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Michele Dawn Kegley

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF APPALACHIAN WOMEN

MICHELE DAWN KEGLEY

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership & Change Program
of Antioch University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

December, 2011

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF APPALACHIAN WOMEN

prepared by

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Acknowledgments

I was sitting in the pew listening to the pastor quote Woody Allen—“Half of life is showing up.” He went on to talk about how in life we have dreams and ambitions, and sometimes we feel like we are failing to meet these aspirations and wonder if we are meeting the expectations for those who depend on us (sermon 5-29-2011). He said, “‘Half of life is showing up,’ and God provides the other half.” His advice to us was just show up and quit worrying. The people I have to thank have done more than show up. They have impacted my life in ways they will never know. I thank God for getting me through this program and sending these special angels into my life.

Let me start with my kids who have learned to wash clothes, cook, and understand my own version of what we call phone sign language—codes for I am talking if you are not on fire or bleeding go away and come back when I am off the phone. Most importantly they endured some of the biggest changes of their lives during these four years and still make me proud! I love them more each day.

My girlfriends, Princess Dorothy, Pretty Nicole, and Moral Mandi, who listened to me cry, complain, and make up new chapters in the book of the ludicrous. I would not have gotten through this program or the four years of change without them, love you.

Thank you to my committee, especially my advisor Laurien and my chair Elizabeth. Both of whom gave advice on more than just my program work and supported me at times I could not see the light much less the light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you to the storytellers in this study who poured out their hearts and helped me grow.

Finally, thanks to the one person who has supported me my whole life with love and survived her own trials. She always said I took on too much, but she would never tell me to quit. She would tell me to get back to work and that she would help any way she could. She loved my kids, taught me strength, listened to my fears and tears, and encouraged me to be a better mom. Love you, mom.

In loving memory of JT, pilot interviewee, friend, and supporter; I and the world miss you.

Abstract

This study researched Appalachian women who were in emotional, social, or economic reliant relationships with male spouses and became socio-economically stable and independent. This effort is to give Appalachian women voice and learn from their accounts of how they led change by financially, physically, and socially providing for themselves and their dependent children. Research is limited to a particular group of white middle class Appalachian women in the North-Central sub-region of Appalachia. This group was chosen because they have been largely overlooked in the literature. However, this study does not answer questions of all women's experiences and barriers in Appalachia. African American, Hispanic, and other minority women are not represented. It is my hope the stories of these women who successfully overcame significant challenges in creating socio-economic stability in their homes provide a positive role model for other women of the region. Through a set of criteria, 15 Appalachian women ages 34 to 74 that left their first marriage, were socio-economically stable and independent were interviewed. Confidential interviews recorded participants' life stories. Each woman discussed her experience in her own voice and explained how she led change in her family's life. The stories were coded for major themes using NVivo 8 software. An adaptation of situational mapping was used to contextualize the primary themes. Generational influences emerged as an important theme and three narratives, one for each generational group, are retold as exemplars highlighting the primary themes, Appalachian Characterization, Generational Issues, Children, Economic Independence, Education, Reasons for Leaving, Social Support, and Self-Leadership. Appalachian education experts affirmed the significance of the themes and situated them in the cultural context of the region. Analysis of the narratives and the situational map shows the significance of economic independence, social support, and place to their life stories. Identification of Appalachian women self-leading provides an important addition to the

Appalachian studies literature. The electronic version of the Dissertation is accessible in the open-access OhioLINK ETD Center <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/>.

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Prologue

Autumn Winds

By Effie Smith

*O autumn winds, with voices far away,
 I hear you singing on the leafless hills,
 And all my heart with jubilation thrills!
 You bring to me no message of dismay,
 No tender sorrow for the year's decay;
 Rather you sing of giant trees that cast
 Their leaves aside to grapple with the blast,
 Strong and exultant for the stormy fray!*

*Hearing your music, glad and wild and pure,
 Sounding through night's cool, starlit spaces wide,
 I grow weary of earth's paltry lure!
 Oh, like the trees, I too would cast aside
 The fading leaves of pleasure and of pride,
 And stand forth free to struggle and endure!¹*

(E. Smith, 1917, p. 536)

If I have to pick between sending your brother to college and you, I'll have to send him. He will have to provide for his family and you will have a husband who can do that for you (researcher's father, circa 1980s).

I think this statement may have changed my whole life. I was a straight A student sure that college was in my future, and my father reduced all of my dreams down to irrelevance because I was a *girl*. At the time I did not think about feminism, economics, being Appalachian

¹ From Harper's Monthly Magazine, 135, 536, by E. W. Smith, 1917, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers. Reprinted in The collected works of Effie Waller Smith. "Autumn's Winds" (pp. 22-23), by E. W. Smith, New York: The Schomburg library of nineteenth-century Black women writers. Copyright [1991] by Oxford University Press. Reprinted with permission.

or middle class. I did not factor that my mother had been a stay-at-home mom as had my grandmothers before her. I just thought, “*How could you?*” Why? My brother was a good student, anything from A’s to C’s, depending on whether he liked the class. I had one goal: college. Twenty-four years later, my brother is career Air Force. I am an Assistant Professor, divorced with custody of my three children. My father was correct. My brother is the sole provider to his family, but he stopped college after two years of engineering school and joined the Air Force, finishing his degree in the Air Force and making the military his career. My father was also incorrect. My husband did not take care of me. He became involved in other distractions, and I had to make a choice regarding the safety of myself and my kids. To this day, some friends and family do not understand why I stopped being a *good wife*. I had a few things that enabled this choice. I had an education, a career, economic and social resources, and confidence in myself that I could successfully be socio-economically independent. What about women who do not have these advantages and cannot acquire them easily? This research study explores the stories of women who found a way to become socio-economically independent.

Chapter I: Introduction

Issues of women's roles in the market and home economy have been researched for decades (Blau, Ferber, Winkler, 2010; Jacobsen, 2007); yet continue to represent a challenging and complex problem with few effective solutions. This study explores the path of Appalachian women as they struggle to define themselves in the market economy and become socio-economically independent. Their journeys, as told in their own voices, may help us to understand the intersection of gendered roles, regional economics, and family systems within the Appalachian culture.

Like the narrator in E. Smith's poem, I was interested in understanding women of Appalachia who struggled and endured to achieve independence. This interest evolved through an iterative reflective process of my own journey as an Appalachian woman and informal conversations with women who had also struggled in attaining economic stability. These conversations reflected a strong emphasis on women's roles in leading themselves and their children to an economically viable future without reliance on a spouse and ultimately influenced the focus of the research question.

How do Appalachian women self-lead from socio-economically dependent relationships to independence within the social, cultural, and economic forces of the Appalachian community? To capture the sentiment of self-leading and independence, I decided to focus on those women who were acting in the context of a marital relationship that had resulted in divorce.

Definition of Terms

The definitions used for the terms in this research question are based on my own interpretations substantiated by a review of the literature. *Dependence* is defined for this research as the reliance on someone besides self to provide emotional, social, or economic support for self

and minor or dependent children. *Family* is considered a nuclear family unit for this research, a mother, father, and children and extensions of kinship such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles from this original cluster. The female's experience in a heterosexual relationship with a male spouse is the focus. *Household* is another term for the family living together in a home.

Households are important in economic discussions, because their purchases are made to serve the whole of the family. The U. S. Bureau of the Census (2010) defines households as family and non-family. A non-family household consists of persons living together who have no family relationship by marriage, biology, or adoption. *Independence* is the ability of one to secure economic stability for self and one's minor children without relying solely on the male spouse. In the case of divorce, child or spousal support does not negate independence of the female spouse in this study. *Labor* is work inside and outside the home. *Market labor* is the work done in the market place outside of the home for monetary compensation. *Non-market or household labor* is work completed in the house for the family and where no monetary compensation is received. *Place and Appalachian community* refer to the whole of Appalachia and are described later in this introduction. However, in this study there will be a specific focus on the northern Appalachian area which includes southern Ohio, eastern Kentucky, and northwestern West Virginia. *Self-Leadership* in this study is defined as a leadership of the individual by the individual. Sinclair states "leadership can liberate us from confining or oppressive conditions—imposed by structures, others and ourselves" (Sinclair, 2007, p. xix). A case can be made for a woman's self-leadership in the family to enable her to take on a role of economic independence. Self-leadership developed from self-management leadership theories in leadership and management literature and is rooted in self-control theory, which is often called self-monitoring (Daft, 2008; Nahavandi, 2009; Neck & Houghton, 2006). *Socio-economic status* is defined by

the economic (occupation, education, and income) status experienced within an individual's social group and the status of that group in society at large. The American Psychological Association (APA) states in its report on socio-economic status that occupation, education, and income are the major influences for defining socio-economic status (American Psychological Association Task Force on Socioeconomic Status, 2007).

Rationale for Research Study

This is the story of women in north-central Appalachia a region that has been less frequently studied by Appalachian scholars. The purpose of this study will be to discover how Appalachian women, after leaving dependent relationships with male spouses, reach socio-economic stability and independence. The sample is limited to a very particular group in Appalachia, white middle class women in the North-Central sub-region of Appalachia. Much of the prior research on Appalachia has been focused on poor or working class women in central Appalachia. I chose to seek the stories of this socio-economic group of women because they have been largely overlooked in the research literature. The focus is on women; a literature search in the area of women leaving dependent relationships specifically in Appalachian America revealed a paucity of research on this topic. Yet greater understanding of this familial situation could guide professionals in resource organizations to provide the assistance and resources needed by these women and their families experiencing significant change. Further, the identification of barriers to the movement to self-reliance has leadership, political, familial, and institutional significance for women.

The remainder of this chapter will elaborate on the rationale for this study of women in Appalachia and provide the reader with grounding in place—the region of Appalachia, the relationship of economics in Appalachia, and the importance of women's roles and leadership

roles. The research method is then briefly described. The researcher's positionality is presented along with the influence of the pilot study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the Dissertation's subsequent chapters.

Place, Economics, and Women's Roles in Appalachia

To understand the rationale for studying Appalachian women, it is critical to recognize the unique culture of the region and those social and economic forces that impact the ability of women in their region to acquire higher education, careers, and market work outside of their home. While access limitations affect Appalachian men as well, jobs that are available are often viewed as male jobs either due to their physical demands or companies' desire to hire men over women (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005). Aggregate data from the Department of Labor continues to show occupational gender differentiation across the United States in all regions; this study introduces Appalachia the region, economic resources, and Appalachian women. This information provides a foundation for discussion and interpretation in subsequent chapters.

Place--Appalachian region and economic resources. Appalachia is a geographic area, rich in historical importance to the emergence of the United States as a political and economic power. The area is abundant in natural resources consisting primarily of coal, lumber, iron ore, and salt. The Appalachian sub-regions extend from southern New York south through western Pennsylvania; eastern Ohio; all of West Virginia; eastern Kentucky; western Virginia; western North Carolina; eastern Tennessee; northern parts of South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama; and northeastern Mississippi (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2009, Fig. 1).

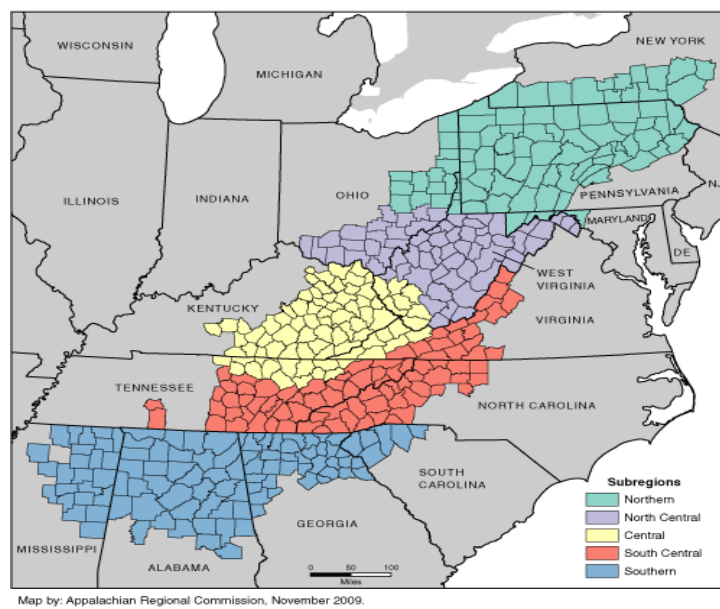


Figure 1. Sub-regions of Appalachia

It is important to understand the regional identity of Appalachia and Appalachians, people who either were born in Appalachia or have moved into the area. Appalachia is a diverse region both in resources and local population, which is very often forgotten or overlooked (Lewis, 1999). Appalachia is an area with a minority population of nine percent which has increased and decreased over time since the civil war (Pollard, 2004). Population and regional “Diversity...is inherent to places...Places are deeply historical and specific; no matter how transnationalized and shaped by larger forces, there is an important sense in which one always lives locally, in place” (Harcourt & Escobar, 2005, p. 6). Appalachian people claim the region as their place. There is a cultural and family connection to the space. The rural nature of the mountain areas isolates people from resources and limits their job opportunities. At the same time, this isolation is considered by the population as a natural protector of their land and life from outsiders.

For many living outside of Appalachia, knowledge of the region is formed and informed by stereotypes and media imagery. Whereas some stereotypes, such as “The Beverly Hillbillies,” portray the Appalachian people as backward, i.e., socially, culturally, and economically inferior to more urbanized residents, a more realistic understanding of the region shows a people who have long held an appreciation of the land and love of nature that did not spur them to industrialize their lands as quickly as outsiders of the region felt necessary (Eller, 2008). Appalachians enjoyed the natural beauty and bounty that the waterways and mountains provided in recreation and rural living. Industrialization was slow coming until outsiders, non-native or non-residents of the Appalachian region, realized the abundance of natural resources in the land. It was not that the people were backward; they just took a different approach to life and asset accumulation than the outsiders (Eller, 2008). As other areas of the United States were barreling ahead in the Industrial Revolution, the Appalachian people did not have the financial resources the outsiders did to develop their land. Also, the people did not want to strip out the natural resources and send them out of the region. Appalachia geographically remained isolated and urban riches did not flow into rural Appalachian communities (Eller, 2008). Infrastructure and resources continue to lag today behind what most urban Appalachian outsiders would consider prosperity and progress.

Appalachian women and leadership. Because this study gives voice to Appalachian women’s roles of leadership of self and in the family, it is important to place their stories in the context of gender analysis. “The evolution of women’s studies has concerned itself with how identity operates and how identities intersect with one another. Women’s studies, feminist theory or gender studies...concerns itself with the relationship between the body and identity” (Brueggemann, Garland-Thomson, & Kleege, 2005, pp. 31-32). Identity and relationships are

important concepts which merge in the study of gender in Appalachian studies and Engelhardt (2005) suggests “interesting ground lies between feminism and Appalachian studies—whether on top of our mountains or in the midst of our urban centers” (p. 6). In this context, it is important to study and analyze the intersection of gender, place, and class in Appalachia and consider how the economies of the region affect women and household economics (Oberhauser, 1995). The responsibilities of bill paying, child care and general household management often rest primarily with women. Maggard (1994) suggests gender analysis is necessary to understand “the ways the lives of Appalachian women and men are framed. . .,[how] other forces like race, class and ethnicity intersect with gender to influence individual biography and opportunity. . .,[and] how gender relations shaped and were shaped by major social and economic changes in the region” (p. 138). This study will focus on women. It is not the intent to do a comparative gender analysis, but to discuss women’s experience after termination of their relationships with their male spouse.

Women living in Appalachian areas of high unemployment and poverty need economic resources. Many women fear leaving their spouse because “the prospect of single parenthood, which in many cases is preferable, given the tremendous amount of domestic violence in [West Virginia], means significant loss of economic security” (Oberhauser, 1995, p. 238). Women living in coal communities have been considered free labor by the companies to maintain home support for their current labor force and reproduce their next generation of laborers. Scholarly research of women leading change in family and social systems in Appalachia needs specific analysis of women as leaders and the function of their economic roles.

This research seeks to understand particular experiences of women in a specific family situation; one in which women have lived in a regional culture called Appalachia and have

moved from dependency to economic independency. Given that this research is specifically focused on women within a particular regional and economic focus, it also suggests these women became self-leaders at some point in their family relational experience. At a certain point in time these women took control of themselves from the partner they had depended on to provide for their socio-economic security. Women moved from being followers to leading themselves out of oppressive situations where they had little say over their decisions, choices, and bodies. The self-leader is both the follower and the change agent (Blanchard, 2007). Self-leadership is “a competence for leading oneself across challenging and performing situations that precede goal achievement” (Curral & Marques-Quinteiro, 2009, p. 165). This study identifies women in challenging situations and gives voice to the stories of the process involved in their decisions leading to socio-economic stability. The women participants are the self-leaders of change.

Social traditions in the Appalachian culture often place specific expectations on women to assume roles based on gender, class, and economic relationships. These regionally identified gender roles influence women’s leadership. Women in dependent roles in the family system must possess some form of self-leadership. In the midst of challenging situations calling for difficult decisions sometimes women resist making these choices because of their emotional investment in the relationship. Women are compelled to recognize the investment and the mental and emotional navigation required to rationalize their choices. Emotional intelligence theories suggest that one component of emotional intelligence is self-management. Women with “the ability to control disruptive, unproductive, or harmful emotions and desires” are practicing self-management (Daft, 2008, p. 145). Blanchard (2007) theorizes that effective leadership is transformational in practice and in process. He suggests that in the stages of transformation, self-leadership is the first stage. For women to lead their families they must transform themselves

because “effective leadership starts on the inside, before you can hope to lead anyone else; you have to know yourself and what you need to be successful” (Blanchard, 2007, p. 101).

The Research Method

This ability to explain an experience and research feminine roles through storytelling emphasizes the appropriateness of using narrative inquiry to discover lived experiences. Barbara Ellen Smith (1999) uses narrative method in *Beyond the Mountains* to describe the Appalachian experience. She uses her own family stories to give a different portrayal of Appalachian women than that depicted in many stereotypical accounts of regional feminine roles during the early 1900s. The women in her family were hard working. Many can picture their own grannies, aunties, and mama while reading her article.

The methodological approach for this research is two-fold: narrative inquiry analysis (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007) to discover lived experiences of Appalachian women through their own recounted stories and a situational interpretation adapted from Clarke’s (2005) situational analysis method. The situational interpretation contextualizes the women’s stories by seeking out economic, cultural, and/or political discourse that is relevant to the primary themes of the women’s stories. Edmondson and McManus (2007) discuss the value of high-quality field research and ensuring methodological fit with the research. Narrative analysis is an ideal fit with the desire to gather details about lived experiences, using an oral storytelling method that is consistent with the Appalachian cultural tradition.

Researcher’s Positionality

Parents serve a leadership role (Sinclair, 2007). As a parent and mother, I have an inherent interest in the family system and the role of women in it. My own experiences inform my position in the research project. As an economist, I believe in freedom of economic choice

and independent movement. The ideas of women as property and the expectations for women to perform unpaid labor in the household because of their sex are in opposition to my socio-economic beliefs. The economic distress in much of the Appalachian area directly impacts women's roles in their communities and families. The relationship of gender and the economic stability of women affect the family system structure and power relationships. These relationships and the consequences of women's roles are the research focus.

Corbin and Strauss note that research emerges from "Problems derived from...literature and problems derived from personal and professional experience" (2008, p. 21). My personal interest in women's socio-economic independence results from personal experiences, which have demonstrated the need for research into the challenges experienced by women when they are in a dependent relationship. I grew up in a rural community and have worked and lived in both urban and rural areas. I was born Appalachian in West Virginia, the only state that is completely Appalachian, and raised in an Appalachian community in southeast Ohio. I am considered an outsider by many living in the Appalachian region because I moved out of the area identified as Appalachia. I live on the fringe of counties in Ohio that are identified as Appalachian. My students are primarily Appalachian women. I move in and out of the region in my occupation and when visiting my family. I maintain a connection to my Appalachian identity and concern for other Appalachian women inside and outside the region.

Influence of the Pilot Research

In preparation for this study, I conducted a pilot interview. The individual I interviewed was a friend; we attended the same church and knew each other's own personal history. She agreed to sign the informed consent forms immediately and offered to fill out the demographic survey later and drop it off. She did this and when she brought the survey she also attached a

note describing in more detail an incident of trauma she related in the interview. The intent once the transcription was complete was to share it with her and get her feedback. She agreed she would be willing and interested in looking over the transcript.

After the interview, the impact of being involved in such an emotional subject of research became more apparent. I cried for two hours once I returned home and would cry every time I listened to her story as I transcribed the tape. I would have never guessed the extent of the trauma she lived. I cannot ignore, minimize, or skip the hurtful details, because these details illustrate meaning in the participants' lived experiences. Her story was powerful and emotional, filled with themes of identity and loss.

The events that occurred within weeks of the interview had an indelible impact on my sense of connection and responsibility to this work. My friend, the participant of the pilot interview, was killed in a car crash. This was a terrible personal loss, yet in this loss she taught me many things from her passing. The emotional context of this work is very important. Stories told in the voice of the individual allow us to truly hear and appreciate the experienced memory. If at some point I questioned the value of doing this study it was confirmed after this interview. The loss of identity and self she expressed saddened me. She had experienced such harsh times with someone who should have loved and valued her. She had been divorced and away from her traumatic experiences for 25 years and she still had difficulty relating some of the details. I knew her in this post period and if she had not stopped me one day to lend me support during a time of my own personal difficulty, I may not have ever known she had lived such a life. After she left her marriage she was able to go back to school, attain a successful career, and care for herself and child. She owned a beautiful home and showed compassion with everyone with whom I ever saw her interact. She was strong, intelligent, and full of self-confidence. If sharing such stories

helps one person live a better life then the work was well worth the time and tears. I was shocked by her story and more shocked when one day she was gone from my life. I am so grateful to have known her and for her to have allowed me to learn more about her and myself.

Conclusion

Literature highlighting the gender and economic issues in Northern Appalachian regions is limited. Studies regarding the social relationships, family systems, and economic structures in households and counties need further development in the northern and north-central sub-regions of Appalachia. “Analyzing the complex relational nature of systems and inequality is currently a priority in race, ethnic and gender studies. However, little work has been done along these lines in Appalachian Studies” (Maggard, 1994, p. 137). This study adds to the Appalachian literature through meaning-making of the stories of women who have led themselves to economic stability and independence.

More investigative research with the people in Appalachia is critical to relate accurately their life experiences. Appalachian literature has addressed three areas well. First, the study of work that addresses stereotypes continues to be an area of research interest in Appalachian literature. Secondly, the political economy with regard to mountaintop removal, land ownership, the role of coal and residential labor pools has received much attention in Appalachian literature. The third area Appalachian literature has documented well is the social history and history of the region (M. K. Anglin, personal communication, April 2010; Eller, 2008; Seitz, 1995). However, the research to date still shows gaps in the discussion of women’s experiences. Anglin (2002a, 2002b), Maggard (1994), B. Smith (1999), and others have begun this work and increased the scholarly material exponentially from where it was in the 1980s. The methods employed by these scholars stress the need to learn the true stories of the people of Appalachia, their families, and,

of particular interest, women. Future efforts to relate the socio-economic systems in families and their dependency relationships could help define more policy and resource needs. Chapter II reviews the literature beginning with the significance of the Appalachian region, then focuses on the relationship of place, gender, class, and economics in Appalachia, and finally discusses the importance of women's self-leadership. Chapter III addresses the study's research design to learn the stories of the women participants. Chapter IV reports the study results. Chapter V presents the situational interpretation of the women's stories. Chapter VI examines implications of the study and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Surely if our selves were just there, we would have no need to tell ourselves about them. Yet we spend a good deal of time doing just that, either alone, or with friends, or vicariously at the Psychiatrist's, or at confession if we are Catholics. What function does self-telling serve? We constantly construct and reconstruct ourselves to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and we do this with the guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future. (Bruner, 2002, pp. 63-64)

This study is an inquiry into Appalachian women's self-telling of memories and stories related to their individual attainment of economic and social stability after leaving a marital relationship. The literature reviewed is a complex mix of information regarding place—the Appalachian region; the economy in Appalachia; and the roles of women in family systems and partnerships which ultimately manifest into self-leadership.

The literature review is broken into three sections, beginning with place in “The Space of Appalachia.” The unique characteristics of rural and urban communities situating Appalachia within each are reviewed. Economic, employment, census, and geographic data are presented. Different challenges experienced by women in Appalachia are examined. The second section reviews “Women's Roles and Economics in Appalachia.” This section presents the significance of economic independence for women and the implications of place. The third section reviews “Women as Leaders” and how they become self-leaders. Literature is reviewed to discover areas where women have become leaders of change. This chapter concludes with the identification of perceived omissions in the literature relevant to this research study.

The Space of Appalachia

Our lives are shaped in part by our environment. Geographic location, regional identities, and regional culture impact our opportunities and choices in life. Many Americans have an image in their minds of the place and the people of Appalachia that, although sometimes accurate, is often inaccurate and discriminatory. This section will describe “the place” of

Appalachia—its geography, resources such as coal, agriculture, and human labor—to provide an accurate and factual grounding for understanding this study of Appalachian women.

The Appalachian Regional Commission's website describes Appalachia as:

A 205,000-square-mile region [that] follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. (see Chapter I, Fig. 1)

About 24.8 million people live in the 420 counties of the Appalachian region; 42% of the region's population is rural, compared with 20% of the national population. The region's economic fortunes were based in the past mostly on extraction of natural resources and manufacturing (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011; Eller, 2008; Seitz, 1995). The modern economy of the region is gradually diversifying, with a heavier emphasis on services and widespread development of tourism, especially in more remote areas where there is no other viable industry. Growth in health service jobs continue in the area. Coal remains an important resource, but it is not a major provider of jobs. Manufacturing is still an economic mainstay, but is no longer concentrated in a few major industries (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005). According to the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (2009), 5% of the United States population lives in the Appalachian region, and 15% of total United States personal income is earned in Appalachia. Appalachians make 20% less per capita in income than the rest of the nation (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). In the recession of 2008 Appalachia lost 800,000 jobs, all of the jobs gained since 2000 (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011).

Western Kentucky, West Virginia, and southern Ohio (areas of specific interest in this study) have some of the lowest high school completion rates of the Appalachian region ranging

from 49.2% to 76.6%, according to the Appalachian Regional Commission's data on educational attainment in the 2010 report using data from 2000. Very few counties in the three states, only one in Kentucky, had high school completion rates over 76.7%. Latimer and Oberhauser (2005) point out:

Appalachia lags behind the rest of the country in terms of college education among men and women. Almost 19 percent of Appalachian males have a bachelor's degree as compared to 16.7 percent of females in 2000. This pattern is consistent throughout the sub-regions with the exception of Central Appalachia. The Southern sub-region has the highest percentages of males and females with a college degree (20.6% males; 18% females), followed by the Northern sub-region (18.9% males; 16.6% females). Central Appalachia has the lowest college attainment rates with only 10.5 percent of males and 10.8 percent of females holding a college degree. (p. 276)

Disparities in employment and education have lasting impact on the people of the Appalachian region and expressly affect women's ability to gain socio-economic advantage. Labor force participation rates in Appalachia suggest that men are employed more frequently in jobs requiring more physical labor while women are employed more frequently in lower paying nurturing jobs. Labor force data showed that

in 2007, men were more heavily concentrated in the areas of construction, manufacturing and transportation and utilities—36 percent of men worked in those industries, as compared to 12 percent of women. In contrast, women were considerably more likely to be employed in education and health services—34 percent of women...10 percent of men. (Blau et al., 2010, p. 132)

This is particularly interesting in Appalachia where most of the available jobs are in the categories that are male dominated. Discrimination laws apply in Appalachia, but companies have historically been able to maintain mostly male workforces, especially in fields such as coal mining.

Frequently, Appalachia has been portrayed by the media as an area where coal miners die of black lung, people are malnourished, and children play in the dirt instead of attending school. Residents live in shanties on the sides of mountains and running water is optional. These images

may represent a segment of the population, but there is much more to the people and area of Appalachia (Shelby, 1999). The rest of this section presents pertinent facts of rural areas, rural Appalachia, urban and rural differentiations, and how stereotypes affect the region. “Two ...stereotypes, one romantic and the other degrading, dominate common notions of Appalachian women...Appalachian women are characterized as the quiet caretakers of an idealized rural mountain way of life” (Maggard, 1999, p. 229). As in all stereotypes, these descriptions do not depict the multi-faceted roles of Appalachian women. Appalachian women are not always quiet background ornaments in dependent relationships. They are often independent leaders regardless of whether they live in urban or rural Appalachia.

Differentiating Communities: Rural and Rural Appalachia

According to the National Institute of Health

‘Rural’ can be defined in several ways: by distance from urban areas, by type of economic base, by density of population, and, in the case of Native American populations, by the geographic location of reservations. Rural has been defined also as a ‘cultural’ perspective of the world as well as a normative structure. It is additionally defined by the distribution of scarce resources and services. (National Institute of Health, 1995)

Fiene (1993) states “census-takers have defined rurality in terms of the density of population living in a specific area and the proximity of the population to urban centers, but others recognize that the concept of rurality encompasses factors other than location” (p. 11). She continues to state that ecological, occupational, and socio-cultural factors are also indicators of the rurality of an area (Fiene, 1993). Literature describes rural communities as typically agricultural in their economic base and deeply religious, regardless of the faith. In rural communities the actual religious faith varies by region and geographic location, but it is very important to the community (Torres & Scheurich, 2007, p. 39).

Not all rural communities are Appalachian; however, most people mentally picture Appalachia as rural. Technically, rural Appalachia is the rural areas within the Appalachian region identified by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Factors making rural Appalachia unique are the culture and regional identity of Appalachia, including religious preferences and family significance. Family, a cohesive group, with a traditional mother, father, and children structure, is an important binding element in the Appalachian community. The remoteness of the geographic locations limits resources and job attainment for Appalachians. Seitz (1995) suggests that Appalachia is often thought of in the same terms as third world nations.

Differentiating Urban and Rural Areas

Urban and rural areas both exist in the Appalachian region. However, urban areas in Appalachia are not as economically advantaged as urban areas outside of the region and most urban comparisons are based on areas outside of the region (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005). Urban areas offer more job opportunities due to more businesses located in a more centralized area. Opportunities and status for men and women depend on the kind of education and job they obtain.

The federal government has two systems for identifying urban and rural, one designed by the United States Census Bureau to differentiate urban and rural (Isserman, 2005). The other system is from the Office of Management and Budgeting and seeks to integrate urban and rural in metropolitan and micropolitan areas (Isserman, 2005). The Grand Canyon is considered to be in a metropolitan area. Twenty percent of the population living on 97.3% of the land mass in the United States is identified as living in rural areas. Therefore, 80% of the population lives on the rest of the land in what are identified as urbanized areas and urban clusters depending on the number of people per square mile. Looking at census data, it appears 117,181,000 households

exist in the United States. Of that number 97,865,000 are inside metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) and 19,315,000 are outside MSA's (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010). This seems to say something about the land. It implies the open space and mountains may appeal to a select group of people, those who think of the mountains as home.

The majority of counties in Appalachia are rural by definition. "It is significant to the analysis to point out 109 of the [420] Appalachian counties are in large metropolitan areas with one million or more population, comprising three fifths of the region's population" (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004, p. 332). Given these numbers one would think significant tax revenue is funneling at least into these urban areas, but Appalachia still struggles economically. Hence, on June 9, 2011, President Obama by executive order established the White House Rural Council hoping to give ARC new opportunities. This council will help coordinate government programs and maximize the impact of federal investments to promote economic prosperity and quality of life in rural communities (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). Even in 2011 the federal government still considers the rural areas of Appalachia in need of economic development subsidized by government dollars.

Some researchers believe the urban/rural distinctions are flawed due to the way data is calculated. Isserman (2005) in his article on the national interest gave West Virginia as an example; it is considered primarily urban. Isserman wrote about the difficulty differentiating rural from urban based on the way the data is collected and recorded. In the article, "In the National Interest," Isserman recommends methods to fix this problem and emphasizes the problems associated with the current method of reporting the data. It is relevant to how the government defines urban and rural communities. Although the details of his approach to calculating population density are beyond the scope of this review, it is noteworthy that he

challenges the validity of rural and urban identifications because it is often difficult for researchers and policymakers to obtain consistent data.

Accurate data representation of where economically disadvantaged populations reside enables researchers such as Isserman to make more accurate policy recommendations.

Without good urban and rural statistics, we shall continue to be forced to make private sector and public policy decisions blind to the realities of actual urban and rural change and conditions...we shall continue to drive our decisions and policies looking through glasses whose thick metro and non-metro lenses badly distort our vision of urban and rural realities. (Isserman, 2005, p. 472)

The data are recorded by county, and counties often contain urban and rural communities, but if it is a metropolitan county, then that whole area is designated urban.

Isserman (2005) wanted to be able to use his method of data differentiation to analyze “the spatial incidence of poverty, hardship and prosperity...to gain a better understanding of conditions in the places rural people live” (p.483). According to Isserman, The Economic Development Administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the United States Department of Agriculture use poverty, but each defines it differently. The Appalachian Regional Commission was set up to study the counties in Appalachian states with the weakest economic development (Fiene, 1993, p. 10). Each agency has its own set of criteria, in addition to poverty, to identify whether the county is distressed. These identifications ultimately affect resources allocated to the counties and thus affect women seeking assistance for higher education or better career opportunities.

Urban and Rural Labor Force Participation Rates

Economic development is affected by the employability of the residents in the area. A skilled labor force employed in jobs paying living wages leads to employees who are able to buy goods produced inside and outside of the local economy. The Beale Code is a classification

scheme developed by the Department of Agriculture to differentiate a metro/non-metro coding scheme used by many researchers. The classification takes into consideration, among other things, proximity to the metropolitan core and the size of the largest city in each county (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004). As expected, regional economic characteristics affect the occupational distribution of employed persons from Appalachia. The data indicate workers in distressed and transitional counties find more employment opportunities in blue-collar occupations (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004). Historically, Appalachia has larger numbers of blue collar jobs than white collar career opportunities. This often translates into what are considered male jobs, but these jobs are diminishing and being replaced with low wage jobs.

Industries with the highest employment concentrations in Appalachia included Mining (1.6 times the national employment share), Manufacturing (1.4), Farming and Natural Resources (1.3) and Utilities (1.25). Given that the Manufacturing, Utilities, and Farming industries have experienced tremendous job losses over the last few years, and Mining is projected to lose jobs as well over the coming years, this does not bode well for the employment situation in Appalachian in the near future. (ARC Region Report, 2009, p. 1)

Therefore, “with the shift from goods to service production in the national economy, a large proportion of more stable, blue-collar jobs have been eliminated. Most of the service-sector growth in rural areas has been female-dominated, low-wage, and part-time service sector” (Gorham as cited in Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005, p. 274) jobs. Despite positive trends, the research also illustrates the region as a whole continues to be distinct in many ways from the rest of the United States. It is still an area where labor intensive jobs are the employment opportunities people are accustomed to working and seek out. The supply and demand of jobs requiring skills without higher education are beginning to decrease, but employees with higher education skills are not in ready supply. This is creating a shortage of skilled workers and affects which businesses choose to locate in rural areas.

Appalachia unemployment rates are higher than the United States average. “Distressed Appalachian counties have rates of labor force participation more than 12 percent below the national rate. Central Appalachian states have unemployment rates that are sometimes 2 percent or higher than the [rest of the] United States” (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004, p. 338). The distressed designation is used by ARC and other reporting agencies such as the Population Reference Bureau to identify the most economically depressed counties.

Workforce participation rates differ between rural and urban women and men. Males in Appalachia have a 67% Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) compared to 70% for all United States males, while females in Appalachia trail United States females by 4%, 53% to 57% , respectively (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004). Research has evaluated the differences in socio-economic situations of women from men and between urban and rural. For example, several decades ago there was a higher percentage of rural wives employed working more hours per week, making less per hour than urban employed wives (Scanzoni & Arnett, 1987). Women in rural communities often work out of financial need, because of rural men’s inability to get jobs which support the family, therefore rural families have to be dual income earning households.

These economic realities, along with the finding that employed rural men earn fewer dollars, probably creates greater economic pressure on rural women to seek employment and to pursue it somewhat more extensively...the mean number of children is larger in rural households, indicating... whatever dollars are earned must be stretched for [the] greater number of persons. (Scanzoni & Arnett, 1987, p. 431)

These studies show rates in Appalachia continue to lag behind the rest of the United States and do not significantly change from the 1980s into 2000. The urban rural distinction diminishes as Appalachia is reviewed. In the data referenced focus is on Appalachia and its similarity across the region to rural consequences even if it is labeled urban. As the data discussion progresses in this review rural becomes the most relevant description of Appalachian communities and these

communities experience rural problems regardless of bureau designations. Personal income rates for the Appalachian region reported in 2008 were still 20% lower than the U.S. national average.

Per capita personal income was 20% lower in Appalachia than in the nation as a whole in 2007, \$29,274 compared to \$36,601. That is true of average wages and salaries and total earnings per job as well. Other forms of income are even lower in Appalachia relative to the United States Proprietors' income and dividends, interest, and rent per capita are only 66% of the United States average, and these ratios have declined by at least 10 percentage points since the beginning of the decade. (ARC Region Income Report, 2009, p. 1)

Low wages make economic development slow if not non-existent. From an economic perspective households need to earn wages to buy goods and services. If incomes are not sufficient to demand any more than basic needs, economic growth in communities will stall, if not stop completely. In my economics class, we discuss this circular flow, I have labeled the Economic Circle of Life and it is depicted in Figure 2 as specific to the Appalachia worker. The coal company pays wages to the laborer whose household buys goods. This process repeats itself over and over again, replicating and causing a cycle where the laborer is dependent on the company employer.

Rural America geographically battles access to employment and services (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005). Often jobs in rural communities do not pay the same as urban employment opportunities. When factored with the types of jobs available, skill set, and education levels of the population, this often leaves women with few opportunities to gain independence and economic stability. Historically, women have not been supported by their families in their desires



Figure 2. Economic Circle of Life to gain higher education.

Without higher education women do not have the skills to work jobs which would provide sustainable wages to support a family as a single parent. Although, service sector jobs are increasing in number and women often work these jobs if they have access to transportation, the income earned from these jobs, does not typically afford a living wage to support a family. Education is fundamental to the obtainment of quality jobs with adequate pay. Adequate meaning a family can be sustained on the income earned. “While rural women must address many of the same conflicts and situations as urban women, their experiences are often complicated by the somewhat unusual nature of the rural value system, labor market structure, and community organizational patterns” (Bescher-Donnelly & Smith, 1981, p. 167). This means urban, rural, and Appalachian women may have similar family and day to day struggles, but for rural and Appalachian women, community expectations, local values, and moral codes frowning on divorce, limited jobs and few community resources are greater barriers to change.

Appalachian women often live in communities where employment opportunities are dominated by jobs historically defined as male, perpetuating an imbalance in power, gender

roles, and unpaid work. Women in Appalachia often live in rural environs or socio-economic environments with few conveniences, even in areas designated by the census as urban. In a study by Grana, Moore, Wilson, & Miller, (1993) women in rural versus urban settings perceived their burden of unpaid housework as more difficult versus paid market work due to the proximity and availability of conveniences such as fast food, day care, laundries, etc. The similarities are women across place still find “men exercise considerable power over women’s labor in the home through the patriarchal structure of the family, while men maintain control over women in the labor market through their dominance... This dual system segregates and devalues the work women do in society, and increases the relative burdens for women working in and outside of the home” (Grana et al., 1993, p. 298). The paid and unpaid labor of women is still not valued the same as men’s work. This imbalance perpetuates a cycle of male preference and power even forty-seven years after the Civil Rights Act regulated there must be no discrimination or difference in wages of men and women. This continues to be a problem nationally and in Appalachia with a double impact on women as marginalized by gender and the economics of Appalachia.

Stereotypes

Economic data and numbers give one a picture of employment and education levels in Appalachia. Describing the geography provides an image of a beautiful, mountainous land where the ability to roam for miles without encountering another human being is peaceful to many. Yet, with all of the quantitative information we cannot forget the qualitative details which also shape lives. The media images and stories passed down over time have created stereotypes which impact the emotional and spiritual well-being and identity of people. This discussion of place must be rounded out by examining the stereotypes of this place.

Mountain people
 can't read,
 can't write,
 don't wear shoes,
 don't have teeth,
 don't use soap,
 and don't talk plain.
 They beat their kids,
 beat their friends,
 beat their neighbors,
 and beat their dogs.
 They live on cow peas,
 fatback and twenty acres
 straight up and down.
 They don't have money.
 They do have fleas,
 overalls,
 tobacco patches,
 shacks,
 shotguns,
 and liquor stills,
 and at least six junk cars
 in the front yard. Right?
 Well, let me tell you:
 I'm from here,
 I'm not like that
 And I am damn tired of
 being told I am.²
 -Jo Carson (1989)

Appalachia is a region particularly characterized by negative stereotypes as depicted in Jo Carson's poem. It is often stereotyped as a culture devoid of intelligence with little ability to understand the civilized, cultural world of city professionals. A dominant view of the region is that Appalachia is mostly white, heterosexual, and politically conservative (Engelhardt, 2005). This description is true though for the entire United States not just Appalachia with the exception

² From *Stories I Ain't Told Nobody Yet* (pp. 28-29), by J. C. Carson, 1991, New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc. Copyright 1989 by Jo Carson. Reprinted with permission.

that political preferences vary across the states. Rural stereotypes can sometimes resemble racial prejudice. One may ask, Why is white normative? There are people in the United States living in Appalachia who are non-white (Cooper, Knotts, & Livingston, 2010); however, the predominant stereotype is of poor, white people living in “hollers,” also known as hollows. Part of this stereotype is residual from Scottish (and Irish) immigrants, mostly white, who wanted to live in the mountains when they settled here because they were reminded of the highlands in their native land (Cooper et al., 2010). They were and still are a proud, stubborn people who did not want to depend on others. They would rather be poor, independent, and self-sufficient than be part of the evolving cities of wealth where they perceive self-sufficiency is not valued.

This idea of a subaltern (Harcourt & Escobar, 2005) class of whites continues to enable others outside of the Appalachia region to maintain a hegemonic perception of a lower class group in the white American class hierarchy. The experience of superiority is secured by not being the “other,” that is, not being Appalachian; because they are better educated, employed and in a better social class of people. To be named Appalachian “that’s the bottom for white folks and we’re not like that at all” (Wilson, 1999, p. 100). The group of non-Appalachian whites Wilson describes is not of the Appalachian region and therefore believes in their superior class as people of more cultured and educated locations. Wilson (1999) asks “which [was] first -- marginalization or misbehavior” (p.100)? Wilson (1999) wants to know which came first: this perceived misbehavior of Appalachians thus causing them to be viewed in a marginalized way, or an environment in which they were already marginalized by outside factors thus leading some individuals to react in a way that their behavior could be stereotyped.

Appalachians are often stereotyped as inferior in intelligence, and economically and socially inferior to outsiders of the region. As human beings “we seem to need to define

ourselves positively by defining other people negatively. We need somebody to laugh [and] feel superior to, someone beside whom, we feel smart attractive, successful, and cool” (Shelby, 1999, p. 157). Appalachians serve this role for outsiders of the region. The images portrayed as the real description of people in this region impact policy decisions (Cooper et al., 2010), allocation of government and private resources, and interaction among people inside and outside the region. “Images create cultural stereotypes, which disregard forces of exploitation stemming from historical development of patriarchal and capitalist social relations” (Oberhauser, 1995, p. 221), so the perceived image affects how people interact socially. The image of people who are inferior has somehow enabled inefficient allocation of resources and excused outsiders to ignore or diminish Appalachians needs for necessary policy actions and legislation to enhance the region’s economy.

In select Appalachian literature, both fiction and non-fiction, authors have painted pictures of the region portraying it as some foreign entity cut off from the real world, a depiction that panders to existing biases (Billings, 1999; Fisher 1999a, 199b). Some writers do this out of ignorance, an attempt at humor, and others somehow believe it will draw attention to the needs of the area. Billings and Blee (1999) quote (John Reed’s remarks) “the Appalachian hillbilly remains the only acceptable ‘ethnic fool’ still safe to disparage in American popular culture” (pp. 119-120). No one is fired for making hillbilly jokes and so such disparagements are not discouraged and in fact often encouraged by those in and out of the area to play on the stereotype of hillbillies and rednecks.

Views of this hillbilly class of people have been accepted and supported by writers and media who at times were trying to help generate interest in the Appalachian region. However, the results were political, social, and economic gains of others, outsiders, at the expense of resident

Appalachians (Eller, 2008; Lewis, 1999; Shelby, 1999). For example, Dickey's *Deliverance* characters (Dickey, 1970; Knepper, 2008) have fostered an image of hillbillies who misbehave and act in disregard of society's rules. Steven Knepper (2008) reviewed the novel *Deliverance* in the *James Dickey Newsletter*, a newsletter published by the Dickey Society and now called the *Dickey Review*, an independent, non-profit, literary journal currently administrated by students and faculty at Lynchburg College in Virginia. Interestingly, he does not dispute the work is a "bigoted, violent, and misogynistic novel" (p. 27). "James Dickey's novel *Deliverance* (1970) and John Boorman's subsequent film adaptation (1972) have left a lasting mark on American popular culture...it 'remains one of the worst pictures of the mountain people as inbred, suspicious, violent, and bestial'"(as cited in Knepper, 2008, pp. 17, 18). Knepper encourages the reader to look at Dickey's portrayal of Appalachians to help fight the stereotype and to consider how the outsiders treated the "mountain people" in order to realize that in fact the visitors were the ones mistreating the people they encountered.

Robert Schenkkan's 1992 play *The Kentucky Cycle*, the TV series *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Hee Haw*, and other works of literature and media have solidified the stereotypical images outsiders of Appalachia relate to Appalachians, especially providing images of Appalachian women to people who have never been to the area or met anyone from the area, reinforcing the idea of either aggressive craggy old women with no man in their lives or young sexually promiscuous, gullible women looking for a man to marry and take care of them financially. These types of media portrayals serve to legitimize a view of Appalachian women that assumes they desire and deserve their marginalized circumstances. This also perpetuates an image that Appalachian families are led by a man as the head of household because the stereotypical woman would not be able to handle such responsibility.

Appalachian studies struggle with how to critique widespread stereotypes, experiences and societal perspectives. Regionalism and regional identities of Appalachia have been associated with primitive areas and people reminiscent of the past. Topography, settlement patterns, and events that flow from these patterns made Appalachia into a geographical, historical, and ideological American borderland, yet popular writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries “who created mythical Appalachia also invented an equally dubious historical Appalachia” (Lewis, 2000, p. 9). These writers were followed by the imposition of modern research agendas such as cultural poverty, internal colonialism, dependency, isolation, “familialism,” and traditionalism (Lewis, 2000, p. 9). As Ron Eller (1988, 1994) has noted, few observers would deny the central role that “region” has played in Appalachian history and life. “A sense of place is intricately woven into literature, politics, social patterns of the region, and provides the fabric from which both personal and regional identities are shaped” (Eller, 1994, p. 2).

Within the context of negative stereotypes, the images of Appalachian women and family systems are inaccurate and misguided (Engelhardt, 2005). Stereotypes impact women’s self-images and contribute to a diminished view of their value as participants in the productive economic system within the community and family structure. “Bobbie Ann Mason noted [when speaking about *The Kentucky Cycle*] ‘they make you deny your language and your story and accept as authority others’ view of you’” (Mason as cited in Anglin, 2002a, p. 566). Anglin’s (2002a) research participants relate stories of irritation, “I learned from informants in western North Carolina...their frustration over various texts that misrepresented the area through graphic detail of dirt farms and families in tattered, rumped clothes” (p. 566). These inaccurate and oppressive stereotypes insert an unnecessary roadblock in the path of Appalachian and non-

Appalachian individual's economic, social, and political interactions. Women and their roles in the family have been either misrepresented or cast as insignificant in fiction and non-fiction accounts. Research and accurate presentations of women's roles in market and non-market work will provide information to researchers and Appalachian women in their efforts to attain economic independence and self-leadership.

Women's Roles and Economics in Appalachia

In government, in business, and in the professions there may be a day when women will be looked upon as persons. We are, however, far from that day as yet.

(Eleanor Roosevelt as cited in Northouse & Hoyt, 2007, p. 268)

Women's roles. Stereotypes still impede the rural woman's ability to obtain professional positions in the workforce. People still see an image of the *The Beverly Hillbillies* or *Green Acres* (Ballard, 1999) when they think of rural and Appalachian women and these caricatures generate barriers. Sixty-one years after Eleanor Roosevelt's comment women are in a better position in the workforce, but there are still struggles, especially for women in peripheral regions (Seitz, 1995) such as Appalachia.

Men are stereotyped with agentic characteristics such as confidence, assertiveness, independence, rationality, and decisiveness, whereas stereotypical attributes of women include communal characteristics such as concern for others, sensitivity, warmth, helpfulness and nurturance... Gender stereotypes are easily and automatically activated, and they often lead to biased judgments. (Northouse & Hoyt, 2007, p. 276)

Gender becomes important in society because we have perceptions of men and women's behavior and defining characteristics. There are assumptions made about men and women in research and therefore it is important to be aware of the literature reflecting stereotypes, and societal and cultural perceptions.

Studies about women are usually labeled gender studies. I have drawn on the literature in gender studies to add value to the Appalachian literature regarding women, but this is really a study of women's roles and experiences. "Gender was culturally and socially constructed, but ... built upon a foundation of biological sex... What it means to be a woman changes over time, varies across cultures, and shifts from one social context to another" (Jackson, 1993, pp. 4, 5). This is applicable to the Appalachian culture and region where there are distinct social expectations of women's roles. Others have stereotyped and put Appalachian women in a category to explain and define them according to society's perception of appropriate behavior, correct career choices, and who should care for the children. This socially constructed idea of gender affects formal production and household production spatially (Oberhauser, 1995). The constructs suggest who should head the household and bring in the income. In other words division of labor in households and the market place is identified based on a set of pre-conceived ideas of what are appropriate tasks to be completed based on an individual's gender and sex.

Power is often explained by referring to an individual's sex, male or female. In present day, Appalachian women often find themselves waiting to commit to a particular activity until they discuss it with their husband. Power established and constructed around male dominance and female subordination is patriarchal, with men at the top of the hierarchy. Women are stereotyped as subordinated to men in power. Sometimes this stereotype proves true in Appalachian culture. hooks (1995) makes an argument for women learning their roles as one who is dominant in a family role and that women have a responsibility to empower and lift up not degrade or humiliate, just as much as men have this responsibility. She asks "if we cannot convince the mothers and /or fathers who care not to humiliate and degrade us, how can we imagine convincing or resisting an employer, a lover, a stranger who systematically humiliates

and degrades?" (hooks, 1995, p. 493). She is suggesting that women have to claim their leadership roles and assert their abilities at home and in the workplace.

Often due to the Appalachian region's geography, there is limited access to institutions of higher learning and actual job opportunities that in turn affects the roles of women within their family structure, social groups, and employment locations. In today's economy most households in the United States are dual earning households either due to necessity or desire; however, in Appalachia there is a strong desire to have the male work outside the home and the wife stay at home to care for their children and home (Oberhauser, 1995). This is evidence of the patriarchal culture which is firmly rooted in Appalachian culture and thereby constrains women in the stereotype. Current 2011 numbers for education and employment from the Appalachian Regional Commission data reports support these assumptions (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011). Younger generations of women, those coming of age to go to college or seek employment, struggle against a cultural mindset which does not support leaving the family to go outside of the area to pursue higher education or employment. Women are often still expected to bend to the patriarchal views of a capitalist and religious society where men are viewed as the decision makers in the household (Seitz, 1995). He, the husband and father, must give permission and allow his wife to work. It is seen as a status symbol in middle class Appalachian communities for the wife to not have to work, regardless of whether she has a desire to work outside of the home (Blau et al., 2010).

Economic and social dependency in patriarchal societies and cultural groups encourages women to stay in a relationship and support their partner regardless of the negative consequences of remaining in the relationship. Even in a situation where the male spouse is abusing substances or the family members, some cultural groups believe in maintaining the family unit. This

perpetuates a cycle which many women find difficult to exit. Often the male spouse controls the financial resources and women are not confident in their ability to safely and securely support themselves or their children. One example of this imbalance in power and stability between spouses is when the male spouse is abusing a substance such as alcohol and the wife begins to carry out most of the domestic responsibilities of managing the household. Peled and Sacks (2008) characterize the alcoholic's behavior as under responsible. When the wife moves to take responsibility, she is faced with decisions on leaving the relationship, leaving the home, and protecting herself and her children. Women must secure a place to live if they leave their spouse and they need financial security and stability. "Systems theory fails to attend fully to the disparities of power and status of men and women, the pressure of traditional roles in patriarchal society and the destructive impact of a problematic individual upon the family" (Peled & Sacks, 2008, p. 391). Seitz (1995) presents in her study the role of the family on women's decisions to act and roles in community activism.

There is a reciprocal effect that once the woman realizes her ability to act outside of the family, that then she can in fact act and make changes within the family. [Women] were the victims of violence in the home and on the street...their lives were limited by deeply rooted gender roles that created a sexual division of labor inside the home and workplace. However, in contrast to the social segregation that is characteristic of race relations, gender relations are defined by the integration, and often the intimacy, of men and women within most households. This curious and combustible mixture of oppression and love makes it clear that discrimination and inequality are not a simple issue of "us-against-them." Instead, it has more to do with the systems in which all of us live and work—the market system, the production system, and the reproduction system. These systems may work with us and allow us to express our individual preferences and abilities, or they may work against us and limit our opportunities...the issues of race and gender inequalities are at heart issues of morality, of democracy, of family and of opportunity. (Albelda, Drago, & Shulman, 1997, p. 9)

The above quote is relevant for a study of women in rural society because rural communities are often secluded, between 20 and 50 miles (sometimes more) from major cities, making family life and family interdependence very important. For women (isolated in the

home) to reject gender oppression becomes more difficult because she is separated from women other than her immediate family or neighbors.

An example from West Virginia archives supports the concept of women as inferior and women should tolerate male treatment even when abusive:

Isolated by geography in its early years, and hindered in its development by a rural culture, West Virginia has been slow to follow paths taken by other states. In the twentieth century, traditional beliefs and behavior have resisted a world of drastic change. A culture which has taught women “to serve men and to consider their self somewhat inferior,” and which put great emphasis on family, prescribed a role for women that reinforced dependence. The tenacity of Protestant fundamentalism, with its emphasis on female subservience, helped sustain the legal disabilities of women. These powerful cultural norms clearly influenced and were reflected in the actions of judges and lawmakers. Only in the last twenty years have West Virginia women begun to gain full equality under the law. (Spindel, 1992, “Women’s Legal Rights in West Virginia,” para. 30)

The owners of resources often seek to control the actions of those without access to resources. “Critical traditions, from Marxism to feminism, have often emphasized how ideology is employed to further the interests of those in power by mystifying the nature of social relations and the causes of oppression” (Bell & York, 2010, p. 116). As discussed earlier, Appalachia has experienced a history where outsiders have maintained power over economic production in the community in ways that subjugate residents. Women in Appalachia were seen as the home support to allow men to work for the companies which were extracting natural resources from the land. Women in Appalachia still experience family systems with hierarchal power relationships. Seitz’s (1995) discussions with women activists in coalfields and mining areas in Virginia strove to contribute to the literature in socialist feminism because she wanted to address division of labor based on gender and the issues surrounding women’s productive and reproductive work. Her research also added to the women in development (WID) literature and studies regarding socio-economic marginalization and social change (Seitz, 1995). This study is

focused on expanding our understanding of the economic and cultural challenges that Appalachian women face while striving to attain economic independence.

Economic marginalization of women in any culture causes disparity in market labor and family division of labor. This is true in Appalachia where women are marginalized and are laboring in a culture where division of labor continues to follow male female traditional roles (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004). Gender roles still enable the power of choice and privilege in the workplace (Connell, 2005). In the global landscape men are the gatekeepers to equality because they “control most of the resources required to implement women’s claims for justice. Men and boys are thus in significant ways gatekeepers for gender equality” (Connell, 2005, p. 1802). Men have global power economically, politically, and in their own households. Connell (2005) states “[i]t is clear that, globally, men have a lot to lose from pursuing gender equality because men, collectively, continue to receive a patriarchal dividend” (p. 1808). In rural communities of Appalachia the patriarchal power bases are still active today (Anglin, 1984, 1993; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; B. Smith, 1999; Oberhauser, 1995) and traditional gender roles are the norm (Rezek, 2010). Appalachian women must identify strategies for how they can achieve economic equity, do they need male feminists, government support, or to change personal assumptions of their roles and economic positions?

In addition to economic pressures, rural women often experience self-esteem issues attributed to their marginalization as women different from their urban peers (Engelhardt, 2005; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; Sherman, 2000). Women believe statements discounting their own worth and value as significant contributors to their family, jobs, and community.

Linguists who study the use of language in everyday life have long known that women tend to be conservative in speech...in an effort to gain social and economic power for both themselves and their children; they adopt language forms that have greater prestige

in society than do their more “homespun” vernacular forms. In other words...they [try to conform] to urban or northern speech. (Flanigan, 2005, p. 180)

Appalachian women often try to hide their vocal accents and dialectal differences, which many in the United States equate with a lack of intelligence (Flanigan, 2005). They fear ridicule due to their accents and language. There is a consciousness to not slip and talk like a hillbilly, so others will not think based on their speech that they are ignorant or unqualified for their positions. Although women may not want to feel like they have to be two different people at home to work, they may find their success is dependent on adopting the language of the outsiders.

The ridicule Appalachian women fear does occur. Gendered images of Daisy Mae, Daisy Duke, and others have firmly planted a stereotyped image in the minds of non-Appalachians and Appalachians (Ballard, 1999; Billings & Blee, 1999; Engelhardt, 2005; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; Shelby, 1999). “Women of Appalachia experience pressures particular to the regional identities that American visual culture projects on them; in a culture that objectifies them, Appalachian women not only experience pressure to maintain a ‘perfect’ body but are also indicted for their inability to condition their bodies accordingly” (Massey, 2007, p.128). Biased views of country girls in skimpy clothes looking for a man to care for them have only added more negative images onto women of Appalachia (Engelhardt, 2005; Massey, 2007). Stereotyping has affected how Appalachian women speak, dress, view their physical image and beliefs in their intellectual abilities.

Appalachian women must prove themselves worthy in the workplace and society, first because they are women and second because of their regional identity. The expectations of certain women’s roles are supported by both genders; men are not the only ones holding traditional views, they are also held by women. “The influence of this culture [Appalachian] has

been around so long that it seems a normal way of thinking” (Sherman, 2000, p. 135). When women choose to enter leadership positions, they are not always ensured the support of the community’s female population (Sherman, 2000). They are often forced to prove themselves to men and women alike.

Anglin (2002a) and B. Smith (1999) both address the issues of women’s strength. They illustrate in their studies the power of women in community and family change. Anglin’s (2002b) participants in her study of the Mica industry in “the hills of Carolina” explain to the researcher acceptable ways of approaching men and women in the factory. They coach her on why she as a single female should not talk to certain men because it will be regarded in a very negative light by other women participants, wives, and girlfriends. This relationship between women outsiders and insiders establishes a need for trust. Often women have problems with trust due to circumstances in their home or community. They know their roles in the established patterns but interjecting something or someone new causes a need to realign their management practices for life. Appalachian women have been conditioned over time to be suspicious of exploitive outsiders, so when someone outside the community comes into research the positive characteristics of their lives, they are slow to believe them.

Economics of Appalachia

“Gender relations have influenced the distribution, causes, and consequences of social and economic inequality in the Appalachian region” (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005, p. 269). This statement, which opens the Latimer and Oberhauser article *Exploring Gender and Economic Development in Appalachia*, supports the need to look deeper into the relationships where extrinsic factors continue to affect women’s choices. Appalachian scholarship has focused on the culture of poverty, the effects of capitalism on the region, coal mining, politics, and class, and

has also taken on the task of looking at how these factors affect women in particular (Anglin, 1984, 2002a, 2002b; Billings, 1999; Engelhardt, 2005; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; B. Smith, 1999). Review of scholarship in which gender is a key element helps ground this study in the literature. “Increased attention to gender issues within Appalachian studies reflected the heightened awareness of how gender—in addition to race, class, and ethnicity—shape economic development of this region” (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005, p. 269).

Eller writes, “much of the story of Appalachia describes the exploitation of the region at the hands of outside economic interests” (2008, p. 7). The non-natives wanted this ability to use the land for themselves, and it was easier if the current occupants of the land did not know or care about the riches buried in their land. “Outsiders” felt it their duty to develop the land and local economies. All of the blame cannot be placed on outsiders; leaders within and beyond Appalachia were often responsible for allowing and often encouraging the exploitation of their land and its people (Eller, 2008).

Appalachia includes the very rich and the very poorest of our country. The region is sharply divided between those who have ownership of the land’s resources and those whom do not. The coal companies were very capable of gaining power when they took over in the Appalachian Mountains in the 1800s. They became the owners and providers of credit, income, property, healthcare, and access to quality education. Social inequality led to economic inequality and then the power was firmly in the hands of the employers, the coal companies. The residents became dependent on the provisions of the coal companies. Because of a lack of reliable transportation, many people remained dependent on local resources that were controlled by the companies (Lewis, 1999).

Capitalism was not a foreign concept to Appalachian people. Economic growth following the Civil War “overwhelmed” the people and strained “land use patterns, social relationships and the meaning of work, residents were propelled into a new world of technology, science and consumer capitalism” (Eller, 2008, p. 9). The lesson to those in Appalachia from outsiders was that money is the most important way to be powerful. Coal companies successfully kept other industries out of the region, thus securing a cheap labor pool. A small middle class allowed a two-class system of the elite and the poor. When out-migration began in the late 1930s-early 1940s, young men joined the military, young families moved north, and the middle class became fewer in number (Duncan, 2001; Eller, 2008). This left an aging population of miners and the poor to fill jobs as they began to be created in the post-Depression era. This further segregated the classes of the haves (the companies making money from the local resources, such as coal companies and residents who have escaped poverty) and the have-nots (the people working for the outside companies, such as mine workers). Eller (2008) makes the case that economic progress comes with costs as well as benefits.

Too often... we have mistaken growth for development, change for progress. Indeed, growth has become central to the American idea of development. Attainment of the good life, we assume, is dependent upon the continued expansion of markets, transportation and communication networks, mass culture, urban centers, and consumer demand. Economic growth may indeed generate employment opportunities, but if those jobs provide low wages and few health benefits, they can reinforce conditions of dependence and powerlessness. New highways may increase commerce and access to services for some communities, but other communities, bypassed by the transportation improvement, can suffer displacement and decline. ...industries may produce short-term employment but if unregulated, can leave environmental damage that may threaten the sustainability of communities. (p. 5)

Companies may believe their economic development is good for the community, but do not fully appreciate the costs to the inhabitants of said community. Businesses, who pay low wages and run other businesses out of a community due to their ability to sell goods cheaply and

undercut the competition, may seem great assets to a group of developers or county politicians seeking to bring business into an area. These developers and other individuals may not fully appreciate the long-term effects on citizens who do not make enough money at the new employer to buy goods at other local businesses, thus eventually causing further economic decline in an already economically declining community.

Scholars (Anglin, 2002b; Billings, 1999; Eller, 2008; Engelhardt, 2005; B. Smith, 1999) continue to review the past to explain what has happened in Appalachia. The economic exploitation of the people and land has been illuminated, but why does it still continue if people know what is happening? It is hard to believe the United States government is unaware of the situation of people in impoverished areas, such as Appalachia, with limited access to resources for employment, health and dental care and educational opportunities (Oberhauser, 1995). Eller (2008) describes the development of America and what Americans view as progress. He points to urbanization, industrial progress and the modern measures of success as the values Americans embrace to prove they are civilized and cultured.

Areas such as Appalachia were deemed to be backward and underdeveloped because they lacked the statistical measures of progress, both material and cultural...For policymakers of the 1950's and 1960's...those backwater places needed to be energized and brought into the supposed mainstream. (Eller, 2008, p. 1)

Through the War on Poverty and other public works programs during the Depression and following, the government tried to change Appalachia to mirror the rest of the nation economically, but the government did not handle structural issues of inequity and it did not turn out as planned. For some outside Appalachia this confirmed their stereotypical views that the people were too uneducated and uncivilized to deal with prosperity. Those living in the region were displaced and taken advantage of by a government that attempted to help, but then left them to fend for themselves (Eller, 2008). L. Smith (2005) discusses the similarity in the way her

fellow citizens in New Zealand have been portrayed in research and the way rural people in general are portrayed. L. Smith (2005) says that many “live in political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health, poor educational opportunities, ...and adults may be as addicted to alcohol as their children are to glue, they may live in destructive relationships” (p. 4). A similar analysis was given in Miewald’s (2004) discussion of Kentucky advocates fighting for welfare and educational reform in Kentucky’s Transitional Assistance Program (pp. 171, 173). She described the women in this program as “caught in circumstances beyond their control, [with] unemployed husbands, domestic abuse, single parenthood, limited education and the lack of jobs” (Miewald, 2004, p. 180). These descriptions of the research participants in different rural locations illustrates that researchers have shed light on the living conditions and that the government programs were not always equipped to deal with the intensity or depth of the issues. Moving from this picture of family and cultural economic situations we take a closer look at the economics of being a woman.

The economics of being female in Appalachia. Latimer and Oberhauser (2005) studied the relationship between gender and economic inequality in Appalachia and found men and women are still dividing labor and resources by traditional gender roles in Appalachian and rural areas. This causes women to stay in low wage jobs and part-time work because they are still responsible for managing the house and childcare (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; Blau et al., 2010). Another significant statement regarding rural women’s disadvantaged status which is symbolic of situations in Appalachia explains:

“rural women are more educationally disadvantaged than their urban counterparts”... limited education hinders, the opportunities of rural women to participate effectively in the paid labor force, thus also limiting the levels of economic inputs they are able to make to their families. These limitations, disadvantages and inequities can be seen in the findings that even though rural wives work a few more hours per week than urban wives, they actually earn fewer dollars than do urban wives in spite of their increased efforts.

[R]ural wives ... very likely work at lower status, lower-paying jobs than urban wives. (Scanzoni & Arnett, 1987, p. 433)

Seitz (1995) affirms in her Appalachian study the generalizations Scanzoni and Arnett (1987) make in their non-Appalachian specific work that the circumstances in Appalachia are often economically disadvantaged. This translates into lower wages, fewer paid labor opportunities and socio-economic inequity for Appalachian women.

Women face contradictions between gendered norms, values, and the necessity to work. In Appalachia, the difficulty of obtaining an education is exacerbated by location. A woman may be far from an institution of higher learning and be needed to earn wages and income for her family; going to school may hinder her immediate earning potential by reducing the time available to work due to class time. Career opportunities are limited in rural communities. Often, jobs are available but not professional positions. Society and spouses/partners in rural America are often very reticent to accept working wives. Women's non-market work is not valued, thus women are devalued. The impact of men being the property owners still exists in the 21st century. "Women experience 'invisibility' where...power prevail[s]...men's material power and the economic dependence of women, and...the ideology of gender which defines men's activities as superior and women's as inferior" (O'Toole & Macgarvey, 2003, p. 173). Some women accept this as the way it has always been so it is the way it will always be. Others are forging into areas of economic, social, and political positions of authority.

Judith Ivy Fiene, author of *The Social Reality of Rural, Low-Status, Appalachian Women* (1993), was a native of Louisville, Kentucky. She moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1975 and considers herself an urbanite. She visited and interviewed 18 women in 14 families to learn more about the status of women in Appalachia. She grew up in a working-class, middle-class family, became college educated and continues to be concerned with the living situation of

people from her own background. She considered herself a “visiting anthropologist” in her own culture (Fiene, 1993 pp. xi, 6).

I met in the course of my work...women who lived in rough inadequate houses and shared their couches with the chickens who came in the unscreened doors and windows. I sat around wood burning stoves in rooms so stuffy and so full of people, pets and beds, that the oxygen supply seemed totally inadequate. I saw women in neat but crowded trailers living in almost complete isolation. I drove up hollows that were, to my surprise, still full of ice a week after all other roads were clear...what [are] needed are more studies that examine the experiences, beliefs, and behaviors of members of low-status families. I hope that those who undertake such studies will respect, as I have tried to do, the integrity and strength of these rural mountain families whose lives have been shaped by economic forces largely beyond their control. (Fiene, 1993, pp. x, xii)

The employment pattern of having a job then, losing a job, moves many Appalachian families in and out of working and middle class socio-economic situations. This affects opportunities for higher education and employment. Fiene (1993) found peculiar the class differentiations of mountain families. Torres (2005) found similar issues in her studies of urban Appalachians in Cincinnati.

Many women experienced both upward and downward mobility during their lives...when parents became unemployed... [and] as adults when they or their spouses became unemployed. [There were] differences among blue-collar families dependent on [union membership and job skills]...and the [time period] they lived. Women also experienced class change with divorce and remarriage. (p. 55)

Latimer and Oberhauser (2005) cite Folbre’s (1994) work on gender and economics and note that divorce causes limits on women’s labor opportunities because divorced women are more likely to be responsible for the care of children than men post-divorce. Care of children is often the responsibility of women. They rely on their families to help them with the children so they can work.

Women take on certain roles within the family system, but

rural people are more likely to marry earlier, have more children, and live in larger families than people in urban areas...rural couples...experience less marital

dissolution...and rural families are often characterized by the traditional husband-wife family pattern. (Bescher-Donnelly & Smith, 1981, p. 168)

Often women forego higher education for starting a family when they marry young. Rural women become mothers and take on the traditional role defined by middle-class society of a stay-at-home mom keeping hearth and home (Blau et al., 2010). The expense of childcare far outweighs the benefit of women working outside the home when only a high school education has been attained (Blau et al., 2010). Women face conflicts between the expected family roles and participating in work outside of the home (Bescher-Donnelly & Smith, 1981). “As women’s economic activity rates grow—social and economic disparities continue” (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005, p. 270). Women are expected to continue managing children and the household even when working full or part-time. Gendered norms cause women to continue doing what they have always done at home in addition to working outside of the home.

Occupation is a fundamental element in defining and determining social stratification (Blau & Duncan as cited in Seufert & Carrozza, 2004). The education level impact on occupations obtained in rural, specifically Appalachian areas becomes an indicator for socio-economic success and independence for men and women (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004). “Lacking hereditary castes or feudal estates, current social class differences in the United States depend primarily on occupational positions and the economic advantages and powers associated with those positions (Blau & Duncan, 1967, p. vii)” (Seufert & Carrozza, 2004, p. 331). Socio-economic status is identified by occupation, education, and income. The U.S. Census Bureau and Population Reference Bureau are two sources the Appalachian Regional Commission relies on to help generate reports of socio-economic status and identify Appalachian areas that are economically and educationally disadvantaged. Counties that are identified as economically and educationally disadvantaged are designated distressed and people from these counties are

considered in need of resources to attempt to change this status. The economic problems in the Appalachian area and the effects of these problems on gender specific roles of women make the challenges these women experience important to understand before socio-economic change can occur.

Self-Leadership

To achieve a viable and compensatory position in the workforce, Appalachian women need to lead themselves in a manner that will overcome the economic conditions for women and the cultural mores that bind them to socio-economic dependency. Self-leadership is a relevant theoretical model to understand how women might choose to meet these challenges. Chandler (2008) asserted that “self-leadership provides a framework for motivating oneself to achieve personal goals and acknowledges that people have a great deal of choice regarding what they personally experience and accomplish” (p. 7). Chandler (2008) continues to build on this theme.

The strategies for motivating oneself toward self-leadership involve self-assessment, self-reward, and self-discipline... limitations encapsulate many situations, people are not helpless, even in the most difficult of situations, in making informed choices to advance their goals, standing firm in the face of challenge, and remaining optimistic about the future. All of these outcomes of self-leadership relate to women's roles... Self-leadership is about doing things that are needed to be done, often with great effort and considerable sacrifice... The way one navigates one's individual life journey is often through taking stock of impending obstacles and roadblocks. Depending on cultural background and milieu, women often experience roadblocks to personal goals and future destiny fulfillment and must decide how they will navigate these challenges. Self-leadership provides strategies for motivating and leading ourselves despite challenges, obstacles, setbacks, and undesirable outcomes. (p. 7)

This affirms that women often in spite of hardship can and do self-lead. Self-leaders are individuals who have recognized the need to make internal changes in self in order to lead others. Appalachian women can be found practicing leadership in many forms, subtly through dissent (Anglin, 2002b) or more vocally through community efforts. The family is a place where female self-leadership is important to affect system change. In leadership literature team

management and interaction is discussed with respect to business organizations (Nahavandi, 2009); however, the principles applied to business teams can be used in community and family teams/groups. The participative nature of teams lends itself to individuals self-managing to be most effective and valuable to the work, social or kin group. Nahavandi (2009) lists four characteristics of self-leaders, they develop positive and motivating thought patterns; set personal goals; observe their behavior and self-evaluate; and self-reinforce.

There are self-leadership lessons to be learned from women in both urban and rural environments. Media images portray urban women as strong, tough, and independent (Marotz-Baden & Colvin, 1986). Tough is defined as being less likely to tolerate spousal misbehavior, substance abuse or cheating; more likely to step into power roles in the household; and more likely to seek socio-economic independence from a spouse when the relationship is controlled by the male spouse. There is a considerable body of literature that which concludes that Appalachian women are empowered as self-leaders and leaders of their families and communities (Anglin, 2002b; Billings, 1999; Englehardt, 2005; Hall, 1999; Maggard, 1999; Seitz, 1995).

An example of self-leadership is Jane B. Stephenson, an Appalachian women and wife to the then President of Berea College in 1986-87, who started The New Opportunity School, an outreach program at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. This school is a three-week-long program, where low-income women needing jobs attend class all day every day and learn skills to help them to find jobs or enroll in college (Stephenson, 1995). In March of 2010 I heard Jane Stephenson speak at the Appalachian Studies Association conference in Dahlonega, Georgia. She is a leader. She has grown a program for low-income, middle-aged women to build their self-esteem. Many of the women are divorced and trying to gain economic independence.

Fascinated, I took notes of her speech because it has direct relevance to this research study. Jane Stephenson shared her thoughts:

Appalachian has 1 million female headed families, 40% are in central Appalachia. Appalachia counties except Alabama, Pennsylvania, and New York have the highest percentage of people without high school diplomas or GED's. Many of the women who enter the program come from families where the income is less than \$10k per year. The average age is 42 years old. Many of the women need to get out of the marriage but don't know how to get out. Women leave their home and environment for three weeks and stay, they envision a new life. They take classes in self-esteem, Appalachia literature, creative writing, job searching, leadership, and how to go back to school. Appalachian women don't brag on themselves. It takes courage to come to school. Many women have identity and self-worth issues. They feel trapped and not sure if they are capable of going to school.

Neck and Houghton (2006) draw from several different writings to explain that individuals practicing self-leadership become tuned in to their inner selves, inner scripts/voices, and their causations of behavior. Women in self-leadership roles start recognizing the cues for their responses. Rural women survive in the face of adversity and find ways to become self-leaders and gain independence, even when few options exist. Women utilize their relational skills (Sinclair, 2007) to reach out to family in times of crisis.

Women can self-lead within their relationships and many women in Appalachia do lead through subtle ways in their own homes and in bold ways in the community. Jean Ritchie is an eighty-six-year-old Appalachian woman known as “‘the mother of folk’ ...the singing girl of the Cumberlands” (House & Howard, 2009, p. 23). Ritchie attended Cumberland College and the

University of Kentucky graduating with a degree in social work in 1946; this in itself is a success. She recorded music that preserved the heritage of her native Kentucky, traveled to Ireland and Scotland and learned more music and heritage. She became a popular writer, songwriter, and recorder, and through her recordings of songs such as “West Virginia Mine Disaster,” solidified her “position as an environmentalist and activist” (House & Howard, 2009, p. 30). Ritchie was and is a practicing self-leader from Appalachia.

Women have several factors affecting their leadership practices. Bescher-Donnelly and Smith (1981) examined four areas they felt role diversity of rural women was significant and these were family, the economy, the educational system, and the political structure. These are areas where women need to have knowledge and be in positions of leadership and self-control. For women to be economically independent of their spouses, they must take on roles of strength and responsibility. Women do take responsibility for the roles of nurturer and problem-solver. Women as nurturers take on a role of responsibility within a family system not only of children but also of the home and hearth (Sinclair, 2007; Wheatley, 2005). Women in their roles as managers of the hearth interact in the household and market economy. They support their family’s economic system in the bill paying at home and in income earning when employed outside the home. However, access to higher education in Appalachia has been difficult for women. The coupling of focus on the home, limited educational opportunities and the marketplace economy limits the political involvement and impact women can have in their local communities.

Women can have careers and education and healthy relationships with male partners who are supportive of their desires to be educated and economically independent. Although research suggests this is more likely in urban relationships with liberal men (Harrell, 1986), these

relationships are possible for rural women. Rural women must recognize the necessity of self-sufficiency to provide themselves with financial security and protection. Not only is economic independence important when one has an irresponsible spouse, but the reality in today's world that divorce, death, disability, dissolution, and debt are factors women may face in their lifetime adds importance to women being independent. Geographical location and cultural environment may influence methods of gaining socio-economic stability and independence; however, the motivation, desire, opportunity, and tenacity to change one's situation are the critical ingredients for self-leading change.

The Role of this Research in Appalachian Studies

Research is needed in Appalachian literature regarding the economic situations of women. Maggard (1994) agrees that literature analyzes the place of Appalachia; however, literature highlighting the women's roles and economic issues in Northern Appalachian regions are limited. This research study supports, affirms and extends Latimer and Oberhauser's (2005) socio-economic work through qualitative lived stories of the participants in this research. Studies regarding the social relationships, family systems, and economic structures in households and counties need further development in the Northern and North Central sub-regions of Appalachia. One has to consider social location, economic activities, and women's roles when attempting to orient the power struggle in a system rewarding structured inequality.

Inequality, Appalachian regional economics, and women's roles in families and social systems need further review. Perception is our reality; often internal scripts guide one to feel, respond, and behave as if the stereotypes are true and already voiced. Stories of Appalachian women's lived experience will add to our understanding of women's roles in their families and

communities. Future efforts to relate the socio-economic systems in families and the structured inequality in relationships could help define more policy and resource needs.

This literature review is a compilation of studies in Appalachian region, women, and economics combined with a review of women in self-leadership roles. The methodology used to gather the stories of the women participants is addressed in the next chapter. The vast literature available still leaves us searching for the voice of the Appalachian women who are living in relationships where they must be the agents of change. Their self-leadership techniques can be brought forth through their stories to give other women insight when finding themselves in similar situations. Family supporters of Appalachian women, as well as politicians and social practitioners who seek to help women and their families in the Appalachian region may discover more effective strategies for being resources to these women in need of support. Appalachian women self-leading change utilize support systems and resource strategies to become socio-economically independent and stable.

Chapter III: Method

The intersection of women's issues, regional economics, and cultural identities defines the social and family systems Appalachian women experience. How do Appalachian women self-lead from socio-economic dependent relationships to independence within the social political and economic forces of the Appalachia community? Dependence is defined for this research as the reliance on someone besides self to provide emotional, social, or economic support for self and minor or dependent children. This question developed from an interest in social, economic, and family systems of Appalachian women. I was interested in uncovering and understanding the stories of Appalachian women who moved out of married relationships and became socio-economically stable and independent. It is not the focus of this study to investigate the stories of women who were not able make this change. As was evident in the literature review, a majority of the research studies in this area of interest have focused primarily on the negative outcomes of women leaving these relationships or their victimization within the relationships. There is a paucity of empirical research on Appalachian women who have independently moved out of economic dependence in marital relationships to socio-economic independence without the economic assistance of a male spouse. This study adds to this research in an effort to give voice to women's successful, attainment of socio-economic independence in Appalachia.

The overarching research approach was narrative inquiry that sought meaning from the personal accounts of Appalachian women within the social, economic, and cultural contexts of Appalachia. The decision to approach the study through narrative inquiry emerged from the desire to honor women's stories and voices. Two primary research tools were used to gather information and make meaning of the women's stories: life story interviewing (Clandinin, 2007;

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998) and an adaptation of situational mapping (Clarke, 2005) —named for this study “situational interpretation”—more suited to the narrative approach.

Chapter III is organized to address the study’s overall design features of methodological fit, study method including procedures, interviewing, coding analysis, and situational interpretation. The first section will discuss the development of the research methodology and methodological fit. The second part of the paper explains the method of study including participant selection, the inquiry process, and research tools. This chapter concludes with the ethical implications of the study.

Methodological Fit

“*Methodology*: a way of thinking about and studying social phenomena...*qualitative analysis*: a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1). Qualitative method using narrative inquiry was used in this study to uncover women’s stories during their marital relationships, divorces, and post-divorce periods of their lives.

Narrative inquiry embraces method and phenomena of the study... Narrative inquiry begins in experience as expressed in lived and told stories... [it] involves the reconstruction of a person’s experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu” (Clandinin & Connelly as cited in Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 5)

Narrative inquiry allows researchers to use words in their analysis and embrace the story as important to accounting for human experience (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

In “the constructivist viewpoint concepts and theories are *constructed* by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants who are trying to explain and make sense out of their experience and/or lives, both to the researcher and themselves” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 10). This study is constructivist in design because the study moves past merely retelling the women’s stories. The study constructed meaning by coding for emerging common themes

and then using a situational interpretation of the stories by exploring the social, cultural, and economic forces to contextualize the stories from a broader sociological perspective. Clarke's situational analysis uses maps to illustrate complex themes and "elucidate heretofore ... marginalized perspectives and subjugated knowledge of social life" (Clarke, 2005, p. xxix). A situational mapping perspective on the narratives was an effective way of relating the social and economic contexts relevant to women's stories.

Interviews, analyzed through thematic coding, were "used to analyze and make general sense of experience" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 5). This analysis method is useful for studies of women and their social and economic barriers and disadvantages because a goal was to identify the commonalities among successful women for policy or resource provision to women in Appalachian communities. "Stories are one of the ways that we fill our world with meaning and enlist one another's assistance in building lives and communities" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35). Narrative fits well with feminist thinking because of the ability to give voice to marginalized participants without restricting their sensibility of the telling of events in their lives and making meaning of those events from their perspective as women.

In keeping with Glaser and Strauss' (2008) sentiment that the method must fit the situation being researched, rather than the phenomenon being forced through the lens of the researcher's approach, narrative inquiry resonates with the oral tradition of the geographical area of study. Riessman and Speedy (2007) place narrative as a means to collect stories of experience relative to cultural or identity groups. They acknowledge that stories shape the lives and experiences of individuals, communities, governments, institutions, and organizations. Oral tradition is very important within the Appalachian culture. Storytelling

is a part of the culture and family entertainment. Knowing the stories is important and there is an appreciation for being able to tell a good yarn (story). The act of storytelling is also of historical significance. In many communities and cultures over time this has been the only means of record preservation, passing on the oral tradition.

Studying women and their experiences needed a deeply personal approach. The use of semi-structured interviews with open ended questions provided the interviewer a guide, a place to start the interview, but left room for the participant to share more openly if she chose. As a researcher I had to be sufficiently flexible in this study to uncover meaningful data which was significantly different for each woman. As a researcher and developing scholar in Appalachian studies, I entered with my own personal theory of the meaning of gaining economic independence apart from a male spouse; however, I was very conscious not to force the story I wanted told, but to honor the stories the women chose to tell. The research tools within narrative thematic analysis allowed for openness to the participants' meaning and the bracketing of my preconceived constructions of meaning.

Edmondson and McManus (2007) “define methodological fit as internal consistency among elements of a research project” (p. 1155). In the determination of methodological fit, it is also critical to note the knowledge that has been discovered and synthesized in the field of study, “the less known about a specific topic, the more open-ended the research questions, requiring methods that allow data collected in the field to strongly shape the researcher’s developing understanding of the phenomenon” (e.g., Barley, 1990, as quoted in Edmondson & McManus, 2007, p. 1159). Appalachian studies need further development in the areas concerning women in specific economic and social situations within the region. This area of study represents a nascent or immature level of theory and research. The

research questions were an exploration and open-ended inquiry into the phenomenon. The constructivist and interpretative research design chosen for this study greatly enhanced the transferability of findings to the specific population being studied.

Method of Study

This section discusses the method of study and those involved in the study. The first section outlines how participants were recruited and selected for the interviews. The second section explains the qualitative method of narrative that is used to analyze the stories. The third section discusses how the interviews were conducted and how the data collected was reviewed. The fourth section relates the coding process, how the team coded the transcripts and how thematic analysis was conducted. The fifth describes how situational mapping was used to interpret themes from the data. The method of study section concludes with a description of synthesis and analysis.

Participants

The snowball method was used to identify participants. Snowball sampling yields a certain kind of sameness and exhausts one's network of contacts and contact referrals. Due to the sensitive nature of the information discussed in the interviews, the snowball effect was specifically suited to identifying individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in which I was interested and who were willing to share their story for this research. Particular to this research topic and the cultural characteristics of geographical area of Appalachia, there had to be a level of trust for the participants to be willing to share their story. I believe that overall the snowball method of identifying potential participants added a sense of safeness for the interviewee because someone we knew mutually introduced us and added credibility to my presence as a culturally sensitive and legitimately interested researcher.

During the period of forming my research study, I had many discussions with friends, acquaintances, and professional contacts telling them of my interests. As discussions evolved people would say you need to talk to my sister, you need to talk to my friend, and I need to tell you my story. I kept a list of women whose friends and family told me they would be willing to talk to me and share their personal life stories. I logged their contact information and contacted them by phone and email to set up dates and times to interview them face-to-face or on the phone. I interviewed women until I reached thematic saturation, a point where no new themes were discovered and existing themes were represented with rich and nuanced detail.

Criteria to be a participant included Appalachian women who had been in a married relationship with a male spouse; were no longer with their spouse due to divorce or separation; had children; and supported themselves and their children through their own economic means. Their means of support may or may not have included child support payments.

Women of the study. It has been difficult to find the right term for the individuals who shared their stories with me. I have called them interviewees, participants, women, females, and informants. Regardless of the naming, they are the heart of this study—these Appalachian women gave voice to the pain and triumph of their stories. They were divorced from their first spouse and were now middle- to upper-middle class women with successful careers. The women self-identified as Appalachian and were native to Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. The counties they represented were Harlan County, Kentucky; Adams, Brown, Highland, Lawrence and Ross in Ohio; and Cabell, Marshall, and Wayne in West Virginia. The importance of identifying the counties is to demonstrate the economic situations of the participants and the relevance of socio-economic stability.

Table 1 gives the economic data for each of the counties and their designation of economic status in 2011 as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The designations from the Appalachian Regional Commission are distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, and attainment. These definitions enable a better understanding of the economic implications of place.

Distressed

Distressed counties are the most economically depressed counties. They rank in the worst 10% of the nation's counties.

At-Risk

At-Risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed. They rank between the worst 10% and 25% of the nation's counties.

Transitional

Transitional counties are those transitioning between strong and weak economies. They make up the largest economic status designation. Transitional counties rank between the worst 25% and the best 25% of the nation's counties.

Competitive

Competitive counties are those that are able to compete in the national economy but are not in the highest 10% of the nation's counties. Counties ranking between the best 10% and 2% of the nation's counties are classified competitive.

Attainment

Attainment counties are the economically strongest counties. Counties ranking in the best 10% of the nation's counties are classified attainment. (ARC, 2011)

Harlan County, Kentucky, has a history of coal strikes and hard times; 2011 ARC records designate it distressed. In Ohio, Adams and Lawrence counties are designated as at-risk. Brown, Highland, and Ross are designated transitional. Cabell, Marshall, and Wayne counties in West Virginia were all designated transitional. Not one of the women in this study was from a county considered competitive or attainment status.

Table 1

County Economic Status in Appalachia, Fiscal Year 2011

FIPS	State	County	County Economic Status, FY 2011	Absolute Data Values			Indicator Index Values				Composite Index Value, FY 2011	Index Value Rank (of 3,110 counties in U.S., 1 is the best), FY 2011	Quartile (1 is the best), FY 2011
				Three-Year Average Unemp Rate, 2006-2008	Per Capita Market Income, 2007	Poverty Rate, 2000	Three-Year Avg. Unemp. Rate, Percent of U.S., 2006-2008	PCMI, Percent of U.S., 2007	PCMI, Percent of U.S., Inversed, 2007	Poverty Rate, Percent of U.S., 2000			
21095	Kentucky	Harlan	Distressed	8.8	12,178	32.5	175.9	37.0	270.4	262.5	236.3	3,064	4
39001	Ohio	Adams	At-Risk	8.2	16,496	17.4	162.8	50.1	199.6	140.2	167.6	2,738	4
39015	Ohio	Brown	Transitional	6.9	21,053	11.6	138.3	63.9	156.4	94.1	129.6	1,968	3
39071	Ohio	Highland	Transitional	6.3	20,528	11.8	125.0	62.3	160.4	95.5	127.0	1,895	3
39087	Ohio	Lawrence	At-Risk	5.3	17,249	18.9	105.6	52.4	190.9	152.6	149.7	2,482	4
39141	Ohio	Ross	Transitional	7.0	20,200	12.0	139.3	61.3	163.0	96.7	133.0	2,055	3
54011	West Virginia	Cabell	Transitional	4.0	22,692	19.2	79.0	68.9	145.1	155.4	126.5	1,877	3
54051	West Virginia	Marshall	Transitional	5.1	21,293	16.6	101.9	64.7	154.7	133.8	130.1	1,982	3
54099	West Virginia	Wayne	Transitional	4.7	18,768	19.6	93.6	57.0	175.5	158.0	142.4	2,311	3

source

www.arc.gov

Table 2 lists the participant women using pseudonyms, and indicates education level, generation, number of children bore with first spouse (some had additional children subsequently), place where she considered herself geographically “from,” and the time period of her divorce. These women socially and economically provided for themselves and their children after the marital relationship ended. Two participants revealed they did not have children with their first spouse, of these two one had children with her second husband and one never had children. Thus, they did not meet the inclusionary criteria of having children with their first spouse. This information was not revealed to me until well into the interview process; however, their data was maintained because of the compelling relevancy of their stories to the purpose of this study and to honor the effort that they contributed to the study as a whole. Their stories are highly similar thematically to the other women included in the study and when this is not the

case the discrepancies have been noted. All of the women in this study have some level of higher education and work outside of the home now that they are divorced from their first spouse.

Table 2

Women's demographic data

Pseudonym Name	Education Level	Generation	No. children w 1st spouse	Place	Time period of divorce
1 : Amy	Certificate	Generation X	1	West Virginia	2000s
2 : Andrea	Masters Degree	Generation X	2	Ohio	2000s
3 : Violet	Masters Degree	Silent Generation	1	Kentucky	1970s
4 : Carly	Associates Degree	Generation X	1	Ohio	2000s
5 : Dora	High School Diploma	Baby Boomer	1	West Virginia	1970s
6 : Juanita	Some College	Silent Generation	1	Ohio	1980s
7 : Faith	Masters Degree	Baby Boomer	1	Ohio	1980s
8 : Risa	Masters Degree	Generation X	2	Ohio	1990s
9 : Adele	Some College	Baby Boomer	3	West Virginia	1980s
10 : Nina ^a	Bachelor Degree	Generation X	0	Ohio	1980s
11 : Winona	Bachelor Degree	Generation X	1	West Virginia	2000s
12 : Dena	Associates Degree	Generation X	2	Ohio	1990s
13 : Sara ^b	Masters Degree	Baby Boomer	0	Kentucky	1980s
14 : Tina	Bachelor Degree	Generation X	2	Ohio	1990s
15 : Wilma	Doctorate Degree	Silent Generation	2	Kentucky/Ohio	1990s

Note. ^aThis woman did not have any children with her first spouse, but had two children with her second spouse. She still fit the criteria of a mother, but only had to gain financial independence for herself. ^b She never had any children. She did have young women she treated as her own children, but who were not financially dependent on her so she was not used as the exemplar story.

The generation in which these women were born is also noted in Table 2 because this factor became a salient part of the thematic analysis and interpretation of the data. Three women were of the Silent Generation, 1925-1945, two from Kentucky and one from Ohio; and each with at least one child from the first marriage. The Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort had four women, two from West Virginia, one from Ohio, and one from Kentucky. The Generation X (1965-1979) cohort was the largest with eight women, six from Ohio and two from West Virginia. Within the Generation X group one woman did not have any children with her first

spouse, but had two children with her second spouse, she still fit the criteria of a mother, but only had to gain financial independence for herself. After the thematic analysis, exemplar stories are retold from each generation in the Narrative analysis.

Narrative Analysis

Asking women to tell their stories is a narrative method. “Narrative research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives” (Creswell, 2009, p. 12). The researcher retells the stories in a language that honors the development and emotional presence of the story, while identifying common themes and patterns of events across all of the stories.

Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) described four themes in the turn of narrative inquiry. The first turn is the relationship between participant and researcher changes. The researcher no longer just objectively relates facts and numbers, but focuses on understanding meaning. This causes both the researcher and the participant to learn and change from the interaction. The second turn is the move from numbers to words as a means of explaining the data or story. This move to narrative is an effort to preserve the nuances of experience in a particular setting important to the research. In this case the Appalachian region and culture are important to the lived experience. The specific cultural norms and traditions women in this region lived within affected their decisions and the outcomes. The third turn is from the general to the particular. In this study the people and their location are important so just any woman anywhere would not have the same story to tell. It needed to be participants who have shared a common experience in a common culture considered “other.” The fourth turn is labeled “blurring knowing.” To do research and analysis in this way one has to accept there are multiple ways of knowing and they are valid.

Interviewing

Interviews were the data collection tool to gather the narrative stories. Interviews were conducted with Appalachian women from Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia December 2010-March 2011. These divorced Appalachian women were socio-economically stable and independent from their first spouse. These women shared their stories with me over the phone, in their homes, offices, libraries and restaurants. They let me into their lives and shared an experience that I believe changed both of us. A template of the interview is provided as Attachment II. The interview was a semi-structured format with a set of open-ended questions to guide the interview. Demographic questions were incorporated into the template used as a script for the interview. Attachment III details the questions that evolved as the interviews continued from participant to participant. The interviews were face to face and over the phone. Participants were given an informed consent form prior to the interview which provided contact information of local counseling services if they found a need for this after our conversation (Attachment III). No one shared with me that they were actively seeking counseling, some had seen counselors in the past and all were willing to share their stories hoping it would help someone else. There was no compensation offered to the women, they participated by their own free will. Through the reading and signing of the informed consent form, the participant granted permission to be interviewed and recorded.

It was important to keep the interviews at a reasonable length of time and engage the women with empathy and appreciation for their contribution. The maximum allotted time for the interviews was two hours. The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. During the interview I took field notes to notate things such as participant stress, emotions expressed, not heard on a recording device, and any environmental factors that seemed to affect

the interviewee. Data was collected through the interviews by recording the interview on digital recording devices. Two recording devices were used at the time of the interview to insure against loss of data due to any potential equipment malfunction.

After transcription of the interviews, the participants were provided with the transcript to read and provide any feedback they felt appropriate. Additional information they wanted to provide, elaboration on specific areas of the interview or omissions they preferred, were included in the research study. I asked for clarification of any language or information that was not clear in the initial interview and appeared important to understand the participant's meaning or story. The transcripts were transcribed by a professional service out of Boston, Massachusetts. The transcripts were then sent via email for review to the participants. Follow up conversations were completed when necessary, most participants sent an email stating transcript was accurate or noted anything they wanted changed, deleted, or clarified. Notes were made on the transcript of changes the participant wished to include. The interview data was loaded into NVivo, analytical software used to assist in organizing the code structure and the analysis of emerging themes.

The Coding Process

The interview data in manuscript form was loaded into NVivo for thematic coding. NVivo enabled the researcher to compare multiple interviews and the common themes from the data collected. It acted as a method of data capture and storage. The data was parsed using field notes, memos, and nodes (nodes are containers for a theme or topic within the data; NVivo Moving on Manual, 2008), thus increasing connectivity among primary themes, sub-themes, and patterns of meaning. Boyatzis (1998) stresses the importance of reliability being consistent in the observation, labeling, and interpretation of codes and analysis. This was achieved by following Creswell's (2009) suggestions to use a team to check data, use thick rich descriptions, and step

back and review the data for omissions or errors. During a Skype conference call the team was debriefed on the protocol to follow and a plan was devised on how to code and communicate with each other.

The coding team included me and three other graduate students in the Leadership & Change doctoral program of Antioch University. The team reviewed the transcripts for themes and concepts. The first transcript we coded together to familiarize ourselves with the potential themes and set out a protocol for future coding. After the first transcript, the process involved members separately coding the transcripts for the themes they recognized in the data. Conference calls were scheduled weekly to discuss the themes we uncovered and the team's codes were highlighted and coded in the transcripts. The first five interviews followed this pattern where all four of us discussed our coding and agreed on the codes. After the first five transcripts the remaining transcripts were divided among the team, at least one team member other than me coded each interview. Then, I manually merged in NVivo the coding from the text documents by the team member with my NVivo coding. One team member was able to code in NVivo and this allowed those coded transcripts to be loaded directly into the software. The other transcripts were coded by highlighting the text document which was shared electronically and then reviewed and coded into NVivo. All documents were merged into NVivo software to organize the collective data. Merging coded documents from a coded NVivo document into an existing NVivo project is a useful tool if one has team members who are trained in NVivo software and have a copy of it, but not necessary to quality coding.

Coding and research partners allowed me to collaborate and discuss my ideas. The coding partners helped me minimize personal assumptions and manipulation of the data because of biases. My research partners challenged my pre-conceived ideas and helped me put distance

between the data and myself. The team was invaluable because they were accurate and responsive both with the quality of their coding and return time. This allowed the participants stories to emerge without my persuasion. I was conscious of needing to maintain a check on my personal feelings in the interviews while collecting the information and while coding. Often I would call a team member after an interview and decompress my own feelings. This was very helpful due to the emotional depth of the information collected in the interviews. It also allowed me to step away from the story before coding.

Thematic analysis. Thematic coding was based on seeking patterns in the stories (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is not a method, but a process. Instead of using a manual codebook, NVivo served this purpose of storing codes and allowing for a technological way of sorting the data into open codes, followed by selective coding, and finally analyzing for thematic patterns (Boyatzis, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2009). In the first coding pass, text was free coded, this is a process where one reads the transcript and codes the statements based on content. An example would be if the participant stated *my family helped me move out as soon as I called and told them I had to leave*. In a free code this might be highlighted and the full text used as the code or a statement might be attached such as “family help move out.” Later this code could be merged into a tree code on “family support,” which eventually may become a larger collection of codes under the theme of Support. In addition the codes were reviewed for frequency of like statements and ways to group common themes.

A good thematic code should have five elements:

1. A label
2. A definition of what the theme concerns
3. A description of how to know when the them occurs

4. A description of any qualifications or exclusions to the identification of the theme
5. Examples, both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking for the theme. (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 31)

The theme elements became more apparent each time I looked for similarities and differences in the stories and experiences of the women. Memos were added on codes or in text for clarification when I returned to review the data. These memos enabled me to remember emerging ideas during the coding and if something important occurred when the story was being shared that would influence the context of the code. This approach to coding is consistent with Lieblich et al., (1998) description of the content-categorical approach to narrative analysis. In this approach the emergent themes identified through the use of multiple coders becomes the basis for the synthesis and interpretation of the stories.

Once the themes were narrowed to the eight most significant primary themes, the relationships and intersections among the primary themes were analyzed. The themes and their intersections were reviewed by the coding team to gain their perspective and input on meaning and relevancy of the analysis and synthesis of the narrative themes.

Situational Interpretation of the Narratives

Upon obtaining and analyzing the emerging themes from the data, situational maps, analogous to Adele Clarke's work in situational analysis (2005), were constructed to contextualize the primary themes of the narrative. The primary themes which emerged fit into a relational situational map (Clarke, 2005, p. 105) that allowed visual re-presentation of the narrative discourse. The map became a method of understanding and contextualizing the stories in relation to larger social, economic, and cultural influences in Appalachia. It provides a visual

context to the inter-related data, concepts, and proximity to illustrate mutual influences across the narrative themes.

Depth of context was added to the study by situating data from additional sources to the interview themes found through the thematic analysis. The data used for the mapping exercise and subsequent situational interpretation included knowledge of the Appalachia region from histories and empirical studies, material that emerged from the narrative interviews and interviews with scholars of Appalachia studies. Thus, the map started with the action coming from the women and growing from the themes that emerged to a broader understanding and applicability to social and economic reform.

Ethics and Personal Attachment

Ethically, one has to maintain the confidence of the participants and, therefore, the names have been altered and pseudo-names assigned to protect individual identity. Data has been stored in a safe and secure locked location. Protocol for conducting research with living participants requires IRB approval. Attached is a copy of the approved Ethics Application (Attachment I). Sensitivity to the subject matter, gaining IRB approval, and providing informed consent forms to the participants was and is important to maintaining the ethical integrity of the study. Another strategy for maintaining confidentiality is that the only people who viewed the raw data were the interviewer, the coding team, and the transcriptionist. The only person who knows the true identities is the interviewer. The transcriptionist had no knowledge of the participants' identity as the participant was only identified by first name on the recording. The distance from the place of the interviews to the transcriptionist was a positive reason for using a service unfamiliar with the area and whose contact with the researcher was electronic or by phone. The transcriptionist was not given any information regarding specific locale of the participants. Once the interviews were

transcribed individual participants were identified by initials or first names, and in the final narrative and reported data analysis participants have been assigned pseudo-names.

The integrity, accuracy, and ethical validity of giving voice to the women's stories is of the utmost importance to this researcher. The subject matter is highly personal and sensitive to the participants and is presented in the most authentic way possible. Also, in remembrance of the first interviewee who allowed me to "practice" with her I have strived to show my admiration and respect for the participants, their experiences, and their stories throughout each phase of this research and ultimately in the presentation of the findings and analysis

Conclusion

The methodological choice fits with the study of women who have left their male partner and were successful in supporting and providing for themselves and their children without economic assistance from a male spouse. The goal to identify the commonalities among successful women for policy change and professionals who provide services to families is evident through the thematic narrative analysis and the situational interpretation of the narratives from the larger perspective of the cultural and economic conditions of the Appalachian region. The sharing of these stories is not just a matter of creating another story to read, but a way to convey the Appalachian women's experiences and their importance to women, economic stability, and social support. In Chapter IV the rich detail of the findings will be presented.

Chapter IV: The Findings: A Thematic Analysis

As I interviewed the women in my study I learned as much about myself as I did about them. I learned that as strong women we often hide our fear of changing our own lives and we hide what we perceive as our failure to hold our relationships together. We come to realize we cannot fix others. We reach a point where we have to make a choice and that is when we self-lead because it is often ourselves that we have to convince of our abilities to lead change in our lives. The women in my study told stories that were staggeringly painful and triumphant. Often I would return home in tears, but always thankful these women were able to make it, that is, to achieve socio-economic independence and were not reliant on a damaging relationship from the past.

In this chapter I discuss the eight primary themes and their subthemes that emerged from the discourse analysis of women's stories. I share my interpretative analysis of the women's stories in the context of their generation and Appalachia.

Narrative Thematic Analysis

A narrative thematic analysis was employed to uncover the primary themes and subthemes that were woven through the women's stories. This method of thematic categorization followed Lieblich et al.'s (1998) approach to narrative materials as described in detail in Chapter III. The eight major themes that emerged were *Appalachian Characterization*, *Generational Issues*, *Children*, *Economic Independence*, *Education*, *Reasons for Leaving*, *Social Support*, and *Self-Leadership*. Within each theme there are several subthemes that expand understanding of the meaning underlying each primary theme. Each primary theme is presented with a table of the subthemes, their descriptions, and the frequency of codes that occurred within each subtheme. The frequency of the subthemes is listed with the number of times the theme was discussed by

the participants in each generation. The totals of codes within the primary themes are tallied in the last row of the tables by generation and across all generations. The last column of each table represents the total frequencies of each subtheme across all generations. Because the generations did not have equal number of participants, comparison of frequencies cannot be made across generations. Rather the frequencies are reported to reflect the prevalence of the subthemes in relation to the primary theme within generations. In this way, the comparative significance of each subtheme within a generation is displayed. Next, each primary theme is described with reference to the subthemes and illustrations from the narratives themselves. Throughout the rest of the analysis discussion the primary themes will be italicized in title case and the subthemes will be italicized and lower case. Finally, using narrative and situational interpretation the exemplar stories are presented to illustrate richly the meaning the women made of their life experiences.

The thematic analysis begins with the theme *Appalachian Characterization*. As the themes emerged in the coding and analysis, *Appalachian Characterization* became one of the central thematic elements in understanding the women's stories and all other themes. It brought cultural context to the stories. Following *Appalachian Characterization* the theme *Generational Issues* is discussed. Generation became a way of recognizing particular similarities and differences across primary themes among women of similar age cohorts. Differentiation of the women's stories along generational lines added greater depth of understanding of the cultural and economic influences relevant to their age cohort. In the presentation of the themes generational elements of relevance will be woven into description. Further, in the examination of the primary themes, it was noticed that the theme of self-leadership ran throughout the stories and was connected in some way to all other primary themes. The Appalachian women of this

study were self-leaders in ways that reflected their generation and their roots of “place.” This critical intersection of self-leadership with place and generation led to the naming of a “core” or central theme, *Appalachian Women’s Self-Leadership*.

Appalachian characterization. This theme (see Table 3) developed from descriptions of how place impacted the women’s lives and relationships. The subthemes around *Appalachian Characterization* relevant across all generations of participants were: *Appalachian identification, cultural expectations, place, stereotypes, and religion*. The subthemes describe in greater detail what being Appalachian meant to these women. These are the things that make Appalachia different as a locale. In Table 3 the theme *Appalachian Characterization* and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Table 3

Appalachian Characterization:
Primary Theme identifying the participants’ perceptions and views characterizing Appalachian people and place.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Appalachian Identification	Generation X participants voiced the most emphasis on Appalachian characterization. They associated a lot of behaviors as being specific to themselves or peers because they were Appalachian. Merged themes of identifying as Appalachian into this theme, such as Women's strength and that sometimes they view themselves or	26	52	90	168

Cultural expectations	other women as martyrs. Appalachia stuck in past. Education not valued. Community perceptions often shape the culture of Appalachian areas. Part of the Appalachian culture is a strong sense of kinship connections and placing family as a first priority in social and family responsibilities. Male head of household is common ideal still held.	19	43	83	145
Place	Most identified Appalachia as a rural area. Going home.	20	37	78	135
Stereotypes	Language patterns and accents are attributed to the Appalachian stereotype. Frequently Appalachians are typed as having negative outlooks on life and feel mistreated and marginalized by government and businesses outside of the Appalachian region.	3	13	30	46
Religion	Religion is very important to the community and familial structure.	16	5	22	43
Frequency of all subthemes		84	150	303	537

Dena, who is of Generation X, shared her description of *Appalachian identification*, “Heritage. I think that an Appalachian holds really tightly to their heritage, their upbringing, their morals, and their values, which to me is very important.” The participants from the Silent Generation were not concerned with what others thought or the stereotypes. They were comfortable with themselves and life experience had matured their views on their identity.

Juanita provides a good example of this maturity when she explains how she feels about herself. *I am better off now. I have a much better husband as far as a lot more stable and we want the same things. There is a lot of guilt in life and you always—I always look back and think I could have done it better. But really when it comes right down to it, I couldn't have done it any better than just when you do your best you do your best and that's all you can do.*

Juanita's belief is representative of the Silent Generation participants in this study. She characterizes the Appalachian woman's resiliency in overcoming hardship.

Within the subtheme of *cultural expectations*, there was a belief one had to stand by her man. The women overcame this expectation to make the changes in their lives that culminated in socio-economic stability and independence. The idea of stand by your man is a good description from *cultural expectations* that has relevance both to the cultural context and generational beliefs. Risa (Generation X) explained her view of the cultural perspective on divorce and standing by her man, along with her belief that generational views had an impact on acceptance of divorce. *I don't know, and I guess it just goes back to that generational thing, because really it's just been within—what?—The last 10, 15, 20 years, where divorce has really gone the rate that it's gone. You've still got people who were raised in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, where that was; you stayed no matter what. And I think it's still, we just still haven't... we just haven't outgrown that mindset yet. I think as the population; and it's just horrible to say, but as that population dies off, and is replaced [it will change].*

Place is distinguished among the subthemes as a predominant element throughout the stories. All of the women (regardless of generation) identified with the subtheme *place*. The values of the community they grew up in and lived, coupled with their identification of their Appalachian roots, impacted their decisions both negatively and positively.

Risa, who is of Generation X, spoke fondly and positively of being close to her family and living close to the Appalachian county she was born and raised in, *“My mom and dad, and my grandma, and my two sisters and I all live within like four miles of each other still. My grandma is 90-years-old; us kids, the grandkids, and great-grandkids are in and out of her house all day long, so she’s still able to live on her own.”* Family is very important in Appalachian culture. Eller (2008) described Appalachia as being a culture of close family relationships. Risa continued by sharing a negative aspect of living in the same small community all of her life. *Oh, I think it was both a help and a hindrance, because I did have my family here to support me, if I had to work late, my husband would put the kids to bed, and that sort of stuff. At the same time, a small rural community, I was the topic of conversation for a while [after I got my divorce]... but I never cared too much about that stuff. So, that never really bothered me. I could care less about what people think about me; either take me or leave me. It’s totally up to you.* Although once she divorced she was the subject of community gossip, Risa nevertheless demonstrates a relationship to independence in this statement as well as the culture of place.

An example representing the subtheme of *religion* is illustrated in Wilma’s story. Wilma, who is of the Silent Generation, gave a detailed description of how religion was a part of being Appalachian for her and how she sees other Appalachian women relating to religion. Her story also depicts where she saw herself in relation to others, last. *Appalachian women, they’re, “Put me on the cross. Crucify me.” Marriage is forever; the Bible and all that stuff, and the vows you take, and I went to church six times a week when I was a kid. You say, “Well, that’s extreme,” but twice on Sunday morning, twice on Sunday evening; Wednesday night, training union, and choir practice every week, and I loved it. I absolutely loved it, but all those*

Bible verses, all of that stuff that the men ran things, it's right in my head. I play those tapes; on Jeopardy they do Bible verses; hey, I'm right there. I think that in the Baptist Church it was God first, others second, me third.

Attending church services is frequently part of the Appalachian family and community social life. Juanita, who is also of the Silent Generation, attributed surviving the difficult times to “*God took care of us the whole time. God took care of us that was the main thing.*” Religion is important within the family, culture, and community of Appalachia. Continued analysis showed reciprocal relationships among Generational groups and *Appalachian Characterization* subthemes. Generation appeared to affect the women’s perspective on characteristics of Appalachia.

Generational issues. The theme of *Generational Issues* evolved from the ways in which women understood and spoke about the cultural expectations of women of their generation. The subthemes that emerged described more fully their perspectives (see Table 4). These subthemes were *traditional of era, married young, family history of leaving relationship, and not pregnant*. Generational cohort appeared to be an important factor in differentiating among the women as it became evident many of their beliefs and actions were affected by their generational traditions. In Table 4 the *Generational issues* theme and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Nine of the fifteen women identified themselves in their stories as *traditional of era*, a subtheme of *Generational issues*. Their actions and decisions were based on what they perceived as the societal norms and expectations of their Appalachian communities, grounded in their developmental generations. Andrea, who is of the Generation X, presents her story about her grandparents’ relationship versus her behaviors, providing an example of how

generations differ.

Table 4

Generational Issues:

Primary theme identifying issues affected by the generation the participant belonged.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Traditional of era	Traditional behaviors of participant's era. Views from other generations based on their generational cohort on appropriate behaviors.	3	6	9	18
Married Young	This subtheme closely correlated with whether the participant was pregnant when she married. Participants wanted to distinguish between marrying young because it was what most people did in their generation and getting married because you were pregnant.	3	3	6	12
Family history of leaving relationships	Discussions of history of divorce or abandoning relationships in wife or husband's family.	2	2	5	9
Not Pregnant	Depending on the generational group, being pregnant when they were married or not being pregnant was a theme. Several participants were very deliberate when they stated that they married young and that they were not pregnant.	2	2	0	4
Frequency of all subthemes		10	13	20	43

I have my own views on things I always have. His mom (her former husband) doesn't have her own view on anything and she's not allowed to. It's very much that old time approach: the wife is subservient and that man is the head of the household. My husband really respected my grandparents. He told me numerous times he respected my grandparents because of that

relationship. My grandpa was a wonderful man but they married in the 30s and 40s and they were together when a woman cooked and cleaned, very rarely did they have a job but she had a job and she would go home and cook for the farm hands, put it out on the table, and then clean it up and then go back to school on her lunch half-hour every day. I'd say, 'Grandma, they can get it out of the stove, Oh no, I have to put it out.' Andrea's grandparents were pre-Silent Generation and lived what was considered a very traditional lifestyle of women managing the household chores. Later, Andrea spoke to how she would cook for her new husband because she felt it was what she should do to care for him. He would tell her he did not want her to do it, he did not like to eat dinner. She had a hard time moving away from those ingrained traditional behaviors even as a woman with her own views on responsibilities in a relationship.

Most of the women began their stories about life with their husbands by clearly stating that one influence on their marriage was marrying at a young age. Twelve of the fifteen women identified themselves as *married young*, often followed by some type of explanation such as everyone my age got married early, or that was just the expectation of the time. Dora, who is a Baby Boomer, expressed why marriage was so important: *"Well, it was a very small town. All my friends were married. That's just what we did. We got out of school and we got married. We didn't go to college, we got married, had kids."* Her story communicates the relationship of generation, marrying young, friendships, and place.

Amy, who is of Generation X, adds an interesting perspective on age when she describes her fear of getting too old (to marry), *I was 22 years old, I needed to get married. My mom married at 21 and I just thought maybe I need to get married and move out and I don't know if it was part of that knowledge that pushed me into getting married because of the way my mom had gotten married at 21 and here I was going on 22 and thinking, 'Oh man, I'm an old maid'. I was*

so young, so naïve and the only thing I wanted to do was make my marriage work. Amy's story demonstrates the vulnerability she felt of waiting too long and losing the opportunity for what she believed will fulfill her life. She looks to her mother from the previous generation and takes her cues of what will bring her happiness. In her assessment, marriage will provide this happiness and fulfillment.

When explaining why they married young, participants justified their reasoning by indicating it was the way things were done and followed up with statements on whether they were pregnant or not. It was important to the participants for me to understand that being pregnant was not the only reason someone would marry young, but that it was traditional in either condition, to their generation or community to marry young. For those women who were pregnant they would present this detail as if that was also normal of their generation. Indicative of generational differentiation among this study's participants, none of the Silent Generation was pregnant when they married. Faith, who is of the Baby Boomers, married the youngest of any of the participants and she was not pregnant. Her mom had to sign a release in Ohio for her to marry. She explains, *"I got married at 16. It didn't seem odd at the time. I think that mom was like, 'Well, are you pregnant?' And I was like, 'No'. And nobody wanted to believe that. It was easier to believe I was pregnant. I did what I was supposed to do, and I got a man with a job, and I got married"*. Faith's example shows her desire to meet the expectations of her generation and community.

Andrea shared an example of how the *history of leaving relationships* through divorce in her family affected her beliefs and how she worried about its effects on her children. *In my mom and dad's divorce I didn't know anything, dad was there one day gone the next and had no clue, didn't know why, what for and that led to a real tenuous relationship with my mother*

for many years because I thought it was all her fault because he left. She was still there so it must have been her fault and I knew no better, I was 8 years old when they divorced. So with my kids I tried very hard -- well number one I read a lot on emotional abuse and what it does to kids and all of that. So I got books and books on, self help books on emotional abuse and why does he do that, those type of titles to try to figure out what in the world was going on. Because it was either I was losing my mind and I was completely nuts or there's something going on here. And it talks in there a lot about the kids and where they're coming from. Andrea wanted to handle her divorce differently than how she perceived her parents efforts. Her children's emotions were very important to her. Other Generation X women referenced the need for their daughters to understand a different view of marriage and the woman's roles in the marriage than what had been passed down through the family.

The implications of the generational themes emerging in the women's stories, demonstrates the importance of the era in which one grows up and the age of the participants when they reflect on their life choices. This then weaves through the other themes in the stories. As mentioned previously, identifying generational cohort enabled a richer analysis of the other primary themes from the stories.

Children. The theme *Children* (see Appendix B for distribution of theme across interviews) could have been combined with the *Reasons for Leaving* theme, but it remained separate because children were impacted by the relationship before and after the decision to leave. In the *Children* theme the most relevant subthemes were: *care of children, child perspective, protect child, and child support* (see Table 5). In Table 5 the theme *Children* and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Table 5

Children:

Primary theme depicting the significance of children in the mother's decisions to stay or leave a relationship.

Subthemes of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Care of Children	Family often helped care for the children so the women could work. The birth of another child often showed that no matter how many children they had he was never going to change his behavior.	3	8	17	28
Child perspective	Often children have relationship problems after divorce with father. They often blame themselves for parents divorce. Mothers share a bond with their children and they feel they need to support their feelings. Kids sometimes feel they have to take care of Dad.	3	8	11	22
Protect Child	Often women think they are protecting the child from a life of destitution by staying with spouse, so they say they stay in relationship for kids or the reverse is true they leave the relationship because it isn't safe for their children.	1	3	8	12
Child Support	This theme addressed whether child support was being paid in most cases it was not. Ten of the fifteen women had orders for support. Only four of those ten actually receive their payment.	2	3	6	11
Frequency of all subthemes		9	22	42	73

Care of children and child support were frequently related subthemes as women emphasized the impact these issues had on their lives in and out of the marriage. Amy, who is

part of Generation X, shared how her sister helped her after she was divorced to care for her daughter. She was not receiving child support and to this day he is thousands of dollars in arrears, according to her. Amy shared, “*my sister was a stay at home mom, so she took my daughter. If it hadn't been for my sister I don't know what I would've done because I couldn't afford childcare*”. Winona, who is of Generation X, had a similar situation and her parents helped with her child, “*I depended a lot on my parents for childcare and they came through any time I needed them.*” This also illustrates the importance of family support for these young mothers to be able to work and be economically independent.

Dena demonstrated her care for her children through acting as a role model. Nine women of the fifteen said one factor in leaving the marriage was to protect the children. Dora describes the example she wanted to provide for her girls. *I became a person, knowing that I am worth something, that there is a reason to live. And how to improve on who I was, and who I could be. And I felt like I had to do that, because my children are girls, and I wanted them to grow up to be very independent, strong women, and realize they don't have to depend on a man to take care of them. And I don't want my girls to be in the same situation that I have been. So, I feel like in order to prevent all of that, I had to make something of myself, and I believe I have.* Dena relates her desire to care for and protect her daughters from enduring the same experiences she had in her relationship. She wants them to be independent to ensure that they will not be in the vulnerable position of depending on someone else to care for them.

Some women thought they needed to stay in the marriage for the children, a viewpoint that is consistent with the *cultural expectations* subtheme described earlier. Risa found that what she thought was a benefit to her children really was not. *At that point she [my mother] had me convinced it was the best thing for the kids [staying in the marriage]. Until you go through it*

really [staying in a bad marriage], *you don't* [know whether it is better to stay married or divorce]; *those people who say that children need their mother and their father, regardless, they don't know unless they're in that situation. I thought I did very well at hiding things from my kids, and didn't find out till after the fact, that no, they knew more than I thought they knew.* The interviewees believed they were protecting their children from the turmoil in the marriage, that the children were unaware of events. They thought staying in the relationship was protecting their lifestyle and that the children were better off in a “whole” family.

Andrea shared that her daughter expressed her feelings about her parents separating. *When she was going through all this I was the world's scum. And in fact she called me at one time and she said, I am so mad at you and I said why and she said, because you're able to get out of it and get away from all that he says and he does and I can't because I'm his daughter. She said you were able to divorce him and get away from it and I can't. She said everything that he did to you he does to me. He was very emotional and verbally abusive, incredibly emotional. He's very hateful at times.* Andrea's daughter had her own perspective on the relationship of her parents. She was angry with her mom because she could not divorce her father. She continued to deal with his abusive behavior. She loved her dad yet was tired of being the recipient of his abusive nature. This vignette into a child's view of the situation allows us to see the experiences the child continued to have with her father after the marriage dissolved.

Dora's daughter really had a hard time with the break-up of her parents and still as an adult has problems much like Violet's daughter in the exemplar story (see pp. 116-121). Children themselves often struggled with their role in the breakup of the family. Dora related how her daughter struggled even as a very young child. *We had this huge house and Willa and I just really struggled a lot. I just couldn't get over it and I think Willa thought I blamed her for her*

dad leaving because everything was okay until she came along she thought...She just couldn't get over it. He would come to visit; she would beg him to stay. At two years old begging her daddy to stay and he would just say, 'Well, daddy will see you the next time'; and out the door he went and she just really had a hard time with that. This was not an isolated story among the interviewees. It exemplifies behaviors children experienced in some of the other women's stories. Further discussion of the significance of the children in the family relationships is emphasized through each of the exemplar women's stories in the following chapter.

Economic independence. This is one of the most significant primary themes (see Table 6) and is dramatically portrayed in each woman's story as one of the most salient accomplishments of their journey out of their marriage and into independence. Across generations, *female independence, economic stability, female employment, financially independent, and self-sufficient* were the most significant cross-generational subthemes. In Table 6 the primary theme *Economic Independence* and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Table 6

Economic Independence: Primary Theme demonstrating the participant's ability through income, careers, support and education to provide for self and children.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Female Independence	Interviewees explained instances where their behavior led to economic independence or was a demonstration of this independence. Most often these examples incorporated other themes such as education. This subtheme was then used	0	29	27	56

as the umbrella theme
for like subthemes.

Economic stability	Interviewee's described ways they were economically stable and independent of spouse. Owning a home or the ability to stay in the house and manage the financial obligations of home without the spouse, enabled security and stability. Additionally women referenced Resources such as family support and education as enabling their economic stability and independence.	18	15	48	81
Female Employment	Women had jobs, careers of their own which enabled them to become independent of spouse.	0	20	23	43
Financially Independent	Women were financially independent of spouse. One Baby Boomer and one Generation X interviewee received spousal support.	9	11	20	40
Self Sufficient	Women described the ability to be independent and self sufficient of former spouse as important factors to becoming economically independent.	10	9	19	38
Frequency of all subthemes		37	84	137	258

Adele's story exemplifies the subthemes *female independence* through her diligent efforts to be economically stable and independent by owning her own business. The *female employment* subtheme is important because employment is an important resource to become economically

independent. All the women in the study have or have had jobs or careers. Silent Generation women are now in their retirement years so their occurrences were in the past and their stories did not reveal as much information about employment. It is relevant to note that all Silent Generation interviewees worked outside the home while married. Adele, a Baby Boomer, related how her post-divorce ownership of her own company as an Appalachia woman helped her gain designation as a disadvantaged business enterprise. Because this designation was a federal classification rather than an Appalachian benefit per se, Adele needed to be very resourceful in seeking it out. Her initiative gave her the assistance that she needed to build her business after her divorce.

I am a DBE, a disadvantaged business enterprise, which is just a category that they have for federal-aided programs. Anything that has a federal dollar in it in West Virginia, which means I'm in an industry that being a woman is a disadvantage for the job performance that I offer. They will put a goal on federal aid money anywhere between 5 and 12% of the federal dollars that come into the state of West Virginia have to go to a disadvantaged business. Which could be an Indian, a woman, a black person, I don't know all the criteria, and I know those three are definitely in it. Indian, white women, and black people have a disadvantage at working at the job that I do so they put a percentage of that money has to go to one of them. I work in Ohio, theirs is called a WDBE, I think. Ohio has two: they have DBE and a WDBE. White women have their own category in Ohio. I don't know why because we don't in West Virginia.

The subtheme *economic stability* is identified partially through home ownership. Women who owned their own homes had an advantage when the relationship ended because they did not have to think about where they were going to live as they were going through a divorce and resettling their children. Juanita had an advantage not every woman experiences, her home had

been transferred to her by her parents and this kept her husband from taking it from her. *“They didn’t give it to me, they just—we just put it in my name. It is good that we did, because I wouldn’t have it today because he would have sold it out from under me.”* Juanita’s husband was not good with money; if he had it he spent it. She paid the bills in their marriage, but if he had the title to something and he could get what he wanted he would take that action without consulting her. She told of times he would trade her car or sell something of hers. Having the house in her name gave her an economic advantage after the divorce.

Faith spoke out strongly on why she wanted to be *financially independent*. *Mom and dad got divorced when I was 13. And that was really the deciding factor in my life on that I was going to go to school, and that nobody was going to; because my mom had never worked outside the home, so we ended up going on welfare. I came home from school one day; I was 13, and I wanted something to eat to snack on, and I went looking around, and couldn’t find anything, and I was sitting there on the couch, and I thought peanut butter and crackers, and I went in, and there either wasn’t peanut butter, or there wasn’t crackers. I don’t know what, but I just remember standing at this little metal cabinet, and there wasn’t, I would guess, peanut butter probably, and cried, and said, “My kids will never, ever live like this.” And that was the day I knew I was going to go to college; I was going to have a job; I was going to be independent of a man, because my mom had always been totally dependent on my dad.*

Faith did have a brief time when she might have repeated this cycle of dependence, but she was determined to be educated and economically independent. Her divorce put her in a difficult position financially and her former spouse did not pay support even though he was ordered to pay.

The *self-sufficient* subtheme in Faith’s story continued to illustrate her determination to

become self-sufficient and obtain an education. She envisioned education as a resource that would enable her to gain stable employment allowing her to care for herself and her child. *I was working as a teacher's aide, so I had my summers off, so I could go to school. I used to grab a lot of classes in the summer... my ex-father-in-law was wonderful,[he was my support] and so at that time the money that you got from your federal financial aid in the refund check that you got was considered income; it's not like it is today...But I would get about a \$600 refund check after, and that's when I always pay my car insurance, and my house insurance, and so, we were down; we didn't have sugar; we didn't have cereal; we didn't have anything in the house to eat. I had been eating popcorn, a 19-cent bag of popcorn for a week, so that my kid could have food. So, I went to welfare, and they looked at my income, which they had to consider that \$600 I got every quarter, and I was \$2 over the limit to get anything. And she told me that I was living above my means; I was living "too high," is what she said. So, I left there, and the more I thought about it on the way home the madder I got, so when I got home I called her, and I said, "What do you mean I'm living too high? All I do is work and go to school. All I do is work, and take care of my kid." And she said, "Well, you're going to school." And I said, "Yeah." And she said, "Well, that probably takes about \$20 a month in gas, doesn't it?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "Well, that's what I mean." And I said, "I will not quit school and come look at your (expletive) face for the rest of my life," and I hung up, and I never went back and asked for help again. I would go and buy a packet of chicken wings. You could buy like ten of them for 50 cents, or something, and keep making macaroni; good Lord, my kid ate enough of that, but I always made sure that he had food, but I ate popcorn, and I resented that so much. So, after I got through school I wrote every Congressman I bet 100 times, and told them it wasn't fair that you should claim that as income, because I couldn't use*

it for anything but school. Sorry. [Crying] Faith's story is representative of the difficulties many women face and portrays the relationship to education which is the next primary theme of importance.

Education. *Education* emerged as a critical theme in the narratives (see Table 7). It could have been merged into leadership or economic independence due to the relationship it has to both, but I did not do that because I wanted to demonstrate the strength of its significance to the participants in conjunction with other themes. Significant participant discourse was given to the subthemes, *respect for education, education important, and education threatened marriage*. The interviewees discussed the importance of education to themselves, but also how their desire to gain or utilize existing education impacted their marriages. In Table 7 the primary theme *Education* and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Table 7

Education:

Primary Theme emphasizing the importance of education to women's independence.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Respect for education	Respected the level of education achieved. Education was an important goal.	5	5	9	19
Education important	For some the fact that they were the first in their family to go to college was an accomplishment.	2	4	12	18
Education threatened marriage	When women go back to school to advance their education often husbands try to discourage them because they feel threatened.	1	1	4	6
Frequency of all subthemes		8	10	25	43

Education was very important to Faith and her story illustrates the subthemes *respect for education* and *education important*. She had attended college in high school as a Post-Secondary Education Option (PSEO) student: In Ohio high school students who have their high school credits complete may attend college courses through the PSEO program. Faith wanted to continue and finish college after she was married. Her husband had been supportive of her when she was in high school. After they married her husband found her desire for more education a threat and his mother helped him keep her from going back to college.

Faith shared with me her dilemma. *I was not to go to school. So, I went to the bank to get a student loan, because with his income I didn't qualify for financial aid. So, then the bank president called me, and said I was turned down for a student loan. And so I went up to the bank, and said, "I don't understand. I didn't think you could be turned down for a student loan?" And he said, "He wasn't going to discuss it with me." And I found out later, that my mother-in-law worked at the bank across the street—Smalltown, USA—and she had called them and said her son didn't want me going to college; therefore, they were not to give me a student loan. So, I had lots of obstacles to get where I wanted to be in life.* This example symbolizes an inner strength and perseverance Faith maintained in her desire for and respect of more education.

The dilemma between Wilma and her husband was symbolic of many of the women in this study and the subtheme *education threatened marriage*. When Wilma decided to continue her education, her husband said, *"If you put the kind of energy and intellect into making money, we would be very wealthy."* Wilma resented his implying her education was not important or that she was not working hard, *"He thought that my time, energy, intellect, creativity, problem-solving ability ought to be put into making money."* Her sibling told her if she went back to

school it would threaten her marriage “*If you do it will ruin your marriage.*” Wilma did not let that stop her, but she concurred that it threatened her husband. Her marriage was never the same after she obtained her degree.

The levels of education were depicted in Table 2 by each individual woman. All of the women regardless of their level of education stressed it was important to them that their children have higher education so they could be economically independent. Amy shared what she tells her daughter about education, “*I’ve told her time and time again I want you to get a college education, a degree in whatever she wants I’m not picky but have it and I said I want you to live by yourself for a while before you get married and be your own person. I think that’s so important to be prepared and not just jump in and depend on somebody to take care of you all the time.*” Several of the women shared similar conversations they had with their children. This shows an inter-relatedness of independence and education.

Reasons for leaving. *Reasons for Leaving* (see Appendix B for distribution of theme across interviews) was another primary theme that emerged from the participants. It identifies the disintegration of the relationship and signaled the need to leave their spouse. The subthemes (see Table 8) were *abuse, characteristics of spouse, relationship issues, ending relationship, and control issues*. *Control issues* could have been merged with *relationship issues*, but it is interesting to be able to see the significance of this subtheme on its own. There were many reasons women left, possibly the most significant subtheme was *abuse* (see Table 9). The subtheme *Control issues* was distinguished from the *abuse* subtheme because the issues reflected did not reach the threshold of abuse from the coders’ perspective. Nonetheless, it should be noted that control is a strong motivational characteristic that underlies domestic abuse and may have been the precursor to abuse in the relationships depicted in this study. In Table 8 the theme

Reasons for Leaving and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Table 8

Reasons for Leaving:

Primary Theme capturing the reasons why women ended relationship with male spouse.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Abuse	Mental abuse & control. Substance abuse. Verbal Abuse. Emotional abuse. Violent Male Spouse-- physical fight between spouses. Husband unfaithful to wife. Financial infidelity. Abandonment by male. Women very stressed by relationship.	22	12	49	83
Characteristics of spouse	Non supportive husband. Irresponsible male spouse. Obsessive male spouse. Rebel Male. Husband conscious of his mortality. Husband egocentric, very attractive. Irrational behavior. Generation X had three occurrences of described sociopathic behavior named by woman. Husband insecure, spoiled and jealous.	28	16	52	96
Relationship issues	Doesn't like his friends. Loss of love. Loss of partnership. Resentment. Sexual intimacy. Toxic relationship. Dishonest. Gender inequity. No consequences for male behavior.	26	23	69	118
Ending relationship	Turning point reached. Jekyll & Hyde behavior after married, nice in public, mean at home.	17	18	53	88

Control issues	He controls transportation. Male isolates wife from her family. Manipulative male spouse. Male doing what he wants so he is happy. Power struggle. Husband wanted to keep wife economically dependent. Husband took advantage of wife.	17	9	39	65
Frequency of all subthemes		110	78	262	450

The thematic significance of *abuse* in the narrative analysis and the situational interpretation warrant an additional table. Table 9 enables a reader of this study to understand the relevance of this subtheme to women's actions. It was pertinent to the actions women took on behalf of themselves and their children to become stable and independent. *Abuse*, referenced by the women as affairs, violence, abuse (verbal, substance, mental, financial, and emotional), had significant occurrences in their relationships with their spouses. Because abuse was described so vividly for the women, was so frequently referenced, and took on many different forms, a tally of the types of abuse was created in the analysis (see Table 9).

Table 9

Percentage of women in the study reporting abuse in the relationship

Type	Affairs	Violent male	Verbal abuse	Substance abuse	Mental	Financial problems	Emotional abuse	Some type of abuse
%	60	40	26	73	53	53	60	100

Dena admitted she stayed because she believed she would not be able to make it on her own. Her husband had her convinced she was worthless; *“He had broken me completely down to the point that I believed everything was my fault in the marriage. I wasn't good enough. I wasn't a good enough wife; I wasn't a good enough mother, because he told me I wasn't.”*

Dena explained what it took for her to reach the decision that it was okay for the marriage to end after over ten years of abuse. She said, *“I think it’s just realizing that this is my way out, and my children’s way out. I guess the mom in me took over, knowing that there had to be something better for my children. They didn’t need to be growing up in this anymore, especially, because just a couple of weeks before he actually had his hands around my neck.”* Dena’s story expresses the inter-relatedness of spousal abuse and what children witness when she shares why she did not give up, *“I would say my children were my saving grace, because there was many moments for the 10 years that I didn’t care if I woke up the next morning, because of the abuse, and it would never fail one of my children would walk in, and I thought that’s why. So, no one else, I did it for them. They’re very important to me.”*

Each woman reached her own turning point at different times for a variety of reasons. Those women who suffered abuse usually did not leave because of the abuse’s effect on themselves, but their concern for the effect the abuse would have on their children if the children had witnessed or experienced it.

The women often knew there were relationship issues with their spouse before they married, but they thought they could *fix* him. Andrea knew it was not going to work but she did not want people to think poorly of her if she broke up with her boyfriend. He had a serious car accident and so she kept caring for him even when she knew it was not going to work out, *Early on there was a place in time that I kind of knew that we weren’t going to hit it off real well... So there were differences in our personality from the get go but I was going to change things and I was going to make things work and I was going to do all the wonderful things that women think that they can do and it doesn’t happen. He drank, he had drunk in high school I knew he drank, and I knew when we got together that he drank. I knew his brothers drank some, I knew all his*

uncles were alcoholics but when you're 20 you don't put all that stuff together as history or that there's this alcohol problem, you just don't.

The interviewees believed both culturally and religiously that they had to stand by their man. Dena expressed her beliefs (and other women's) succinctly, *"During the marriage, I didn't believe in divorce, for one, growing up in church and everything, and you needed to work on it."* When it became evident he did not desire to be fixed or was not changing, she found herself facing the decision to leave. Amy felt badly about her marriage ending and looked to her faith to help her: *"then finally when I prayed and the Lord helped me through a lot. He basically let me say, 'Hey it was not your fault;' Not that I was perfect but I kind of I don't know what the word is that I'm looking for, got a new respect for myself. And I think you have to have respect for yourself before you can get anywhere."*

Descriptive of the subtheme *Characteristics of spouse*, Tina shares an interesting story describing her husband's disinterest in handling his own home responsibilities: *We bought a home, we were moving, and my family was helping us move and Terry went golfing and didn't come back. And so we were unloading and moving furniture in the house, Terry was mostly drinking with his buddies. And my parents said—I got a lot of shit from my parents, well, 'Where is he?' Well what's he doing and I'm trying to make an excuse well he'll be back or he's worked really hard this week and inside I'm furious because he should've been there.*

Juanita reflected on her feelings when her husband stayed out drinking and lied to her. This behavior damaged their marriage and hurt their child, ultimately leading to the end of the relationship. *It was devastating to me that he didn't come home at night or home late at night and have [our child] upset, and he would come home and kick the dog. You know what they say about that. Well he was mean to the dog actually. He got mean, and so you can be—you can be so*

close to somebody, and love them so much, and then it's like you're so distant when something bad happens like that. You just become so distant, you're like total strangers. You don't know them when something like that happens. Juanita's story represents a common scenario many of the women experienced. Their spouse's behavior over time eroded trust, established threatening environments, and caused their children's fear of their fathers. The women would make excuses to themselves first then to their children, then families, then friends. Eventually, they had to face the reality of a deteriorating situation and take action.

In some cases the women did not make the first initiation for the divorce, but in all cases they had to take charge of the situation and practice their leadership skills to actually get the divorce filed and finalized. These defining points in the women's lives identify significant events that made the decision to leave more beneficial than the cost of staying in the relationship. Often their reasons for staying as long as they did emerged from their concerns about the stigma they would endure if they ended their marriage.

Social support. *Social Support* is a primary theme that is significantly interrelated to both *Appalachian Characterization* and *Generational Issues*. The subthemes are *support network*, *remarriage*, and *social independence*. In Table 10 the theme *Social Support* and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Social Support is an important inter-related theme. It is indicative of the Appalachian culture in the sense that these women's descriptions indicate an ability to rely on family and gain support from them. Amy explained how place and support were intertwined for her, "*My support system was great. When I went through my divorce, I can't imagine going through what I went through anywhere else or living anywhere else. I don't think I would've had the support that I*

had at the time of my divorce if I had lived in a different community.” Tina’s parents supported her throughout her marriage and when the time came they were able to help her with a home. She shared, “Once I had an out -- as far as his agreeing it was over—my parents were going to be able to be supportive then, which they were supportive that I had a house to go move to I didn’t have to pay rent and so once I had that option,” she could end her marriage. Fourteen of the fifteen women referenced their family as significant supporters. This is evidence of the strong ties of family given the stigma against divorce. Families continue to support their daughters when they need it even if they have difficulty with the division of the daughter’s family.

Table 10

Social Support:

Primary theme demonstrating the importance of family and social support to the achievement of independence and stability.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Support Network	Family connection important. Mom’s helping daughters was important to two participants. Support does come from outside family, from female friends.	11	17	29	57
Remarriage	Dependable and responsible second spouse,	4	9	10	23
Social Independence	Includes feeling safe in their own space. With employment, education and support, participants were able to forge social relationships without their former spouse.	3	4	6	13
Frequency of all subthemes		18	30	45	93

The subtheme *support network* identified places in the women's stories where they drew on support from others, very often their family. Juanita had a very close relationship with her parents and sometimes this caused tension in her marriage, "*I was bad about going to my parents and asking them and he didn't like that.*" Ultimately, that relationship was very valuable because when she divorced her husband her mother was very helpful watching her child.

Faith had an interesting situation where her former father-in-law was more supportive than her own parents. She had formed a bond with him during her marriage. *He was my best supporter. What I didn't learn until he died in 2006 was he never got a high school diploma, and I never knew that about him. He was just so proud of me, and everything I did. He was more of a father to me than anybody; but anyway, yeah, and I wonder if he knew she [mother-in-law] kept me from getting that student loan, and that was like his way of fixing it after the fact, kind of.* Support was critical in enabling these women to seek educational resources and independent living situations.

Remarriage is a subtheme that included the women's description of second marriages to responsible men that contrasted dramatically with the relationship that they had with their first husbands. Dora shares the difference in her second marriage: *I was going to raise my daughter and live happily ever after and that's when I met my current husband. Actually he was a friend of my niece. My niece had come to live with me because she and her mother didn't get along so I had a teenager and then my five-year-old daughter that I was taking care of and my niece thought that I should get out of the house and meet somebody and so she set us up. It was a friend of her girlfriends. So anyway we met and he liked my daughter so I think we dated six months and got married. I feel really good. I love my husband to death. When I first married him*

he was willing to take me as I was. I was older, I had a child, I was just hitting 30 and I thought who would want me? I had some low self-esteem there, didn't I?

Dora's story expresses a concern many women would feel after a traumatic divorce. She felt no one would want her and when her second husband not only wants her, but loves her child, it helps her build self-confidence and a feeling of worth. This feeling that no one would want them again was shared by other participants. The feeling of worth is still defined by traditional gender roles by Appalachian women.

Social independence was often facilitated by female friendships and social connections. Wilma expressed how important her friends were to her sense of independence and they remain important to her.

One of my best friends is at a university. Another of my best friends is a woman I knew from a previous college. My best friends are people from my past that I've stayed connected with; women, strong women. My best friend, I'm going to see her the first week in January. I went to see her this past summer. She is in Florida in the winter, and I'm going down to see her. She wants me to buy a condo in the place where she lives. She's my best friend.

Strong friendships enabled her social independence.

Women often have to draw on their inner strength and push themselves to be social after their marriages end. Dora went through a process of gaining social structure: *I started to get out of the house a little bit and I joined a co-ed softball team and I got on a bowling team. The co-ed softball team was fun and I had a good friend that was on the same team with me and she was a good bit younger but we got to where we were running around. I had to go through my little wild stage but that taught me so much because I realized that other people found me attractive and*

that I really was okay because you think, it's all your fault. You think, 'What did I do wrong'? It had to be me. Reaching out and developing social relationships fostered confidence in the women. It gave them a sense of security and that everything was going to be fine.

Self-Leadership. *Self-Leadership* was reflected in the women's stories in ways that resonate with the current leadership literature (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The subthemes were extensive, overlapping, and intertwined. They were *female leadership, self-confident, independent, and teacher*. This section's examples are arranged a little differently than the other themes; they are not arranged as mutually exclusive because many of the examples interweave multiple subthemes. In Table 11 the theme *Self-Leadership* and each of the subthemes are described briefly and the frequency of codes is reported by generation and as a total across all narratives.

Table 11

Self-Leadership:
Primary theme depicting the leadership traits, behaviors and characteristics of self leading women.

Subtheme of Primary theme	Descriptor	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Frequency across generations
Female Leadership	Direct Communication. Emotionally independent. Practices assertiveness. See self as successful. Courage.	16	20	29	65
Self Confident	Women willing to be risk takers. Proud of self. Live your life-take care of herself. Learn to say no.	12	13	25	50
Independent	Own long term goals. Be able to move on and beyond past. Continued personal growth.	12	10	19	41
Teacher	Develop plan for stability. Women counseling others listening to their stories. Positive lessons to share.	6	7	17	30

Frequency of all subthemes	46	50	90	186
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Interestingly all of the women, regardless of generational cohort, identified *self-confident* and being able to take care of self as important to successfully leaving a relationship and becoming socio-economically stable. The following example illustrates the subthemes *female leadership* and *self confident*. I asked Dena why women stay and she said, “*I think it’s from fear. Mine was from fear; fear of being alone; fear of not being able to take care of my kids, also because they beat us down to believe we are nothing; we cannot do it on our own, because he actually made a comment, ‘You will be nothing without me.’ And after so much abuse, we believe that.*” When I asked her, what would you tell other women that have a similar situation that they need in order to change their situation? *That they need to believe in themselves, that they are worth something, and I’ve even made this comment to my daughter, that she is worth so much. God didn’t put us here to be nothing. And all it takes is just the least little bit of belief in yourself, and that will grow. With every step we take, we will grow, and knowing that we are something if we just allow ourselves to do it. And I told her, and I believe it’s not what we’ve done yesterday it’s what we do from today on.* The women not only want to believe in themselves but they want other women in similar circumstances to know how important it is for them as well.

When Baby Boomer Dora states she is proud of herself for her accomplishments she speaks of her confidence and pride in the fact that despite being from a place stereotypically perceived as producing people who will not succeed, she believes she has been successful within the Appalachian region. She remarks about how women identify with being Appalachian in their effort for economic independence, thus demonstrating her own self-leadership qualities and the subthemes of *self confidence* and *independence*. *I make jokes about it so maybe I do. I make*

jokes about the fact that my mom's from Kentucky and my dad's from West Virginia. How could I have any sense, kind of thing, but really underneath and I don't mean to sound vain and all but I really think I've done pretty damn good for where I came from and how I was raised and what I've come through by myself and I really feel pretty good about that.

This Self-Leadership is a recurrent theme. The interviewees express a sense of accomplishment for pushing back against cultural perceptions and expectations of independent women. The participants exemplified leadership qualities across generations. Over and over again I asked what each participant believed was the most important thing a woman needed to do to become socio-economically stable and independent from a dependent relationship. They all said one needs self-confidence and to take care of yourself. Winona's answer mirrored her sister participants, *"You have to have a certain amount of confidence in yourself. And sometimes it's harder to find that... I'm better than that. I deserve better and I can do it."*

When I spoke with Winona we had an extensive conversation on "getting out" of the relationship and what she has told young women whom she has counseled. This counseling is an example of the subtheme *teacher*. She reiterated that one needs to have confidence, but she also mentioned other resources. *I have actually been in that situation that you're talking about. I've had people come to me and ask my advice. My advice to them is look at what you have now, figure out if this is how you want to spend the rest of your life, and if this is the example you want your children to think that a marriage is supposed to be like. To really think about it and think is this how you want your son to treat a wife or how you want your daughter to think she should be treated in a marriage. Really stop and think about it and if you think that that's not then what you're doing is not where you need to be.* Her answer shows her own leadership traits but also

illustrates the importance she places on being an example to her children. I asked her, what if they feel like they financially cannot get out or they cannot afford it?

I have heard that too, and I have always told them there is always a way, always. Our government has provided way too many resources for people for less reason to make it in this world. Get a job, got to school, apply for assistance for daycare, do whatever you need to do to get your life where you need to be in a good place. Coming from a woman that was told she was stuck, my response is, you're never stuck, only if you want to be. Granted a woman with six kids and no education and no job skills it's going to be a little harder. But it can still be done; there are people who have done it. The message here is do it, just do it. It is a hard message to sell.

The participants were from at-risk and transitional counties, although the women are now considered middle-class several of them lived in lower income levels post-divorce until they could gain higher education or build careers. Self confidence of Appalachian women self-leaders enabled them to become independent in spite of the original economic situation.

They would relate that they realized their husband was not “taking care” of them. The women’s stories captured a sense of their husbands’ disinterest to bear equal responsibility for decision making and care of the children and household. Their spouses wanted the women to work enabling the husband to use his money to do “whatever he wanted,” according to the women. The men wanted to control the women emotionally, mentally, and physically and thus insure control of the family and household through this control (over their wives), by actively choosing to not make decisions or fulfill the responsibilities of a partner in a marriage. The woman leads the family before she is on her own because she has to be the nurturer, mother and father, and take risks. When each woman reached her tipping point for leaving, she found herself

feeling guilty and at a loss, but she drew on her inner strength and took the risk to lead significant change in her and her children's lives.

Summary of Primary Themes

The thematic thread that runs through all eight primary themes is *Appalachian Women's Self-Leadership*. Thematic analysis of the women's stories revealed the *Appalachian Characterization of place* was integral to understanding how these women acted out their self-leadership in the cultural context in which their lives unfolded. Economic independence was a significant driving force in these women's lives and was a powerful influence in their seeking education. Other themes also emerge from these stories that sound and feel similar to the struggles many women outside of Appalachia experience when making critical life choices around marriage, family, and divorce. The interviewees identify with their Appalachian roots and family as they consider their choices and the consequences of their actions. Even the strength of generational mores for women unfolds in the context of the Appalachian culture. Each interviewee was impacted by the events of her developmental (generational) years.

To understand the women's narrative from a generational perspective within the context of Appalachia, sources regarding the economic and social forces of the generational period were researched. This was then used to contextualize the stories within each of the three generations represented by the women of this study. The next section begins with the telling of one woman's story as representative of her generation of women in this study in the context of that historical period in Appalachia. The first exemplar story is from the Silent Generation, followed by a story from a woman of the Baby Boomer Generation. Finally, the chapter concludes with the story from a Generation X woman.

The Women's Stories

It is important to begin with the women's stories in the context in which they lived. Because the women representatives are of different generations and the context of Appalachia varied significantly with respect to cultural mores and economic conditions, each exemplar story has been placed into the context that describes the economic and social mores of that time. Historical information gathered from scholars Billings (1999), Biggers (2006), Duncan (2001), Eller (2008), Engelhardt (2005), and Zinn (2003) and organizations such as the Appalachian Regional Council, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the West Virginia Archives situates the woman's story within her generation and within the framework of significant events in Appalachia.

The stories of Violet, Adele, and Carly exemplify Appalachian women's struggles to become socio-economically stable and independent in successive generations. A brief overview of significant events during the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X is presented before each woman's story. Then, each of these three women's stories is retold using her words. The relevance of the primary themes are nuanced; throughout their revelations of how their lives evolved from the beginning of their relationship with their first spouse, during the decision to leave, and finally the time after the marital relationship. The core theme of self-leadership becomes very evident during their decision-making around the ending of the marital relationship. The time after the relationship is a time of continued self-leadership and growth of economic independence. Each woman ended her story with a message to other women. This was each woman's moment to share what she would tell others given the opportunity. I want to honor their desire that other Appalachian women would learn from their journey by sharing these stories in rich detail. Their voice affirms the reality of their lives and the importance of the place of

Appalachia, economic independence, education, and social support to their emergence as Appalachian Women Self Leaders.

Silent Generation (1925-1945)

The Silent Generation is composed of children born to parents who had lived through World War I (WWI), gained women's rights to vote in 1920, and worked on peace movements post WWI. The Silent Generation spent their youth during the Great Depression and World War II (WWII). They came to adulthood during President Roosevelt's New Deal program and when the first of their group became 25 years old, the political climate in Appalachia was changing rapidly. Appalachian women like Aunt Molly Jackson were taking action.

Aunt Molly Jackson, a woman who later became active in labor struggles in Appalachia recalled how she walked in the local store, asked for a 24-pound sack of flour, gave it to her little boy to take it outside then filled a sack of sugar and said to the store-keeper, "Well, I'll see you in ninety days. I have to feed some children...I'll pay you, don't worry." When he objected, she pulled out her pistol (which, as a midwife traveling alone through the hills, she had a permit to carry) and said: "Martin, if you try to take this grub away from me, God knows that if they electrocute me for it tomorrow, I'll shoot you six times in a minute." (Zinn, 2003, p. 393)

The story of Aunt Molly serves to illustrate the dire situation many in Appalachia found themselves in during the Depression. It is also an example of strength and leadership of Appalachian women. Aunt Molly was going to take care of her children no matter the cost. People all over the United States were facing hard times and they either became self-advocates or looked to groups like unions to help them. Union membership grew during the 1940s in Appalachia as well (Zinn, 2003). In 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act established a 25-cent-per-hour minimum wage, forty-hour work week, and outlawed child labor (Department of Labor, 2011; Zinn, 2003). "In the immediate postwar years, barely one percent of youths between 10 and 15 were in the labor force—[this was] the lowest child labor force participation rate of the

twentieth century” (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p. 284). These laws benefitted the Silent Generation in Appalachia as they came to the age of employment.

Those members of the Silent Generation born toward the end of the generational era would be subjects of the War on Poverty (1964), which was part of President Johnson’s Great Society ideals. The Appalachian Regional Commission was established by an act of Congress in 1965 (ARC) and recommended the Appalachian Regional Development Act to President Johnson as a part of their charge. This development plan advised government investment in infrastructure projects to lift the region’s population out of social and economic isolation with the goal of Appalachia experiencing economic progress similar to the rest of America.

Not everyone thought economic progress for Appalachia should mirror the rest of the United States. Scholars like Ron Eller suggest the region’s culture and identity had to be considered as the economic plans were put in place. Eller (2008) states “development strategies in Appalachia further fragmented mountain society through the centralization of public services and retail facilities, the creation of class-segregated communities and the generation of material symbols of individual success” (p. 60). He suggests this caused a breakdown in local, producer-based economies, which had been a part of the Appalachian culture. He further argues “the development process is a value-laden political act, complete with winners and losers...Much of the story of Appalachia describes the exploitation of the region at the hands of outside economic interests” (p. 7). For the members of the Silent Generation who grew up in these producer-based local economies the change they were introduced to was a technology and infrastructure improvement; however, it came at the cost (culturally) of attempting to make Appalachia mirror the regions outside Appalachia. No longer are there as many locally owned grocery stores, there are Super Wal-Mart or other large chain stores. Local leaders running the townships, counties

and towns, now give authority over to the big government machine to decide on allocation of resources. The institutions which came out of this development caused more institutional and economic segregation instead of eliminating it.

To add a particular contextual perspective to Violet's story, I share economic and social data that affects her life in Appalachia. Violet's Silent Generation story is from a woman who grew up and lived in Harlan County, Kentucky. Additional context is given to this general information about Appalachia and the country as a whole during this time; unemployment data was reviewed from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Harlan County workforce website which reported unemployment rates were one to two points higher than the national average from 2006 to present. During the years of the coal booms in the 1960s and 1970s the rates for unemployment were often below the national average; however, prior to 1940 it is difficult to pull data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other sources because the census did not ask the type of labor force questions (Roberts, 2004) that are asked in more recent times which enable quick analysis of national, state, and county averages of unemployment data or labor force participation rates by year. Percentage of women employed of the labor force population from 1948-1955 was 30 percent, 1956-1965 was 34 percent, 1966-1975 was 38 percent, 1976-1985 was 43 percent, 1986-1995 was 45 percent, and 1996-2005 was 46 percent (Jacobsen, 2007, p. 34). These percentages indicate a steady climb, but demonstrate that men were 70 to 60 percent of the employed labor force. Current economic rates presented in Table 1, show the distressed nature of Harlan County in the present.

I also want to remind the reader Violet was not from a family living in the cycle of poverty. She was educated beginning in the early to mid-50s, but the region is of significance because even with an education finding jobs in an area such as Harlan County may have been

viable for a teacher, while other resources were still limited. In Appalachia the perception of divorce was still very negative even as this generation merged into the early 1960s. However, nationally “women born between the mid-1930s and early 1940’s showed the biggest age bracket jump in the divorce rate” (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p. 284). Their social mores and values were not as free as the generation to follow, a fact that is especially true in Appalachia where traditional family values of marriage are held sacred yet today as noted in the stories.

The Silent Generation “was the earliest-marrying and earliest-babying generation in American history. Men married at an average age of 23, women at 20. The 1931-1935 cohorts were the most fertile of the twentieth century; 94 percent of them became mothers” (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p. 284). Violet’s married age is not necessarily unusual for a woman of her time, but as education levels increase, marriage age also increases. Given her relatively high education level Violet was young; however, geographically she was in step with her peers. Her story is situated in the mid-1950s when the country was stabilizing from WWI, but her region of the country was still economically distressed and socially behind in comparison to areas outside of the Appalachian region.

Violet’s story. Violet and I spoke on the phone one cold, snowy January evening in 2011. I was sitting in Ohio and she in Kentucky. She was referred by another participant. She was reluctant to do the interview at first. She did not agree to do it until the other interviewee kept telling her it would help others to share her story. I believe that being told she could help someone is what convinced her to participate in the study. She needed to wait to talk until later in the day because she kept her grandchildren at the house during the day. She started telling me her story. The first thing she wanted me to know was:

***The beginning.** I was raised by my grandmother and my aunt and so I was forced after graduating from high school to go to college. I didn't want to go to college. I wanted to get married maybe and have four kids like my mother and father had, but they forced me to go to college. I met this guy and he made me laugh and he drank beer, but I thought it was just a social thing. I didn't know that he had a drinking problem, because it didn't seem to affect his life in anyway. After I got to know him after three or four summers, he asked me to marry him; I thought "Well, he didn't have a good childhood. He was raised by his father and his mother went off on her merry way. I thought he would appreciate having a good home."*

I married him in June and by October I was pregnant and by Christmas time I knew I had made a tragic mistake, but I could not go home. I had to suck it up. We were both teaching school. I was afraid they would make me quit, but the principal said it was no problem. I had the baby. My husband kept drinking. His life didn't change. I would stay during the week and then on the weekends my grandmother and aunt would come get me and the baby and we would stay with them all weekend. I didn't want her (the baby) around him drinking. He was abusive to her when he was drinking. He never whipped her or anything like that. This went on for 10 years. I was not a very happy person, but I went ahead with it. I stayed with it and at that time, if you were a divorced person—if a woman divorced her husband in this little Appalachian regional area, you were thought of as being a loose woman. It was a little town with five or six stores, a little 10-cent store, a drug store and that was it town. You had to stay with it. That was your responsibility. You had a child. You had to stay with it.

Back in those days you didn't have an illegitimate child. Really, you were considered a whore if you did. Now in this day and age, it's normal for girls to have babies outside of marriage, so this was back forty some years ago. If you got divorced in that little small town I

lived in, you were considered a loose woman because you're supposed to stay home. You're supposed to wash those diapers, and take them out and hang them on the line and bring them in and do all this stuff even if you did have to teach. If you had to go to work at eight and come home at three, you still had to do all that stuff and if you didn't, you were a loose woman. I'm 74 years old so I was like 32 or 33 when I got a divorce, so it's that many years ago and nobody in our family had ever divorced; but when I had to do it, I just went and got me a lawyer.

***The decision to leave.** My sisters and brother and mother and father and my grandmother and aunt, they didn't treat me differently because I divorced, but I was ashamed because there was a stigma about a woman back in those days that you just didn't get divorced. You stick it out, so my social situation, I didn't have any friends. I was working all the time. I didn't have time, but after I divorced, then I had some social friends.*

We didn't have any fusses over him drinking, but we had fusses and arguments because of his drinking. Never fought, but we had a big fuss, and I said "Look, I want a divorce." It was over IRS and taxes, that's what we had our big fight over. The night that we had the fuss, I got all the knives and put them under my pillow. I didn't know, he was so vicious verbally, I was afraid of what he might do in the night. The next morning when I got up, I couldn't find a knife and then I thought, "Oh, well I know where they are."

I was always looking for extra money and he would never work in the summer. There was a program for unemployed miners. They could go to school and learn math, to read and write and try to get their GED. I was working all summer long and then two nights a week teaching these miners to read, write, and do arithmetic. When it came time to do the taxes, he didn't want me to do taxes with him, because the money that I made would make the taxes go up. I was using the money that I made to do improvements on the house and to help pay for the babysitter. He

was raising Cain because of the income tax and we struggled. We struggled because at that time, teachers were not making that much money. This was 40 years ago. That was the straw that broke the camel's back.

He wouldn't move out of the house until we were divorced. We owned two houses and he moved across the street. He never helped me financially, not one dime. He was supposed to pay \$45 a month for child support. He never gave me one penny. He threatened me. He said that if I took him to court to make him pay that \$45 dollars, he would get all his friends at the high school to say that they screwed me. I was scared because I was afraid that he would take my daughter away from me, which he threatened. I should have known that he didn't want the responsibility, but I was afraid to take the chance. I was forced into taking on extra jobs to make money. This was something that I was going to have to do on my own. I decided that I needed to increase my income, so I started working as a secretary type of thing, bookkeeper type of thing, in order to make enough money to pay all the bills. I did this for several years and during this time, I would go to college. I would go back to college and up my credentials, until I had so many hours above the Master's degree.

After the marital relationship. *After the divorce, it wasn't easy. Even today, it's not easy because now I've got a daughter and four grandchildren and three great grandchildren who I'm happy to keep. My daughter to this day still has a problem because she doesn't think her father loved her. When she was little she said "Doesn't daddy love us anymore?" I said "He loves you. He's mad at mom, but he loves you, but she still to this day has a problem because he never really showed her. I was her mother and her father and really her best friend. I thought a man that didn't have a good mother, would appreciate a good home, but he didn't. I did an injustice to my daughter by marrying him; he loved her, but he just didn't know how to show it.*

After I left the marriage I felt ashamed because as I said, it was a disgrace, but I didn't go around hiding my head or anything like that because I have too much pride to do that. I probably felt that way a year or two. I did well professionally and socially. I did make some friends, girls, we played cards. I never did go out to eat with anyone or movies, but we would go to each other's houses and play cards. I had a few boyfriends, but once I got to know them, I knew that I did not want to be tied down like that again. I didn't want to be involved in a situation where I didn't have control. I wanted control over my life. I lived with a guy for a year after my daughter was gone and married and children of her own, at his house and I walked out because I couldn't take it. I just thank God that I didn't marry him because I could walk out whenever I was fed up.

Now, I feel I've done a pretty good job. I've got three of my grandchildren. One had gone to college or is still in college and I've been able because of the work that I've done, I've been able to help them financially. I think that I'm a great, great grandmother and I think I've been a great grandmother and I think I was a good mother. My daughter tells me I was a good mother, that I've been a good mother. I think there are a lot of things I would have changed if I could go back and do it again, but I think that's what everybody feels like.

I think if I hadn't divorced him I probably would have been drinking beer too. I would have been a very unhappy person. I don't regret divorcing him, not one minute, nor have I ever regretted it. We tried to be friends for a long time, but when he started some of his abusive talk to my daughter after she became an adult or teenager, that was it. I couldn't be friends with him anymore, and he's been dead now for about ten years. I was eligible for social security when I got to be a certain age, he would have died if he knew that I was going to get a little bit of extra money because of doing that extra work, more than he would be making.

I tried to get my daughter to go to college. She would not go to school. She thinks that she's not bright enough. I think that her father said things to her that still bother her. She's very talented and she's very bright, but she lacks self-confidence. You know when somebody beats you down, you lose your self-confidence.

A message to other women. *I have counseled some women telling them that they need to get an education so that they don't have to put up with nothing. Know that they can do it on their own. They don't have to get into a situation that's impossible to get out. If they have an education, they've got something to stand with, something that's going to help them get out of situations like unhappy marriages. I told it to one of my granddaughters. You get an education so that no man can tell you what you can and can't do. When you get married, you marry one that you know is going to be good to you and don't you put up with no shit. She did what I told her, she went to school and she got a good job at the hospital as a surgical technician and was planning on going back so that she could teach surgical tech, but she didn't take no [guff] off of anybody. I mean nobody.*

Reflections on Violet's story. Violet is an example of a strong woman of her time, the Silent Generation. She is a woman from rural Appalachia, but she does not go to that Appalachia designation first, instead she identifies first as being rural and then by her color. She reminded me of Jean Ritchie (the mother of folk music) commenting "I guess if it hadn't been for the radio it's no telling how long it would have taken us to find out that we were hillbillies, or what kind of songs we were supposed to sing" (Biggers, 2006, p. 1). When I asked Violet if she considered herself urban or rural and with what group she identified she said: *I would identify myself as a rural woman. I don't even consider myself Appalachian American. I'm just a white woman.*

Violet was true to her social culture until her spouse threatened the economic well-being of their family, along with verbally abusing their child. She illustrated how place affected her decisions when she gave the explanation that you didn't get divorced in her community, *if a woman divorced her husband in this little Appalachian regional area, you were thought of as being a loose woman*. As Violet reflected on her life and thought of what she wanted to share she pointed out that women need education and self-confidence so they do not have to be controlled by a man. She has counseled her own offspring and other young women to make sure they are in a position to make a choice, not someone else making the choice(s) for them.

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Coming of age during 1946-64, the Baby Boomers have a reputation as belonging to the generation that made significant changes. The boomers at the beginning of the era were reaching adulthood during the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, the advent of the pill as a form of birth control, and the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. These early boomers were born at the end of WWII and grew up in the 1950s during McCarthyism and a permanent wartime economy; with significant pockets of poverty hidden by the number of people employed making money outnumbering the poor (Zinn, 2003). The early boomer babies grew to be the soldiers, supporters, and protestors of the Vietnam War, an event that significantly impacted the history and culture of the United States.

Those boomers born toward the end of the era were coming of age in the 70s and mid-80s and benefitted from much of the social change their brothers and sisters brought about in the United States and Appalachia. Kennedy and Johnson's War on Poverty continued throughout the mid-1960s. Boomers from Appalachia will remember Johnson's vow to end poverty in the

region and his pledge to increase jobs and bring economic progress to the Appalachian states (Leonard, 1964).

In the 1960s women witnessed the second wave of the women's movement. Women's active involvement in the Civil Rights Movement prompted engagement as well in their issues as women. Betty Friedan wrote in her book *The Feminine Mystique* that white middle class women were beginning to speak up for what they wanted from their lives and families, not to just accept a role as the housewife to her spouse and child care provider, but as women with talents and desires they wanted to express(1963). In 1960, 38% of women were in the workforce and by 1970 43% of the female population was in the workforce. This growth in women in the paid labor force outside of the home has continued to grow to 59% of women in the workforce in 2010 (Department of Labor, 2011).

The Baby Boomer interviewee in this study comes from West Virginia. She lives in a state that is completely identified as Appalachian. She married at the age of 18, which was common in her community and among her peers; however, this is young in comparison to the U.S. national median age of women of 22.3 years old in the years 1976-85 (Jacobsen, 2007). She explains in her story the fact that the relationship of her experience to the actions of her friends is not outside of the norm; however, it may be considered outside of the norm for non-Appalachian women of her generation.

West Virginia's metro centers are Huntington, home of Marshall University and Charleston, its state capital. West Virginia has endured a hard history from the time of its succession in 1863 from Virginia, a confederate state of the Civil War. It has been fighting the battles of strip mining of the land and industry based primarily on physical labor for wage earning jobs. The state has tried to bring in dollars through tourism, highway tolls (it is crossed

by many Midwest vacationers heading south or east), and marketing its historical offerings. They have built scenic highways to encourage more cross-state travel; my own family had to give up their homes to eminent domain when West Virginia built Route 52 through their hollow.

The state has maintained fairly low unemployment rates, but this is a skewed number because unemployment is figured on those persons seeking a job and many living in the cycle of welfare and poverty are not looking for jobs. In addition the jobs available often are literally back breaking and lung congesting, with either low wages or wages marginally covering the risk. Median income in West Virginia in 2009 is over \$12,000 less than the United States median (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Wayne, the interviewee's home county has a median income of \$1,300 less than the state average in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This has been consistent for more than 20 years and further demonstrates the economic disparity between this Appalachian region and the rest of the United States. This reveals something about the relationship of Appalachia to urban areas in the United States since Wayne County is part of the Huntington-Ashland WV KY metro area and is still lagging economically behind the rest of the country.

The study's participant, Adele, is a hard worker. She had to be in order to maintain economic independence. Adele's story illustrates how owning her business provided her with economic independence and stability after she left her husband. She worked for several years in factory jobs until she was able to open her business.

Adele's story. Adele's generation is the generation of change. This group has made a name for itself as a generation of activists, advocates, and progress pushers. Adele seems to share these traits. Always busy, she and I played cell phone tag and finally were able to connect one evening after she put her granddaughter, who is living with her, down for the night. Between

work and travel schedules we were able to have a conversation on the phone. It was another cold evening in early March 2011. She was in West Virginia and I in Ohio. She was cheerful and ready to talk, willing to share anything.

***The beginning.** We, (my then boyfriend and I) dated all through high school. I got pregnant my senior year in high school. We got married one week after graduation, of course, just like everyone did in 1980. We were married for seven years had two more children so there were three of us. Then again, as most people do, about 25 I went what am I doing here? We just grew apart. We both wanted different things. And of course he was abusing drugs and alcohol and I didn't want it around my children. That was really my whole marriage.*

I stayed there as long as I felt I could. Between the alcohol and the drugs I just couldn't take it anymore. I knew he did it before we were married, I did, but I thought I could change him. I knew that he partied when we were in high school. I knew he partied when we dated. I knew he was drinking as we became young adults. I kept thinking we had our second child, oh my gosh, he'll want to straighten up now that we have two children. Surely, he loved me more, he cares more about these children, but he didn't. And they never do. No, no he didn't. That just kept me busier and more tied down and him more free time to do whatever he wanted to do. And then our third child came and I knew then that this is never going to change, ever.

We both had full-time jobs. Mother was helping me with the kids while I worked. I worked days; he worked nights, mom babysat in the middle. You wake up one morning and you look over there and go dear God, I can't do this forever. I knew I was bound to be a single parent. I probably knew that from the first child and kept trying to fix it and trying to make it work and trying to make it better. And if I do this maybe he'll straighten up. And if he does that different, if he'll go to school maybe that will help. We weren't talking we were going through

the motions. I had goals and ambitions and things that I wanted for my children and where I was at, at that time, was not where I wanted to stay. He never set goals for himself. It was just get up and go to work and I came home today you should be happy. And I wasn't.

We had no social connections while we were married. He had a group of friends and I had a group of friends. A lot of them were mostly around my work and whatever the kids were doing at the time, pre-school and soccer. He wasn't involved with the kids. When I would say "our son has a ball game," he would say "I don't want to go." It just did not interest him because he was too busy with the other things. Nope, completely two different outlooks on what was fun to do.

The decision to leave. *I decided to leave the relationship when I woke up one morning and he had come in from partying. Thomas (our son) and me were sitting, Thomas slept with us from the day he was born he stayed in the bed with me. But I woke up and Thomas was sitting in the bed playing with a bag of pot all over our bed. He had fallen in bed with it in his pocket and it had rolled out and the baby got it. That was my aha moment. I picked up my child, I went to my mom and dad's and said I'm getting a divorce. That was it. I never looked back. Never tried to make up, never tried to talk to him. I left. I never thought about it. I left the house. I left everything. I'm probably the one in your group that literally walked off. I said you can have the house, you can have the furniture, and you can have everything. This is not what I want for me or my children. I moved in with mom and dad and started over.*

After the marital relationship. *My husband couldn't believe it. He wanted to fight with me and argue with me and tell me that I was going to be on welfare. He said I would be married or on welfare within two years. I said well, you don't know me very well. The boys were two, four and six or three, six and nine; they're just two years apart. I never ever in my whole entire*

marriage ever had a partner; probably the reason I never remarried. I was like I never want to do that again.

I worked in a factory and had I not moved in with my parents I couldn't have done it at all. I went to work every day and supported the kids. I bought the groceries and mom and dad kept a roof over my head. We stayed there until I saved enough money to buy the trailer, two or three years we stayed there. All the dates that I can truly tell you that I know for sure are when Thomas turned 12, when my dad had just passed away. But truthfully those years of them being small and me working are a fog to me, they really are. He never paid child support. I had it in the divorce papers but back then they never made them pay it. It wasn't something that was mandatory or took out of their check like it is now. Now you just go to court and they take it out of their check and they send it. They didn't in the 80s. He never had visitation with them, they were mine. He never asked for vacation in the summer. He never fought for them.

My social life after the divorce included living with mom and dad, dating and going out with my girlfriends. I allowed myself to grow up, which was really something I never did because I dated him all through high school. My support network was my single girlfriends. Those are the same social connections that I have today. Every serious relationship I've ever had has always been curtailed by my children and that's still true today because I've always put them ahead of everything as far as social life. I would be ready to go out on a date and they'd have a science project. Or I'd be ready to go someplace and they failed their spelling test so we had to stay home and study. And men just don't accept that very well.

I would never have been able to make it without my mom. I'm going to cry. In every facet from watching the boys to it's going to be okay. You can do this. Here come the tears. For a person that stayed at home, mother was the biggest cheerleader there ever was. [Crying] You

could walk in there and say I think I'm going to build a ladder to the moon and she would ask can I help you? What do you need? Is there anything here at the house you can use? She would never say that's a stupid idea or you can't do it. I can't talk about my mom very well.

When I started the company the year that dad died, there were no men it was me and mom and three little boys. We were just sitting at the table, what are we going to do? How are we going to make it? I was deciding to start the company and dad's life insurance policy came. It was \$10,000. It was the only money she had. She didn't work. She didn't have Social Security. She didn't have anything. She was too young for everything. This was when I was having this brainstorm that I'm going to start this company and I can do this and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And she just handed me the check. And I'm sitting there thinking I could lose this. I could lose every dime that you have that you're supposed to live on for however many years. She said you go try. And she just handed it to me. It will be okay. It will be okay.

There was an opening in the state of West Virginia. There was a shortage of these companies. That was in 1992 or '93; I think dad passed away in '91. That was it. I took the money and bought an S10 pickup truck and a bunch of supplies. I started my company on Thomas's 12th birthday, October 29, 1992 or 1993. By the following summer, I was able to give mom back her money. So I knew within that first year, really the first eight months that I could do it. I was willing to take risks after I left the marriage. After our divorce I just never said I couldn't do anything. And I did have my mother there pushing me. If I would say no, I don't know, mom would say, well, you know you can do that if you try.

After the marriage, I was wonderful. I'm still wonderful. It's still the best decision I ever made. I have no idea how my children would have turned out had I stayed there with all the ropes that were wrapped around. I feel like I have done everything that I need to do to the best of

my ability. I really do. There are so many things that over the years that I was running the company, even though I was at all their ball games and all their things there was also things I missed. Do I know what I would have changed? I have no clue.

I got the kids through school. My mother's goal, it wasn't just mine when we took the \$10,000 and started the company was we got to get these kids through college. Then turned around and I thought oh damn, they're getting married now they want to buy houses. And we just kept working. But my goal was when they got through college that was going to be the end of it. I quit. [Laughter] I was going to retire and sit home and play grandma. I couldn't because then they got married and they had wishes and they had dreams. They all worked for me I couldn't quit. Oh my gosh! Now we have five more grandkids to get through college.

I employ six full-time people and in the summer there are about 26 of us. People love to hire people from West Virginia. They are the best workers they've ever had. They're on time. They're loyal. They'll be there. But all they want to do is get the job done and go home. If it's a two-year job they'll take it, if it's good money. They may have to go to Chicago or Minneapolis or something but they never want to stay. They always want to go home. I love to travel but when I'm done whatever the meeting is I want to go home. I miss the mountains. I miss my house. I want my pillow. I want my family. I want to be able to drive down to my son's house.

I don't know if it's we are so family orientated here. A lot of places people will leave and never come back. Never even think about going back home. But I don't see that very much with my family or my friends. Their kids leave but they come back. Especially now that I'm having my 30-year reunion a lot of kids that have moved away or in the service they didn't stay wherever their last place was, they came back home.

***A message to other women.** Women stay in relationships, even though there isn't truly any security, there is just such a lack of self-confidence in women. It's a lack of self-confidence that's instilled in our youth. Like I said, I never ever in my whole life ever was told that I could not do something. And this is from a woman who never really worked outside the home except in a restaurant. But mother would push you out that front door every time you walked in it and tell you to go do something.*

Other women in similar situations need to get up and move. You're not doing yourself or your family or your children any good sitting there being miserable, being unhappy. There's just too much out there if you just get up. That's what I would tell them. That's what I do tell them. It isn't working this way. It's not easy but it's doable. The unknown makes you brave cause you're like, eh, you don't know what's on the other side of that door go ahead and open it. I was always that way. I now have more precautions, caution about things that I do especially in my work than I did 20 years ago. I would try anything 20 years ago. And now I've had enough experience under my belt to know what will not work.

Looking back on this whole life what I did differently from other women was I had confidence in myself that I would be successful as far as being able to raise my children by myself. I knew the man that was in my house was not the man I wanted my children to grow up to be. I did not want them to think this is the way men act. I was a parent who picked and chose the men that my children were around. If my kids would get picked up on a team and that coach was a screaming and hollering, I would divert my child from that team. When they would ask me why don't you want him playing with Billy Bob? I was like you know how he acts. They would always say yes. I'd say I'm a single parent. I do not want my children to think that is the way men are to

act. I never had a coach, team or sport, tell me not to change my children because that was my reason for doing it.

We, working moms, knew that everything that got done we had to do it. I know that I did. I knew I had to go to work but I also knew when I came home I still had to mow the grass. I had to do the laundry. And I had to crawl under the trailer and unclog the pipes when it froze up because no one else could. Kids hand me the hair dryer...

Reflections on Adele's story. Adele is the baby boomer. She did associate with place and identify as Appalachian. When she travels she said: *I want to go home. I miss the mountains. I miss my house. I want my pillow. I want my family. I want to be able to drive down to my son's house... And that's what I've found with the contractors that I've worked with. They would love to have more people but we can't keep them. They don't want to wait on a second job they want to go home. I don't know if it's we are so family orientated here.* She tells us here how this place is home, family, it has an identity to her. It is not just a residence or an address or another state. She misses the mountains.

Adele was a fixer, she believed she could change him and then realized; *surely, he loved me more, he cares more about these children, but he didn't. And they never do. No, no he didn't.* When she describes her turning point for ending the relationship most readers probably hold their breath, not sure what is coming next. I know *I woke up and Thomas was sittin...playing with a bag of pot all over our bed. He had fallen in bed with it ... and it had rolled out and the baby got it. That was my aha moment. I picked up my child, I went to my mom, and dad's and said I'm getting a divorce. That was it. I never looked back. Never tried to make up, never tried to talk to him. I left. I never thought about it. I left the house. I left everything.* Her description here shows the importance of social support, especially from her family.

Adele had a job as well as her husband. They depended on two incomes to raise the children. Adele's husband wanted to stop her from leaving. He attacked her confidence by trying to tell her she wouldn't be able to make it. *He said I would be married or on welfare within two years. I said well, you don't know me very well.* You can hear the determination in her voice as you read her words. *Women stay in relationships, even though there isn't truly any security, there is just such a lack of self-confidence in women... Looking back on this whole life what I did differently from other women was I had confidence in myself that I would be successful as far as being able to raise my children by myself.* She believes in herself and believes with confidence other women can lead change.

Generation X (1965-1979)

Members of Generation X (1965-79) were born to Baby Boomer and Silent Generation parents. The boomers grew up in a time of affluence and privilege, from which their X-generation children benefitted. Generation X women also benefitted from their mothers, aunts, and grandmother's fight for women's rights. "By 1969, women were 40 percent of the entire labor force of the United States" (Zinn, 2003, p. 506). According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics report, 34% of women were in the labor force in 1950, 38% in 1960, 52% in 1980, 58% in 1990, and 60% in 2000 (Toossi, 2002). These numbers make us aware that more households had working mothers. Women held off on marrying until later in life and single motherhood rose as did divorce. More women sought out higher education (Toossi, 2002). These changes in women's family and work roles, while happening across the United States including Appalachia, were not looked on with the same sense of enthusiasm in the Appalachian family (Anglin, 1984, 2002a; Eller, 2008). The women's movement enabled more women to have choices between house work or market work (work outside the home), which then led to households of children

raised by two working parents. This was a new phenomenon, where children went to day care and not just to a friend's house while mom ran to the grocery. Children became independent at earlier ages. This also is antithetical to the culture of Appalachia where family is first and leaving your children with anyone besides a family member is viewed negatively (Rezek, 2010). This has been an issue at my own institution where I teach. Female students do not want to leave their children behind to go to school or work and will often choose government assistance over school or work if it means leaving their children.

As more women were entering the workforce, jobs in Appalachia were still considered jobs for men, such as coal mining, trucking, or manual labor. Choices available to Appalachian women were typically low-skill, low-wage jobs, not careers. In comparison to the rest of the country, Appalachian communities were economically and resource disadvantaged. This was compounded by limited access to institutions of higher education. While more resources were made available through the Appalachian Regional Commission in the late 1960s, many Generation X parents did not have these opportunities and did not always see the value of sending their children to college.

The third story is about Carly, the Generation X participant. Education levels in Carly's region are still low. In Brown County, Ohio, only 9.2% of the population over 25 years of age had a bachelor's degree or higher. Adams County had 10.9%, compared with the whole state of 23.6% in 2005- 09 (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2010). The U.S. national percent of people with a bachelor's degree or higher during the same period was 27.5 of the people over the age of 25. Carly's region is in serious economic stress and this is growing with recent employers leaving the area. Median household income in 2009 for Ohio was over \$4,700 less than the U.S. national median (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2010). Adams County median income is

\$11,000 less than the state of Ohio, Brown County median income is only \$1,000 less than the state; however, this still means that the two counties are between \$5,000 and \$15,000 less than the national average. This is an agricultural area with few industries. Yet Carly found a way to move beyond the negative pull and become socio-economically stable and independent.

Carly's story. Carly and I met in her office at the end of January 2011. We were both tired of snow in southern Ohio. She was very enthusiastic and excited to help. Like most of my participants she was not sure her story was significant or if it would really help. I assured her I wanted to hear her story. She is educated and continuing her education. She was born at the end of Generation X. Her story emphasizes how we are bridging generations with her boomer parents and her connection to young millennial generation women in her job and how her desire to be educated affected many of her life choices including her marriage....

***The beginning.** It was kind of a quick wedding. I met him in January, 1998. We were married in May 1998. His birth family is from this area so he found his birth family and actually came here to be with them. One of his relatives, a friend of mine, was like you need to go meet this guy. I think you guys would get along together. I was about to turn 21 when we met and he was the same age. We were fairly young. He was very articulate and seemed very intelligent. He had a job. He had his own car and trailer (mobile home) at the time. He seemed to have his head on his shoulders good and he just seemed like a really great guy, he must have been a really good actor. We started dating and then a couple of months later, it started getting more serious and I ended up pregnant. Then all of a sudden, we were getting married.*

Everything seemed to be coming together; my parents were pushing us to get married. They absolutely loved him and everything and then it was like the day after we got married, everything started. He's a very good actor, really. We were trying to get things set up. Kind of

noticed then, he had some controlling issues. He was trying to get me to move as far away from my family as I possibly could. He lied a lot, I started noticing. His true colors started coming out. At one point, he had lied to his family and told them that I lost my baby, and we needed money for a funeral, like a memorial and was getting money off of them and so they thought, she's lost the baby. I didn't know anything about it until a couple of days later, I went to my mom's house and it had all got back to her and she's sitting on the couch bawling. I come in "What's wrong with you?" He completely denied it.

As for social connections during the relationship, I didn't have any friends. It was all his friends. They were shady characters. Nobody really socialized with me. I just kind of sat on the side. He was okay with the two of us doing things with his friends, but not mine. He actually alienated me from my friends. He would go tell my friends that I didn't want to be a part of them anymore. That they were controlling me and they were to stay away from me. I had no idea he was doing that at the time. After I had left him, my friends starting coming back around and told me what he had been telling them.

Most of the relationship, he was a manipulative, controlling, compulsive liar. He did not like to work. He expected me to go out and work and wanted to take me places to find employment when my doctor told me I shouldn't work. I should stay at home. He hated responsibility. I was working and going to school at the same time, when I met him. He tried to stop that immediately. I was not to go to school. After I got pregnant with my daughter, he told me when our baby is two months old; you're going to get pregnant again. I mean he was just like telling me how my life was going to be, for now until the end of it.

Anything that involved him having to do something for somebody else or having to take care of somebody else, he hated it. He actually told me that his sister had just called and he even

got off the phone and had tears in his eyes. This is how good this guy was, but his sister had just called and his nephew was in the hospital dying and his sister lived in Indiana so he drove to Indiana that night. I was upset because this little child, who was like three or four years old is in the hospital. He's got a liver problem. They thought he was going to die. I'm sitting at home and I find out it's a lie when his sister calls me. He's not coming back for a few weeks. He needs some time by himself. I'm still pregnant at this time. Then this follows so it's like boom, boom, boom, boom right after we got married. He calls me from Indiana, and tells me I either move to Indiana with him or he's done.

I had time to think and was going to do it. I have my doctor in Ohio. I'm a high risk pregnancy. When I was pregnant, I weighed 98 pounds. Three months into it, I was down to 86 pounds so they didn't want me to leave. I needed to be at home. Somebody needed to be around me all the time because I passed out all the time. I had a lot of issues going on so I didn't know what to do. I kind of had my back to the wall, very manipulative. Then he changed his mind. I guess they got sick of him in Indiana, sponging off of them so he came back to Ohio. We did try to work things out together, almost up to the time my daughter was to be born.

The decision to leave. *Then one moment, it just hit me. I'm sitting here. I went back to school while I was pregnant. He's a healthy young man living with me and my parents doing nothing, but being manipulative. Cons everyone around him, is very controlling with me. I can only do certain things. He told me what classes I could and couldn't take. He controlled what types of foods I bought at the grocery store. He was controlling me too much and alienating me from the people that I loved and he lied all the time and if he's going to lie to other people, what lies has he told me. It was close to when I was about to have her because it was cold outside and I sat down there one day. I was sitting on the couch and I said "I can't do this anymore. I can't*

live like this. I can't live with somebody that is that controlling and that manipulative and then bring a child into the world and then have the child be around that too." So I did leave him.

I left him right before I had my daughter. He moved. I don't know where. We lived in a southern Ohio county. During that time, the time between when he left and when I had my daughter, he would call my mother and father's house where I was staying at the time and threaten, I don't want the baby. The baby just needs to die. At one time, he told my mother he would kill her. I was walking down the street one day. He was coming at me and tried to actually swerve at the curb to hit me. I was with a relative of mine at the time. I had to get restraining orders put against him. He was very manipulative.

When we were moving stuff of his out, we found court papers and previously he went to court for blowing up a car in a parking lot. He got mad at his sister. Took the car, blew it up. When I found all the court records, I thought if you want to hide that stuff, why would you keep the court records? [Laughter] Not too bright. That's what finalized my decision was that—I called his adopted family relatives and asked them and they told me he did have a criminal background and he had mental health issues and there was some criminal charges put against him. They thought I had known about it so nothing was ever brought up when we would visit or anything. They thought I knew. [Laughter]

He had a girlfriend and at one point, him and her got into an argument, he put her in a trunk and locked her in it for a couple of hours while he went out with his friends. He killed animals. It was just all of this stuff. I mean that is like sociopathic behavior. When I first kicked him out, I thought "Well maybe this is enough for him to think—"Okay I really need to straighten my act up" but after seeing that, there was no way I would go back to him. That's

when I knew “No, I can’t even if he begs me to come back or he would like to come back to him so there was a violent past with him too.”

I didn’t want my baby to see him controlling me because everybody should be independent with themselves and I wasn’t. I was very passive. I just did whatever I was told and I’m not that way. I don’t know why I was that way when I was with him. You can ask my family even when I was younger, I’m pretty independent and outspoken person, but with him, I wasn’t. It was very demeaning. I don’t know if I had just been beaten down so much that that’s the way I was and then one day I just sat there and I just woke up and I’m like “I can’t be like this anymore. This is not what I want to do.” This is what he wants me to do and I needed to get away from what he wanted me to do and start doing what I wanted to do and it ended up being a big huge fight.

I don’t know how he found out I had my daughter, but he was not to be near me or the baby so they actually had to have a security officer sit outside my room at my OB and hospital because he was threatening my mother, calling her. “I’m going to go get the baby. I’m going to do this. I’m going to do that.” It was very hard because even though you’re in a relationship like that, you still care about that person so you think “Okay, they’re going through all this pain, and you don’t want them to go through all this pain, but yet you think at the same time, I’ve got this new living being here. Do I really want her to see me like this? Do I want her to see me being controlled, being manipulated? Do I want to see this person, her dad, calling people into things? It took time, but I accepted the fact that this is the way it’s going to have to be... The relationship was—toxic—because what he was, he made people around him become that way too. He wanted everybody as low as he was or lower.

I don't think the community affected how I made my decisions. Their perception is that you stay where you stay if you're in that situation, you stay in it. In my family, I've had cousins and I still have cousins that are in relationships like that and divorce is not an opening, leaving the person is not an option, so in the area that I grew up around, at that time, divorce really wasn't something that was, not in my area anyway, in my immediate family, but no, it didn't influence my decision at all. When I was thinking of leaving him and I talked to my mother about it, I was just thinking basically with my own situation and my child.

My mother was a little concerned at first because she was worried that I was going to end up on welfare. I wasn't going to be able to take care of my child. I would end up in low income housing and end up being there for the rest of my life because I wouldn't have the means to better myself. After she saw what I did to try to work out and bring myself up, she started to become okay with it and after she saw how he acted when I kicked him out, the blowing up. We had to get restraining orders and things like that; she was glad that I had left him. That was the big one.

My father was the big one, because my mother and my father separated a little bit when my mother was pregnant with me, so he thought "Oh, look they're just going to separate and they've done their separation so now they're going to realize they really love each other and get back together." He was so mad at me. My dad wanted me to go through counseling with him and after I had found the court papers, we tried to show him important things. He thought it was just a couple's argument, but then after I slowly tell him, "Dad, he didn't let me do this. He tried to control this. He wants me to get pregnant again when the baby is two months old," and then the phone call. One day my husband called and called me a "bitch" on the phone to my dad. That was it. My dad hung up. He said "No, you're right."

I went to an attorney after [I had the baby]. We can't get a divorce around here while still pregnant. You have to wait until after you have the baby. At least you did back then. I don't know if it was a county or a state, but I remember my dad and me. I'm going to an attorney and he said "You can't do anything while you're pregnant. You have to wait until after you have your baby. You can't." Here I'm waiting. As soon as I have her though, we're off to find an attorney and we did find an attorney to take us. The thing was [my husband] he fled. They could not get a hold of him. For two years, we looked for this man. No idea where he was [hiding]. He eventually found me, and the divorce was pretty bad.

He had not seen his daughter the first 2 ½ years of her life. Then he wanted her to be a part of his life. Very scary. In retrospect, he's not actually a great person to leave around any children. [If I had known that] beforehand, [Laughter] I wouldn't have this beautiful little girl that I have now though so the divorce was a little hairy. He ended up only getting supervised visitations. He showed up 2 or 3 times. The last time he showed up, it was her third birthday and he forgot his own daughter's birthday and at 3 years old, my daughter walked up and said "You forgot my birthday. You don't even know when my birthday is. Go away." So she picked up on that too. He never came back after that. She hasn't seen him. Every once in a while we get a little tip from him. He's \$17,000 dollars behind in child support. [Laughter] I see him every once in a while at the grocery store and he tries to come up and—he still tries to manipulate me and control—he still does.

In those two years, I ended up going to college. I got my associates degree. I was in a program through the Ohio Human Services Department where they helped me pay for fees and equipment since I had worked so hard. You would be surprised at the programs for women that are trying to leave bad situations. You just have to dig a little bit to find them. The one I used

was for anybody really low income, but they would help you pay for your testing, if you needed testing for school. They would help pay for your graduation fee. They pay for any equipment. I needed uniforms for school and they gave me a check to get uniforms. I would tell them where I was going and I'd go get them. I didn't have a driver's license when I met him. He refused to teach me to drive. Human Services had a program to teach you how to drive. A guy who worked for the county came by the house once a week and we would go and drive around. I was so diligent, trying to get out of this horrible situation they recommended me as the one person in the county to get a car bought for them and they actually bought me a car. [Laughter]

***After the marital relationship.** My financial situation was about the same after I left him because I was going through school. You get by, what you can get by with. My social and my support system excelled afterwards because everybody wanted to see me do well. Everyone wanted to see my daughter in a good home in a loving environment and with him that wouldn't have happened so I guess that part increased. As time went on, the situation did improve little by little.*

I'm almost done with my bachelor's degree. I'm going to go further. I'm looking to get my doctorate. I got my life back together. I was able to take care of myself on my own. I worked at night and weekends. During the day I was at school and then I would stay up till 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning doing homework and being with my daughter. I missed a lot of milestones, but now I'm better off for it.

My life after I left that marriage is joyous. Everybody's got problems, but no issues at all. Happy, excited to go home whereas before, you would just get this sick pit in your stomach when you were going home to see that person. Now it's just excitement. I can't wait to see the kids. The kids are happy and my daughter—I always wonder what she would be like if I was still in that

situation and my daughter is in an accelerated program. She's very articulate. She's highly intelligent. I think he would have just pushed her down just like he pushed me down. My life is a whole lot better now. I'm not proud that I married the person, but I'm proud that I left the person. I can say the only good thing that came out of it was my daughter so if I hadn't lived through all of that, I wouldn't have had her.

Then right before my divorce was final, I met my husband. When I met him, my self-esteem was low. Everything is just so spent that you can't really do anything, but I think if you put yourself in a situation to better yourself, go to college, get that higher education and you start surrounding yourself with people that help, you build your self-esteem. He encouraged me. Told me I could do anything I ever wanted to do. He always told me that he would be there. He would stay three steps away because he knew I was just a little gun shy, but he was always in arm's length so if I ever needed anything, if I ever wanted him to go away, he would go away. He would sit and wait until I told him to come back because I was just so scared coming out of a bad relationship. We were engaged for a long time. We dated for two years and we were engaged for one, it was slow going. I was gun shy. He would ask me and I'd tell him "No."

I've been remarried since 2004 to a wonderful guy. I moved up from "Hey, you're living in a trailer and I'm not going to work, but you can go get a job at Burger King or something to support us," to trying to make the best for us. When I met my current husband, I told him "I will not marry you. I won't move in with you until I know I can take care of myself on my own. I got a job where I can pay my own bills and do my own thing. Then I got married and I always tell my daughter now, "Do not get married because you have to get married. Do not get married because you need somebody to take care of you. You get married because you choose to get married, not because you need to get married." And I think that was the mistake I made when I

got married the first time. I needed that person. Too bad he didn't take care of me. He wanted me to take care of him. I tell my [current] husband all the time now—and I tell people I know—I didn't need to marry him. I didn't have to marry him. I chose to marry him. I choose to be with him.

I do think of myself as being Appalachian. I'm actually very proud of it. I don't identify that as an ethnic group. I identify as being rural and Caucasian is what I mark on my census. I'm Appalachian and to me, it's like a way of life. Being Appalachian is different than non-Appalachian because Appalachian people are like a group on their own. They're very family oriented, very family knit. I think it's a group of people that have gone through trials because when you think of Appalachian, which is kind of serious if it's open, but most people think of people in the woods or the mountains that they have dirt floors and things like that, but really when I think of it is just people that are family oriented. If you have a family member that doesn't have food and all you have in your pocket is enough money to pay your water bill, you go ahead and give him that food money and you try to work something else out with your water bill payment. You sacrifice yourself for your family. I think they help each other out too, community wise. I don't know many areas where a complete stranger would stop and help somebody change their tire, not in this world anymore, and I think around here, we're pretty much like that, which is kind of scary because you probably shouldn't do it, but that's your first instinct, "What can I do for this person? This is my neighbor. What do I do?"

A message to other women. *If I were giving advice to another girl/woman who I thought was in the same situation, I would tell them they need to have confidence. You need to get confident, have some guts. With me, I needed to have a plan. Where am I going to go, which I knew that I could stay with my parents. How are you going to take care of that situation*

afterwards? So, if this person has an income, what are you going to do afterwards, and I think that's why a lot of women stay in relationships because if they get out of them, what are they going to do? They have no education background. They have no work experience. That's why I always tell my daughter, don't get married because you have to, and get married because you choose to.

As far as knowing what's out there, know what kind of programs are out there to help you so maybe contact your human services office. They still have legal aid I think so if you ever needed legal aid, you can go that way. Maybe start off with your school, see if you can get some grants and stuff to go back to school, that way you know, because a lot of times, if you can get a grant, whatever you have left over, that's a little bit each quarter that you can put towards bills. If you can find resources you're confident when you leave. Be confident when you leave. Have guts when you leave. Stand your ground too.

I always thought "What's the best thing I could possibly be doing with my life whenever I felt like "I shouldn't have done that?" And just think of yourself doing that and if think of yourself doing that then eventually you're going to start perceiving yourself that "Hey, that's what I'm going to be doing and I think eventually at least for me, I started working myself towards that goal. I knew there were resources out there I could utilize. It probably would have taken me longer if I had not had my parents support, but I would ask for help somewhere or I would have just went and tried to find a job and maybe opened up the secret bank account and saved the money in there and got out myself. It would have been harder, but it wouldn't have mattered. I would still have left. I'm very proud of myself. That's bad, you shouldn't be proud of yourself, but I am. [Laughter]

Reflections on Carly's story. Carly is the storyteller for Generation X. Media images often portray them as being apathetic, disloyal, and carefree, yet she is far from that. Detailed in Carly's story is the transition from a controlled girl-woman to a confident woman who took charge of her life, went back to school, and delivered her daughter without her husband. She explained that she didn't want her child to think this was how she should be treated. One day she thought, *I can't do this anymore. I can't live like this. I can't live with somebody that is that controlling and that manipulative and then bring a child into the world and then have them be around that too.* She had to wait two years for a divorce from a man who just disappeared.

She was bright and happy the day we met and so proud of her ability to lead change. She also was proud of her home place. When I asked her how she would characterize Appalachia and if it was significant to her she told me: *I'm Appalachian and to me, it's like a way of life. Being Appalachian is different than non-Appalachian because Appalachian people are like a group on their own. They're very family oriented, very family knit. I think it's a group of people that have gone through trials because when you think of Appalachian, which is kind of serious if it's open, but most people think of people in the woods or the mountains that they have dirt floors and things like that, but really when I think of it is just people that are family oriented.* She suggests the same ideas that Adele did about place and family. She also said confidence is what women need most.

Concluding Comments

The stories speak to the women's struggles, their decisions, and their final triumph in leaving a damaging marriage and successfully creating an economically stable life for themselves and their children. The economic and social context of their generation is used to provide that reader with a context for each woman's journey and the special barriers and

obstacles that she might encounter in ending a marriage and striking out on her own. The primary themes gained through the narrative thematic analysis are woven throughout the events of the women's stories; however, the telling of the story itself reveals the path, turns, and twists of each woman's journey. The core theme of self-leadership grows in significance as the woman matures, makes critical decisions around the marriage, and establishes her own life independently. It is my hope that this work brings to the reader the emotional undercurrent that still remains for each of these women many years later as they reflect on this difficult period of their lives. Noteworthy are the final words from each Appalachian woman sharing what she would counsel other women in similar situations.

In the next chapter, the situational interpretation of the primary themes will be presented. To further contextualize the importance of these themes in Appalachian women's lives, scholars and practitioners with specialized knowledge in the areas of education, economics, and policy were added to the discourse.

Chapter V: Situational Interpretation of the Narrative Themes

The situational interpretation of the narrative begins with the presentation of the situational map depicting the situation of action based on the eight themes from the thematic analysis. This map is used to situate the inter-relatedness of the themes in map format (see Figure 3). Interviews were conducted to seek out additional perspectives related to the narrative themes of education, place, support systems and economics, and leadership.

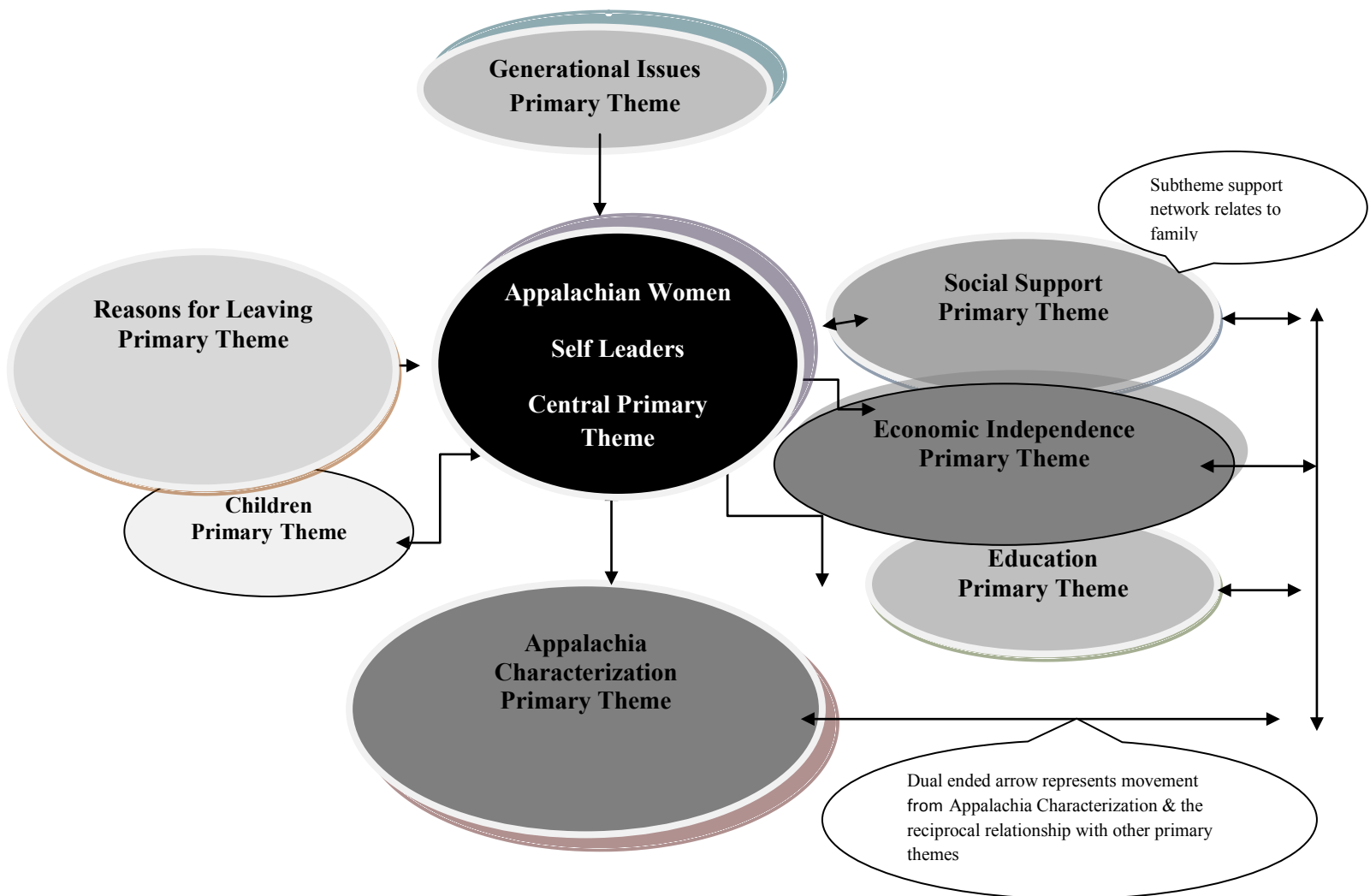


Figure 3. Map of narrative themes

The map of the narrative themes acts as a visual tool that is used in conjunction with the narrative analysis to situate the primary themes in relation to one another. This use of mapping is

adapted from Clarke's situational analysis mapping (2005). The women's stories are interpreted in the context of "discourses related to the situation of interest" (Clarke, 2005, p. 175). In this adaptation of situational analysis, I have sought to situate the most significant themes of the narrative in the social and cultural context of the women's life stories. In this study the primary themes of *Appalachia Characterization*, *Economic Independence*, *Education*, *Children*, *Generational Issues*, *Social Support*, and *Reasons for Leaving* were explored in the space of Appalachia.

The first step of the mapping process was to understand the relationship among the primary themes. The situational map (see Figure 3) visually depicts how the themes overlap, intersect and relate to one another. It depicts Self Leaders at the center with arrows showing back and forth flow to Social Support, Economic Independence, and Education. The oval shapes are deliberately of different sizes to illustrate the relative relevance and impact of this theme on the women's lives. The overlapping and placement of the circles roughly illustrate the strength of reciprocal influence these themes had within the stories. Finally, the arrows suggest movement or action among the themes. For example, education had considerable influence on the attainment of economic independence and attaining an education was highly influenced by familial support (social support). The primary theme, *Children*, was not coded as frequently as the other primary themes (thus depicted with a smaller circle); however, children evoked significant emotional reaction in the women's stories and were very instrumental in the women's reasons for leaving the first marriage. Central to all themes is the centrality of Appalachian Women's Self-Leadership, which was attributed to Appalachia as place and generational cultural influences.

The second step of the situational mapping was the exploration of sources that would contextualize the theme of self-leadership as it related to education, economics, and social support. These three themes had the most significant impact based on the narratives and situational interpretation therefore they have the largest space on the map. The researcher sought out experts/scholars in education, policy, and Appalachian regional resource opportunities and interviewed to further understand the larger context in which the women of this study acted. These conversations led to policy recommendations by the women and are included in each of the relevant sections of economics, education and social support. This chapter interprets the women's stories from the perspective of the discourses on education, support, and economic stability as learned from Appalachian women scholars in these fields of practice.

Seeking Discourse on Women in Appalachia

As part of the exploration of primary themes of the narrative, I sought out other sources of information and meaning making that would inform me of the larger forces, be they social, cultural, economic, or political in which these women lived out their stories. I contacted three women in Appalachia who held career positions relevant to the critical intersection of themes in my analysis. These three women leaders were Dr. Haas, Ms. Hale, and Ms. Kirtdoll-Suggs. They were selected because of their expertise in the field (see Attachment IV for informed consent allowing identification by name and public position).

Dr. Brenda Haas is the [former Executive Director for Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE) and current Interim Dean, University College, Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio]. Dr. Haas has more than 30 years of experience as a K–12 educator in Appalachian Ohio. Prior to serving as principal at Dawson Bryant High School for six years, Dr. Haas served as principal at Dawson Bryant Elementary School for eight years. She was also a principal and teacher in the Rock Hill School System for nearly 20 years. A lifelong resident of the region, she holds a doctorate and master's in education as well as a Bachelor of Science degree, all from Ohio University. In 2006 Dr. Haas was named the Samuel I. Hicks Executive in Residence, an award co-sponsored by the Ohio University College of Education, the Coalition of Rural and

Appalachian Schools and the Samuel I. Hicks Executive-in-Residence Endowment Fund. Her dissertation, *A Comparative Case Study of Administrator Stability in Two Rural Appalachian School Districts*, received an award from the American Education Research Association in 2004 (source www.oache.org).

Dr. Haas, whose work includes encouraging Appalachian higher education endeavors, was very willing to engage me on the topic of influencing factors for Appalachian women reaching socio-economic independence and stability. In this conversation she related, what she believes are the factors influencing women reaching economic stability and independence.

Ms. Hale is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. Ms. Hale's varied professional experiences include serving as an education budget analyst in the Governor's Office, State of Illinois; as the Director of Training Programs for Head Start in the Region III office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and as the Director of Head Start Training for the state of West Virginia. She began her career as a public school teacher in Springfield, Ohio, and taught with the Department of Defense Education Activity at military installations in Japan, Ethiopia, Turkey, and Italy. Betty consults with schools, state agencies, and other projects and initiatives across the country. She plans and facilitates leadership seminars, and writes articles and reports on education leadership and related issues (source www.iel.org).

Ms. Hale was born in Delbarton, West Virginia, Mingo County 85 miles east of Huntington, West Virginia, where I was born. In 1970-73, she worked with Head Start in West Virginia and she helped Head Start teachers obtain college classes and degrees.

Ms. Kirtdoll-Suggs is part of Admissions and Recruitment at Eastern Gateway Community College located in Steubenville, Ohio. She obtained her Associate of Arts at Kent State University and Bachelor of Science at West Liberty State College and has been the Director, KEYS-OACHE (www.egcc.edu). She is an AHE Network Consultant for the Appalachian Regional Commission. She has worked on OACHE initiatives and traveled throughout the Appalachian area working on educational recruitment and awareness. In June 2011 Kirtdoll-Suggs made history as Steubenville's first African-American councilwoman (source www.HeraldStarOnline.com).

Ms. Kirtdoll-Suggs shared her insight as an education professional and recently appointed councilwoman. She was recommended by Dr. Haas and Ms. Hale for policy and Appalachian education information.

I asked each of them “What do you think enables Appalachian women to become socio-economically independent?” And “What political or policy actions do you think help or hinder in this endeavor to be socio-economically independent?” Dr. Haas was very helpful with the value of education and resources for gaining higher education. Ms. Hale discussed the Appalachian environment, economic factors, and the value of family support. Ms. Kirtdoll-Suggs provided insight to education needs and policy and regulation reform valuable to women seeking socio-economic stability. Each of these women contributed to an understanding of self-leadership that motivates Appalachian women to become more socio-economically secure and educated.

In the next section I have organized these women’s comments around each of the primary themes of education, Appalachia Characterization in reference to Place, Social Support, Economics, and Women’s Self-Leadership. The comments and insights from each of the three women affirm and add to the narrative analysis by bringing forward the larger social and economic forces that act in synchrony with the narrative reports. Their perspectives corroborate the challenges, choices, and experiences that the women’s stories depict and show the relevance of the narrative themes to policy formation that can impact women’s educational and economic success.

Educational theme. Education, an essential theme that emerged from my interviews, is one of the enabling influences to the socio-economic stability effort of Appalachian women. “Education,” noted Haas, “is what enables stability and independence” (B. Haas, personal communication, June 21, 2011). All three experts affirmed that education establishes stability and independence. Haas confirmed that in over her thirty years in education, with regard to women generationally, access was “better than it was—but not where it should be” (B. Haas, personal communication, June 21, 2011). She continued to stress the tie to family and how

important relational family support was to the success of Appalachian women returning or going to school. Middle age women have a lot of difficulty compared to younger women when seeking higher education. Middle age women's motivation is significantly aligned in Appalachian sense of place. Often women are first generation college students and once one person goes to college others will see the benefit. Haas mentioned a family where the daughter went to a two-year school then her father, and finally her mother went back to school. When asked the barriers to Appalachian women achieving an education, Haas provided a daunting list.

Barriers to returning and staying in school:

1. Women are usually the childcare provider
2. Cultural issue
3. Lack self esteem
4. Need supportive relationships—very strong ties to family

According to Haas, the leading reasons for women not returning to school:

1. Lack of financial resources
2. Lack of information
3. Poor performance in high school
4. Married Young
5. Higher Education viewed as unattainable goal
6. Afraid won't fit in—if can get them on campus they will adjust
7. Education provides access to better job opportunities.

In terms of policy changes that could help remedy the situation, Haas felt programs need to do a better job of providing women with access to information about financial aid. Her recommendations included continued efforts to break the cycle of not attending post-secondary

schools. Policy and agency actions are important to this change. The Appalachian Higher Education Network (AHEN) and the Ohio Appalachian Center Higher Education (OACHE) are two centers the Appalachian Regional Commission has supported. The OACHE has been replicated in other Appalachian states including Kentucky and West Virginia; additionally, AHEN centers operate in Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2011).

As the stories told by this study's interviewees demonstrate, women do change when they become better educated. They start to question the status quo, become critical thinkers and question why? Stories highlighted how they became determined to make it and their self-esteem increased. They fought to become confident in themselves and make changes in their lives. Virtually all interviewees sought freedom from their environment or dependent relationships after gaining education. They realized the potential for financial and personal freedom. Many women, according to Haas, "have talents, which have gone unrecognized until they are in an environment that empowers them to share their talents" (B. Haas, personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Appalachia—Place. As witnessed in the stories of interviewees, one of the distinctive aspects of Appalachian culture and community is the connection to family and sense of place. Kirtdoll-Suggs believes family is not the number one value among non-Appalachians; rather it is the connections to non-family. Appalachians place more importance on the family connection versus connections outside of the family, whereas, non-Appalachians build strong connections outside of the family, even if they have strong family ties (A. Kirtdoll-Suggs, personal communication, June 23, 2011). Culturally, there still appears to be a hierarchy where the husband is the head of household. Women often have to go home and talk to their husband if

they want to go back to school. According to Haas, while the Appalachian female is the real leader, she frequently is not recognized as such. She pays the bills, handles the finances, acts as caregiver, makes appointments, and takes children to the doctor. The fact that the women ran the household was mentioned over and over in the interviewees' stories but their husbands still wanted to be in charge. It was as if he wanted her to do the work and he would supervise and evaluate. Haas concluded that men may be considered the head of the household, but "women are the glue that holds the family together" (B. Haas, personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Information dissemination is an important factor in the region and in the effort to support women. All three experts agreed that family is the primary method of communicating any information because individuals consult their family often in informal ways about where jobs are available and how to handle situations. In addition to family, all three experts identified said church as an important place within the community and culture for disseminating information. As a locus of community activity, the church has an information distribution role via church programs, newsletters, bulletins, and bulletin boards and often in hallway discussions with other congregation members. High school counselors, college education personnel, local librarians are also sources of information and encouraging women to continue their efforts for financial and self-improvement. Information about options and support must come from a concerted group effort to reach women in need of services. Therefore, those professionals working to enable socio-economic stability must enlist help from other social support networks. Based on my conversations with the three professional women and my study participants, the following entities (in order of seeming significance to the women) must be conscripted to help.

1. Family Members
2. Church

3. Community (action agencies, libraries, non-profits)
4. Federal and state policymakers and service agencies

Policymakers looking at this list with funding of initiatives in mind may actually start at number four and work their way to one. However, to reach women with information of federal and state services and policies one must begin in the listed order of one to four. It seems imperative to stress training of individuals who are service providers is critical. The stereotypical images persist and many professionals still discriminate based on Appalachian identity. The problem with this is that some women in early stages of getting their confidence and self-esteem built may not have the inner skills yet to fight these institutionalized prejudices. Dena, one of the Generation X participants, told me she started into the community college three times before she finally had the courage to turn in her application for admission!

Synthesizing the conversations all three women reflected on the unique aspects of Appalachian culture which are critical for professionals working with Appalachian women to recognize. Appalachians value family first; they are hardworking people who are attached to place and have a sense of place—even if they move away. Appalachian communities are still home. In most cases they want to come home—if the family moves they want to go back home to Appalachia. Adele's story explained when people hire her workers they would like her employees to stay on for future jobs, but her employees want to go home. This is a common statement made by Appalachians who have moved out of the area. Preparing to visit, they say they are going home. All participants in this study identified a strong love for the region. However, women may find it hard to be proud of their culture when fighting to keep self and children safe and secure.

Support systems and economics. Economic independence correlates with the amount and type of social support the women received. Interviewees mentioned their families' support as the most significant group, but good friends were valuable as well. This necessary relationship to family was referenced by all three experts. Paradoxically, messages and pressure to not go to school also emerged from family members. In one example, a woman has a choice to use her education to stay and create a better place for her family, but the family fears she will forget where she is from and leave (B. Haas, personal communication, June 21, 2011). Kirtdoll-Suggs noted, "we don't move from our family, won't leave our family, so often girls won't go far away" to go to school or get a job. All three experts concurred that there is a fear from family that the child won't return to them if they go too far away (A. Kirtdoll-Suggs, personal communication, June, 23, 2011).

There is an extremely strong cultural commitment of responsibility to the family, both personally and socially. In Appalachia, families are responsible for each other forever. Just because you have moved out of the house does not mean you do not still owe something to the place you came from originally (Payne, Devol, & Dreussi Smith, 2006). The culture of Appalachia does not necessarily encourage female independence in the family. Depression, both emotionally and financially, and manipulation are rampant in Appalachian families and communities (Isserman, 1996; Oberhauser, 1995). Appalachian/rural women are often dependent to stay in relationships due to limited financial security and employment skills. This dependency makes gaining skills to become independent critical, if they find themselves without their spouses to care for them and their children.

Appalachian women need support systems and networks to be successful in continuing their education and pursuing career opportunities to become economically independent and

financially stable. The family is very important to Appalachian people. Women have to overcome family fears when they seek to better themselves. Not only do the women have to garner their own self-esteem and confidence, but they have to convince their families of the importance of education to their future opportunities. One of the reasons families resist giving this support is they fear their member will leave the family and community behind.

Family ties are positive when they have a ripple effect to other generations within the family. Hale noted that older women are often the most critical of women getting educated and bettering themselves. This supports the idea that in some areas it is not just fighting for equality in a man's work environment, but it is convincing the ones who will frequently be asked to watch their grandchild that more education or a job is important to the woman and her children. Kirtdoll-Suggs reflected that there are still a lot of older women who don't think younger women should work or go to school. Women of the Silent Generation tend to embrace *don't get above your raisin'* mentality, and often make it hard on their daughters and granddaughters to be confident in their choices.

Although most of the women in my study had strong family support and encouragement from their mothers in particular, this was not the case for Faith. Her mother did not think education and a career were important. After Faith married, her mother thought she should be happy to have a man and have babies. In the case of Tina, her mother was supportive of her daughter, although sometimes it seemed to Tina it was her way of maintaining an influence in her life. In Risa's case, her mother suggested she stay in the marriage until her children turned 18, but Risa resisted her mother's influence and left.

Hale's reflection on the factors that enable Appalachian women to become socio-economically independent focused on "*figuring out things can be better. In order to make it*

better it is up to me and I know I can do it, but I will need support. When finding stability, someone has to help with the children.” Again the theme of support was intertwined with family. Women need to think to themselves “I know I can make this circumstance better,” according to Hale. This resonates with the common statement among the women of this study that self-confidence was the most important thing they needed to change their situation. Hale added that support often needs to come from outside of the family through community and agencies. Broad-based support is very important and often counters negative messages from family members.

Women need to know where to go for assistance and often this is communicated through word of mouth. Employment services need to help by telling the women of available training. Most women in poverty know about welfare. Middle class women know about welfare programs, but often do not know of other services that can help them as they make the shift from wife to single head of household. Social workers and education professionals in positions to interact with women need to communicate programs available to middle class women. Often women’s income drops following separation and divorce. This is the time they most need support from family, agencies, and education services to become economically stable and not spiral into the downward cycle of poverty. Transitional programs, which were the original intent of welfare in the 1930s, are available to help women and their children, but often women are made to feel guilty for seeking help outside of the family. This guilt is partially pride and fear from a culture fearing individuals outside of the family unit; but often it is the very people who are supposed to be helping the women who make them feel as if it is their fault they were in an abusive relationship and should have done things differently. This is a prime example of where people responsible for implementing policy and agency practices, such as social workers and

student services personnel in education need to be trained on the culture of a region they do not understand (A. Kirtdoll-Suggs, personal communication, June 23, 2011).

Kirtdoll-Suggs' reflection on the factors that enable Appalachian women to become socio-economically independent and what helps or hinders these endeavors, focused on "*our laws are set up for women to remain dependent on the system.*" Women can only do so much and then they are limited by the system's structure. One either stays in the system or leaves the system. Laws limit women's ability to continue to get education assistance and enter a new relationship. Social services and policies put women in a place of having no relationship and maintaining funding, lying about relationship or leaving the social services support system to have a relationship. It is an unfair situation for women, especially for those who are part of a culture where relationships are important to their identity.

Women's self-leadership. Patriarchal views still impact women's roles and positions in the family and Appalachian culture. Hale said one of the most important things is to get women to realize *I am somebody*. More women telling their stories are important to supporting women in their efforts to be self-leaders and recognizing self-worth. Kirtdoll-Suggs agreed that hearing other women's success stories adds to the confidence women feel about their own decisions. Haas and Hale both suggested the idea of breaking the cycle of dependence. One way this cycle can be broken is by women self leading change and seeking new support systems. When the cycle is broken and the woman begins self leading she needs support systems in place. If a woman is low income because she left a dependent relationship she needs interdependent support. Interdependent support is accepting help from others while working to help self, but not relying on them to provide sole means of stability. She also needs understanding and in school

she may need tutoring to be successful. A woman will have to draw on her inner strength which becomes more evident as she self leads her own and her family's change.

Self-leadership cannot be denied in light of the barriers and obstacles that women have to overcome to seek out help and make change. One previously referenced article researched six global women leaders and discussed how culture impacted their leadership styles and methods (Chandler, 2008). The author emphasized that support systems were very important to women's success and self-leadership. The women of this study needed to self lead and very often in times of stress and turmoil recognized their inner strength to manage their own lives.

Concluding Remarks

Doing additional research beyond the original literature review adds to the analytic review of the data. When developing the situational mapping the researcher has to answer a long list of questions that are not part of the story directly, but are raised from the discourse and provide background data for the researcher. What needs further analysis, who, how? Clarke (2005) suggests completing the mapping causes one to go back and forth between the discourse and outside data. I found this to be the case. In this study, Appalachian Regional Commission data was important to interpreting place and educational levels of the population. To situate the stories more fully I conducted additional conversations with Educational and Appalachian regional professionals to collect feedback on what these individuals thought enabled socio-economic stability and independence. Their feedback corroborated the stories and strengthened the analysis and understanding of significance and relatedness of themes. Conversations with Haas, Hale, and Kirtdoll-Suggs supported the overlapping position of primary themes and the significance of culture and place to the centrality of self-leadership in the women's lives. The conversations led to policy recommendations regarding the recognition, support and resources

needed to aid Appalachian women in attaining economic stability. Ultimately, completing the interpretation of the narrative by “situating” it in a larger discourse added a much richer understanding of the Appalachian women’s journey to economic stability and independence.

Chapter VI begins with a discussion of the significance of the primary findings of the study followed by the implications and recommendations for practice and research. The limitations of the study are then reviewed. The Epilogue offers my final reflections on conducting this study and the meaning that it brought to my life.

Chapter VI: Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

I teach at a rural community college in Southern Ohio that services five counties, three of which are designated Appalachian. My students frequently ask, “*Why do we have to take a class on diversity or the economics of men and women or talk about discrimination? I don’t think we have discrimination anymore.*” I was surprised to hear such sentiment from these young Appalachian women and men. In my age cohort of Generation X women, I experienced bright, capable women living in the economic shadow of men and finding it difficult to make independent lives in and out of married relationships. Terms such as identity, control, power, financial problems, head of household, dependent, divorce, and abuse were not a part of open conversation amongst my female peers. Yet in my office or in private conversation, Appalachian women students and friends would share brief glimpses into a personal world that spoke to these very issues. As an economist, I was puzzled over Appalachian middle class women’s financial instability and their learned dependency on the male partner’s financial resources and support. As an educator, I was intent in discovering the underlying reasons for these disparities. I believed that my students would recognize the significance of financial and economic dependence if they heard the stories of middle-class women who had overcome obstacles on their journey to success. My consideration of these experiences and the review of the Appalachian literature ultimately led to the foreshadowed question for this research study: How do Appalachian women self-lead from socio-economic dependent relationships to independence within the social, cultural, and economic forces of the Appalachian community? The foundation of this study is told in the voice of Appalachian women. As the researcher, I sought meaning from the journeys that they related through early marriages, divorce, and ultimately economic stability. The

analysis of meaning ultimately led to the realization that these Appalachian women were self-leaders of change in their own and their children's lives.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the primary findings of the study in relation to the relevant literature on self-leadership. The second section includes the study's significance to Appalachian studies. The third section presents implications of self-leading change and how this affects choices and family roles, which in turn affect socio-economic stability of the mother and her children. Finally, I conclude with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

The Appalachian women of this study practiced self-leadership fostered through social support, education, and economic independence. Sinclair's (2007) concept of liberating leadership supports these women's voiced experience; "leadership can liberate us from confining or oppressive conditions—imposed by structures, others and ourselves" (p. xix). For the women of this study becoming economically independent liberated them. Through self-leading change "these women continue to live their lives as people of commitment, courage and vision," as stated by Appalachian writer Sally Maggard (1999, p. 248) for themselves and their children.

Appalachian Women's Self-Leadership

The leadership of these women is identified by this researcher as self-leadership. In Appalachian literature, leadership of women has been discussed largely through studies of activism such as House and Howard's (2009) environmental activism, Anglin's (2002b) Mica women, Maggard's (1999) coalfield strike workers, and Seitz's (1995) participants in community action; however, the women of this study were not leading a community cause or actively engaging in political protest, but engaging in an internal self-change to leave a destructive family

system. An examination of the theoretical literature on self-leadership reveals the correspondence between the central concepts of leading self-change and the qualities that the women of this study exhibited in their journey of change.

Like other leadership practices, self-leadership may be manifested and experienced differently across diverse cultures. Alves et al. (2006) compared cultural implications on self-leadership outside of the United States to how self-leadership is defined inside the United States. Extrapolating to internal U.S. cultures Appalachia, as a marginalized cultural area within the United States, might also involve different norms of self-leadership practice from non-Appalachian areas of the United States. The cultural place of Appalachia affected women's self-leadership practices as evidenced by the women's deep-rooted sense of place and identification as Appalachian. This emotional attachment to place was noted by the researcher during the interview, in the voice of the participant. Furtner, Rauthmann, and Sachse's (2010) definition of self-leadership, "managing one's own thoughts and behaviors in order to intrinsically pursue goals effectively and be productive" (p. 1191) is descriptive of what the participants in this study did. In the change process, the participants thought differently about themselves and aggressively pursued economic independence and stability. Furtner et al. (2010) correlate high socio-emotional abilities with high self-leadership abilities. Appalachian women are cognizant of their emotional attachments to place. The socio-emotional strength they derive from the embedded cultural systems of community and family support aid their decision-making strengths when acting as change agents. The participants lend new voice to self-leadership discussion.

Alves et al. (2006) considered various paradigms and suggested possible reconfigurations of self-leadership into two dimensions based on Hofstede's research on "individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity" (p. 340). They proposed the femininity

of self-leadership is “connoted as cooperation, participation, and relational” in style (Alves et al., 2006, p. 340). These characteristics are dominant methods of leading change in the stories of the Appalachian women of this study. These women were a part of a support system structured on family cooperation, active participation, and relational work within the family and community.

An examination of Alves et al.’s (2006) self-leadership postulates from the perspective of Appalachian culture yielded a useful correspondence with descriptors of Appalachian women’s self-leadership practice as depicted in this study:

1. Appalachian women experience a dual identity as Appalachian and American where they vacillate between contingent and autonomous as needed. In male-dominated relationships women may face a higher power distance leading to: “Individuals in cultures with higher power distance are more likely to practice restricted/contingent self-leadership, [whereas] individuals in cultures with lower power distance are more likely to practice autonomous self-leadership” (p. 351). In Appalachia the relationship of husband and wife may present a high power distance where women must self lead in a restricted/contingent manner. This restriction was evident in the stories where they felt controlled and had to raise their self-confidence to end the relationship. Alves et al. (2006) suggest that in the United States our structure is a low power distance. This presents Appalachian women with an opportunity to draw on a dual distinction as Appalachian American and possibly practice autonomous leadership after the relationship of high power is terminated.
2. Appalachian women are risk takers when support systems are solid. The women were willing to take risks much like “Individuals in cultures with lower uncertainty avoidance are more likely to practice entrepreneurial self-leadership... self-leadership

- in collectivist cultures may be understood and applied on the basis of social relations, while in individualistic cultures it is essentially centered on the person” (p. 354).
3. Appalachian women are relational. “Individuals in collectivist cultures are more likely to practice relations-centered self-leadership. In particular, in feminine cultures the ideal leader (or “manager hero”) is intuitive and seeks consensus and cooperation; in masculine cultures, the manager hero is supposed to be assertive, decisive, and aggressive. Traditionally, masculine emotions reflect assertiveness, toughness, material and economic aspects of life, while feminine emotions reflect nurturing, social relations, and quality of life” (p. 354). This depiction of feminine emotions reflects the nurturing Appalachian women of this study. They rebuilt social relations damaged by their husband’s isolation of them after they left the husband. Quality of life was a determinant in the change effort because they recognized the effects of the marital dysfunction on themselves and their children.
 4. The role of mother and hearth nurturer is respected although not openly discussed outside of the family. Often, Appalachia is assumed to be a masculine patriarchal culture and to some degree it is such. There is an assumption the woman will run the household and nurture the children under the man’s guidance. This is an important aspect of the familial relationship because she has some power within the household as home manager and men do respect the woman’s role as nurturer. This becomes problematic when she desires to make other choices or use her influence outside of the household. Appalachian women navigate from male-dominated situations back to relate to their female supporters, often mothers or sisters. “Individuals in masculine cultures are more likely to practice material-based self-leadership. Individuals in

feminine cultures are more likely to practice relational-based self-leadership” (p. 355). It is a conundrum not easy for Appalachian women to navigate where masculine and feminine leadership traits are rewarded in some situations and not in others.

Power differences, risk tolerance, relational ability and female support impact the roles the woman must embody to self-lead and bring about change. Within the relational behaviors women consider the effects of their actions and the impact that not achieving their goal will have on their family. To each of them failure was not an option if she was to secure her independence. Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009) refer to the effects of reflection and behaviors on the impact of self-leadership, “behavior focused strategies are about enhancing one’s self perception of personal performance during task resolution, in order to adjust self behavior towards task achievement” (p. 166). The task goal was terminating a detrimental relationship and building a socio-economically secure life for the woman and her child. Her behaviors at times were impacted by cultural and family expectations. She had to be confident in her abilities in spite of the risks and fears. Importantly, the support from family enabled actions she may not have been able to consider if she were alone with no familial support to encourage her to proceed.

Appalachian characterization impacted the participant’s views of responsibility, family, and who they were as people. Over and over I would hear, “it is going home,” “it is the physical presence of location,” and “it is who I am” when asked what was different about Appalachia. To these women there was *something different and good* in the cultural practices of *Appalachia as home*. Harcourt and Escobar (2005) collected 15 stories from authors from around the world depicting the relevance of women’s lives particular to place. The women were not Appalachian, but several depictions (from women of other cultures) shared similarities to the marginalized

experiences of Appalachian women. The place the women were located was significant in each story because of the institutions and customs impacting their lives. All of the women in this study but one considered themselves rural Appalachians. Rural designation conjures an image of people who are poor, “historically, rural communities in the United States are portrayed as disadvantaged... [and] rural literature consistently supports this assertion” (Belanger & Stone, 2008, p.103). The participants were from at-risk and transitional counties. At-risk counties rank between the worst 10% and 25% of the nation's counties. Transitional counties rank between the worst 25% and the best 25% of the nation's counties (see p. 60). This affects economic stability, resource availability and higher education access. The rural aspects of place impacted access to education and availability of resources due to proximity and transportation (Belanger & Stone, 2008; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; Oberhauser, 1995). It is not uncommon for women to have to drive over 30 minutes to reach a college or social service agency. Appalachian literature is attentive to place, but more research on women and their issues in place such as the work Harcourt and Escobar (2005) have done would benefit deeper understanding of the issues of identity and cultural aspersion women face in their interactions with Appalachians and non-Appalachians.

Economic Independence was related to *Education* which in turn appeared to be related to employment opportunities and confidence. These women advanced their careers, income, and education. Outside sources of support enabled them to gain asset ownership and career paths if they did not have them at the time of the divorce. Before the women left their spouses several were economically dependent on the man as the primary breadwinners of the family. One of the first hurdles individual women in this study had to cross was how to support herself financially. Division of responsibility often “served the purpose of keeping women economically dependent

on men and in a lower position of economic power than men. In this way it did secure the existence of the family” (Kirkwood, 1993, p. 22). If the woman had a job during the marriage it was somewhat easier to find the economic resources to leave the marriage. If she did not have a job during the marriage, then fear of destitution and concern over how to care for her children tended to trap women in the relationship until she could lead herself into a means to become economically stable either through a job or government agency resources.

The three most significant factors affecting socio-economic status and class are education, income, and occupation (Leonhardt & Scott, 2005). In my research occupations were discussed as employment. Income was not identified by salary but all of the women are currently socio-economically middle class given their educational level and stable employment in careers, not simply jobs. In Appalachian literature poverty permeates; “wealth belonged to the exploiter, not the inhabitant” (Giardina, 1999, p. 165). If wealth is taken from a region then economic independence becomes harder for one to develop. In the literature depicting natural resource stripping such as coal and other valuable natural assets the flow of money to big business leaves the area of Appalachia instead of being reinvested in the local economies. This economic drain negatively impacts the availability of employment and maintains a status quo (Eller, 2008); however, the women of this study secured sustainable jobs with family supporting incomes through furthering their education when necessary and aggressively pursuing careers.

Steubenville Councilwoman, Kirtdoll-Suggs, said if she could make any change she would investigate how women are paid and she was sure women were paid less than men and that discrimination in the workplace is worse in Appalachia (A. Kirtdoll-Suggs, personal communication, June 23, 2011). Although it is illegal, she believes employers in Appalachia seek to discover the woman’s number of children because they believe the children will take

priority over the job. Employers make an assumption and judgment before the woman ever has a chance. This continued discrimination places women in an untenable position when making choices regarding education, jobs, and federal assistance. Kirtdoll-Suggs believes institutionalized discrimination makes it difficult for women to pursue jobs or seek agency assistance; therefore they distrust government programs and rely on family to help care for their children or provide a place to live while they are transitioning to independence.

Social support impacted the ability to become economically independent through enabling women to obtain an education, look for employment, or take necessary actions to lead change. Appalachian women became socially independent by seeking their own friendships and support from their family apart from the relationship with their male spouse. Rezek (2010) completed a study of teen mothers in rural Appalachia. Her research into support systems found “some form of kin network for support was crucial for all the young women. This support was almost exclusively female” (p. 134). In my study support from parents or parent-like relatives was vital to their success. Several husbands tried to isolate their wives from their friends and family. It was important for these women to maintain their own family connections while going through their divorces. Mothers were significant in the strength and support they shared with their daughters when the life-changing turning point arrived where she had to terminate the marriage.

Education was often a catalyst for the women to make the decision to leave. It was a tool to enable sustainability after they left the marriage. The women wanted their children to have a positive role model that imbued the importance of education and advanced career options. The fear the women had for their children, especially their daughters, was that they would limit their career options by not advancing in education. They believed that without the education to attain

economic independence, the daughters would be trapped in relationships that were similar to the ones that the women of this study had endured. In this study, the women who were educated prior to the marriage and working were more likely to believe they could be economically independent; however, they had to overcome emotions and guilt for leaving the man they thought they had to stand by forever. Eula Hall (1999) tells her story of determination to leave an abusive relationship. She understands why some women stay, “I can still see why there aren’t many women in Appalachia in the same abusive situation who manage to get out. They really can’t. They’re destroyed physically by men” (p. 197). She did not obtain a formal education, but valued it, “I’ve done a lot of things I’ve wanted to do without trying to further my education...but if I were twenty years old, I would go to school and get my degree” (Hall, 1999, p. 197). It is impressive when someone who has been successful does so without higher education, but her statement stresses that education is important and women need to take advantage of educational opportunities. “But now there are opportunities that women can pursue. There are shelters and there are programs for education” (Hall, 1999, p. 198). Support for education from Appalachian women leaders such as Hall emphasizes the need and when she speaks hopefully women will listen to her experiences.

Significance to Appalachian Studies

This study adds to the research on Appalachian women, Appalachian leadership and Appalachian women’s self-leadership. The impact of relational practices in leadership exercised by women of a culture, which embraces family ties, is significant to the leadership literature as well as Appalachian literature. This study and others can add to the success stories available to women, a need articulated by Kirtdoll-Suggs. The voices of the women of this study can speak to women who need encouragement to become self leaders. As important, the women’s stories can

inform professionals who work with Appalachian women looking for education or employment opportunities of the challenges and needs of their struggle.

This research was encouraged by preceding work such as Anglin and B. Smith's capture of women's stories. Anglin's (2002b) ethnographic work captured the ongoing life experience of Mica workers, while B. Smith (1999) used feminist historiography to "challenge conventional conceptions of the region" (p. 1). Seitz (1995) also used a feminist research process to examine women's experiences. Her study's focus was women in community activism and the changes they made in communities. She drew on outside sources and her own experiences to analyze the themes. Rezek's work, *Gender Role Patterns: How they factor into support systems for young mothers in rural Appalachia (2010)* conducted a qualitative study "employing an open-ended, semi-structured interview style" (Rezek, 2010, p. 131) that illustrated through stories the strength and resiliency of Appalachian women.

The studies of Anglin, Rezek, Seitz, and B. Smith illustrate the importance of women's stories and demonstrate the strength of Appalachian women and refute the colorful, negative and stereotypical images of women from the region. Influenced by their example, I have sought to add to the Appalachian literature the stories of women who successfully navigated through challenging familial experiences to become self-reliant and economically independent.

Women Appalachian scholars continue to call for more research in women's issues by actively seeking the information through the women's voices. Obtaining lived experiences achieves a perspective supported by constructivist researchers, oral historians, ethnographers, and feminist scholars who believe the best way to uncover the lived experience of Appalachia is to ask those who are immersed in the phenomenon of interest in the place of Appalachia. My

study is situated within the tradition of studying Appalachian culture and lives with interpretative method and adds to our understanding of women's lives in Appalachia today.

Implications for Leading Change

This study gives voice to a marginalized group, specifically Appalachian women of North-Central Appalachia. I chose to seek the stories of this socio-economic group of women because they have been largely overlooked in the research literature. Admittedly, this study does not answer questions of all women's experiences and barriers in Appalachia. African American women, Hispanic and other minorities are not represented. Nonetheless, it is my hope that the stories of these white, middle class women who successfully overcame significant challenges in creating socio-economic stability in their homes provide a positive role model for other women of the region. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 states women are not to be discriminated against in the workplace. Evidence of continued discrimination is documented in pay inequalities by the Bureau of Labor Statistics data on pay differences among other sources. Education and economic opportunities are often gate openers for women to successful careers and incomes. As women gain more education, better career opportunities open for them to lead and participate in more comfortable and stable lives. The women of this study were able to use education to attain stable incomes and occupations; however, their journeys to success illuminate the barriers and obstacles that must be navigated to attain economic stability and sustainable occupations. The strategies these women used can be studied by others to affect change in their own lives. In particular, the strategies for creating change in their own lives and those of their children emerged from and fostered their "self-leadership." Self-leadership allowed these women to enhance their lives through "a set of behavioral and constructive strategies aim[ed] [at] the enhancement of personal effectiveness" (Alves et al., 2006, p. 356).

The implications of the findings centered on the qualities of self-leadership, education, and social support may be especially useful to counselors, education professionals, interested policy and agency workers, and family and friends of women in similar situations. Counselors and education professionals may be part of women's efforts to become stable socio-economically. Counselors have the opportunity to support and reinforce the qualities of self-leadership, in Appalachian women seeking help. Women develop positive and motivating thought patterns, set personal goals, observe their behavior and self-evaluate, and self-reinforce through support from the counselor (Nahavandi, 2009). Education professionals, both faculty and administrators, are resources to independence. Increased education aids in a woman's ability to secure employment enabling her economic independence. Often she needs support from outside parties to lead change in her own life. Social service personnel need to be trained and made aware of the culture of their clients, in addition to the programs and services available to women in need. Implementation of legislation providing new educational opportunities and job retraining are vital to the economic success of Appalachian women.

Policymakers and agency personnel are often part of implementing or enforcing regulation that provides resources for continuing education, childcare support, therapy, and medical aid to victims of abuse and children of parents who do not have insurance benefits. Most importantly, policymakers can affect legislation that makes it easier or more difficult to divorce, obtain local resources in rural areas, get help for children, and ensure adequate child and spousal support to women when due. An example of resources is the current issue with broadband in rural areas. As distance learning opportunities increase, the demand for Internet services in rural areas increases but the infrastructure is not in place. Cultural discrimination is institutionalized and many policymakers dismiss the significance of rural services, saying it is a choice to live in a

rural area, implying they are unworthy of certain services. It is a type of geographical discrimination.

The lower the income the harder it is to go to college—one might suggest that providing incentives for people to go on for higher education might raise income levels. Therefore institutions that make it difficult to change or improve educational levels help to maintain or institutionalize low incomes (American Psychological Association, 2006). Government agencies providing assistance have been a part of this imbalance. What matters regarding social position as much as reality is our perception and what we believe to be our class status. Appalachian women often perceive themselves as less than their non-Appalachian counterparts in classrooms as students and in the work place as colleagues. This is what happens with Appalachian women when fears are validated by encountering a degrading situation either in our personal relationships or in our social engagements with people outside of Appalachia.

Localized regions all over the United States and the world develop cultural characteristics shaped from geography and access to resources. Here might be where the real differences lie, not in the people themselves but in the services and resources available to them because they live in topographically and geologically rough landscapes hidden in rural backlands. Political bias and regional discrimination of people due to their place of residence needs to be addressed on the federal and state level with legislation and policy remedies. Appalachian women need access to the same services non-Appalachian women have with regard to government and social support systems. This will enable more equity across regions and empower self-leadership in Appalachian women which in turn enables socio-economic independence and stability.

Limitations of Study

The primary limitations of this study were sample size and demographic characteristics. It was a conscious choice to limit the sample size and complete a purposeful sample of Appalachian women. The participants had specific socio-economic characteristics as they were all Caucasian, middle-class women from a very specific region in Appalachia, North Central. Although there is a paucity of research on this specific demographic group with respect to socio-economic independence and geographic regions of North or North Central Appalachia, the narrowness of the sample limits generalizability of the findings to other classes and cultural groups.

The snowball method was used to identify potential participants of the study. This method limits the essential diversity of the sample because women are referring other women they know through their own social network. This increases the probability of interviewing women with similar values, backgrounds, and interests. However, in this study I was interested in discovering women who shared a common experience rather than increases the diversity in the sample.

Economic stability and independence was determined from a perceptual constructivist view. Information was not specifically gathered about the women's income and occupation; rather, the researcher relied on the participants' view of economic stability. This is consistent with taking a narrative view where it is the person's perception of their life quality that is essential to the story rather than an objective measure. The women's middle to upper class status was identified by the participant herself. The referrer perceived the person to be middle class because of their occupation and assumed income level based on their assets such as owning their own home.

Finally, this study does not address the issue of domestic abuse that emerged as a subtheme in the women's reasons for leaving the marital relationship. Abuse in the relationships took on numerous forms from physical, emotional, to financial. All of the women left their husbands due to some manner of abuse. This was a sub-thematic area of the findings that was noted but was not featured prominently in the analyses and interpretation because of the intent of the study to examine economic independence; nonetheless, such experiences of abuse may be instrumental to the women's self-leading out of the relationship and seeking independence. The scope of this research study constrained the full investigation of the relationship between abuse, motivation for socio-economic independence, and self-leadership qualities in women.

In spite of these limitations, the authenticity of the stories, credibility of the sources, confirmability of the data, and the transferability of the findings are the criteria on which the study must be evaluated.

Future Research

Stories of Appalachian women as productive economic agents are gaining ground in the literature and this study enriches our understanding of middle-class Appalachian women and their successful metamorphosis to socio-economic independence. The role of self-leadership and its relationship to socio-economic independence may be of particular significance in the Appalachian study of women and their roles in family and community. Although much of the self-leadership literature is directed to management organizations and how individuals can successfully lead in these organizations, this study explored the role of self-leadership theory to the family organization.

The women reflected on the impact their decisions had on their own lives and their children's. "Self observation stands for one's self consciousness and reflection concerning why

and how specific behaviors impact” (Curral & Marques-Quinteiro, 2009, p. 166). It would be revealing to revisit these same women a year from now and engage in a conversation to learn the effects on their self-leadership from telling their stories and reflecting on their experiences. This would inform whether the reflection enabled the women to improve their leadership, make adjustments to their decision strategies ensuring economic stability, or utilize more available resources to sustain independence.

It would be worthwhile to extend the connections between self-leadership, education, and social support to other groups of Appalachian women including African American rural and urban women. In what ways does education and access to education play a role in attaining economic success? How does the African American family structure support life decisions of divorce and independence in the Appalachian culture? In what ways are the cultural characteristics of importance in this study not unique to Appalachia but relevant to many different rural communities or marginalized groups such as a sense of home, suspicious nature of individuals from outside, and a sense that women should carry an extraordinary share of family/household responsibility?

Abuse, although a part of the women’s stories, has not been the primary focus of this study. It does, however, warrant further investigation in the context of Appalachian women’s lives. The types of abuse in Appalachian families and the significance of it to fostering a pattern of dependency and repetition of cycles of abuse present important questions for future investigations. The abuse of prescription drugs in the region has received recognition in ARC studies and the extent of this problem on the family and opportunities for dependent children is important; however, these studies have been limited and need to be expanded to include the

many different types of abuse that occur in family life and as revealed in the stories of these women's lives.

This study does not seek out the reflections of men and their role in the Appalachian family. Analysis of men's impact on women's self-leadership could be completed through intense interviews with men from their perspective. Research in Appalachian men's roles and their impact within the relationship would add to the body of work on Appalachian roles and leadership.

Finally, it is critical that further investigations into the policies and funding through social services and education initiatives are pursued. Although beyond the scope of this study, more review is warranted of how institutionalized laws and policies make it difficult for women to obtain education and job placement services.

As the outside forces push on the Appalachian community, women try to maintain a culture valuing family, home, and religious values. The culture has held to fairly conservative religious beliefs (Eller, 2008) which impact the views of who is in charge of the family, decision making, and divorce. The women in this study pushed back against the stereotypes of subservient women and uneducated Appalachians. Self-confidence is integral to Appalachian women's self-leadership. The statement about confidence was echoed in many of the women's stories. It is my hope and goal to encourage women I meet to have confidence and self-esteem. As an educator I seek to teach men and women the value of economic security and social stability. As a parent I want my children to embrace their heritage, cast off stereotypes, never be ashamed of where they come from and recognize that every individual is responsible for their actions and their effect on others.

Epilogue

Where I'm From

*I am from blue walls and tile floors,
From Irish music loud and proud.
From dark forbidding storage room.
And nerf darts strewn about the place.
I am from the basement.*

*I am from ten acres to roam.
From my dog at my side.
From trekking through the tall grass.
And cattle in their pasture.
I am from a farm.*

*I am from the county fair.
From generations pizza.
From countryside YMCA.
And the buckeye state.*

*I am from Gaelic storm.
From lacrosse.
From fish and chips.
And Celtic festivals.*

*I am from vacation on the outerbanks.
From cornbread.
From fresh brownies.
And sitting in the sun.
I am from my mother's love.*

By Noah McCarren, my son (2010)

Two of my favorite shows on National Public Radio, NPR, are *Wait, Wait, Don't tell me!* and *What do you know?* When I finished my interviews I thought "Well, hmmm, what did I know from these remarkable stories of Appalachian women?"

I remember when I entered Antioch University my reason for wanting to go back to school was to learn something to share with my students and to help others. I wrote in my first

essay about how I walked out of my house one day and thought *why doesn't household labor of women have value, non-market work as we say in Economics? If the measurement for value is getting paid, then why do they get paid less in the market? And another thing, why if you are an Appalachian woman, is it even more difficult?* Oh, I heard the reasons: men have been doing market work longer, the pipeline theory; men are stronger and do riskier jobs; women stay home with babies and lose skills; and those people in Appalachia are just *different*. Okay so if all of that is true then why, with advances in technology and equal rights and anti-discrimination laws, are we still experiencing problems? Of course, I also thought I knew the answers, after all I am an educated, market laboring Appalachian woman. I must know the answers and they are just buried in my mind.

We go to school to learn and I started learning about marginalization, disenfranchisement, cultural racism, and self-leadership. Who knew we actually lead ourselves? As we all experience change over time, my time in the Leadership and Change program was filled with many personal and educational changes. As the learning achievements progressed it became clear that I wanted to know all afore-referenced, but I wanted to know about people who were close to my heart, Appalachian women. They are my students, my friends, and my family. Specifically, I wanted to hear the positive stories of successful outcomes. I have visited the hollers and I have seen what has given fodder to the stereotypes, but what about all the good experiences?

As parents we worry about our decisions and how they will affect our children. When my son gave me this poem I cried just as I cried while typing it in this paper. I hope I have taught my children something by my own actions and my own efforts at self-leadership.

Ironically, the day I started writing Chapter V my two oldest children left for a mission trip to Harlan County, Kentucky. One went to help repair homes and the other to work in an Adult Day Care for mentally challenged adults using Art. They prepared for this trip for a year, they asked to go, and they wanted to go. I knew I would not be able to accompany them because of the timing. They understood and each time they came home from a mission meeting they would tell me about the discussions and plans. They would tell me how some of the team needed to learn some things about Appalachia because someone suggested they watch *Deliverance* if they wanted an image of where they were headed. My son responded “My mom hates that movie.” My daughter said “It was a good thing you weren’t there mom, on the other hand, maybe you could set them straight.” I told them it would be fine, people say ridiculous things when they aren’t thinking, these are educated people you are going with, they know better. I told them they don’t need me to tell them things they already should know. After all we live in an area that ranges from 90% to 50% out migrants from Kentucky and West Virginia, whose families left Appalachia for jobs during the War on Poverty. *Well, I couldn’t repeat what I was really thinking—they are minor children.*

So when the day came to kiss them good-bye, I told them what every mother tells her children, “I love you, behave, listen to the adults, if you have any problems tell someone, and if you need me I am only a five-hour drive away.” They said, “Yeah, yeah, us too, we just hope nobody says anything stupid.” So I added, “You can only be responsible for yourself, just remember to be one of instead of apart from.”

I spent quite a bit of time trying to prove to others that Appalachian women live lives substantially different from women outside of Appalachia. Maybe the biggest difference is we believe there is a difference based on perceived stereotypes of the region and its occupants.

Maybe the only real differences are perceptions. Maybe Appalachian women share the same highs and lows as women outside the region but our expectations are that our lows are so much worse because we have an image constructed from what the media and other outsiders have told us characterizes our region. In response I will continue to self-lead and lead my students and children by example, demonstrating through research and actions the importance of education, economic sustainability, and social stability practices.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Participants Generational Assignments

Rename participants	Current Age:	Born	Generation	
Adele	49	1962	Baby Boom	
Sara	55	1956	Baby Boom	
Wilma	72	1939	Silent Generation	
Tina	41	1970	Generation X	
Dena	41	1970	Generation X	
Risa	45	1965	Generation X	
Amy	38	1973	Generation X	
Violet	74	1937	Silent Generation	
Andrea	43	1967/68	Generation X	
Carly	34	1977	Generation X	
Dora	59	1952	Baby Boom	
Juanita	66	1945	Silent Generation	
Faith	53	1958	Baby Boom	
Nina	44	1968	Generation X	
Winona	37	1974	Generation X	
Name	Range	Age	Number in Cohort	
Silent Generation	1925-1945	86-66	3	
Baby Boom	1946-1964	65-47	4	
Generation X	1965-1979	46-32	8	
Millennials or Gen Y	1980-2000	31-11	0	
Bridge generation age 50-64				

Appendix B

Primary Theme Occurrence by Participant Pseudonym

	Appalachian Characterization aggregated	Children Aggregat e	Economic Independence Aggregate	Education Aggregate	Self Leadership Aggregate	Generational issues aggregate	Reasons for Living Aggregate	Social Support aggregate
1 : Amy	9	19	7	4	20	4	36	13
2 : Andrea	26	28	5	6	36	15	68	11
3 : Violet	21	14	15	10	37	8	31	11
4 : Carly	26	14	25	11	52	3	61	31
5 : Dora	16	8	5	4	22	5	18	10
6 : Juanita	15	8	8	1	37	5	48	18
7 : Faith	27	7	15	17	20	13	32	14
8 : Risa	31	10	16	15	24	10	40	14
9 : Adele	12	18	15	2	31	7	22	13
10 : Nina	25	3	12	16	66	5	83	23
11 : Winona	7	9	12	6	17	1	24	9
12 : Dena	16	8	6	8	33	2	44	8
13 : Sara	11	2	13	5	28	0	22	20
14 : Tina	13	2	6	8	23	5	56	11
15 : Wilma	34	3	9	5	105	15	101	40

Attachment I

Antioch University PhD in Leadership & Change INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Application for Ethics Review

IRB Chair comments:
Instructions

- All research (by faculty and/or students) involving human participants must be reviewed and approved prior to initiating the project.
- This version of the form is intended for you to complete in Antioch Online. Once it is completed, including the attachment of any necessary documents, please press the Submit button. Submissions will 1) send you an email copy of the application for your own records, 2) email the application to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Carolyn Kenny E-mail:ckenny@antioch.edu

NOTE: IRB Approval for projects is valid for one year only. Investigators must request a continuation if the activity lasts for more than one year. IF APPROVAL FOR THE PROJECT LAPSES, CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH IS A VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY POLICY AS WELL AS FEDERAL REGULATIONS.

1. Name and mailing address of Principal Investigator(s):

Michele Kegley
978 Hampton Ct

Lebanon, OH 45036

For Faculty - Other Principal Investigator:

2. Departmental Status: Student

3. Phone Number: (a) Work (b) Home (513) 836-3235

4. Name of Core Faculty Advisor: Elizabeth Holloway

5. Name & Contact Information of other Program Faculty Involved in this Project:

a. Antioch Faculty and/or Primary Evaluator for Learning Achievement or Research Project: Elizabeth Holloway

E-mail address of non-PhD faculty person:

Note to students: Please have your primary evaluator send an email to Dr. Carolyn Kenny

indicating his/her approval of your research proposal.

b. If this ethics application is for your dissertation, the name of your Dissertation Chair appears below.

Elizabeth Holloway

6. Learning Achievement Dissertation

Title of Project: Dissertation Investigative Interviewing for Narrative Inquiry of How do Appalachian women in dependent relationships with male spouses reach socio-economic stability and independence??

7. Source of Funding for the project (if applicable): n/a

8. Expected starting date for project: 12/01/2010

9. Anticipated completion date for data collection: 03/15/2011

10. Describe the proposed participants- age, number, sex, race, or other special characteristics. (Up to 250 words):

Appalachian adult females over the age of 18. Will interview a minimum of 15 or until I reach the saturation point for Qualitative Narrative Inquiry study. It is possible I may need to interview 25 or more women to reach saturation; if saturation is reached at eight I will continue to interview the minimum 15 to ensure there is rich detail for the emerging themes. Appalachian women, defined as those living in Appalachia or self-identifying as Appalachian. Participants will be Appalachian women from Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia; divorced (or terminated marriage), middle to upper class women; who have children. The women participants were married to male spouses and as single women have socially and economically care (d) for themselves and their children. They may or may not be receiving child support. The stories will be confidential. Only I will know the names of all of the participants.

11. Describe how the participants are to be selected and recruited. (Up to 400 words):

Colleagues, scholars and professional women I know through my work and attendance of organizational meetings and whom I have shared my research interest; have referred the first women to be interviewed. They will refer women they believe embody the participant criteria. The participants are not my own personal friends but referrals through mutual acquaintances who know their story and my research interest. They contact the individual and if the individual is interested they can contact me or ask the referring individual that I contact them to set up a private conversation. During the interview process the participants will be asked if there is someone they know who has shared similar life experiences and may be willing and interested in speaking with me. They will be asked to contact the individual and ask if they can share their contact information with the researcher, me. The first individual was referred by a fellow cohort member who contacted the individual told them of my research interest and the individual agreed to be interviewed. My second interviewee was referred by a colleague of mine at my college who is aware of my research interest and contacted the participant and she agreed to be interviewed. She in turn has asked two more women she knows if they would participate and they have agreed to be interviewed. From these women I will seek additional referrals. I am not drawing from an

institution or organization but using the snowball method where one participant refers another and so on. If at some point this does not continue to yield participants I have an additional list of women whom I have met over the last year and half at workshops, conferences and who work with me at my college who are know my research interest and are willing to refer women.

The snowball method will be used to identify participants. Snowball sampling yields a certain kind of sameness and exhausts one's network of contacts and contact referrals. With this approach, I am legitimized as a trustworthy researcher and that my personal approach to the interview is genuine and authentic. Due to the sensitive nature of the information to be discussed in the interviews, the snowball effect is specifically suited to identifying individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in which I am interested and that may be willing to share their story for this research. Particular to this research topic and the cultural characteristics of geographical area of Appalachia, there must be a level of trust for the participants to be willing to share their story. I believe that overall the snowball method of identifying potential participants will add a sense of safeness for the interviewee because someone we know mutually will introduce us and add credulity to my presence as a culturally sensitive and legitimately interested researcher.

Snowball sampling is useful in recruiting participants who may be difficult to find or who would not be easily identified. Health care researchers have used this method to find participants when the information they seek is not information people openly share (Sadler et al, p. 370).

12. Describe the proposed procedures, e.g., interviewing survey questionnaires, experiments, etc. in the project. Any proposed experimental activities that are included in evaluation, research, development, demonstration, instruction, study, treatments, debriefing, questionnaires, and similar projects must be described. Continue your description on following page if necessary. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE AND AVOID JARGON. Please do not insert a copy of your methodology section from your proposal. State briefly and concisely the procedures for the project. (500 words):

This is a qualitative narrative inquiry which uses an investigative interviewing approach to data collection. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with each of the participants. The template of questions is attached to this application as is the informed consent. I will interview a minimum of 15 participants. Each interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. I will do face to face and telephone interviews. Both will use the same questions and informed consent forms will be signed prior to the interview. All identifying information will be removed from the transcript. The participant will be provided with a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy, clarification, or deletion of any material that they would prefer not to be included. All interviews will be transferred into the software program NVivo 9 for thematic coding. A research team will work on the coding and a research buddy/partner will help minimize researcher bias. Major themes which become evident from the coding will be investigated and analyzed using situational analysis and thematic interviewing analysis. All hard copies of the transcripts and audio recordings will be kept in a secure and locked drawer in the researcher's home office. The computer in which the transcripts are stored is password protected. Electronic copies of the transcripts will be password protected through Word password function.

13. Project Purpose(s) and Benefits: (400 words):

The purpose of the study is to learn what factors influence women in socio economically and emotionally dependent relationships to leave these relationships to seek socio-economic independence. Semi-structured interviews will be used to explore the women's stories of leaving their relationships and of achieving social, emotional, and economic independence from the relationship. The benefits of this project are to learn of those factors that contributed to successful outcomes for these women. The findings from these women's stories may be useful to other women navigating similar situations. In particular, understanding what were the catalysts that allowed them to make the decision to leave, what resources in the community helped them to navigate this life change, and what professionals were instrumental and how did they assist them. These questions have not been answered for Appalachian women who face this specific circumstance.

14. If participants in this proposed research may thereby be exposed to an elevated possibility of harm, physiological, psychological, or social please provide the following information: (UP to 500 words)

a. Identify and describe the possible benefits and risks.

NOTE: for international research or vulnerable populations, please provide information about local culture that will assist the review committee in evaluating potential risks to participants, particularly when the project raises issues related to power differentials:

There is no physical harm to the participant(s) in this study. The information the participant provides is confidential and I will be the only one who knows the true identity of each participant. I will list the mental health facility address and phone number in my informed consent form which is near the participant and will tell the participant in the form and verbally, they do not have to continue with the interview if they wish to stop. The subject matter is very personal and one may become emotional in the retelling of the story, but all have agreed by their own free will to participate in the interviews. It is strictly voluntary. All interviews are done privately and the reports and subsequent papers will maintain the participant's anonymity therefore reducing any social risk that may be a result of identification of the participant. Attached to this application is a copy of the informed consent form. The following statements are in my consent form: I hope that you may develop a greater personal awareness of your own experience as a result of your participation in this research. The risks to you are considered minimal; although unlikely, there is a chance that you may experience some discomfort in the telling of your experiences. If you do and feel the need to talk about it, please contact the Mental Health and Recovery Centers of Warren County, Lebanon Centers 204 Cook Rd 513-695-1357 and 212 Cook Rd 513-695-1354 to discuss your reactions. (This will be specific to each participant's location.) This telephone number is local. In addition, you may withdraw from this study at any time (either during or after the interview) without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study.

14b. Explain why you believe the risks are so outweighed by the benefits described in (13) as to warrant asking participants to accept these risks. Include a discussion of why the research method you propose is superior to alternative methods that may entail less risk:
The participant(s) will not be exposed to physiological, psychological or social trauma. Any risk

is minimal and participants are asked to share what they are comfortable sharing of their own stories. The benefit of this research study is to help other women find the necessary skills to leave dysfunctional relationships which are harmful to themselves and their children. The information discovered is intended to be used to help develop information, policy and or programs to help women become independent and safe themselves and those children in their direct care. The possible emotions the participants may feel during the retelling of their own lived experience will not be exploited and participants are asked to only share what they feel comfortable sharing. The goal is to help (rural/Appalachian) women gain information and resources to leave dysfunctional and harmful relationships. I believe that confidential interviews where the interviewees can maintain their anonymity are the best method as opposed to focus groups or some type of forum where they would share their information publicly. This method imposes the least amount of stress because it is done privately in the location of their choice. Please see attached documents.

14c. Explain fully how the rights and welfare of participants at risk will be protected (e.g., screening out particularly vulnerable participants, follow-up contact with participants, etc.):

Participants will be given informed consent forms detailing the study and that they are not obligated to participate. In the course of the interview if the participant or researcher feels the interview has become too emotional for the participant to continue telling their story or the participant becomes distraught, either party may ask to stop the interview. This is to maintain the well being of the participant. In the informed consent form information for contacting counseling services in the participant's area will be named in the event the participant feels the need to contact them after the interview. Participants' identities will be known only to me. Information used from these interviews will be utilized confidentially and will be reported in the study anonymously. Participants will be offered the opportunity to read the interview once it is transcribed to determine if anything needs to be added or changed.

15. Explain how participants privacy is addressed by your proposed research. Specify any steps taken to guard the anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of their responses. Indicate what personal identifying information will be kept, and procedures for storage and ultimate disposal of personal information. (400 words):

Each interview will be conducted in private in a location the individual is comfortable. Tapes will be held securely while data is transcribed and until the research is completed. At the time the study is complete and information has been transcribed and verified with the participant tapes will be cleared. All notes, tapes and data files will be kept secure in the researcher's private office. The following is an excerpt from my consent form: Your name will be kept confidential in the resulting report. I request the right to retain all files for future academic use and scholarly purposes. The tapes and all related research materials including the Informed Consent Forms will be kept secured and locked in my private office; all transcripts are coded and password protected in my personal computer. The results from these interviews, surveys, and written summary responses will be incorporated into my dissertation.

16. Informed consent statements, if one is used, are to be included with this application. If information other than that provided on the informed consent form is provided (e.g. a cover letter), attach a copy of such information. To submit or fax these documents, refer to

the instructions in the next question.

If a consent form is not used, or if consent is to be presented orally, state your reason for this modification below:

Consent form attached.

17. If questionnaires, tests, or related research instruments are to be used, then you must submit a copy of the instrument, or a detailed description (with examples of items) of the research instruments, questionnaires, or tests that are to be used in the project. Copies will be retained in the permanent IRB files. To submit documents, go to end of on-line form to upload attachments.

Please identify all attached documents.

Informed Consent Form is attached.

Interview questions attached.

Changed phone number in informed consent form and attached as doc dated 11-25-10. Also changed dates of research in question 8 and 9 to reflect new time line.

18. Will electrical or mechanical devices be applied to participants? No

If YES, describe:

[x] I agree to conduct this project in accordance with Antioch University's policies and requirements involving research.

Attachments

[Attachment I-III IRB Inf Cons Questions 11-13-10 MKEH MK Final 111810.docx](#)

[Attachment II Interview questions.docx](#)

[Attachment III Informed consent form.docx](#)

[Attachment III Informed consent form 11-25-10.docx](#)

Addendum

As part of the interpretation of the narrative stories three scholar practitioners in the Appalachian region were contacted by telephone to gain further information regarding their expertise in specific areas relevant to the study findings.

Each conversation was conducted without recording or transcription. The researcher took notes that represented the main points that the interviewee discussed. At the conclusion of the conversation the interviewee was asked if she wanted her comments to be attributed to her by name and position in the dissertation. Each of these individuals chose to be identified. Once their comments were prepared as part of the interpretive section each speaker received an electronic copy of those comments attributed to her. Each speaker was then asked to review the comments and make any additions or clarifications and to sign the consent to use her name and position in the dissertation.

Attachment II

Interview Questions of Participants

As you know I am interested in women who have been married and had to become independent of their partner.

Tell me your story of when you were married to your husband.

Talk to me about your social connections during your relationship.

Can you tell me your story of why you left the relationship?

What made the difference which allowed you to move out of the marriage and seek an independent life from him?

What made the difference in the initial separation? Tell me about your economic and social situation after you were no longer with your partner? Did you get child support?

How would you describe the period of time after you left him?

When did you feel independent from the relationship?

How do you feel about your life since the relationship ended?

Attachment III

**Antioch University
PhD in Leadership & Change
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Human Participant Research Review**

Informed Consent Statement

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Michele Kegley, a doctoral candidate in the Leadership and Organizational Change program at Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Study overview: One of the primary purposes of this project is to research what factors contribute to women moving from relationships of socio-economic dependence to socio-economic independence. This research involves the study of live experience, in particular, the experience of adult women. I wish to conduct this study with multiple participants who are over the age of 18. The study involves live interviews and survey data collection. The process may be taped or digitally recorded. Participation is voluntary. Participants have the right to stop their participation at any time. All transcript documentation may be reviewed by participants.

Your name will be kept confidential in the resulting report. I request the right to retain all files for future academic use and scholarly purposes. The tapes and all related research materials including the Informed Consent Forms will be kept secured and locked in my private office; all transcripts are coded and password protected in my personal computer. The results from these interviews, surveys, and written summary responses will be incorporated into my Individual Learning Achievement and possibly my dissertation. There is no financial remuneration for participating in this study.

I hope that through this study you may develop a greater personal awareness of your own experience as a result of your participation in this research. The risks to you are considered minimal; although unlikely, there is a chance that you may experience some discomfort in the telling of your experiences. If you do and feel the need to talk about it, please contact the Mental Health and Recovery Centers of Warren County, Lebanon Centers 204 Cook Rd 513-695-1357 and 212 Cook Rd 513-695-1354 to discuss your reactions. This telephone number is local. In addition, you may withdraw from this study at any time (either during or after the interview) without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please contact: Dr. Lisa Kreeger, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Ph.D. in Leadership & Change,

Antioch University, 150 E. South College St., Yellow Springs OH 45387, phone 805-565-7535, lkreeger@antioch.edu .

The researcher conducting the study is: Michele Kegley, Doctoral Student Ph.D. in Leadership & Change, 978 Hampton Court, Lebanon, Ohio 45036, phone 513-836-3235, mkegley@antioch.edu .

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this research. Return one to me and keep the other for yourself.

I am aware that my opinions may be utilized for research purposes, but that I will not be identified by name in the final written document.

I understand the research findings may benefit others of like experience.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may discontinue participation at any time. I have the right to express my concerns and complaints to the University Committee on Research Involving Human Participants at Antioch University (Dr. Lisa Kreeger, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Antioch University, lkreeger@phd.antioch.edu, Tel. 805-565-7535).

No first or last names will appear on any materials that are collected. Conversations will serve as an iterative form of the process. The form below will be used to document your permission for the use of these materials.

I understand if I have any additional questions regarding my rights as a research participant, I can contact the investigator, Michele Kegley or her advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Holloway, Professor of Psychology, Antioch University (eholloway@antioch.edu, 805-898-0114).

Name of researcher (please print)

Date

Signature of researcher

Date

Name of participant (please print)

Date

Signature of participant

Date

Attachment IV

Antioch University PhD in Leadership & Change INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Human Participant Research Review

Informed Consent Statement for participants who are identified in report.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Michele Kegley, a doctoral candidate in the Leadership and Organizational Change program at Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Study overview: This research involves the study of lived experiences, in particular, the experience of adult women with children. One of the primary purposes of this project is to research what factors contribute to women moving out of relationships and into socio-economic and emotional independence. You have been asked to comment on the primary findings of the thematic analysis on the basis of your position and knowledge of the Appalachian region. Our conversation will take approximately 30-45 minutes and at the conclusion of the conversation you will be asked if you would like to be identified by name and position in conjunction with your comments. If you choose to be identified you will receive a copy of your comments to make any additions or clarifications. Your revisions and clarifications will be included in the dissertation report as attributed to you.

If upon reading your comments you agree to these terms please sign the informed consent and return with your revised comments.

If you have any further questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please contact: Dr. Carolyn Kenny, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Ph.D. in Leadership & Change, Antioch University, 150 E. South College St., Yellow Springs OH 45387, phone 937-654-0076, ckenny@antioch.edu.

The researcher conducting the study is: Michele Kegley, Doctoral Student Ph.D. in Leadership & Change, 978 Hampton Court, Lebanon, Ohio 45036, phone 513-836-3235, mkegley@antioch.edu.

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this research. Return one to me and keep the other for yourself.

I am aware that my opinions may be utilized for research purposes and that I will be identified by name and professional position in the final written document.

I understand the research findings may benefit women in the Appalachian region.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may discontinue participation at any time. I have the right to express my concerns and complaints to the University Committee on Research Involving Human Participants at Antioch University (Dr. Carolyn Kenny, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Antioch University, ckenny@antioch.edu, Tel. 937-654-0076).

Conversations will serve as an iterative form of the process. The form below will be used to document your permission for the use of these materials.

I understand if I have any additional questions regarding my rights as a research participant, I can contact the investigator, Michele Kegley or her advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Holloway, Professor of Psychology, Antioch University (eholloway@antioch.edu, 805-898-0114).

Name of researcher (please print)	Name of participant (please print)
Signature of researcher, Date	Signature of participant, Date

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