussion of reliability and validity.

Coding Instrumentation

A coding instrument was designed to conduct the content analysis, and was created by modifying the original study data collection form (Dail, 1983, p. 198) for efficiency and clarity. A major difference in the instrument design was the separate data collection forms for the family structure and parent interaction variables. The present research resulted in eight pages of data recorded on the Family Form Code Sheet (Appendix B) and 130 pages of data on the Parent Interaction Code Sheet (Appendix C). The coding sheet from the original research seemed to have room to record only one parent interaction on each piece of paper. The newly created code sheet had room to record twelve parent interactions on each page, but within each interaction, there was room for coding up to five parents, and the subsequent children responses, which meant there could be up to sixty separate data entries on one page.

Code sheet - family structure. The Family Structure Code Sheet recorded parent sex, partnership, and occupation, as well as television show identifiers by episode and family, including the program title, episode title, season number, and episode number. Family structure variables utilized the entire program as the unit of sampling and unit of data collection, resulting in each family as the unit of analysis. Within each episode, there could be multiple families, which were recorded by family name, then character names, family roles, gender, and occupation. The partnership variable was coded into one of the parent partnership variables. It was necessary to record data by family to account for programs with multiple families. Within each episode, there was room to record as many family groups as necessary, and within each family group, the characters names were listed and assigned a family role (mother, father, son, daughter, etc.). Each family member was assigned a family ID to correspond with their family name and family role. During data entry, the family ID would ensure the family structure

variables associated with each character's family ID were entered with each parent interaction. The total running time, or time codes, were also recorded on the family structure code sheet, including any delineation necessary for changes in the occupation variable. The time code was also recorded for any advertisements, allowing for true representation of total minutes of programming and density of parent interactions.

The process for coding family structure variables was very open-ended in terms of how the information was gleaned from the episode or programming promotions. The parents' sex, partnership, and occupation were often assumed or discussed in the show synopses, or in parts of the storyline, or in promotional pieces on the shows. In other words, there was not just one way to identify and code the family structure variables; rather, the variables could often be identified with the networks' promotional material. The variables generally stayed the same throughout the series, so the coding could be carried forward into subsequent episodes. Though infrequently, the parent occupation variable was one that did change, in which case the time code was recorded at the moment of the job change and the new parent occupation code would be recorded for all subsequent program minutes from that point.

The family structure variables were recorded by episode, and sometimes series, but were then entered with each instance of a parent interaction for data analysis. The next section explains the detailed process of coding the parent interaction variables.

Code sheet - parent interaction. The critical variables were recorded on the Parent Interaction Code Sheet (Appendix C). Each page had a place to indicate program and episode, and then the parent interactions were separated by time code, with each parent interaction assigned a number, corresponding family ID, and a brief, couple-word, description of the parent-child interaction. There was also a column to identify each parent and child by gender role, and

then space to code the four critical variables for each parent interaction: parent role, parent role child response, child rearing, and child rearing child response.

Within each instance of parent interaction, there was space to code up to five parents and subsequent child responses. The time code would be recorded where each parent interaction started and stopped, with each parent utterance bound by a child response. In the case where the child spoke first, the parent interaction would include the subsequent parent utterance and child response; if no children were present for the parent role variable (the child rearing variable was not coded without a child present), the parent role was bound by another character speaking, or a new scene or new scenario with a different parent role being represented; if several children were present, each child's response was recorded with each instance of parent interaction. For example, two parents could be taking turns talking with their three children, and the parents finish their back-and-forth utterances about getting ready for school, and the children respond in unison by going to get ready; the time code is recorded and the recording is paused while the coder determines how to categorize each parent interaction for the four critical variables. More likely, each child responded differently and was coded accordingly.

Often, it was necessary to play the recording several times, for several reasons: to separately determine how each critical variable would be coded; to unitize, or determine the precise place the time code should indicate the end of one parent interaction and beginning of another; and to focus on a different parent-child interaction when there were several occurring at once. With little direction on how the process was completed for the original research, the discussion on instrumentation turns to focus on the unit of analysis for each parent interaction variable.

Parent role: Instrumental-expressive categories. The unit of analysis for the parent role was a complete parent interaction, defined as a parent's activity or phrases or groups of phrases, bounded by a child response or a different parent interaction. The parent role variable was coded after the parent interaction was unitized, or broken into the smallest possible unit for coding. Parent role is associated with the way a parent acts or contributes in their socially interconnected family role, characterized by which tasks take primary concern and in what context (public/private sphere). Because parent role is more about the context in which parenting happens and how the overall parent act contributes to family care, it was possible for parent role variable to be represented without a child present. The example was used earlier of a parent at work, coded as instrumental in their provider role. An entire scene of a parent at work could become one instance of parent interaction, but if the parent role changed to expressive, such as when a parent takes a child's phone call while at work, that would begin a new parent interaction. The complete list of parent role variable identifiers is included in Table 4 above, and was the primary tool referenced throughout coding. Each parent interaction was coded for as many instances of parent role that were represented, as either: *I* for *Instrumental;* or, *E* for *Expressive*.

A parent interaction was anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes long, since each *different* parent role or child response indicated the end point for a parent interaction. The time codes were recorded to indicate the beginning and ending of each parent interaction, bounded by a child response or different parent interaction. There were often several parents being coded for the parent role categories, each receiving a separate code for the interaction depending on their communication, verbalizations, or behaviors. Each child was also coded separately based on the individual responses. Until the parent's role or child's response was differently coded, the

parent-child interaction continued. It also became a new parent role if the scene changed, meaning the parent was in a different setting, and therefore the context of the parent role was different. For example, if a parent was at home cooking dinner for the family, the parent interaction was coded as an expressive parent role; and the next scene was a parent at work, the parent interaction was coded as an instrumental parent role. Any child response could also indicate the end of a parent role, which would then call for the next unit of analysis, time code, and separate coding for the parent role and child response.

The parent role variable was conceptualized to reflect the *context* within which the general overall parental role is exercised by each parent in a scene, as is stated in Dail's (1983) dissertation. The discussion of context, specifically the traditional public vs. private sphere, was used to train coders on the difference between the parent role and child rearing variables. Coders were also trained on the history of the categorizations being aligned by gender, to promote understanding of the instrumental and expressive categories having nothing to do with the gender of the parent, but rather the overall role that is portrayed. The list of variable identifiers was modified throughout the pilot study and from coding notes and coder training, until all categories were deemed to have an acceptable inter-coder reliability. The unit of analysis and the process of creating the list of variable identifiers are very similar for the child rearing variables, which are discussed in the next section. The method chapter will then conclude with a discussion of unitization, validity, and reliability

Child rearing: Authoritarian-flexible-permissive categories. The unit of analysis for child rearing is the same as the unit of analysis for parent role, so much of the previous section discussion also applied here. Child rearing was coded for any complete parent interaction directly involving a child. Each phrase or sentence that was spoken *directly to a child or children*

was coded for the child rearing variables. Child rearing was associated with any immediate interactions with a child and the patterns of attitude, values, and beliefs around raising children and exercising parental authority. The parent interaction was unitized once and then coded for the critical variable sets, parent role and child rearing, for each parent-child pair present. Child rearing begins when a parent directly communicates to a child and was bounded by a child response. As was often the case, a child was the first to address the parent, but child rearing still began at the point when the parent addressed the child directly, essentially using that child's initial address as contextual clues for coding the subsequent child response. The parent interaction was coded for each instance of child rearing by assigning one of the following: *A* for *Authoritarian*; *F* for *Flexible*; and *P* for *Permissive*. The full list of variable identifiers is in Table 5 above, which was the primary tool used through the data collection process.

All critical variables used the same unit of analysis, a complete parent interaction, to unitize before coding the two sets of variables, parent role and child rearing and the subsequent child responses. The main difference between the two critical parent interaction variables is that child rearing is only possible when a parent is directly involved with a child, while parent role represents the general way the parent performs their role within interconnected family expectations, so it is possible without a child present. One parent interaction could include multiple parents, each receiving their own code for parent role, child rearing, and child response. Again, the dependent variable code sheet has place for five parents and five children to be coded within each parent interaction. Each parent interaction may have included several data collection units of child rearing, since each parent is its own unit of data collection within each parent interaction. Although the unit of analysis is the same for both sets of critical variables, there were fewer incidences of child rearing, since parent role could happen without children present.

Child response: Positive-negative categories. The parent interaction was also the unit of analysis for each child rearing response. Each incidence of parent role and child rearing within a parent interaction was also coded for child response, resulting in two potential child response variables: parent role child response and child rearing child response. The child's response was conceptualized as any reaction, whether verbal or non-verbal, directed at a parent during a parent interaction. For some reason, the original research used non-verbal cues from children as a marker for the end of the parent interaction, but they did not include non-verbal cues in the child response coding. This research was altered a bit from this approach, utilizing both verbal and non-verbal cues, which is explained further in the unitizing section below. The child response is still used as a marker to indicate the end of one parent interaction and the beginning of the next. Each child's response was categorized into one of two possible categories: + *positive*, or - *negative*. Each incidence of parent interaction had room for up to five child responses to each critical variable.

Neutral category used minimally. For each critical variable, parent role, child rearing, and child response, there was also a neutral category that could be used. The neutral category was left off of all data collection materials and was not discussed in detail here, as it was used minimally in this research. This is noted as s an alteration from the original research, which used the neutral category much more readily. In the original research, the neutral category was used so much that it seemed meaningless. The variable identifiers for neutral were not mutually exclusive from other categories. Thus, the current coders were trained to use it minimally, assigning the parent role, child rearing, and child response into one of the categories that most closely aligns with the parent child interaction. The *neutral* value was to be used only in the event a character, either parent or child, was on screen and did not interact or it was not

discernable which parent interaction value would be assigned. The original research used a broad *neutral* definition to include any interaction not aligned with either parent role or child rearing, even noting that, "directions to child in form of polite request, [and] comment on neutral subject" are to be coded as neutral. These statements were too aligned with the expressive parent role and flexible child rearing, so the neutral category was used sparingly, primarily when a parent or child was oblivious to their role, or completely in their own world.

Now that the unit of analyses and variable identifiers has been discussed for each critical variable, the method discussion will conclude with a focus on data collection and data analysis procedures as well as validity and reliability.

Data collection procedures and data analysis. Television has unique characteristics, just as with face-to-face communication, and considering it is a continuous stream of mediated information, special attention has to be paid to the reliability of coders' ability to uniformly identify a unit of analysis. Research has supported the fact that coders can reliably identify a unit of analysis when charged with identifying unique instances of particular behaviors or acts (Greenberg, 1980; Wurtzel & Lometti, 1984) and plenty of family communication research utilized the communicative act as the unit of analysis (Akins, 1986; Skill & Robson, 1990). The unit of analysis for this research mirrors that of the original research, with criteria of analysis for dependent variables to include "verbalizations occurring within the context of parent-child interaction… bounded by some form of child response" (Dail, 1983, p. 73). With mentions of unitizing in the previous section, this concept will be clearly defined here, beginning with an explanation of the process for this research.

Data collection process. The pilot studies and instrument tests were conducted on programs that were in the larger potential population, but because of cancellation, were not

included in the final sample. For the pilot studies, episodes of Parenthood were borrowed from the library and three episodes were used to test and calibrate the data collection instruments. Three master's students were trained in the data collection procedures by reviewing the codebook, especially the tables of variable identifiers. The group of coders then practiced using the instruments by coding an episode together. The notes and discussions were used to calibrate the new list of variable identifiers and then the updated instrument was tested when the three master's students and the researcher each coded an episode individually. The final coder training included a thorough discussion of the individually coded episode, updating the codebook based on notes and discussions. The inter-coder reliability of the individually coded episode was determined to be above 90% for each variable.

The process of gathering the sample was also interestingly involved in the digital age. The researcher purchased a program-streaming device that would allow for a digital recording that could be stored digitally. An adaptor was necessary to convert the digital signal into a format identifiable by a mac. The researcher then signed up for a 30-day free trial to a programming subscription service that included network television programming. Five episodes of each program were then recorded from the digital streaming software and saved into a computer. The episodes were also saved onto an external drive, and then coding was completed. Each program, episode, and family structure variables were recorded onto the Family Form Code Sheet and then the critical dependent variables were coded onto the Parent Interaction Code Sheets. Finally, each separate parent interaction was then entered into SPSS for statistical analysis, associating family structure variables with each instance of parent interaction. Discussing the units of measurement can further explain the process of unitizing and identifying units of analysis.

Units of measurement. It was sufficient to use the entire program as the unit of analysis

for the variables concerning family structure, as these tended to remain constant across several communicative acts, episodes, or even entire seasons. For family structure variables, each episode was unitized, which is necessary when a continuous stream of actions needs to be broken into the smallest possible unit of discrete communication act. Each unit became one discrete parent interaction, which was then coded for the critical variable sets of parent role and parent role response, and child rearing and child rearing response.

In order to unitize uniformly across all variables, each parent interaction, or communicative act involving or concerning a person in a parent role, began with a parent utterance and ended with a child response or a different parent interaction. The original research also unitized by focusing on easily definable and discrete parent interactions found in television programming, which were also bound by a parent utterance and some form of child response. The exact unit of measurement was said to include any "verbalization occurring within the context of parent-child interaction" (Dail & Way, 1985), which was broadened to include non-verbalizations as well, fully embracing the television genre to utilize both video and audio to tell a story.

Coder training. Establishing reliability around the ability to unitize a parent interaction uniformly was essential before moving onto coding the parent interaction for the critical variables. The process to unitize began with the few details mentioned in the original research, and was adjusted during pilot tests and coder trainings. Three coders were first trained on unitizing a program into separate parent interaction units by unitizing an episode of *Parenthood* (NBC, 2014) together as a group. The unitizing training was completed before even discussing the critical variables for observation. After unitizing one episode together, the three coders and the researcher each unitized the same episode and came together to discuss any discrepancies or

points of importance, ultimately determining inter-coder reliability with the third episodes'
observations in which coders were able to unitize with 94% accuracy.

For all parent interaction variables, the same process of coder training, pilot testing, and
inter-coder reliability was established. First, three coders were trained on the variables using the
tables of variable identifiers during a coding session where all coders coded an episode together,
stopping at each parent interaction to discuss how it would be categorized. The coders then
modified the identifiers according to the notes from the session, and then each coded an episode
individually, before reconvening again to discuss notations and discrepancies. The coders then
coded an episode individually until all reliability coefficients were above .90 using Kerlinger's
(1963) rs reliability coefficient. This process was successful in gleaning inter-coder reliability of
90 % agreement for all variable sets during the second pilot study after the third pass through the
instrument tests. After inter-coder reliability was established, the actual sample was coded
entirely by the researcher.

Statistical analysis. Answering the questions about family structure and parent
interaction variables in primetime television required the use of some basic statistical tests. Chi-
square contingency analysis is a statistical test used to test for the existence of a relationship
between two variables. It is a versatile statistical tool as it can be used with different classes of
data, including nominal, ordinal, or scale variables. The data for this research was nominal and
several combinations of critical variables were tested for relationships. Some basic frequencies,
averages and percent change were also used to determine presence of particular variables and
how things have changed from the original research. The statistical analysis was similar to that
used in the original research and the data collection procedures were aligned where it was
possible.

Instrumentation Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are interdependent, meaning if any one component, repeatability, accuracy, or precision, is compromised, it is suspect whether the research is measuring the intended target and whether it could be repeatable. Reliability refers to the extent to which research and its measuring procedures can yield the same results over repeated trials. Validity refers to the extent to which the measuring procedures are actually measuring what is the intended concept of the study.

The repeatability of this research has been demonstrated in several concepts. The pilot studies and subsequent calibrating of the instruments to achieve above 90% agreement across variables and unitizing increased the likelihood of repeating the research. Since this was also a replication of the original research, the repeatability was demonstrated in the successful completion of the present study. The data collection tools have only been enhanced from the original research, so repeatability has been increased with this replication and extension. Accuracy and precision were increased by carefully testing and updating all data collection instruments, including removing the use of the neutral category. Detailed descriptions of the data collection procedures ensures replicability if other researchers applied the instruments to a different set of media messages.

External validity refers to the generalizability of the research, asking whether the measures could be extrapolated to other settings and whether the data is representative of the sample. The careful sampling procedures ensure the likelihood that the random episodes drawn were representative of the total population of family oriented primetime television programming. The coding instruments were updated through an involved pilot study and coder training process to increase the likelihood that the measures could easily be applied to parent interactions in other

mediums, day parts, networks, etc. Unitizing uniformly and then training coders to only include clues, markers, actions, or dialogue from the immediate parent interaction being observed and coded increased the face validity of the project. Ensuring the coding schemes and categories for each variable were exhaustive and mutually exclusive also enhanced the validity of the research.

Three ways this research increased the likelihood of obtaining high reliability included: pilot testing, coder training, and double-checking data at several points. Before applying the codebook to the actual data, the coder training allowed for step-by-step explanation of the coding procedures, and then began testing the coding instruments as questions were addressed with clarification of the coding descriptors. Pilot testing allowed for further tests of the coding instrument and refined the categories before applying the coding to the actual data set. This allowed for optimal accuracy in the coding categories. During pilot and instrument testing, coding was cross-checked for coder drift, as well as errors in transferring the data from code sheets to SPSS. Another way reliability was increased was with coder training to achieve ultimate levels of inter-coder reliability.

Inter-coder reliability is important because it validates the coding scheme, ensuring that different coders would similarly identify examples of codes within the data. It also allows for a division of labor, enabling more data to be processed and can be compared and cross-referenced. Ultimately, inter-coder reliability allows for the coding instruments to be reproduced and applied to future research in the same area. Intra-coder reliability expects each coder to remain consistent across variables and through time. Intra-coder reliability can be enhanced with proper coder training, including having coders take notes while they are coding during pilot studies to compare coding decisions and adjusting the coding instruments for the final research.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

After closely duplicating the previous research, the results are reported in a similar fashion leading to an easily comparable discussion in the final chapter. A total of eight different programs met the criteria for family oriented, prime time television programming. Five episodes of each program were recorded and coded for all variables, resulting in a total of 40 episodes, or just over 13½ hours of programming, closely scrutinized. All of the series were situation comedies from traditional half-hour programming blocks, with an average of 20 minutes of actual programming per episode. Of the 816 minutes of family oriented programming, 567 minutes (69%) contained parent interactions. Each moment of parent interaction could have contained multiple parents, behaviors, and interactions, and ultimately child rearing was present during a combined 480 minutes and parent roles were present during a combined 984 minutes. Essentially, the nature of the family-themed programming meant that if a parent was present, parent role was recorded, while accounting for multiple parents in the same scene/interaction, which results in more total minutes of parent role portrayal than total minutes of parent interactions. Thus, the two critical variables were separated for analysis, with a total of 2725 parent role portrayals and 1858 child-rearing patterns. There were child responses to parent roles 1908 times and child-rearing patterns received a child response 1808 times.

The results chapter is organized by research question, presenting tables to aid in identifying significant associations. First there is a discussion of family structure frequencies, then the prevalence of particular parent interactions, followed by the correlations of family structure to parent interaction.

Research Question 1 - Family Structure

The family structure variable is analyzed along three measures: parent sex, partnership, and occupation. Cumulative frequencies answer research question one, found in Table 9, with slightly different totals for the parent role and child rearing variables. The data is best understood while remembering a significant difference between parent role and child rearing is that the child rearing is when a parent is in direct interaction with a child and the parent role often occurs whether a child is present or not. Males and females can be found nearly equally across parent roles, but females (55%) are more likely to be presented in child rearing than males (45%). Females are more likely to engage in child rearing, while parent roles are almost as likely for either parent.

Table 9

Family Structure Variable Frequencies Across Parent Interactions

	Parent Role		Child Rearing	
Parent Sex	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Male	1328	49	841	45
Female	1396	51	1016	55
Parent Partnership				
M/F Dual	2204	81	1568	84
M/M Dual	100	4	8	0.5
M Single	24	1	5	0.5
F Single	315	11	211	11
Grandparent (GP)	81	3	65	4
Parent Occupation				
Professional	186	7	85	5
Semi-Professional	1539	56	1118	60
Non-Professional	433	16	282	15
Unemployed	8	.5	0	0
Stay-at-home	477	17.5	307	17
Retired	81	3	65	3

Family structure analysis (Table 9) also includes the parents' partnership and occupation. The most prevalent parent partnership was the traditional, male/female dual-parent household, with over 80% of the parent interactions. Female single parents were most closely behind,

presented in 11% of the parent interactions. The only minor difference in parent partnership between the role and child rearing portrayals was with the male/male family form, noting a 3.5% increased likelihood that the portrayals would be parent roles and not child rearing. Grandparent portrayals were more likely found than single male parents, and with very few female grandparents, the male and female grandparent data is combined for the analysis. There were no female/female families portrayed and the male/male portrayals come from one family. A majority (approximately 3/5) of the parents were in semi-professional or white-collar occupations, with stay-at-home parents found just slightly more than non-professional/blue collar occupations, each at just over 15% of the portrayals. Professional occupations represented 7% of the parent role portrayals, and only 5% of child rearing, while the 3% retired represents the grandparents of the shows. Unemployed parents were almost non-existent, with only half percent of the total parent role portrayals, but none of the child rearing. Professional and unemployed parents were less likely to engage in child rearing.

Research Question 2 - Parent Interaction

The density of parent interaction in family programming is presented in Tables 10 and 11, which show the prevalence of parent roles, child rearing and child responses across all of the programs ($n = 40$). This analysis helped to answer the second research question regarding the extent to which particular parent roles, child rearing and child responses are present and which predominate.

Table 10

Density of Parent Role and Child Response			
Parent Role	Total Number	% of Total	*M* Number per Program
Instrumental	843	31	21.07
Expressive	1864	68	46.60
Neutral	18	1	00.45
Parent Role Total	2725		68.12
Child Response			
Positive	982	36	24.55
Negative	930	34	23.25
Neutral	814	30	20.35
Child Response Total	2725		68.12

Total number of programs = 40

The parent roles (Table 10) were more than twice as likely to be presented as expressive (68%) than instrumental (31%). Expressive parent role portrayals were found about every half-minute, while instrumental portrayals are found an average of one per minute. Parent roles on television were much more likely to be expressive, or attentive parenting. The child responses to parent role portrayals were found quite equally across categories, including 36% positive, 34% negative and 30% missing or neutral. This was the only variable where there was a large incidence in the neutral category, because parent role was possible without a child being present, thus an increased chance for the child response to be categorized as neutral. The general nature of parent roles in primetime family television tended to be nurturing and family-oriented, while children are less likely to tend towards any one response.

The child rearing patterns (Table 11) were three times as likely to be presented as flexible (61%), and about equally as likely to be authoritarian (20%) or permissive (19%). The child responses to child rearing were quite equally split, with just slightly more positive (49%) than negative (48%) responses, and very few neutral (3%) responses. This variable is concerned with the manner of direct parent child interaction, which made it very unlikely for the absence of children, as happened often with the parent role variable. The parent child interaction in

primetime family television was likely to be flexible and child-centered, with equally presented positive and negative child responses.

Table 11

Density of Child Rearing and Child Response

Child Rearing	Total Number	% of Total	*M* Number per Program
Authoritarian	362	20	9.05
Flexible	1133	61	28.32
Permissive	356	19	8.90
Neutral	7	0	00.17
Total	1858		46.45
Child Response			
Positive	914	49	22.85
Negative	896	48	22.40
Neutral	48	3	1.20
Total	1858		46.45

Total number of programs = 40

Research Question 3 - Family Structure and Parent Interaction

For the last questions of the research, the analysis answers how the family structure and parent interaction variables are associated. Table 12 is the first of these tables, showing, specifically, how parent *sex* is divided between parent role and child rearing. Males and females were both more likely to be expressive, but three-quarters of female portrayals were expressive, while just over 60% of male portrayals are expressive. Likewise, males were almost fifteen percentage points more likely to have an instrumental parent role portrayal than females, having only one quarter of all portrayals as instrumental. Again, with child rearing, males and females both tended towards one pattern, flexible, and were even equally permissive, at just twenty percent of the time. Females were twenty percentage points more likely to be flexible, and almost ten percentage points more likely to be permissive, while males were twenty percentage points more likely to be authoritarian. Males were most strongly associated with instrumental parent role and authoritarian child rearing, while females were most strongly associated with

expressive parent role and flexible or permissive child rearing.

Table 12
Parent Interaction and Sex of Parent

Parent Role [a]		Male	%	Female	%
Instrumental		503	38	340	24
Expressive		817	62	1047	76
	Total	1320		1387	
Child Rearing [b]					
Authoritarian		215	26	147	14
Flexible		460	55	673	67
Permissive		164	19	192	19
	Total	839		1012	

[a] $\chi^2(1, N = 2707) = 58.27, p < .001$; [b] $\chi^2(2, N = 1851) = 39.19, p < .001$

Parent interaction and *family partnership* were examined in Table 13, which shows all family partnerships were more likely to be expressive and flexible. Looking more closely at the percentage of instrumental to expressive, there were noticeable ten percentage point differences in which single mothers were one of the most likely to have instrumental portrayals (68%) and single fathers were more than twice as likely to have expressive portrayals (71%). The male/male partnership was least likely to be portrayed in instrumental parent roles (21%) and most likely to be portrayed in expressive parent roles (79%). These anomalies were all present within the one-sex households, which also held true for child rearing patterns. The male/male household had the highest percentage of flexible portrayals (88%) and no authoritarian portrayals (0%). Single mothers were most likely to be permissive (29%) than any other parent partnership, and had the lowest percentage of flexible portrayals (51%), while single fathers were never permissive and hardly authoritarian (20%), and male/male portrayals were never authoritarian and hardly permissive (12%). The one-sex family partnerships, single-mother, single-father, and the male/male couple, helped to make a significant association between family partnership and parent roles and child rearing.

Table 13

Parent Role [a]	M/F	%	M/M	%	F	%	M	%	GP	%
Instrumental	692	32	21	21	101	32	7	29	22	28
Expressive	1499	68	79	79	212	68	17	71	57	72
Total	2191		100		313		24		79	
Child Rearing [b]										
Authoritarian	310	20	0	0	41	19	1	20	10	15
Flexible	963	62	7	88	108	51	4	80	51	79
Permissive	289	18	1	12	62	29	0	0	4	6
Total	1562		8		211		5		65	

Table title (spanning): *Parent Interaction and Parent Partnership*

[a] $\chi^2(5, N = 2707) = 43.16, p < .001$; [b] $\chi^2(8, N = 1851) = 88.89, p < .001$

Parent Occupation was the last variable of family structure that was associated with parent interactions, detailed in Table 14. All three categories of working parents were primarily expressive, accounting for 2/3 of all parent role portrayals, leaving only 1/3 of working parents presented as instrumental. The stay-at-home parents had the highest percentage of expressive (79%) and the lowest percentage of instrumental portrayals (21%) of all parent occupation categories. The unemployed, on the other hand, had the highest percentage of instrumental (75%) portrayals and the lowest percentage of expressive portrayals (25%), and interestingly, did not engage in any child rearing what so ever. Parent occupation brought out significant differences in child rearing patterns as well. Professional parents had the largest percentage of flexible portrayals (85%) and the smallest percentage of authoritarian portrayals (13%), while non-professional parents had the smallest percentage of flexible (49%) and largest percentage permissive portrayals (34%) of all parent occupation categories. The semi-professional parents had the largest concentration of authoritarian child rearing patterns (22%). Parent occupations were connected with particular parent roles, with a majority of the portrayals of working parents, but their primary concern was family, not work. The highly differentiated child rearing patterns portray professional parents most positively with the most flexible and fewest authoritarian

portrayals, while non-professional parents were most permissive.

Table 14

Parent Interaction and Parent Occupation

Parent Role [a]	Prof.	%	Semi-Prof.	%	Non-Prof.	%	Un-employed	%	Stay-home	%
Instrumental	64	34	509	33	148	34	6	75	116	21
Expressive	122	66	1018	67	282	66	2	25	440	79
Total	186		1527		430		8		556	
Child Rearing [b]										
Authoritarian	11	13	247	22	48	17	0	0	56	15
Flexible	71	84	660	59	137	49	0	0	265	72
Permissive	3	3	208	19	96	34	0	0	49	13
Total	85		1115		281		0		370	

[a] $\chi^2(5, N = 2707) = 43.16, p < .001$; [b] $\chi^2(8, N = 1851) = 88.89, p < .001$

Research Question 4 - Child Response and Parent Interaction

The final way family interaction data was analyzed helped further delineate the child responses by scrutinizing how child response differs across the two critical variables, parent role and child rearing (see Table 15). An instrumental parent role was primarily rejected, with 60% of the child responses being negative, while an expressive parent role was primarily reinforced with positive child responses 56% of the time. The authoritarian child rearing was almost twice as likely to receive a negative child response (66%) than positive (34%), and permissive was also more likely to receive negative child response (53%) than positive (47%). Primetime family television had parent child interactions that were overwhelmingly expressive and flexible with positive child responses as reinforcement, while the instrumental, authoritarian, and even permissive parent, were rejected through negative child responses more often than not.

Table 15

Parent Interaction and Child Response

Parent Role [a]		Positive	% of PR	Negative	% of PR
Instrumental		208	40	317	60
Expressive		773	56	610	44
	Total	981		927	
Child Rearing [b]			% of CR		% of CR
Authoritarian		120	34	234	66
Flexible		631	57	477	43
Permissive		161	47	185	53
	Total	912		896	

[a] $\chi^2(1, N = 1908) = 40.35, p < .001$; [b] $\chi^2(2, N = 1808) = 59.64, p < .001$

Child response was also associated with parent roles by family structure variables. Three-way chi-square analyses were conducted using the family structure (parent sex, partnership, occupation) as the explanatory variable, parent role as the response variable, and child response to parent role as the control variable. Table 16 gives details by family structure of the parent role and child response variables. Instrumental parent role is met with negative response more often than positive for male (53%) and female parents (70%), but female parents are more than twice as likely to receive a negative (70%) rather than positive (30%) response. Conversely, expressive parent role is met with positive response more often than negative for both male (61%) and female (53%) parents, but male parents are more than 20% more likely to receive a positive (61%) rather than negative (39%) response to expressive parenting roles. There is a significant association of parent role, child response and sex of parent, with male expressive parents being especially reinforced, while female instrumental parents were especially rejected.

Table 16

Parent Role Child Response by Parent Characteristics								
	Instrumental Child Response				Expressive Child Response			
	Positive		Negative		Positive		Negative	
Sex [a]	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	140	47	155	53	350	61	228	39
Female	68	30	162	70	423	53	382	47
Partnership [b]								
M/F	179	42	250	58	645	55	527	45
M/M	1	100	0	0	10	83	2	17
F	18	24	58	76	79	56	63	44
M	1	100	0	0	9	90	1	10
GP	9	50	9	50	30	64	17	36
Occupation [c]								
Prof.	14	58	10	42	46	67	23	33
Semi-Prof.	139	43	188	57	468	59	329	41
Non-Prof.	31	36	56	64	106	53	95	47
Unemployed	0	0	0	0	1	1	146	99
Stay-Home	24	28	63	72	152	90	17	10

[a] $\chi^2(1, N = 1908) = 31.78, p < .001$; [b] $\chi^2(5, N = 1908) = 16.16, p < .006$;
[c] $\chi^2(5, N = 1908) = 11.34, p < .045$

Parent partnership (Table 16) also had significant association with parent role and child response. The traditional family structure, consisting of a male/female partnership followed the trend of parent role responses, with instrumental response primarily negative and expressive response primarily positive. Again, the one-sex-parent partnerships showed the significant differences between instrumental and expressive portrayals being particularly reinforced or rejected. Single mothers who were instrumental were three times as likely to receive a negative response (76%) than positive (24%), while both a single father and two male fathers displayed very few instrumental roles, which were always met with a positive response. The single father and male/male partnership were much more likely to be portrayed as expressive, with the highest percentage of positive responses and lowest percentage of negative responses across all the parent partnerships.

Parent occupation (Table 16) also showed an association with parent role and child

response. The instrumental professional parent had the highest percentage of positive responses (58%) and lowest percentage of negative responses (42%) of all parent occupation categories. A negative response to the instrumental role was most likely from stay-at-home, non-professionals and semi-professionals, though stay-at-home parents had the highest percentage of negative and the lowest percentage of positive of all the parent occupations. The expressive stay-at-home parent was also most likely to receive positive response (90%) and least likely to receive negative response (10%). Quite the contrast is the unemployed parent, who was only portrayed in an expressive role, never even child rearing, and was almost always met with a negative child response (99%). Other than these small sub-samples becoming statistically significant, the professional expressive parent had the next highest incidence of positive child response (67%) and the second smallest percentage of negative child response (33%; unemployed have only 10% negative response) across all occupation categories. If parent occupation were a continuum, those categories at each end of the spectrum, professional and unemployed, would have the most significant findings, with semi-professional (white-collar) and non-professional (blue-collar) workers being most typical.

The details of whether child response to child rearing varies across the family structure variables are found in Table 17. Just as with the parent role variable, three-way chi-square analyses were conducted using the parent characteristic (sex, partnership, occupation) as the explanatory variable, child rearing as the response variable and child response to child rearing as the control variable. Both authoritarian mothers (76%) and fathers (60%) were more likely to receive negative responses, but authoritarian mothers were overwhelmingly rejected. Flexible fathers had the highest percentage of positive responses (63%), but flexible mothers also had a bit more positive (53%) than negative (47%) responses. Permissive parents of both sexes were

just a bit more likely to have negative (male, 53%; female 54%) response than positive. The significant associations with child rearing response by sex of parent are that of authoritarian mothers rejected, while flexible fathers are reinforced.

Table 17

Child Rearing Child Response by Parent Characteristics

	Authoritarian				Flexible				Permissive			
	Pos.		Neg.		Pos.		Neg.		Pos.		Neg.	
Sex [b]	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	85	40	125	60	286	63	166	37	76	47	84	53
Female	35	24	109	76	345	53	311	47	85	46	101	54
Partnership [b]												
M/F	108	36	194	64	529	56	409	44	131	47	148	53
M/M	0	0	0	0	5	71	2	29	1	100	0	0
F	7	17	34	83	62	57	46	43	27	44	35	56
M	1	100	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
GP	4	40	6	60	32	63	19	37	2	50	2	50
Occupation [c]												
Prof	6	60	4	40	44	62	27	38	2	100	0	0
Semi-Prof	89	37	152	63	390	61	251	39	96	48	104	52
Non-Prof	13	28	34	72	80	59	56	41	40	42	56	58
Stay-Home	12	21	44	79	117	45	143	55	23	48	25	52

[a] $\chi^2(1, N = 1808) = 37.25, p < .001$; [b] $\chi^2(10, N = 1808) = 38.68, p < .001$;
[c] $\chi^2(8, N = 1808) = 88.52, p < .001$

Parent partnership was also found to have significant associations with child rearing response (Table 17). Again, the statistical anomalies were the one-sex parent households. Authoritarian single mothers were most likely to have a negative child response (83%), while male/male partnership was never portrayed as authoritarian and the authoritarian single fathers only had a positive child response. Flexible single fathers and male/male partnership were both about three times as likely to have a positive (75% and 71% respectively) than negative (25% and 29% respectively) child response. All flexible parent partnerships were more likely met with positive responses, but flexible single mothers (43%) and traditional partnered parents (44%) were most likely to receive negative responses. Permissive child rearing was met with more negative responses than positive responses for both single mothers (56% negative; 44% positive)

and traditionally paired parents (53% negative; 47% positive). Overwhelmingly, authoritarian parents across all partnerships were met with negative child responses, while flexible parents were met with positive child responses, and permissive parents were met with generally more negative child responses.

Parent occupation (Table 17) was also significantly associated to child rearing and child response. Authoritarian professional parents were most likely to receive positive reinforcement (60%), while authoritarian stay-at-home parents were most likely to be rejected with negative child responses (79%). Flexible professional parents were most likely to receive positive reinforcement (62%), while flexible stay-at-home parents were most likely to receive negative, rejecting child responses (55%). Permissive child rearing was primarily met with negative child response, with non-professional parents having the highest percentage of negative responses (58%). The couple of incidences of permissive child rearing among professional parents were always reinforced with positive child response. Overall, authoritarian and permissive child rearing were rejected, while flexible child rearing was reinforced across all parent occupations. The results show that there are significant associations among family structure variables across parent role, child rearing, and child response.

Research Question 5 - Changing Family Structures and Parent Interaction

There are stark differences in the parent interactions from 1985 to 2015. Parent roles, child rearing, and child response all had points of distinction. In general, there were more parents portrayed overall and child responses were much more negative, with a shift in the prevalence of male and female parent interactions. In 1985, there was an approximated 60/40 split of male to female parent interactions; in 2015, the split shifted to 45/55 of male to female parent interactions. There were more mothers presented and fewer fathers, and children were much

more likely to respond negatively to parenting. Table 18 points out the increase in expressive

parent roles overall, from 43% of total in 1985 to 68% of total in 2015. Child responses were 17

percentage points more likely to be negative in 2015 and much less likely to be positive, from

83% in 1985 to 36% in 2015

Table 18

Parent Interaction - Parent Role	% of Total 1985	% of Total 2015	X per Program 1985	X per Program 2015	% Diff. 1985: 2015
Instrumental	31	31	6.65	21.07	0
Expressive	43	68	9.34	46.60	25
Neutral	26	1	5.70	00.45	25
Parent Role Total			21.70	68.12	
Positive Child Response	83	36	12.18	24.55	47
Negative Child Response	17	34	2.54	23.25	17

Percent Difference in Parent Role and Child Response 1985:2015

Table 19 compares the parent role and child response variables by parent sex between the

1985 and 2015 data sets. Both mothers and fathers were much more expressive in the 2014-2015

season, but were not necessarily less instrumental. Fathers went from 39% expressive in the

original data set to 66% expressive in the current data set, while mothers increased from 49% to

78% expressive. Child responses to expressive fathers were more negative (20% more), while

child responses to expressive mothers were slightly more positive (7%). Instrumental parent

roles were found about as often for fathers, 33% in 1985 to 34% in 2015, but slightly less often

for mothers, 27% in 1985 to 22% in 2015. Child responses were much more likely to be negative

to both fathers (30 percentage point increase) and mothers (54 percentage point increase)

instrumental roles.

Table 19

Parent Role and Child Response by Sex of Character 1985: 2015

	Male Parent						Female Parent					
	Total Male Behaviors		Child Response				Total Female Behaviors		Child Response			
			Positive		Negative				Positive		Negative	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1985[a]												
Instrumental	189	33	87	78	25	22	104	27	48	84	9	16
Expressive	220	39	134	81	31	19	191	49	24	46	28	54
1985 Total	409		221		56		295		72		37	
2015												
Instrumental	295	34	140	47	155	53	230	22	68	30	162	70
Expressive	578	66	350	61	228	39	805	78	423	53	382	47
2015 Total	873		490		383		1035		491		544	
1985:2015												
Instrumental	106	1	53	31	130	31	126	5	20	54	153	54
Expressive	358	27	216	20	197	20	614	29	399	7	354	7
1985:2015 Total	464		269		327		740		419		507	

[a]1985 data reported without the neutral category, with adjusted totals and % does not equal 100

Table 20 shows how the child rearing and child response variables changed overall from 1985 to 2015. Parents were less likely to be authoritarian in 2015 (20%) compared to 1985 (26%), but more likely to flexible (61% in 2015 from 50% in 1985), and much more likely to be permissive (19% in 2015 from 2 % in 1985). Positive and negative child responses were much more evenly distributed in 2015 (49% positive and 48% negative) than in 1985 (86% positive and 14% negative).

Table 20

Parent Interaction - Child Rearing	% of Total 1985	% of Total 2015	X per program 1985	X per program 2015	% Diff. 1985: 2015
Percent Difference in Child Rearing and Child Response 1985:2015					
Authoritarian	26	20	4.88	9.05	6
Flexible/Authoritative	50	61	9.45	28.32	11
Permissive	2	19	0.43	8.90	17
Neutral	22	0	4.15	00.17	22
Child Rearing Total			18.93	46.45	
Positive Child Response	86	49	9.88	22.85	37
Negative Child Response	14	48	16.59	22.40	34

Table 21 compares the child rearing variables between the 1985 and 2015 data sets. Permissive and flexible child rearing were more likely, while authoritarian child rearing was less likely, for both mothers and fathers. Child responses to all child rearing was much more likely to be negative, but negative child responses to authoritarian mothers had the highest percentage increase (from 13% in 1985 to 76% in 2015). Permissive parenting was much more likely to receive negative responses from both mothers and fathers in the current data set. There were no negative responses to permissive parenting in 1985, but in 2015, over half of the child responses were negative. These differences are further explained in the final discussion chapter.

Table 21

Child Rearing and Child Response by Sex of Character 1985:2015

	Male Parent						Female Parent					
	Total Male Behaviors		Child Response				Total Female Behaviors		Child Response			
			Positive		Negative				Positive		Negative	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
1985[a]												
Authoritarian	146	29	55	65	29	35	69	20	41	87	6	13
Flexible	232	47	135	91	14	9	184	55	108	85	19	15
Permissive	15	3	9	100	0	0	4	1	3	100	0	0
1985 Total	393		199		43		257		152		25	
2015												
Authoritarian	210	26	85	40	125	60	144	14	35	24	109	76
Flexible	452	55	286	63	166	37	656	67	345	53	311	47
Permissive	160	19	76	47	84	53	186	19	85	46	101	54
2015 Total	822		447		375		986		465		521	
1985:2015												
Authoritarian	64	3	30	25	96	25	75	6	6	63	103	63
Flexible	220	8	151	28	152	28	472	12	237	32	292	32
Permissive	145	16	67	53	84	53	182	18	82	54	101	54
1985: 2015 Total	429		248		332		729		313		496	

[a]1985 data reported without the neutral category, with adjusted totals and % does not equal 100

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The final chapter summarizes and explains the results for each research question, including a brief comparative discussion to the replicated research, where possible. Implications of the results for theory and practice follow, concluding with suggestions for future research and limitations of the study.

Summary of Results

After closely duplicating and expounding on research conducted over thirty years ago, parent interactions seem more traditional and positive than ever, with a few exceptions, such as gay male households and many animated series that were much less likely to include any parent interactions. Children were more likely to give negative responses than in the past, thus more evenly presenting positive and negative responses. The families were primarily traditional, even more traditional than the families from the early eighties, with a majority of parents in male/female partnerships and middle-class occupations. Stay-at-home parents were even more likely than non-professional, blue-collar occupations. Females were presented child rearing ten percent more than males, even though males were presented almost as often as females in a parent role. The traditional mother as having primary child rearing duties still seemed to stand, but the much closer balance between males and females portrayed also says a lot about the transformation of parenting roles, especially for fathers.

The families and characters were traditionally presented, while the parent role and child rearing seemed to become very middle-of-the-road, while still being traditional. Overwhelmingly, parent roles were expressive and child rearing was flexible, with generally more positive than negative child responses. Traditionally, though, expressive parent roles were reinforced with positive responses, while instrumental parent roles were rejected with negative

responses. Similarly, flexible child rearing was reinforced with a majority of positive responses, while authoritarian and permissive child rearing were the most rejected, with the highest percentages of negative child responses, respectively. Also traditional is the way males and females were aligned into particular gender roles, with females being more aligned with expressive parent role and males more aligned with instrumental parent role. Similarly, both females and males were most likely to be flexible, but males were almost twice as likely to be authoritarian in their child rearing. The traditional gender roles were reinforced with males in the public sphere (instrumental) and aggressive (authoritarian), while females were concerned with the private sphere and nurturing (expressive) and were highly child-centered and accommodating (flexible). Even with these traditional leanings, fathers were much more like mothers than not when it comes to parent roles and child rearing in family oriented primetime network programming.

In many ways, the gender roles were still restrictive, but much more restrictive for mothers than fathers, and much more pronounced when there was a one-sex household. In many instances, the one-sex households, either single mothers, single fathers or male/male households had heightened sex roles, often seeming to over-compensate for the lack of the other sex partner. Single fathers and gay fathers had the highest percentage of expressive parent role and flexible child rearing, while single mothers had some of the highest incidence of instrumental parent role and authoritarian child rearing. Admittedly, there were very few instances of single fathers, noting that there was a show, *Raising Hope*, featuring a single father that was not renewed for a new season, thus was not included in the sample. The very few single fathers in the sample were the few around in the single mother series, *Mom*. As with most media research on parenting, there was little involvement of co-parenting, rather there was traditional male/female parenting,

or one-sex parenting that furthered stereotypes of gender with the overcompensation of the *missing-sexed* parent.

The parents on television were primarily semi-professionals, or white-collar, upper-middle-class, including seventeen percent stay-at-home parents. The professional parents did little of the involved child rearing, but if they did, they were reinforced with positive child responses. Stay-at-home parents were primarily mothers and were generally rejected with negative child responses. The parents in primetime family television were traditional in many senses, espousing stereotypical gender roles in which mothers were the caregivers and met with negative child responses when taking on the more traditionally father-like roles; while fathers were the traditional disciplinarians, while also taking on the more mother-like qualities, all reinforced by positive child responses. Mothers had narrow mothering roles, while fathers roles were much more like mothers than not these days.

Explanation of Results

A detailed discussion of each question will help to further explain the results, while comparing to previous research findings and current household data when possible. Instead of simply collecting the family structure data by program, like the original research, this research had a more detailed family structure variable, which became the subject of the first question. The family structure variables, of parents' sex, partnership, and occupation, were entered for each parent interaction data entry. This made for a particularly rich way to analyze for associations among different family structure variables with the parent interaction variables. With the original research (Dail & Way, 1985), the family structure was noted for each program, resulting in just over fifty different television families, noting the different types of households in the sample, but then only utilizing parents' sex when analyzing the data. These results are more far reaching by

operationalizing family structure along these parent characteristics and then using the different categories for analysis. The first question addresses the extent to which different family structures are portrayed, and which family structures predominate. Then the questions get progressively more detailed, addressing, first, the presence of the parent interaction, dependent variables and, subsequently, associations among variables.

Family structure. Family structures in family oriented primetime television programming are very traditional and more balanced in many ways, while also becoming more modern, literally with *Modern Family*. In the present study, dual parent families were most prevalent, by far, presented in over eighty percent of all the parent interactions, which is contrary to the trends of the American family becoming less traditional (Angier, 2013; Coontz, 2015; Jorgenson, 2014; Wiscombe, 2014). But, the program, *Mom* (CBS), featuring a single mother living with her single-mother daughter, and *Modern Family* (ABC), featuring gay male fathers of an infant, made for just over ten percent of the parent interactions with single mothers and fewer than five percent with gay fathers. Single fathers were almost non-existent, which is also contrary to the rapidly growing trend of single father households (Angier, 2014; Jorgenson, 2014; Wiscombe, 2014) and were only portrayed in the more active child-rearing role 17% of the time; even grandparents were more actively involved in child rearing than single or gay fathers. The incidence of grandparents was noted in the research trials, so a separate category was created, to prevent inaccurate data, as most of the grandparents were single, retired, and male. The presence of grandparents should have been no surprise, as research noted an increase of households with extended family members (Wiscombe, 2014). It should also be noted, that the gay fathers were the only parents of an infant, which does not usually make for exciting child rearing on television. As for the more traditional, balanced portrayals, women were presented in

parent roles just two percent more than men, but women were still ten percent more likely than men to be presented child rearing. This confirms research showing females were associated with a mother role more than males were associated with a father role (Park, Smith & Correll, 2010). Mothers were still primarily portrayed child rearing, but fathers and mothers were presented as much more alike in their parent roles than they are different.

The occupation, sometimes referred to as the class signifier, also showed traditional leanings, with primarily upper-middle class, white-collar parents present, and stay-at-home parents second most common. By far, semi-professional parents were doing the child rearing, with stay-at-home parents even a bit more prevalent than non-professionals to be child rearing. Professional parents were more than twice as likely to be found in a parent role than engaged in child rearing, making it clear that the direct child interaction was expected less, as the parent moved up the occupation ladder. This is congruent with the trends of family television unrealistically depicting the work-family balance dilemma facing American families (Prince, 2012).

Out of curiosity, a couple quick one-way chi-square analyses found that mothers and fathers were still very traditionally aligned in terms of occupations and gender. Fathers were twenty percent more likely to be portrayed in a professional parent role than mothers, and over ten percent more likely to be semi-professional. The research around working parents tends to support these findings in that women have more of a choice of whether to work, and the distinct wage gaps, which are pronounced when women become mothers (Akass, 2011; Jackson & Darbyshire, 2006). Mothers were more than six times as likely to be portrayed as stay-at-home parents than fathers, though mothers and fathers were found almost as equally in non-professional parent roles. Although there were fewer professional mothers in parent roles, they

were almost twice as likely to be portrayed child rearing than a professional father. Again, the data seemed to be leaning back towards traditional roles, with the father as the breadwinner and mother as homemaker. This is also congruent with current research trends noting that, although women's involvement in paid work is increasing, their work in their parent roles has not decreased (Angier, 2013; Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007). Though, somewhat redeeming, is the prevalence of fathers portrayed actively child rearing as semi-professionals, and the involved fathering in retirement. This could potentially be attributed to the maleness of Hollywood, especially in comedy (Lauzen, Dozier & Horan, 2008). Though, the data also matches trends of American fathers having doubled their developmental care (akin to expressive parent role) and tripled their daily physical care (akin to flexible child rearing) in the last fifty years (Sayer, 2011). The current data aligns with that of American families increasing gap between men and women's unpaid, housework especially after the arrival of children (Kuperberg, 2012).

In terms of family structure from the original research, the 1985 Dail and Way data set featured single parent households (56%) most, with single father households (35%) more prevalent than single mother households (21%), and even more likely than dual parent families (29%). The original sample had a fairly equal spread of occupations, with a majority of professional parents (35%), while stay-at-home (23%), non-professional (23%), and semi-professional (19%) were least likely, respectively (Dail & Way, 1985). In this way, the current television households were both more traditional and more realistic. The prominence of traditional dual parent families in the current sample was definitely much more traditional than both the original sample and current trends. The current data was more realistic with the presence of single and gay parents, and shifting towards more balanced parent interactions, though

stereotypical gender roles were especially noticeable with child rearing, involved in the direct care of a child.

Family structure data from the most recent, 2010 census reveals a decline in traditional families overall, noting the first time that husband/wife households have dropped below 50% of all households since the data was first tabulated in 1940, while dual parent families with children was the only household type to show a decline (5% fewer) in the last decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Merely twenty percent of all households were dual parent families with children, the only American household type dwindling in the past decade, while single mother households have increased eleven percent (7.2% of all households), single father households have increased almost thirty percent (2.4% of all households), and same-sex households have increased eighty percent, with, at most, an estimate of one percent of all households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). In some ways, the current sample shows trends towards an increasingly diverse, and shifting household make-up, with gay fathers and single mothers, but there was also an over-representation of traditional families, when the trends are currently shifting away from the thought-to-be *traditional* household. A quarter of school-aged children were cared for by stay-at-home-fathers in the last decade (Carr, Cohen & Green, 2010). The biggest increase in the past ten decades have been in unmarried couple households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), likely pointing to the continued trends in television families towards non-traditional families, but within the confines of a more safe and balanced representation of parent interactions.

Parent interaction. Looking at the density of parent interaction answered questions of the current study, reporting the total number, percentage, and incidence per program for each aspect of parent interactions. Parent interaction could include a parent role or child rearing pattern and their subsequent child responses. This also addressed, on the surface, which parent

role, child rearing, and child response variables predominated across all programs. There were primarily expressive parent roles and flexible child rearing patterns, with a fairly equal presentation of positive and negative child responses. Expressive parent roles were portrayed twice as often as instrumental, with seemingly insignificant differences in the frequency of child responses elicited, since there were about an equal number of positive, negative, and neutral responses. The same was true for child rearing patterns, with a fairly equal split of positive and negative child responses to primarily flexible child rearing, portrayed three times as often as either authoritarian or permissive child rearing patterns. The parent role and child rearing were very middle-of-the-road, non-threatening interactions portrayed, with children seemingly unaffected by parents, until closer examination of variables.

Knowing the parent role and child rearing patterns were so likely to be presented as expressive and flexible, with seemingly undifferentiated child responses, it was interesting to see a breakdown by program for each variable. *Family Guy* (FOX) portrayed the highest percentage of instrumental parent roles, at just over fifty percent, while all other programs had more expressive than instrumental parent roles. *The Middle* (ABC) and *The Simpsons* (FOX) had the highest percentage of expressive parent roles, respectively, and were three times and twice as likely to portray expressive parent roles than instrumental. In the original data (Dail, 1983), *Archie Bunker's Place* presented over 60% of parent roles as instrumental, while *Happy Days* had the most expressive (56%), and *Gimme a Break* had the most neutral (42%) parent roles.

All recent programs featured flexible child rearing most regularly, while *Last Man Standing* (ABC) had the highest percentage, with three quarters of all child-rearing portrayals. *Last Man Standing* (ABC) also had the lowest percentage of permissive child rearing, while *Mom* (CBS) and *The Simpsons* (FOX) featured the highest percentage of permissive child

rearing, at just below thirty percent of all child-rearing portrayals. Not too surprising to see the Simpsons' family featured in the permissive child rearing category, and it seems typical of the single-mother saga usually espoused, with the children getting too much space, thus the high incidence of permissive parenting in *Mom*. *The Goldberg's* (ABC) and *Bob's Burgers* (FOX), on the other hand, have the highest incidence of authoritarian child rearing, just at or over a quarter of the child-rearing portrayals. Interestingly, *The Goldberg's* features a family from the eighties, when authoritarian child rearing was more accepted and prevalent, and in *Bob's Burgers*, the dad was also the boss, ensuring the children were managed rather than reared in many instances.

The original data (Dail, 1983) also had most shows with primarily flexible (authoritative) child rearing patterns, with *Happy Days* having the highest incidence (77%). *Archie Bunker* was the only program with the largest percentage of authoritarian child rearing (54%), which came with no permissive child rearing; and *Gimme a Break* was the only program with the largest percentage of neutral child rearing patterns. The biggest difference, other than the categorization of neutral, is that child rearing was much more permissive and less authoritarian, while flexible (authoritative) child rearing has remained constant as the largest percentage of the child rearing patterns presented.

In comparison with the original findings (Dail, 1983), there was higher incidence of expressive parent roles and flexible (authoritative) child rearing in the current research, as well as a much higher incidence of negative child responses. Though, the neutral category was used much more readily in the original research (a quarter of all parent roles), so instrumental parent roles were equally as likely in both the current and replicated findings. In the present data, child responses were not found to be significantly different, but in the original findings, positive child responses were likely about 85% of the time.

Child responses could be said to have become less conservative, less politically correct, and more realistic. The same pattern was noticeable for child rearing as well. Permissive child rearing has increased to almost twenty percent of all child-rearing patterns, compared to only 2% in the original research. Parent roles and child rearing were becoming more child-centered, often so child centered that the parent was often in reverse roles or removed from the parenting. The equally likely positive and negative child responses demonstrate parent child interactions in primetime family oriented programs were likely much more realistic and indicative of the popular notion of younger generations being increasingly more entitled.

Child response. Closely examining the incidence of child response, the expressive, flexible parent portrayals were met with a majority of positive responses, while authoritarian, instrumental, and permissive parent portrayals were met with a majority of negative responses. Children reinforced the parenting styles that were most child-centered, flexible, open, and nurturing and rejected child rearing patterns that had an imbalance of authority, either a lack of it (permissive) or forceful obedience to it (authoritarian). Scrutinizing the percent difference from the original to the current data, television has definitely shifted in its child-centered family interaction. Positive child responses to parent role portrayals have decreased by almost fifty percent, while negative child responses are 17% more likely to be found in response to ever increasing expressive parent roles. In terms of child rearing, positive child responses have decreased by almost forty percent (Table 18), while negative child responses were 34% more likely to be found in response to ever increasing permissive and expressive child rearing patterns. The changing child responses seem to go along with the criticisms of entitlement attached to the youngest generations of children, presumably from the shift to child-centered parenting. In many ways the child responses were not easily categorized, as there was rarely a straight yes or no

spoken. The large change may be due to the way the responses were coded, with the current coding instruments tailored to the television subtleties of sarcasm, for instance.

Further examining the child responses by program helped explicate how positive and negative responses were not necessarily spread equally across 2015 primetime, family oriented programs. The *Last Man Standing* had the highest incidence of positive child responses for both parent roles and child rearing patterns. *The Goldberg's* had the highest incidence of negative child responses for both parent roles and child rearing patterns. As previously noted, *Last Man Standing* was also the program with the highest incidence of expressive parent role and flexible child rearing, while *The Goldberg's* was the program with the highest incidence of authoritarian child rearing. The child responses by program were a clear indication that particular parent roles and child rearing patterns bring about particular child responses, reinforcing the child-centered family, while the parent controlled interactions were rejected.

Before moving on to the final sections of the explanation of results, a comparative discussion of the incidence of parent interactions per program is worthy of mentioning. There were three times as many parent roles per program in the present research than the original research and almost two and a half times as many child-rearing patterns per program. This shows that more involved parenting and more family interaction was present, overall. The sampling, though, cannot go unexamined in this discussion. Dail's (1983) original dissertation data coded a total of 44 episodes, but reported a total of 1800 minutes of programming, while the current research resulted in 40 episodes and only 800 minutes of programming. The large discrepancy in total programming can most likely be attributed to: the original sample containing hour-long programming, when the current data only included half-hour episodes; the original sample containing programs that were not primarily family-oriented, but rather had high ratings; and

potentially, the original sample included advertising in their total minutes. More likely, the 1800 may have referred to instances rather than minutes of parent interactions, which made most sense considering the large incidence of parent interactions in the present family programs. Either way, it was apparent that *Hill Street Blues* and *Dallas* most likely skewed the original sample, portraying only five and eight incidences of parent roles, respectively, and only one child-rearing pattern between the two of them. Even though the sample was defined as family-oriented primetime television, further insight into the original methodology revealed that including the top ten percent of Nielsen rated programs of the time essentially undermined the key, *family oriented* aspect of program inclusion.

The present research, on the other hand, used the criterion of a renewed season for the ratings, only after narrowing the list by first using criteria of a show synopsis that revolved around families with children. *The Mysteries of Laura* was actually removed from the sample, as it was not appropriately categorized as family oriented programming, even though the show synopsis was about juggling "home life as the mom of twin boys" (tvguide.com, 2015). After screening five episodes, there were about ten seconds with children present. The way the parent role was operationalized, any time a parent was at work, it was coded as instrumental, which pertains to the public sphere, bread-winning role. This variable was only relevant if the programs included were family-oriented programs, and *The Mysteries of Laura* was an obviously anomaly and was removed from the sample so the data would not be inaccurately skewed. *Hill Street Blues* and *Dallas* would most likely have been removed had this technique been followed.

Family structure and parent interaction. The incidence of child responses to parent roles and child rearing patterns gave insight into which parent interactions children reinforce and reject. As has been discussed, expressive parent roles and flexible child rearing were met with

positive responses, while instrumental parent roles and authoritarian and permissive child rearing were generally met with negative responses. Beyond this, though, there were significant associations when analyzing child responses along the family structure variables. This is where it became even more evident that there were very different ways to be a mother and father, or even a professional or stay-at-home parent, and an especially different way to be a parent in a one-sex household.

When looking at child responses to parent roles and child rearing in terms of the parents' sex, there were distinct expectations for fathers and mothers. Positive child response to an instrumental parent role was twice as likely to be towards a father, while mothers were more than twice as likely to receive a negative response to an instrumental parent role. Interestingly, mothers were also more likely than fathers to receive a negative response to an expressive parent role. Fathers were also significantly more likely to receive positive responses to flexible child rearing, while mothers were especially rejected when portrayed in authoritarian child rearing. Mothers were essentially narrowly confined into traditional roles, rejected if taking on the more male-aligned role, while fathers' roles were generally reinforced, especially when taking on the more female-aligned role. This was similar to findings from the original research in which mothers' expressive parent role was the only role to receive a slight majority of negative child responses. Although the original research had primarily positive child responses, fathers were reinforced when taking on the traditionally female-aligned, expressive role.

In terms of parent partnership and occupation, child responses to parental roles and child rearing, the significant differences were in the one-sex households. Single mothers were especially instrumental and authoritative, bringing about a large majority of negative child responses, while single fathers and the gay fathers were especially expressive and flexible,

bringing about a large majority of positive responses. The one-sex households seemed to overcompensate, taking on the traditional role of the missing sex parent. Most of the parents portrayed were semi-professional or non-professional, but it was the professional and stay-at-home parents that had the most significant associations with particular parent interactions. Professional parents were the only category to receive more positive child responses to an instrumental role, while also receiving reinforcement for expressive parent roles. Stay-at-home parents were found to have primarily female-aligned parent roles, with almost all positive child responses to expressive roles and strong rejection to an instrumental role and authoritarian child rearing.

Implications of Results for Theory

Research examining television portrayals has added to the understanding of how social roles on television are a legitimate subject of study, as they help to create particular roles as the norm. The implication of the results for theory will discuss the findings in terms of the theoretical foundations established in the introduction. First, social learning theory will aide in understanding particular parent roles as the constructed norm, then cultivation effects will help explain how heavy television viewing of family themed programming will likely result in skewed perceptions of family interaction. Social role theory helps illustrate how these gender aligned family interactions can be detrimental to both mothers and fathers.

Social learning theory. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Walters, 1963) tells us that we learn social behaviors through persistent observation, when social comparison and modeling are likely to occur, suggesting the primetime television families have pervasive, substantial influence on social and cognitive levels. Social learning theory has implications in the way that the prominent parent interactions on television are those that will be

observed most often and internalized as the norm, rather than recognized as a particular social role *constructed* as the norm. The child responses to parent interactions help to explain how vicarious reinforcement is embedded in social learning. Although it is thirty years after the original research was conducted, the typical parent roles have been embedded in the construction of these social roles over many years of family themed primetime television families.

The expressive parent role and flexible child rearing were constructed as the norm for both mothers and fathers, being reinforced with primarily positive child responses. Overall, the biggest message was that parenting is child-centered. Though, mothers were still considered the quintessential, nurturing parent figure, with expressive and flexible parenting at greater percentages than fathers. Fathers were still the quintessential stern, distant parent, almost twice as likely to be authoritarian and instrumental, though even fathers were much less likely to be in these roles as parenting was child-centered. But as with many instances of gender roles changing, males were more fluid in their roles, meaning that when fathers were portrayed in an expressive, flexible role, their behavior was reinforced with positive child responses, even more so than mothers' expressive, flexible role. The constructed nature of the parent roles go unnoticed, as it seems it is the norm for mothers to be nurturing and fathers to be disciplinarians. Most evident in the way fathers' roles are changing, is that it is more acceptable for fathers to mother than it is for mothers to father, noting the negative child responses were twice as likely when mothers were portrayed in an instrumental or authoritarian role.

The present research supports the social learning theory in that it deems these social constructions of parent roles and child rearing as powerful sites for advancing particular roles and silencing others. The consensus was that parent roles and child rearing were both child centered, with parents more expressive and flexible and children's responses reinforcing this

with a majority of positive responses. Authoritarian child rearing and instrumental parent roles were those that were primarily rejected when they were presented, with a very significant increase in permissive parenting, all pointing towards the conclusion of parent roles and child rearing as being, most importantly, child centered.

Cultivation effect. The cultivation effect (Gerbner et al., 1986) suggests that the more television a viewer consumes, the more likely their worldview will be skewed towards the mass, aggregate effect of the particular socialization, in this case learning particular parent roles and child rearing as the norm. This research has implications within the cultivation effect in understanding the parent roles portrayed have, not only individual, but societal effects, that in turn exacerbate individual effects. Even though this research does not include any discussion of how subjects respond to these parent role portrayals, the cultivation effect helps explain how televised portrayals are a key ingredient of a symbiotic process in which particular social roles are both reflected and reinforced. The cultivation effect speaks to the way the parent roles have made many progressive changes, noting there are gay fathers, but while still reinforcing the established rules of masculinity and femininity, noting these roles were also extraordinarily feminized, ensuring they were delineated most starkly from fathering.

The cultivation effect explains how television helps socialize parents into standardized roles, primarily expressive and flexible, child-centered family interaction. Even if these parent roles and child rearing do not represent reality, heavy television viewers were more likely to align expectations with the general notions of stereotypical mother and father roles, while also further stereotyping a gay father or single mother. These highly gendered, primarily traditional parent roles helped to develop perceptual biases towards these television portrayals. Overall, the televised parent portrayals helped to define parent roles, especially aligned by positive and

negative child responses that reinforced traditional gender roles and rejected mothers outside these boundaries, while fathers were encouraged to become more like mothers.

Social role theory. The parent roles in this research definitely support the social role theory, in which gender roles are constructed to support the division of labor in which women are aligned with the internal domestic duties and nurturing, while men are aligned with the external, social sphere of providing for the family. This was especially evident with the professional and stay-at-home parents having heightened gendered roles. The gender bias comes into play when mothers were narrowly defined, while fathers were becoming less stereotypical.

Implications of Results for Practice

The implication of the results for practice would suggest that the television industry should carefully consider the gender and parent roles that are being espoused in the content created. The industry has broadened parent roles, but they are still very traditionally aligned, especially for mothers. In many ways, the industry has done well changing some aspects of family portrayals, like including gay fathers, but in other ways, the industry has gone backwards in becoming even more traditional, like the overwhelming amount of traditional families, which are steadily decreasing in actual American families. Even thirty years after the initial research, the industry continues to espouse narrow roles for mothers, while fathers' roles are still broadening, which is not too surprising, considering the majority of television writers, producers, and directors are male.

The educational implications for these findings point to a need for a media literacy platform that encourages students to examine portrayals of family interaction and question the general tendencies towards highly expressive and flexible mothers and traditionally aligned instrumental and authoritarian fathers. The industry has responded well to make the child

responses more realistic, but the significant differences in how mothers and fathers are reinforced or rejected seem to make it okay for children to reject the changing mother role, while reinforcing the changing father role.

Suggestions for Future Research

With almost all of these statistical tests showing significant associations of family structure, parent roles, and child responses, the need for further research in this area is key. Possibly the examination of a broader sample would be able to paint a more vivid picture of how and why particular genres or program types are espousing particular views on parenting. It would be interesting to duplicate findings, even if just with the next year's primetime lineup, or by broadening the sample to include other networks, cable programming, or even film. Longitudinal analysis would help illustrate how family structures and interactions are changing, especially in relation to how actual family structures are changing.

In many ways, it was difficult to duplicate the original research exactly, since there were some holes in the research tools, making the categories for coding difficult to discern in many ways. Overall, television, especially primetime family programming, was quite middle-of-the-road in the way characters were presented, and parent interactions were no exception. There was very little outwardly aggressive, authoritative parenting, and very little outward defiance from children. When conducting tests on the coding instruments, it was apparent that broader definitions of these categories would be necessary to delineate televised parent roles and child rearing. Further research replication will help perfect the research tools.

Limitations of Study

Like all research, there are limitations to this study, the largest being the time constraints that helped to determine how the sample would be narrowed. The sample was not quite

representative of the year's television programming, since some of the shows that were not renewed were popular programs, such as *Parenthood* (NBC), but were not renewed for reasons other than low ratings (fans were disappointed that it was not continuing). Also, shows like *Raising Hope* (Fox) and *Two and a Half Men* (CBS) had fairly long runs, four seasons and twelve seasons respectively, but just happened to be at the end of their run during the sampling. These two shows would have given further insight into single fathers, as there were very few incidences in the sample, overall. In many ways, using ratings may be insufficient in narrowing a sample in the future with the diverging platforms. For instance, one can watch all of these canceled shows on Netflix, meaning that the changing viewing habits will necessitate broader sampling.

Another limitation would be the extent to which content analysis can answer broader theoretical questions, such as connecting the parent portrayals with actual parent responses to the data. Also, the coding schemes were recreated from the original research, while also corroborating with the parental authority questionnaire, essentially adapting one research tool into a different methodology. While testing the data collection instruments, it was apparent that further adaptations would be necessary to make it possible to delineate the family interactions on television. The process of pilot and instrument tests was solid, but it would have been more efficient and reliable to continue to use the total of four coders through the data analysis process rather than just for the pilot tests.

Conclusion

Primetime family oriented television programming has traditionally aligned family structures, parent roles and child rearing patterns. Parents were overwhelmingly child-centered, primarily expressive and flexible, while children's responses were more realistically spread

among positive and negative responses. In many ways, fathers were more like mothers, but with closer examination, the traditional, stereotypical roles were reinforced for mothers, while fathers were given more encouragement with their expanding roles. Fathers were much more expressive and flexible with positive child responses, while mothers who were instrumental or authoritarian were rejected with negative child responses. The instrumental parent role and authoritarian child rearing were primarily accepted from fathers. Single mothers, single fathers and gay fathers were found to overcompensate for the lack of the missing opposite sex parent, while parent relationships and occupation further reinforced traditional gender roles.

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APPENDIX A
Population of Potential Programs

		Primetime Network Television Winter 2014 Programming					
		8 - 8:30	8:30 - 9	9 - 9:30	9:30 - 10	10 - 10:30	10:30 - 11
Sunday	ABC	The Bachelor		Revenge		Betrayal	
	CBS	The Amazing Race		The Good Wife		The Mentalist	
	CW	Local Programming					
	FOX	THE SIMPSONS	BOB'S BURGERS	FAMILY GUY	AMERICAN DAD!	Local Programming	
	NBC	American Dream Builders		Believe		Crisis	
Sunday	ABC	The Bachelor				Castle	
	CBS	HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER	2 Broke Girls	Mike & Molly	MOM	Intelligence	
	CW	Star-Crossed		Beauty and the Beast		Local Programming	
	FOX	Almost Human		The Following		Local Programming	
	NBC	Hollywood Game Night				The Blacklist	
Sunday	ABC	Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.		THE GOLDBERGS	TROPHY WIFE	Killer Women	
	CBS	NCIS		NCIS: Los Angeles		Person of Interest	
	CW	The Originals		Supernatural		Local Programming	
	FOX	DADS	Brooklyn Nine-Nine	New Girl	The Mindy Project	Local Programming	
	NBC	The Biggest Loser		About a Boy	GROWING UP FISHER	Chicago Fire	
Sunday	ABC	THE MIDDLE	SUBURGATORY	MODERN FAMILY	Super Fun Night	Nashville	
	CBS	Survivor: Cagayan		Criminal Minds		CSI	
	CW	Arrow		The Tomorrow People		Local Programming	
	FOX	American Idol				Local Programming	
	NBC	Revolution		Law & Order: SVU		Chicago PD	
Sunday	ABC	The Taste				The Assets	
	CBS	Big Bang Theory	THE MILLERS	THE CRAZY ONES	TWO AND A HALF MEN	Elementary	
	CW	Vampire Diaries		Reign		Local Programming	
	FOX	American Idol (Results Show)		Rake		Local Programming	
	NBC	THE MYSTERIES OF LAURA		SEAN SAVES THE WORLD	THE MICHAEL J. FOX SHOW	PARENTHOOD	
Sunday	ABC	LAST MAN STANDING	THE NEIGHBORS	Shark Tank		20/20	
	CBS	Undercover Boss		Hawaii Five-O		Blue Bloods	
	CW	The Carrie Diaries		Supernatural (Repeats)		Local Programming	
	FOX	Bones		RAISING HOPE	Enlisted	Local Programming	
	NBC	Dateline NBC		Grimm		Dracula	
Sunday	ABC	Repeats					
	CBS	Comedytime Saturday		Crimetime Saturday		48 Hours	
	CW	Local Programming					
	FOX	Repeats					
	NBC	Repeats					

BOLD = FAMILY ORIENTED TELVISION, PRIMARILY ABOUT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

APPENDIX B
Non-Sample Program Family Themed Premise

Non-Sample Potential Program (Network) Family Themed Premise
American Dad (FOX)
Cartoon antics from Seth MacFarlane (*The Family Guy*) about a gung-ho CIA agent (voice of MacFarlane), and his suburban family, which includes a hippie teen daughter.
The Crazy Ones (CBS)
An eccentric advertising exec and his levelheaded daughter cater to top-tier clients at their ad firm.
Dads (FOX)
Two successful video-game developers take in their hard-to-live-with fathers in this sitcom.
Growing Up Fisher (NBC)
Growing Up Fisher follows a father that won't let the fact that he is blind get in the way of being a great dad.
How I Met Your Mother (CBS)
A man named Ted tells his kids how he met the love of his life, through flashbacks, years in the future. The bored kids sit on the couch and listen as dad regales them with tales of his pursuit of romance.
The Michael J. Fox Show (NBC)
A popular TV news anchor returns to work after taking time off to focus on his health and family.
The Mysteries of Laura (NBC)
A New York City detective juggles her busy job with her hectic home life as the mom of twin boys.
The Neighbors (ABC)
A family moves to a gated community in suburban New Jersey where the residents are extraterrestrials from the planet Zabvron, and learn that the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the universe because marital and parenting problems are the same everywhere.
Parenthood (NBC)
A comedy-drama following a large and imperfect family as they tackle the challenges of raising kids and starting over after setbacks.
Raising Hope (FOX)
Twenty-three-year-old Jimmy Chance adjusts to life as a single father in this comedy about a new addition to an extended dysfunctional family.
Sean Saves The World (NBC)
A comedy centering on a divorced father trying to balance the demands of his life. His juggle struggle includes focusing on his successful career, dealing with his meddling mother and raising his teen daughter.
Suburgatory (ABC)
A teen has trouble adjusting when her single dad moves them from New York City to the suburbs to give her a better life.
Trophy Wife (ABC)
A young woman marries an older man, inheriting difficult relationships with his three kids and two ex-wives.
Two and a Half Men (CBS)
A hit sitcom built on often-raunchy material begins with the premise of a Malibu bachelor (Sheen) whose life is disrupted when his brother and 10-year-old nephew move in with him.
(TVGuide.com, 2015)

APPENDIX C
Code Sheet - Family Structure

FAMILY FORM CODE SHEET

PROGRAM	EPISODE	FAMILY NAME	CHARACTER NAME(S)	FAMILY ROLE		GENDER		OCCUPATION				
				Family ID	Father/Mother/ Son/Daughter	Male	Female	Profess-ional	White Collar	Blue Collar	Unem-ployed	Stay-at-home

DATE: CODER: PAGE:

APPENDIX D
Code Sheet - Parent Interaction

PARENT INTERACTION CODE SHEET

PROGRAM				EPISODE				
START	**END**	**FAMILY ID** (INCL. BRIEF DESCRIPTION PARENT/CHILD INTERACTION)	**PARENT(S)** [MALE / FEMALE] all incld interaction	**CHILD(REN)** [MALE / FEMALE] all incld interaction	**ROLE** INST/ EXPRSV/ NTRL	**CHILD RSPNS** POS + / NEG - / NTRL =	**C.R.P** AUTH / FLXB / PRMSV / NTRL	**CHILD RSPNS** POS + / NEG - / NTRL =
0:00	0:00	FAMILY ID	M / F	M / F	I / E / N	+ / - / N	A / F / P / N	+ / - / N

DATE: CODER: PAGE:

ABSTRACT

PARENTING INTERACTION IN PRIMETIME FAMILY THEMED TELEVISION PORTRAYALS: A REPLICATION AND EXTENSION OF DAIL AND WAY'S (1985) CONTENT ANALYSIS

by

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August 2017

Advisor: Dr. Pradeep Sopory

Major: Media Arts and Studies

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

This research is a replication and extension of Dail and Way's (1985) content analysis identifying parent interactions portrayed in family oriented prime time network television programs. Family structure, parent role, child rearing, and child responses were coded from five episodes each of eight different programs from 2014-2015 television season. The programs presented parent roles more often than child rearing, while mothers were found in child rearing more often than fathers. Traditional family structures were most prevalent with fewer single parent households and a new presence of same-sex parents. Mothers and fathers were still portrayed stereotypically, but children's responses were more realistic and further reinforced traditional gender roles. Child responses reinforced traditional and rejected non-traditional parent interactions according to the parents' sex, partnership, and occupation.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Anna Maria K. Flores is the Manager of Community Engagement at Wayne State University's Irvin D. Reid Honors College. Prior to this position, she was an instructor for the Early College and Accelerated Learning programs at Rochester College and an instructor in writing fundamentals at Lawrence Technological University. She is 2016 graduate of the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute, a year-long investment in leadership and self-awareness. She is also a King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellow and PhD Candidate through Wayne State University in the Department of Communication - Media Arts & Studies, where she focuses on parent and gender roles, media literacy education, diversity, and family communication. She served as a MI GEAR UP Coordinator at Saginaw Valley State University, where she managed a college access and success grant. She also completed a college access internship in 2010 for the Education Policy team in the office of Governor Granholm. Anna Maria has also served as an instructor for media and communication courses at Wayne State University and Henry Ford Community College, such as: Public Speaking; Television Criticism; Telecommunication; Introduction to Film; Writing for Radio, TV & Film; Audio Production; and Video Production. In addition to a decade of experiences in higher education, she has a decade of varying experiences in the telecommunication industry. She holds degrees in Communication and Sociology with a minor in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Michigan-Flint, and a Master of Arts in Public Communication with an emphasis in media and diversity from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University. She is also a proud alumnus of the Emma Bowen Foundation for Minority Interests in Media. Ms. Flores is married and has two children and, in addition to family, her passions for education equality are the foundation for her existence.