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Abstract

Social networks and capital often sustain community and individual survival. This phenomenological study was designed to illuminate the experience of job loss within the context of globalization, describing the phenomenon from the perspective of rural women and its meaning for those participants. Using a phenomenological approach, this qualitative study explored eight rural women in Appalachian Kentucky who had experienced apparel factory layoffs as a result of global outsourcing. A modified form of van Kaam's method (Moustakas, 1994) was used for phenomenological analysis of the data. Data were analyzed using an eight-step technique to identify essential characteristics of rural women's lived experiences and to discover "what" attitudes ex-factory workers had toward job loss and "how" social support networks were developed. A description of the experience and its meaning was developed from the five salient themes that emerged. These major themes include impact of job layoffs; emotional effects of a shuttered plant; rural resiliency; social support networks at the individual, family, and community level; and cultural challenges to social support networks. Findings of the study suggest participants perceived their cultural values and heritage as an important resource toward creating viable socioeconomic pathways and by providing a psychological buffer against stress. Implications for social work practice, research and education, and policy were discussed.

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IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON CENTRAL APPALACHIAN WOMEN:

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Jennifer Lanham

August 2010

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Advisor: Dr. Enid Opal Cox

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

For globalists, globalization is the solution and underdevelopment, backwardness and provincialism is the problem. For localists, globalization is the problem and localization is the solution.

(Kellner, 2002, p. 285)

With vast resources that have influenced the social, economic, and political characteristics of the region, Appalachia is defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC, 2000) as a mountain range extending from northern Mississippi to southern New York, covering selected counties in 12 states and all counties in West Virginia. Globalization, together with a neoliberal ideology, presents profound implications for this region, and its women in particular (Lewis & Billings, 1997). This study explores the economic impact of globalization on these women and their social support networks. Framed by a social capital theory perspective, the study explores the relationship between economy, society, and place, by investigating the status, processes, and functioning of social networks among rural women in this region. In this first chapter, I present the statement of the problem, which includes a discussion of globalization according to a neoliberalist perspective and its impact on Central Appalachian women. I then discuss the theoretical framework of the study and the study's significance, concluding with a presentation of the research questions.

Statement of the Problem

The Central Appalachian region consists of 215 counties (80% rural) in the states of Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. From an historical perspective, this region has been laced with despondent conditions and economic hardships, stemming as far back as the Civil War, Great Depression, and coal mine wars. However, some argue that Appalachians are accustomed to adversity and demonstrate an uncanny wherewithal. As the globalization of capital, markets, and cultural values becomes more homogenized, Central Appalachians again face diminished economic opportunity and changes to their socioeconomic structure.

Globalization is a general term encompassing cultural, political, and environmental dimensions. From a neoliberal economic standpoint, the notion of globalization is defined by the integration of markets, finance, and technologies. During the past 15 years, exacerbated by globalization, increasing socioeconomic changes have included higher rates of unemployment; loss of jobs; lower incomes; soaring crime rates, including a rise in drug manufacturing and trafficking; substance abuse; and declines in population (Appalachian Regional Commission, n.d., 2000). These conditions, in addition to out-migration and worker displacement—further consequences of globalization—have posed a serious threat to the affected communities in terms of ruptured social support networks and loss of social capital, thereby heightening the need for strong family and community mutual support.

Social networks are broadly defined in this study as the social relationships and ties of individual actors and relationships between the actors. This characterization of social networks is expanded further to represent a series of interconnections between

people and organizations as a means of increasing the creation of social capital through collaboration, network-building, and comprehensive community planning (Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). *Social capital* refers here to networks of trust that lead to outcomes of mutual benefit for individuals, families, and communities (Gyarmati & Kyte, 2003; White, 2002). Social support networks are elemental to social capital, serving as its conduit.

Limited awareness and understanding of the changing nature of social support networks and/or social capital are evident. Today, as relationships in families are changing, so too are their cultural values and the types of relationships people have with other members of their informal network, such as neighbors and friends (Pahl, 2000). When family and kinship ties are weak or nonexistent, these other relationships can form a critical part of the individual's informal support network. Nevertheless, of great concern today, Central Appalachia's social networks may be too fragile to withstand the impact of the current global economy. Questions remain unanswered regarding the region's strengths, potential, and the value of existing social networks, all of which can play a role in assisting and withstanding the impact of ongoing rapid economic and social change in the face of globalization.

Globalization and the Neoliberalist Philosophy

“Globalization has brought down many of the walls that limited the movement and reach of people, and because it has simultaneously wired the world into networks, it gives more direct power to individuals than at any time in history” (Freidman & Ramonet, 1999, p. 115). Moreover, Bergeron (2001) contended that globalization has become an unstoppable, uncontrollable force in society.

Yet, the universalization of globalization dogma is not a new historical phenomenon; a capitalist economy preexisted and initially took root in colonialism. As Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies (1999) pointed out, “The colonial structure was and is the basis for what has become known as ‘free trade’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth century” (p. 28). Altvater and Mahnkopf (1996) suggested that the difference between colonialism and modern globalization is the *illusion* that equality, justice, and welfare are to be had by everyone. Globalization emphasizes competition, individualism, and materialism; and the faster its principles become entrenched in Central Appalachia’s communities, the more likely that monetary gain and a non-collectivist commitment become a strong societal force (Erikson, Lowe, & Hayward, 1995).

Neoliberalism, as used in this study in association with globalization, is consistent with Karger and Stoesz’s (2005) definition:

A recent American ideology, based on liberalism, that assumes that universal social programs such as those advanced by liberals are implausible because of current social, political, and economic limitations (p. 516)...Neoliberals argue for free trade, less regulation of corporate activity and a more laissez-faire approach to social problems. (p. 14)

Thus, with a bootstrapping mentality, neoliberalists present a framework of less government funding for social welfare purposes, resulting in a shifting paradigm from public welfare toward personal responsibility. As a result, neoliberalist philosophy is frequently in direct opposition to social support networks, heralding self-interest over societal interests (Leonard, 1997). Catherine Kingfisher (2003) characterized globalization, in conjunction with neoliberalism, as the reduction and destruction of welfare state institutions. Confirming this characterization, Freidman and Ramonet (1999) stated, “All over the world, globalization is destroying the welfare state” (p. 127).

Within a contemporary society of centralized economies and government, the global economy's ideology is ill prepared in dealing with the backlash and dismantling of cultures, tradition, and self-sufficient economies (Freidman & Ramonet, 1999). Emerging in a modernist, global economy of technological change and free trade, governments are fated to play a smaller role in providing social safety nets and services to the impoverished, as the gap widens between profitability and human need. Thus, at horrifying environmental and human costs, globalization and corporate greed continually turn a blind eye to the thousands left socially dislocated, as impoverished regions, such as Central Appalachia, helplessly stand without the proper safety nets in place (Freidman & Ramonet, 1999; Sparr, 1994). There is little global equity and justice when the "winners" are ill prepared to compensate the "losers" (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Freidman, & Ramonet, 1999; Sparr, 1994).

Because government is no longer the principal actor, poor rural communities single handedly must face globalization's culture of power and wealth; its driving force has altered social structures and the process of social change in such regions as Central Appalachia (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2000; Black & Sanders, 2004; Democratic Policy Committee, 2007; Herzenberg, Price & Wial, 2005; Mincey, 2001), which is the geographical area focused on in this research study.

Impact on Central Appalachian Women

In most areas, marginalized populations--especially poor rural women--have not benefited from neoliberal economic restructuring (Mincey, 2001). Women, in general, are frequently employed in the public sector and in service industries; lack access to capital, credit, and property rights; and are the principal users of social services. In an era of

globalization, all of these factors exacerbate the challenges to rural women associated with poverty, poor health, gender inequality, and the critical need for strong social support networks.

It is within this context that the research study addresses the following five questions: (a) How do women characterize their social relationships and supports following job loss? (b) What are the key social and economic factors that support or challenge women's social support networks in Central Appalachia? (c) What are the structures, functions, and strategies of rural Appalachian women's networks? (d) How are the lives, cultural values, and communities of women in the region impacted by globalization of the economy? and (e) How are social support networks historically relevant in cultivating social capital in Central Appalachia? Additionally, this study explores a number of complex social issues and consequences facing women in contemporary Central Appalachia according to a feminist perspective.

A Theoretical Framework: Social Capital Theory

An examination of the theoretical underpinnings of social networks and capital in the context of the impact of a globalized economy clearly highlights the complex issues encountered by individuals, families, and communities in rural regions, such as Central Appalachia. The theoretical framework that informs this study uses social capital theory as a means of further understanding the significance of social networks and rural women. This framework has attracted much policy and academic interest in recent years, because social capital is said to lead to numerous potential benefits for individuals, families, and communities (Winter, 2000).

Social capital theory provides a framework for conceptualizing social relationships that focuses on both the structure and quality of social networks. Addressing structure, social capital theory is inclusive of social relationships across a range of social realms. Whereas much of the social support network literature has typically focused on family and other informal ties, social capital theory draws attention to civic and institutional ties, in addition to informal networks, as important aspects of the social and economic infrastructure (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995, 2000). Further, social capital theory emphasizes the quality of relationships, typically in terms of trust and reciprocity as important features of sustainable social ties. Accordingly, the focus of this study fits well with the social capital approach. Overall, a review of the current literature confirms not only the importance of social ties within family life and expansive informal networks, but also their importance to civic and institutional relations as key characteristics of a social infrastructure (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 1995; Putman, 2000).

Whereas social capital theorists Putnam (2000), Coleman (1988), and Bourdieu (1986) differ in perspective, they all maintain the usage of social networks as an essential means to accessing social capital, viewing the social structure of networks as a locus for individuals' ability to access resources and move toward individual mobility. However none of these theorists has completely explained the means by which individuals create or sustain these relationships. Social capital literature alludes to the notion of trust (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 2000) as possibly playing a role in relational development, but left unexplained are the "processes" individuals use to create and sustain social networks.

Significance of the Study

The exploration and subsequent analysis of women's social support networks in Central Appalachia in the context of globalization are important for several reasons. First, an in-depth description of the present nature of the region's existing social networks and the social stressors impinging upon them facilitates a better understanding of the issues related to rural women's utilization of and participation within these networks. As oppressed populations absorb the impact of global economic changes into their social fabric, it is worth noting that the utilization of social support networks, as a means of creating social capital, should be a mainstream consideration of social development and civic initiatives.

Secondly, it is critical to explore the formation and effectiveness of the social networking efforts of rural women in the region, because women typically use networking strategies to maintain the social fabric of household structure. Further, social support networks play a critical role in the region and bear historical significance in sustaining community survival by offering a psychological buffer against stress and mental disorders as well as a means to cope with health problems. They also serve as a buffer for poverty through collective survival efforts. Finally, the finding from this study may serve to bridge social work practice and public policy initiatives, principally by investigating the stressors imposed by neoliberal globalization and related political, economic, and cultural trends with respect to (a) the threatening effects these changes may have on rural women's equitable and sustainable development and (b) whether social support networks flourish, adjust, and/or dismantle under conditions of the current global economy.

Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of rural Appalachian women in regard to their social support networks within the context of globalization. Based on this overarching research purpose, the following key areas, comprising the study's research questions, are explored:

- How do women in rural Appalachian Kentucky characterize their social relationships and supports following job loss?
- What are the structures, functions, and strategies of rural Appalachian Kentucky women's social networks?
- How are the lives, cultural values, and communities of women in this region impacted by a globalized economy?

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The study's exploration of the needs and strengths of the social support networks of the women of Central Appalachia requires a concentrated focus on the local culture of this region, with its strong familial ties and collectivist society. Accordingly, I look at the rural woman's close ties to family, church, and community (social networks), specifically examining value orientations toward self-interest, kinship, social responsibility, local self-reliance, and innovative community building (Kahn, 1973; Mincey, 2001). And whereas this review of the literature examines the Central Appalachian region in general, the research study itself targets the specific region of Appalachian Kentucky, due to its higher levels of social and economic problems and consistently higher poverty rates as compared to the other regions of Central Appalachia (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2000).

Traditional Values and Role of Social Support Networks

Appalachians are characterized as proud, private, wanting to "take care of their own," and not accepting of charity; traditionally they do not seek attention, and they try to manage their own problems (Behringer & Friedell, 2006). However in examining selected images of the region, including folklore, myths, and the culture of poverty (Ball, 1968), such images often portray stereotypes of Appalachians as poor, backward, rural, and unmotivated, consisting of everything from mountaineers to hillbillies to rednecks (Billings & Blee, 2000). Today, at a glance, Appalachians mirror people in other middle-

class communities in the United States (Bryant & Masson, 2005); nevertheless, upon closer scrutiny, the Central Appalachian region is characteristically distinct, with high concentration rates of poverty, poor health, low incomes, unemployment, inadequate housing, and substandard education (Appalachian Regional Commission, n.d., 2000).

Many historical studies have suggested that characteristics of Central Appalachian culture (e.g., fatalism and patriarchy) include values and beliefs that compromise Appalachians' psychological and overall health. However, strong family ties (e.g., familism and kinship) and other informal networks (e.g., church and neighbors) serve as emotional protective barriers (i.e., coping mechanisms) to social, cultural, and economic environments (Coyne, Demian-Popescu, & Friend, 2006; Lengerich et al., 2006). Hooks (1984) posited that family support may be the one maintained social support system for oppressed populations. A significant body of research has documented that religious involvement is also beneficial to psychological well-being and is conversely associated with depression (Brown, Ndubuisi, & Gary, 1990; Chatters, 2000; Ellison, 1995; St. George & McNamara, 1984). Moreover, in response to economic and labor struggles, Hooks added that some Central Appalachians have historically sought support in their families and religion. Reinforcing this point from an economical perspective, Warren et al. (2001) stated, "Poor people rely on the support of extended family relationships...like churches to survive" (p. 267).

Social capital and networks have often been at the forefront of sustaining communities in Central Appalachia. Lengerich et al. (2006) provided the following poignant description of social support networks among Central Appalachians in the context of community:

Another dominant image of Appalachia is that of tight-knit communities composed of self-reliant residents with a distinct cultural heritage. Faced with limited economic opportunities and, for some, pervasive poverty, Appalachian communities remain vibrant. The Appalachian community itself may be a substantial source of its residents' strength. Surveillance data collected over decades show that this image is generally correct. (p. 1)

In the past, manufacturers (e.g., coal mining and textile mills) have had a history of fostering an attitude of “us against them.” Whereas relationships of trust and cooperation between social networks ultimately suffered, historically Appalachian communities, showing their resiliency, have banded together in response to unsafe, unfair, and illegal work environments. The Appalachian coal mine wars in the late 19th and early 20th centuries provide an example of how families relied upon the support of extended family relationships, churches, and the community to survive (Billings, 1990; Couto, 1999; Fisher, 1993).

Traditional Appalachian concerns and commitments have been considered in direct conflict with economic development that requires “social mobility rather than traditionalism; achievement orientation rather than familism; and large-scale rational organization rather than personalism” (Lewis & Billings, 1997, p. 18). On the one hand, Appalachians are perceived as rich in culture, community, family, social networks, and resiliency—a proud and determined people who have endured a myriad of adversity (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). On the other hand, rural Appalachia has often been criticized as out-of-step with America’s progress—old ways of life are no longer viable in a fast-paced modern society. Both economic developers and politicians have considered the Appalachians’ familial ties—its collectivist society and social networks—

in need of transformation to “modern-society individualism” in order for the region to be economically prosperous (Fisher, 1993).

Impact of Globalization on Central Appalachia’s Economy

Boom or Bust Economy

Due to the ample supply of low-wage workers and an abundance of natural resources in the Central Appalachian region, manufacturers have, in the past, been attracted to the area. In fact, several Appalachian communities transformed themselves into booming industrial towns in the late 1970s, 80s, and early 90s. A region once reliant upon a now-declining farming/agricultural economy thus became increasingly dependent on “boom and bust” coal and manufacturing industries. However, in the face of changes wrought by globalization, set in motion by U.S. trade policies, such industries can no longer be considered “booming.” For example, as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Appalachian states collectively lost a total of 95,000 jobs between 1993 and 2000 (Scott, 2001).

Impact of Trade Policy

Neoliberal globalization ideology touts that free-market trade is the panacea for all economic problems. Proponents of free trade believe that globalization will produce winners and losers as the gains are dispersed, compensating the socially displaced and unemployed (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Sparr, 1994). Principles of the global economy imply that capitalism and unregulated free trade represent a win-win situation for everyone, stimulating economic growth and development, mirroring the vision of corporate, capitalistic America.

On January 1, 1994, Congress approved the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada, forming the largest free-trade area in the world, with aspirations of enhancing American global competitiveness (Fisher, 1993). This agreement removed most barriers to trade and investment among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Under NAFTA, all non-tariff barriers to agricultural trade between the United States and Mexico were removed and many tariffs were eliminated.

Consequently, during the last decade, a large number of American companies have cut costs significantly by sending manufacturing and customer service jobs overseas, where labor costs are considerably lower. Some of these jobs represented the “bread and butter” of rural U.S. communities where low wages and rent drew outsourcing work away from higher-priced regions. Furthermore, the government provided tax loopholes as incentives for companies to send their operations overseas (Moore & Stansel, 1996).

In this age of globalization, the effect of closing community-sustaining factories has been devastating. As an unintended consequence under NAFTA, the United States lost 766,030 actual and potential jobs between 1993 and 2000, impacting all 50 states. In Central Appalachia, several major community-sustaining factories closed due to job outsourcing, and in turn, lives were suddenly shattered when jobs were lost following the implementation of this agreement. Collectively, the Central Appalachian states lost a total of 95,000 jobs between 1993 and 2000 as a direct result of NAFTA (Scott, 2001). The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor (2005) found that, since the year 2000, Appalachian Kentucky lost nearly 27,000 jobs due to mass layoffs from overseas relocation. In Appalachian Virginia, the communities of Smythe County

witnessed 10 factories close and relocate to Mexico, impacting 80% of its workforce population (Vieth, n.d.). Referring to one such community, *The Los Angeles Times* commented that the entire town, in effect, had been traded away (Vieth, n.d.). Comparable in other states, outsourcing either domestically or overseas has drastically impacted Kentucky's economy.

A second blow for the Central Appalachian economy occurred when the U.S. House of Representatives granted China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with the United States on May 24, 2000. Opponents representing organized labor warned that NAFTA and PNTR would lead to significant job losses for U.S. workers (Banuri & Spanger-Siegfried, 2000). Unfortunately, these labor predictions have proven all-too-true for thousands of Central Appalachian workers, as they continue to brace themselves for a possible series of further job losses.

Globalization's Impact on Specific Appalachian Economies

The negative impact of globalization on Central Appalachian economies has been significant, as confirmed by Herzenberg et al. (2005), who found that such decline in farming, mining, and timber work has resulted in severe economic hardship for the region. In addition to coal mining and the timber industry, other key economies adversely affected by globalization include the textile and garment industries, as well as Burley tobacco production.

Coal Mining

With the onset of the U.S. trade agreements, coupled with U.S. industries' switching from bituminous to cleaner-burning coal, massive coal-miner layoffs were set in motion. Between 2001 and 2004, the production of coal in Central Appalachia

decreased by 25%; and from 2003 to 2004, coal imports from China to the United States increased by 9% (Energy Information Administration, 2004). In general, the prospects of Appalachian coal mining currently look bleak in light of the implementation of free-trade markets, low-skilled workers, and a dwindling coal reserve.

Timber

Unfortunately, as larger market forces (e.g., outsourcing) have made it difficult to sustain the local economy, it is not surprising that the timber industry in Central Appalachia was assailed when Congress approved Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China in 2000. Due to competing imports, this U.S. trade policy contributed to additional massive layoffs in the furniture industry, a consequence of the demise of the timber industry and its displaced workers (Black & Sanders, 2004).

Textile and Garment Industries

Since the implementation of NAFTA, several community-sustaining factories, such as Oshkosh B'Gosh and Jockey International, have closed in the Central Appalachian region due to globalization. The textile and garment manufacturers began cutting domestic production and relocating their plants to Mexico and Asia where factory workers could be employed at a significantly lower wage. According to Tompkins (2005a), "The global economy...has ravaged the state's apparel industry, a stable employer income of the poorest rural regions for decades" (para. 11). For example, between 1991 and 2000, Kentucky lost 24,000 apparel industry jobs, primarily located in the Appalachian Kentucky region. Particularly revealing are statistics for the Kentucky counties of Casey, Adair, and Taylor: Apparel-maker Oshkosh B'Gosh outsourced nearly 1,000 jobs in Casey County and 800 jobs in neighboring Adair County in 1994 to

Honduras for cheaper labor. Similarly, less than 20 miles away, Taylor County lost 3,200 Fruit-of-the-Loom jobs to El Salvador in 1998 (Tompkins, 2005b). The following comments by Bill Londrigan, President of the Kentucky State AFL-CIO, sum up this critical situation:

We're losing jobs at an alarming rate, primarily manufacturing jobs; our textile industry, which was a base employer in many small communities, has virtually been destroyed and wiped out, particularly due to trade agreements....Any job replacing it [a lost job] in smaller towns pays less and probably has few to no benefits. (as cited in Tompkins, 2005a, para. 18)

Burley Tobacco

The decline in the tobacco industry and small family farms has deeply impacted the region's traditionally strong agricultural economy. Burley tobacco constitutes a critical economy in Central Appalachia, with 97% of the total U.S. burley tobacco production located in Kentucky and North Carolina (Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative, 2004). However, farmers in the region have serious tobacco-related concerns, stemming from growing competition overseas and passage of the Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act (*Assessment for the Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004*), which eliminated competitive tobacco prices, making tobacco cheaper to produce elsewhere. Yet, the importance of the burley tobacco industry cannot be overstated: It has sustained many distressed Appalachian communities whose economies would otherwise have collapsed.

Impact of Worker Displacement, the Illicit Drug Economy, and the Prison Boom

Worker Displacement

In Herzenberg et al.'s 2005 study, *Displacement in Appalachia and the Non-Appalachian United States, 1993-2003*, specific findings for that time period include the

following: (a) The displacement rate in Appalachia manufacturing more than doubled from 4.2% in 1995 through 1997 to 9.6% in 2001 through 2003; (b) manufacturing plant closings were a more common reason for displacement in Appalachia than in the rest of the United States from 1999 to 2003, where 55% of displaced Appalachian workers lost jobs due to plant closings, compared to 42% outside the region; (c) nearly 1 of 5 displaced workers in Appalachia had more than 20 years of experience on their previous job, compared to just under 1 of 10 in the rest of the United States; and (d) of the full-time workers in Appalachia who were displaced during 1999 to 2003, only 16% were working in full-time positions at the time of the next survey. Overall, between 1993 and 2002, manufacturing jobs saw a 70% decline in the region, spurring out-migration and worker displacement, and collapsing Central Appalachia's social support networks and social capital (Lichter, Garratt, Marshall, & Cordella, 2005).

The question that arises is two-fold: "Do you help the people or the place?" For the region's economic vitality, communities support the recruitment of jobs to the area. On the other hand, skills training and education support economic efficiency; yet the skilled and educated usually secure employment in other competitive labor markets, leaving the area. The dilemma for Central Appalachia presents a Catch-22 for the region's future.

Growth of the Illicit Drug Economy and Its Impact

Particularly applicable to the Central Appalachian region, while economies grow, so does poverty, coupled with additional welfare and social service cuts (e.g., Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, TANF). With thousands of displaced workers and the loss

of jobs in Appalachian rural communities, the economic void has quickly been replaced by a new economy: the illicit drug economy.

Hence, economically displaced, uneducated, and unwilling to abandon their sense of place, Appalachian women as well as men have now opted to partake in illegal activities as a means of their own survival, committing non-violent drug-related crimes, often out of economic need, as their social structures and traditional culture are destroyed. Considering that methamphetamine is presently the number-one drug threat in Central Appalachia, and marijuana the number-one cash crop there—with Kentucky ranking third in U.S. production (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2002)—it is no wonder that the illicit drug economy has developed into an epidemic within a region—Appalachian Kentucky—with the highest unemployment rate and poorest per capita income. For fiscal year 2006, the Appalachian Regional Commission (n.d.) reported that Appalachian Kentucky had the highest poverty rate (24.4%) and second highest 3-year-average (2001-2003) unemployment rate (7%) of all 13 Appalachian states. Riddled by poverty and exacerbated by the devastating impact of globalization, Central Appalachia, and Appalachian Kentucky in particular, have proved a fertile ground for the fast-growing, illicit drug economy.

Growth of Prisons, Prison Populations, and Their Impact

Prison boom. Since 1980, the U.S. prison and jail population has quadrupled in size to more than 2 million. As employment has become scarce in Central Appalachia, the boom to build prisons in rural areas has become of great economic importance as a development industry. In the process, prisons have embedded themselves into the nation's economic and social fabric (Frost, Green, & Pranis, 2005). Correspondingly, in the past

two decades, hundreds of “prison towns” have multiplied--places that are dependent on prisons for their economic vitality. A powerful lobby has grown up around the prison system that will fight hard to protect the status quo. Major companies, such as Wackenhut Corrections Corporation and Corrections Corporation of America, employ sophisticated lobbyists to protect and expand their market share. The law enforcement technology industry, which produces high-tech items, does more than a billion dollars a year in business. With 2.2 million people engaged in catching criminals and putting and keeping them behind bars, "corrections" has become one of the largest sectors of the U.S. economy (Elsner, 2004, p. A19).

The United States seems to thrive on building new prisons every year, while cutting social service and rehabilitation programs. The United States now spends more on prisons (construction and management) than on education and social service programs (Frost et al., 2005). Prisons are not reducing crime. Rather, they are corrupting and fracturing the social structure and traditional culture of fragile rural communities. By ignoring economic policies that have contributed to the collapse of social and cultural structures, policy makers, who not uncommonly create public fear and panic to gain political clout, have inadvertently made criminals the scapegoat. State and federal sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimum sentences, fixed sentences without parole, the "three strikes" mandate, and new criminal legislation represent key examples of policy decisions influenced by private industries, despite statistics showing decreased crime rates. When the United States can cultivate more prisoners through such policy decisions, growth in prison populations is ultimately guaranteed (Soren & Stemen, 2002), at the same time justifying more prisons and resulting in more capital. Consequently,

prisons are rapidly becoming an essential component of the U.S. economy and a leading rural growth industry (Clement, 2002). In effect, the prison boom in Central Appalachia has become of great economic importance as a development industry, closely linked not only to the region's fast-growing illicit drug economy, but also to the tremendous growth of the prison population.

Growth of prison population. Within a globalized economy, prisons need more prisoners to develop growth, therefore relying on the guarantee that more people will be incarcerated. The increase in the number of prisoners due to mandatory minimum sentencing, for example, has skyrocketed. Hence, despite the fact that on November 2, 2004, the United States Sentencing Commission (USSC) marked its 17th anniversary, there has been little room for celebration: Nationwide, 400,000 men and women sit in crowded jails and prisons for drug-related offenses, with more than 60% accounted for in federal prisons. Drug laws, particularly in relation to mandatory minimum sentencing, have been the largest predictors of expanding prison populations, with drug arrests doubling from 581,000 to 1,090,000 between 1980 and 1990 (Justice in Sentencing Act of 2004). Unsurprisingly, Kentucky's state inmate population grew faster between 2006 and 2007 than anywhere else in the nation, increasing by 12% (Public Safety Performance Project, 2008).

Women in prisons. Implying that mandatory minimum sentencing laws and practices were in critical need of reform, Frost et al. (2005) made the following statement about the impact of these sentencing laws on women:

In the federal criminal justice system, draconian mandatory minimum sentencing laws and rigid sentencing guidelines have increased the proportion of women who

receive prison sentences and the length of time women spent behind bars...drastically increasing the length of incarceration for drug offenses. (p. 13)

In effect, the “war on drugs” has been a key catalyst of female prison population growth. While the number of women prisoners has soared nationwide, the proportion of women convicted of violent offenses has declined since 1979; now drug-related crimes account for nearly one third of offenses. Women in Appalachian Kentucky represent the largest growing sector of felony drug convictions, resulting in increased rates of imprisonment (Frost et al., 2005). Between 1977 and 2004, Kentucky’s female prison population grew by 949%, with an average annual percent change of 9.8% per year, ranking Kentucky 17th relative to other states in 2004 (Frost et al., 2005). The majority of women in Kentucky’s correctional settings are sentenced for non-violent crimes that “stem from drug abuse and economic marginalization” (Frost et al., 2005, p. 115). Trends, particularly in Appalachian Kentucky, should be of interest to policy makers, social workers, and other advocates who are concerned about the damage that imprisonment can cause to women, their families, and their communities.

Impact of imprisonment on families and communities. Incarceration has been linked to the disruption and dismantling of the economy, family, and social networks. Especially in relation to women, imprisonment destroys the family support network. When men go to prison, potential male role models are lost from families as well as the loss of maintaining household viability and increased financial stability. When women go to prison, most often families fall apart. Given that the majority of women in prison are mothers, the ramifications of these broken families are frightening.

Thus, as economic hardships have mounted and employment has become scarce, workers, such as those in Central Appalachia, are suffering devastating consequences. The cycle has come full circle, from worker to unemployed to criminal to prison laborer. Furthermore, the consequences of drug convictions range from a lifetime ban from public housing to being prohibited from receiving food stamps or welfare (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002). For many rural men and women, such penalties can result in a lifetime of added hardship—an overlooked punishment that continues long after they have served their criminal sentences or completed probation.

The negative impact of imprisonment on the health of communities, already confronted by poor social services, poor access to health care, and poor public education systems, is tremendous. Overall, it has not only been the Appalachian workers' demise in the face of globalization, coupled with growing poverty and additional welfare and social service cuts (e.g., TANF), that has contributed to the corruption and fracturing of the fragile social structure of the communities of this region. Appalachia's prison and drug economies, indirectly attributed to globalization, also play a major role in hindering and restricting the community's opportunities and goals toward social capital and social support networks (Carlson, 1991).

Globalization's Impact on Rural Appalachian Women: Dismantling of Their Social Support Networks

Neoliberal interests and the global economy have neglected to understand oppressed and marginalized populations, and in the case of this study, Central Appalachian women and ties to their culture and social networks (Kahn, 1973; Mincey, 2001). As discussed earlier, the effect of major garment and textile factory closings has

been devastating to the workforce of the region, and especially to women workers. Herzenberg et al. (2005) explained that in Central Appalachia, with its historically high dependence on manufacturing, women workers, in particular, have currently been experiencing a difficult economic period, characterized by “slow and negative job growth and a mushrooming trade deficit” (p. 4). These scholars found, for example, that older-women workers (55 years and above) in Central Appalachia had a significantly higher rate of displacement compared to non-Appalachian United States. As mentioned earlier, whereas women, in general, frequently lack access to capital, credit, and property rights, and are the principal users of social services, in an era of globalization, such factors invariably make more difficult the challenges to rural women associated with poverty, poor health, gender inequality, and the critical need for strong social support networks.

Thus, as a result of globalization, rural Appalachian women are experiencing threats to their economic, cultural, physical, and psychological well-being (Coyne et al., 2006; Cushing & Rogers, 1996). In addition to out-migration, these threats tend to lead to strained social support networks, accompanied by negative well-being, chronic disease, limited access to health care, and elevated rates of behavioral risks (e.g., tobacco use, substance abuse, poor diet, obesity and physical inactivity, and harmful sexual and criminal behaviors) (Lengerich et al., 2006).

There is well-documented literature indicating that social relations are important for providing individuals with identity, social roles, and social supports, often alleviating adversity and even poverty (Seiling, 2006). However, in light of the alarming methamphetamine epidemic and the increase of “perverse capital” (the burgeoning drug and prison economies), coupled with the demise of economic-sustaining industries (e.g.,

manufacturing, mining, and agriculture) and welfare reform, a need to understand the *nature* of rural women's formal and informal social networks has emerged. For example, little is known about how rural women make ends meet under the new welfare reform (e.g., TANF) and global outsourcing of previously self-sustaining economies (e.g., textile manufacturing and farming) in Central Appalachia. Moreover, the number of single mothers is a growing sector in rural communities (MacTavish & Salamon, 2003). Therefore it is worthwhile to examine informal and formal social networks in this region.

Obstacles and Barriers to Social Networks and Social Capital

Obstacles and barriers to social networks and capital in Central Appalachia encompass a set of social and place-based characteristics that are unique to rural women. Examples include long commutes, high costs associated with vehicle ownership and maintenance, and lack of telephone access.

Long commutes. Reliable transportation is essential, because employment is often located far from home. Putnum (2000) cited suburban sprawl and long commutes as one of the major factors that has reduced social capital (i.e., community-connectedness) in the United States. Commuting to and from work results in less time for social and civil engagement in society (e.g., voting, activism, club memberships, and dinner gatherings). The combination of high poverty rates and long commutes is typical in Central Appalachia.

Cost of vehicle ownership and maintenance. The combination of long commutes and lack of public transportation make ownership of, or access to, a private vehicle essential. Yet, the cost of fuel, vehicle maintenance, auto insurance, tolls, and parking fees, in addition to that of purchasing a vehicle can be a major expense for low-

income families (Grieshop-Goodwin, 2003), and overwhelming for low-income women, in particular. Thus, it is not surprising that there are many families in Appalachia who do not own or have access to private vehicles. In the absence of public transportation, these families may be completely cut off from employment opportunities outside their local areas.

Lack of telephone access. Telephone access is also critically important to low-income families, because it can put people in contact with family members, potential job opportunities, and social networks. In 2000, the Population Reference Bureau indicated that 6.9% of households in Central Appalachia lacked phone service, compared to 2.4% in the non-Appalachian states (Pollard, 2003). According to the same source, examples of Kentucky counties with high proportions of homes without phones included Clay County at 18% and Lee County at 15%.

The Subsistence Perspective

Numerous scholars have suggested that the experiences related to social support networks of rural Appalachian women are primarily grounded in practices of economic opportunity and prosperity (Erickson et al., 1995; Feser, Goldstein, Renski, & Renault, 2002; Luther & Milan, 2003; Lyons, 2002; Morgan, 2003; Reaves, 1999; Schrimmer, Atkinson, & Carroll, 1998; Taylor, 1997). Such literature surrounding the topic of social networks in oppressed populations reflects what rural women *should be doing* under their current circumstances versus exploring women's own strengths, resiliency, and cooperation with others. In their book, *The Subsistence Perspective*, Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies (1999) put forth the notion that what is important to oppressed women is "what secures an independent subsistence" (p. 3). They pointed out that the concept of

subsistence is usually associated with poverty and backwardness. However, they posited that *the subsistence perspective* lies not only in hard labor and living at the margins of existence, but also “in generosity and the joy of working together and not in individualistic self-interest and jealousy” (p. 5). These authors contended that social support networks and self-provisioning work cannot be understood if measured only quantitatively.

A Feminist Ideology

Although Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies (1999) stressed the need to strike a balance between subsistence and *empowerment*, based on women’s own strengths in a globalized economy, the researchers’ perspective remains distant from the current status, processes, and functioning of social support networks, namely rural women’s collective participation within these networks. Advocating for a feminist perspective, Smith (1998) commented,

Absent of feminist analysis, we fail to comprehend not only Appalachian history, but also the present trajectory of class relations and political change. Class, gender and race may be separable at a high level of theoretical abstraction, but in the trenches of lived experiences they join together. (p. 21)

As social support networks are dismantled and social dislocation occurs as a consequence of globalization, Bergeron (2001) predicted that feminist dialogue can serve as a much-needed catalyst in restructuring the global economy by increasing the need for strong family and community mutual support, alternatives, and strategies for resistance.

Gaps in the Literature

Only limited research has examined regional feminist dialogue that is characterized from the perspective of the rural Appalachian women themselves; and

therefore, for the most part, current literature is devoid of their regional voices and narratives. Also, as substantiated earlier, most research generated from the Appalachian region has focused on improving the connectivity of social networks as a means of creating financial opportunities by looking at the region's women who are already presently connected to economic networks and community-based activities. Few studies have explored questions concerning the "what and how" in regard to women faring on their own, without assistance. The research from this region has looked more at what they need or should be doing, or how those with resources are surviving, rather than examining whether women are possibly "doing something right" on their own. Most often, factors such as rural women's self-reliance, cultural ties, sense of place, and innovation, have gone unnoticed. According to Mincey (2001), "The Appalachian women have been overlooked, both in terms of experiences within and contributions to the region" (p. 15).

Upon reflection as to how the literature demonstrates a disjuncture between economic subsistence and the actual process of engaging and partaking within social support networks, critical questions remain unanswered, such as, Is it possible for social support networks to emerge or co-arise through economic conditions related to globalization? and, Would it be possible to isolate the structures, functions, and strategies of women's specific reflections of social support networks from their practical experiences? The present qualitative research study addresses this gap in the literature by exploring questions related to the needs, issues, interests, and coping strategies of rural women in Appalachian Kentucky and their communities. Of additional importance, the study explores the role and experience of relationships in which rural women are

embedded (with strong ties to friends, neighbors, kin, and co-workers), thereby providing insight into marginalized and oppressed populations' coping and survival efforts.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Central Appalachians face diminished economic opportunity and changes to their socioeconomic structure. During the past 15 years, increasing socioeconomic changes have included higher rates of unemployment; loss of jobs; lower incomes; soaring crime rates, including increased drug manufacturing and trafficking; substance abuse; and declines in population (Appalachian Regional Commission, n.d., 2000). These conditions have increased the need for strong family and community mutual support. Limited awareness and understanding of the changing nature of social support networks and/or social capital are evident. Questions remain unanswered regarding the region's strengths, potential, and value of existing networks, all of which can play a role in assisting and withstanding the impact of ongoing rapid economic and social change.

This study explores the social support networks of rural Appalachian women related to the economic impact of globalization on the Appalachian region's economy. The relationship between economy, society, and place, is investigated by examining the current status, processes, and functioning of social networks among rural women in Central Appalachia toward creating socioeconomic resource pathways with effective, self-sustaining economies. Specifically, the study identified the state of knowledge regarding these networks through examination of current literature, research related to the current nature of support networks in Central Appalachia, relevant theory and social policy, and the nature of social work intervention related to this issue. As oppressed

populations absorb the impact of global economic changes into their social fabric, it was worth noting that the utilization of social support networks, as a means of creating social capital, should be a mainstream consideration of social development and civic initiatives.

As the safety nets have been ripped from Central Appalachia's economic, political, and social structures, neoliberal globalization has failed to promote equality or eliminate poverty. It has instead resulted in a concentration of wealth in certain parts of the world and in the hands of certain people (Black & Sanders, 2004; Bryant & Masson, 2005; Pollard, 2003). In most areas, marginalized populations--especially poor rural women--have not benefited from neoliberal economic restructuring. In general, women frequently are employed in the public sector and in service industries; lack access to capital, credit, and property rights; and are the principal users of social services. In an era of globalization, all of these factors exacerbate the challenges to rural women associated with poverty, poor health, gender inequality, and the critical need for strong social support networks.

Throughout this study, I explored and documented current knowledge related to the following three research questions:

- How do women in rural Appalachian Kentucky characterize their social relationships and supports following job loss?
- What are the structures, functions, and strategies of rural Appalachian Kentucky women's social networks?
- How are the lives, cultural values, and communities of women in this region impacted by a globalized economy?

Additionally, I examined a number of complex social issues and consequences facing women in contemporary Central Appalachia, while defining the key terms of social support networks, social capital, and neoliberal globalization. At this point, I present the methodology for this qualitative study, utilizing a feminist perspective.

The Qualitative Method

Qualitative methodology is the voice of emancipation for women, whose realities have historically been constructed by elitist, patriarchal standards (Davis, 1994). Davis claimed that the use of qualitative methods is essential in accurately reflecting oppressed populations and is therefore of value to the social work and research communities.

Appalachian women's voices have often become silenced through the powerful socialization of neoliberal globalization—socialized to frequently believe and trust experts to define their realities. Women's realities are complex and consequently cannot be understood or explained simply or easily. Qualitative research methodologies can accurately reflect rural women's experiences and possess the capability of converting a patriarchal reality into an empowered voice for women to reflect their own realities. Through the use of qualitative methodology, women can be afforded the opportunity to vocalize their story, create their own reality, be encouraged to speak, embrace their complexities, and be emancipated from silence.

Central to this qualitative study is its emergent design. As explained by Creswell (2003), this emerging quality “makes it difficult to prefigure qualitative research tightly at the proposal or early research stage” (p. 182). Thus, because the nature of qualitative inquiry is fluid, dynamic, and transformational, the path this study has followed to get to

the heart of the matter has unfolded from within itself. In this sense, inquiry into social support networks was the catalyst toward which this qualitative research study journeyed.

Isolating specific methods, sampling strategies, data collection methods, data analysis strategies, and activities provided credibility and trustworthiness in design, and results became informed by the aforementioned explored journey. As Patton (2002) explained, it is the unification between structure and inquirer wherein research unfolds. Qualitatively, the coalescence described above can be defined as emergent design flexibility. In Patton's words,

Design flexibility stems from the open-ended nature of naturalistic inquiry as well as pragmatic consideration. Being open and pragmatic requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty as well as trust in the ultimate value of what inductive analysis will yield. (p. 44)

Pragmatically aligned toward an investigation of the effectiveness and formation of social support networking efforts, the study sustained a course of ambiguity. Beginning with a vague notion of what social support networks in Central Appalachia could be in the aftermath of globalization, the unstructured structure and personal projections toward a course of action again became the textural setting of inquiry. Although the sense of uncertainty may perplex active inquiry, the researcher was accommodated by the emergent design's sense of trusting the process itself.

The Phenomenological Tradition

The study followed the phenomenological tradition. Phenomenology has its origins in the philosophy of German mathematician/philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Even though the beginnings of phenomenology can be traced back to Hegel and Kant, Husserl is regarded as the principal founder of phenomenology and "the

fountainhead of phenomenology in the twentieth century” (Vandenberg, 1997, p. 11). Husserl’s aim was to find a method which enables researchers to find non-empirical entities and laws—a search for meanings and essences of the experience rather than measurements, such as in quantitative inquiry.

More specifically, the phenomenological tradition addresses the meaning things have in people’s experiences, particularly, the significance of objects, events, the self, and others, as these things take place and are experienced in their world. Humans experience various types of experience, including thought, emotion, desire, perception, and action. As a result, the field of phenomenology is the range of conscious experiences. Conscious experiences are the starting point of phenomenology and have a unique feature: humans experience them, live through them, or perform them. As Husserl stressed, people are only vaguely aware of things in the margin or periphery of attention (Vandenberg, 1997). This approach, as explicated by Moustakas (1994), “involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (p. 13). And highlighting its inductive nature, phenomenological analysis utilizes such strategies as epoche, bracketing, and phenomenological reduction.

Van Mannen (1990) posited that phenomenology is an exploration of “the essence of lived experience”—the essence and meaning of the phenomenon. Although meaning is rooted in the lived experience, the essence becomes the “central underlying meaning of the experience” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52). Overall, these three key concepts—essence, meaning, and experience—emphasize the importance and foundation on which phenomenological research rests. In this study, the use of the phenomenological tradition

allowed me the opportunity to capture the essence of the unique lived experience of rural Appalachian women in relation to their social support networks, as embedded in a particular historical, cultural, and situational context.

Population and Sampling

Sampling Method

Trusting uncertainty, embracing myself as a dynamic research instrument, and acknowledging the logic behind my research questions, I attempted to define who or what might aid in understanding social support networks. Because qualitative research is inherently fluid and represents an emerging process, the sampling strategy defined a moment in the creation of structure for the study. To be deliberate about the information gathered and how it might occur, I isolated the purposeful sampling strategy among the various choices.

While being purposeful in my selection of “information-rich cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 243), it was important both to utilize a sampling strategy that reflected the research questions and to thoughtfully adhere to the unit of analysis extracted via the sampling strategy. In this sense, the way in which the research questions were composed informed not only the unit of analysis but also guided the sampling strategy. In the present study, the research questions reflected interest in locating rural Appalachian women who had been economically displaced by global outsourcing. Therefore a purposive snowball or chain sampling strategy was justified. Additionally, this approach to sampling was particularly appropriate, because through the use of key informants, a purposeful sample was built around the central concept of social support networks, allowing me, as the

researcher, to identify the resources within the targeted community and select those people best suited for the needs of the study.

The Sample

In this study, female ex-factory workers from Fruit of the Loom, living in Adair, Casey, and Green Counties in Appalachian Kentucky, were selected for the sample.

Taking into consideration my interest in locating women who were working at the time of the closing of each of these factories, snowball or chain sampling was utilized, as discussed above.

In regard to accessing this target population, I had previously worked with five women at the Marion County Adjustment Center (MAC) who knew of former employees from Fruit of the Loom or had previously been employed there themselves. A group e-mail was sent to these five women (as key informants), explaining the study and asking them to supply the names of one or more female ex-factory workers living in the stipulated region who met the following criteria for eligibility: (a) were employed at Fruit of the Loom for a minimum of 10 years and (b) were still employed at the time of closure of that factory. Based on this e-mail, the key informants identified a few such factory workers, who served as a basis for the snowball sampling procedure. A recruitment letter was also used (see Appendix B). Because it is preferable in qualitative research to use small purposive samples, a sample-size limit of 8-10 women was tentatively chosen as adequately constituting the information-rich cases needed for inquiry in this study.

Purposive samples are the most commonly used form of non-probabilistic sampling, and their ultimate size usually relies on the concept of “saturation” or the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data. Accordingly, I reached what Glaser

and Strauss (1967) termed the “saturation point,” after 8 women had been chosen and interviewed. Thus, the sampling process was stopped (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Data Collection

Qualitative Interviewing

Informed by the emergent nature of the study, qualitative, face-to-face interviewing was used as the primary data collection method. This approach was chosen because it “begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (Patton, 2002, p. 341), and inherently values the lived experience of others. These values and assumptions aligned in many ways with my own tacit knowledge, reinforcing the concept of the “researcher as instrument.” This is essential in the process of interviewing, because the researcher *becomes* the instrument or conduit guiding the interview.

Ex-factory workers who met the criteria were contacted via phone to schedule a one-on-one interview. Initially, several women rejected participation in the study due to fear of possible retaliation from the factory and an overall mistrust of the purpose and nature of the study. Therefore as a means of gaining support and trust from the perspective participants, it was determined necessary to share with the women my personal connection to the region and my grandmother’s experience working for Fruit of the Loom.

A place for conducting the interview was determined at that time, and where possible, “a quiet location, free from distractions” (Creswell, 1998, p. 124). The study participants chose either their home or their church for the interview. Upon arriving at the interview site, the participant completed a *letter of informed consent* form that explained

the study as planned and the terms of agreement for participation. In the letter (see Appendix C), I introduced myself as the researcher and explained the study's purpose, how long the interview would take, and plans for using the interview material (Creswell, 1998). Additionally, terms of confidentiality, which included utilizing pseudonyms for each participant; the voluntary nature of the study; compensation in the form of a \$20 gift card for Walmart; and offers of a copy of the study's findings were discussed.

Upon receipt of signed consents from the participants, I initiated the interview phase of the study. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Beginning with the first interview, I was immediately challenged to look for insights that raised new questions and lines of thought that could be developed for use in subsequent interviews.

Interview guide. An interview guide, which I designed, was utilized in the qualitative interviewing (see Appendix A). Examples of the interview guide questions include, "Describe the role social support play in your current life and specifically in what areas of your life. Have they been beneficial or not beneficial?" "Could you describe the role of social support during the factory layoffs?" All questions were open ended and designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer from the respondents. In seeking to "outline a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins...and serv[ing] as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered" (Patton, 2002, p. 342), the use of this guide reflected my desire to be systematic. Although the interview guide provided a system toward discovery, I also preferred the option of building conversations around a particular question and the flexibility of referencing questions to spur conversation.

Other Strategies for Data Collection

Data collection was also enhanced by field observations, memos, public documents, archival materials, photographs, artifacts, and videotapes, all of which I used as sources of content analysis in the triangulation of relevant data (Creswell, 1998). Field observations included a tour of the abandoned Fruit of the Loom factory and several visits to the surrounding counties. Information was recorded using an observational protocol, which included both descriptive notes (i.e., a description of the setting and a drawing of the physical plant) and reflective notes (i.e., notes on the reflective process as related to the observation) (Creswell, 1998). Along with taking field notes, I utilized a digital tape recorder to capture the interview. Not only were the written notes an aid in probing the interviewees, but they were also useful in providing insight for future interviews (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). The recorder and transcriptions were additionally used as cross-references with the field notes taken during the interviews.

Post-interview reviews were performed to aid me in documenting reflections from the interviews. The thoughts documented in these post-interview reviews aligned with the texture of the study's emergent design. Also, documenting my experience and reflections regarding the early interviews facilitated changes and modifications in the interview guide. It was at this point that I began to describe how the interview unfolded; I also documented whether or not the location influenced the interview (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Statement About the Researcher

As the researcher of this study, I am grounded in the experiences of my mother, grandmother, and ties to the region of interest in this study. My practice experience,

academic research, and activism in relation to the effects of the global economy on the social support networks in Central Appalachia are dear to me because of the struggles of the women in my family as ex-textile factory workers. As the daughter of several generations of garment workers and tobacco farmers in Central and Eastern Kentucky, it has been my experience, living amongst the rural, and working-poor, that my knowledge and insight into the region's behaviors, customs, language, artifacts, class history, and resistance to the global economy undoubtedly informed my research. There is both a strong sense of community and strong network of social relationships in Appalachian Kentucky.

My personal praxis of working with disenfranchised and marginalized populations additionally afforded me the ability to gain trust and establish rapport with participants by understanding their state of mind, way of life, ties to the land, sense of place, and importance of kinship. Because Appalachian Kentucky serves as my native background, familiar experiences were useful in the interpretation and analysis of the findings.

However, I can only speak from my own experience, and it is not my intention to imply that I am speaking for the experiences of Appalachian Kentucky women. The phenomenological intention of the research is to hear the distinctive stories of each of the respondents. Thus, during the interviews, I sought to establish a positive, open rapport with the interviewees and posed a neutral stance regarding what the respondent had stated. I attempted to stay true to the respondent's meaning-making around social support networks by utilizing the strategy of *epoche*. Moustakas (1994) explained that throughout the study, the process of *epoche* would require looking, watching, and

becoming aware without importing what the researcher sees, thinks, imagines, or feels; epoche entails a fresh way of looking at things by suspending and bracketing all previously held preconceptions, biases, theories, or beliefs in order for the consciousness to be explored successfully. Epoche therefore was a practice of thinking adopted on a continuous basis throughout all phases of the study.

Additionally, I maintained “reflective notes” as an ongoing record of my ideas and impressions that emerged during the conducting of the research interviews. Immediately following an interview, I found a quiet place alone and quickly entered my immediate thoughts and perceptions on a range of matters, such as where the application of *epoche* seemed necessary, or as Creswell (2003) suggested, reflections “about the process, reflections on activities, and summary conclusions about activities for later theme development” (p. 128).

Phenomenological Approach to Data Analysis

The overall activities of data analysis for this study followed an emergent design in which I continuously interacted with and interpreted the findings. Data used for analysis included interviews, field observations, and my journal containing field notes and memos, as well as public documents, archival materials, photographs, and videotapes. Consistent with the study’s emergent design, the process of analysis began the moment I started to write field notes of my experiences with the interviewees. In this sense, the fluidity and dynamics of my research reflection with the raw data became the locus of analysis. Confirming this standpoint, Giorgi (1997) stressed that the most important factor in phenomenological data analysis should be its flexibility and adaptability to the phenomenon under investigation; it is not “set and predictable.”

In the process of analysis, I gave importance to both the transcribed data as well as audio files. Thus, before actually beginning the data analysis, I listened several times to the audio records of all 8 interviews to gain a sense of the context that gave meaning to the verbal expressions of the respondents. Listening to the interviews informed me about the varying emotional states of the participants which otherwise would have been hard to obtain from the transcribed files.

The analysis continued more formally upon receipt of the transcripts from the interviews with the participants. At this more structured point in the data analysis, I utilized the specific strategy of phenomenological analysis, the basic steps of which involved my application of Moustakas's (1994) "Modification of the Van Kaam Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data" As summarized by Creswell (2003), this phenomenological approach to data analysis consisted of "the analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of an 'essence' description" (p. 191). This theoretical orientation toward data analysis seemed to be the perfect fit for what I was trying to capture regarding social support networks.

To begin with, I listed and pre-grouped every significant statement or meaning unit relevant to the experience from the individual transcripts. Each of these statements was considered to hold equal value as a means of contributing to the understanding of the phenomenon as a whole. Thus, each significant statement was horizontalized. (Because this approach represents a never-ending process, offering unlimited possibility for discovery, it is referred to as *horizontalization*.) In Patton's (2002) words, "Once the data are bracketed, all aspects of the data are treated with equal value, that is, the data are

“horizontalized....The data are spread out for examination, with all elements and perspectives having equal weight” (p. 486).

In the *reduction and elimination* step, I selected all of the relevant, meaningful, non-repetitive expressions in order to determine the invariant constituents of the experience. To determine the invariant constituents, I tested each expression for two requirements: (a) Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it? (b) Is it possible to separate it and label it? If so, it was considered a horizon of the experience. I eliminated all expressions not meeting the above requirements, as well as those that were overlapping, repetitive, and vague, or I presented them in more exact descriptive terms. The horizons that remained were considered the invariant constituents of the experience. In this way, each expression was tested for its relevance to the phenomenon and its possibility for being labelled. After the significant statements had been horizontalized, I grouped the meanings and statements based on the above two requirements. Next, I clustered the invariant constituents into labeled themes (*clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents*), which, in effect, represented the core themes of the experience.

The purpose of my next step, *the process of validation—final identification of the invariant constituents and themes*—was to validate and check the invariant constituents against the raw data and complete record of each participant using two criteria: (a) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? and (b) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? Accordingly, I deleted from the list of invariant constituents and labels those that did not meet these two criteria and which were inconsistent with the participant’s description of the experience. I continuously went back to the data to make

sure that each participant's voice was being extracted in a way that was explicit and/or compatible with what the participant was experiencing.

The subsequent step of constructing *individual textural descriptions* involved my capturing the *what* of the participants' experience with regard to social support networks. In doing this, I was able to reveal the affective and emotional aspects of the phenomenon. These descriptions also texturally captured the experience of the person involved in the meanings and included verbatim examples from the transcribed interview. This aided in providing breadth to the themes captured. As Patton (2002) explained, "The textural portrayal is an abstraction of the experience that provides the content and illustration, but not yet essence" (p. 486).

After constructing the textual descriptions, my next task was to construct the structural description of the participants' experience in regard to social support networks. The result was a description of the underlying structure regarding *how* the participants experienced what they did. Patton (2002) described this piece of the analysis as follows: "The phenomenologist looks beneath the affect inherent in the experience to deeper meanings for the individuals who, together make up the group" (p. 486). In this process, I developed an explanation for what happened in the participant's experience by constructing an *individual structural description* for each participant. The individual structural description is developed on the basis of the individual textural description, along with the *imaginative variation process*: varying the frames of reference and the perspectives, employing polarities and reversals. In this stage, intuition was imaginative and not empirical, because I identified the invariant themes within the data in order to develop an expanded version. Through imaginative variation, I was able to move toward

the textual-structural portrayal of each theme—an abstraction of the experience (Patton, 2002).

In the final steps of the phenomenological data analysis process, I relied on the preceding steps to create an individual description of the meaning and essences of the experience. I synthesized all the relevant experiences and themes, thereby constructing a *combined textural and structural description* for each participant as well as developing a *composite description* of shared essences for the whole group. It is important to note here that at this point in the analysis, every attempt was again made to bracket all previously held biases and preconceptions in order to encounter the phenomenon of social support networks in rural Appalachia. Also, in preparation for these final steps, I read the transcribed files multiple times and also switched back and forth between the transcribed data and audio recordings to find out the contextual meaning of the meaning units before finally constructing the textual-structural descriptions for each participant and for the whole in order to arrive at the *essence of the phenomenon*. The essence is the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is: It is “the final truth” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 144), which was incorporated into my final report.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Through conscientious adherence to the methodological processes described above, I was able to achieve transparency and consistency. As recommended by Patton (2002), it is through these dynamics that the study’s emergent design and results can, in large part, be proven trustworthy and credible. *Data triangulation* (e.g., the cross-referencing of interview transcripts and field observations) was used to help establish *validity* (i.e., where the findings reflect the real situation, based on sound evidence).

Furthermore, the inclusion of thick, rich description strengthened the authenticity of the study (Creswell, 2003).

The strategy of *member checks* was also used to enhance the study's credibility and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described this technique as one of the ways in which researchers can check their own subjectivity and ensure the trustworthiness of their findings. According to these authors, "The member check, whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with... [individuals] from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checking was employed in this study throughout the research process, in both formal and informal ways (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition to ongoing member checking during the interviews, informal (before the findings were written) member checks were conducted toward the end of each interview, at which time, I provided each participant with my provisional conclusions, for purposes of verification, negation, elaboration, revision, and other reactions, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). After the data collection stage, near the conclusion of the study, I conducted a formal comprehensive member check wherein I made arrangements to meet each participant at a site of her choice to share with her my preliminary report of the findings, in draft form. Importantly, this allowed me to "obtain confirmation that the report has captured the data as constructed by the informants, or to correct, amend, or extend, that is, to establish the credibility of the case" (Lincoln & Guba, p. 236). Complete approval from the respondent was not necessary. According to Rodwell (1998), it is more important to "experience sufficient negotiation between the researcher and the

participants so the areas of disagreement become clear enough to be included in the final report (p. 65).

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Social support networks face increasing socioeconomic pressures due to disruption of the economies of Appalachian Kentucky, the continual undervaluing of the region's work, and the uncertainty brought about by the increasing occurrence of job outsourcing. This phenomenon creates a growing challenge for marginalized and oppressed populations. Strong social support networks may represent the key in providing one such important alternative.

As a result of globalization, rural Appalachian women experienced threats to their economic, cultural, physical, and psychological well-being (Coyne et al., 2006; Cushing & Rogers, 1996). These threats have led to out-migration, negative well-being, strained social support networks, chronic disease, limited access to health care, and elevated rates of behavioral risks (e.g., tobacco use, substance abuse, poor diet, obesity and physical inactivity, and harmful sexual behaviors) (Lengerich et al., 2006). The communities of these rural women have faced many obstacles as well. As production in the textile and apparel sector became more globally mobile, communities began to have less control over their destiny, often leaving women workers to feel powerless.

Due to the limited number of studies looking at the social support networks of rural women in the wake of globalization, this topic was worthy of greater investigation in terms of understanding the ways social support networks affect women living in Central Appalachia. In this chapter, descriptive experiences and the participant's *words*

reveal a culturally informed understanding and knowledge of social support networks in Appalachian Kentucky as a result of globalization.

Presentation of Descriptive Characteristics of Participants

I conducted in-depth interviews with 8 female ex-factory workers recruited from Adair, Casey, and Green Counties in Appalachian Kentucky. All 8 participants were laid off from the Fruit of Loom apparel factory, along with approximately 4,000 co-workers in 1998, without prior notification from the company. Ages of the participants ranged from 39 to 70 years. Only 2 of the 8 participants had completed their associate's degree, and the remaining 6 had completed either middle school or had attained their GED. Five participants were Caucasian and 3 were African American. Two of the 8 participants were presently married and 2 were widowed. All of the participants practiced the Christian faith. Of the 8 female participants, 3 were retired, 2 worked as licensed professional nurses, 2 continued to work in a small garment factory, and 1 was employed as a medical clerk.

The Phenomenon of Social Support Networks Following Job Loss

Lengerich et al. (2006) provided the following poignant description of social support networks among Central Appalachians in the context of community:

Another dominant image of Appalachia is that of tight-knit communities composed of self-reliant residents with a distinct cultural heritage. Faced with limited economic opportunities and, for some, pervasive poverty, Appalachian communities remain vibrant. The Appalachian community itself may be a substantial source of its residents' strength. (p. 1)

Throughout the findings of this study, I have shown that each participant's cultural heritage and self-reliance illustrate that this image is generally correct. However, many of the women in the study believed the current Appalachian community was less

concerned with the collective good and provided little assistance and support during the massive layoffs. It was evident that for most women in this study, their community lacked consciousness and incentive for local concerns in the wake of the factory layoffs. The thematic description that follows suggests participants are still locally connected but rely more on the strength of their cultural values and religion.

Upon completion of analyzing the verbatim transcripts and digital files of the 8 participants who had been abruptly laid off from Fruit of the Loom, I clustered the invariant constituents (meaning units or horizons) and defined the “core themes of the experience,” using the modified form of Van Kaam’s method of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121), as discussed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, I present all the major themes and invariant constituents that represent each theme. The resultant themes and invariant constituents described below were extrapolated from the verbatim transcriptions of all the participants. The essence encapsulates the synthesis and composition of texture and structure called for in Moustakas’s (1994) data analysis strategy; therefore the textural components are illustrated in the actual words of the participants.

Major Themes and Sub-Themes

Five core themes emerged from the data gathered from interviews with the 8 participants: (a) impact of job layoffs; (b) emotional effects of a shuttered plant; (c) rural resiliency; (d) social support networks at the individual, family, and community level; and (e) cultural challenges to social support networks. Through illumination of these themes, sub-themes were identified for each theme. Collectively, these themes and sub-

themes constitute the subjective description and experience of social support networks following job loss for rural women.

In the following section, the themes are explained in a narrative format and illustrated in the quotes of the participants, providing the textural description of their lived experiences—my understanding of *what* occurred. I felt that pulling specific quotes would bring vibrancy to the design as well as mirror the abstraction behind them.

The findings are also presented in five tables that tell, in outline form, the story of job layoffs through the eyes of the eight ex-factory workers from a structural perspective. By using excerpts from the transcript, these tables build upon the *individual textural description* of the participants' experiences, as a way of describing the structure of the phenomenon—my understanding of *what* the participants experienced. The process “acts of thinking, judging, imaging and recollecting in order to arrive at core structural meanings” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 79) helped me understand *how* the experience occurred for the participants. This was accomplished by incorporating a structure (individual structural description) into the individual's textural description. As I imagined the experience occurring in a variety of structures (imaginative variation), I was able to identify the conditions that accompanied the experience and understand *how* participants characterize their social support networks.

In short, the following description of the findings consists of an interwoven narrative of *what* and *how* (structure) the lived experiences of the participants occurred. Thus, the themes, along with the quotations and the tables texturally and structurally capture in detail the true essence of the participants' experience with job loss and social

support networks in Appalachian Kentucky. According to Moustakas (1994), in order for a phenomenon to occur, one must be aware of the essence or the condition.

Impact of Job Layoffs

The theme *impact of job layoffs* includes descriptions of women's subjective experience and perceptions of job outsourcing, the sudden impact of income loss and loss of connections to others, and job unpreparedness in light of today's global economy. More specifically, the impact of job layoffs is presented according to the following descriptive sub-themes: (a) rumors of pink slips, (b) disbelief and fear, and (c) unpreparedness (see Table 1).

Table 1
Impact of Job Layoffs

Impact of Job Layoffs
1. Rumors of Pink Slips
2. Disbelief and Fear
3. Unpreparedness

Rumors of pink slips. Fruit of the Loom apparel factory, employing approximately 4,000 employees, was located in Taylor County, Kentucky. Opened in 1952, Fruit of the Loom had minimal turnover, and women spent entire careers sewing side by side their neighbors, classmates, extended relatives, sisters, and mothers. The plant shuttered in June 1998, taking several thousand jobs to Central America. Fruit of the Loom employed several women from several small surrounding counties in Appalachian Kentucky.

All participants reported they were shocked at losing their job that had once been considered lifetime employment; however most had been aware of rumors. One participant described her experience of hearing rumors circulate in the community and inside the factory:

We heard rumors that it was going under, but never believed that it could go under. We thought there was no life after Fruit of the Loom. Fruit of the Loom was our life, it put our kids through school, bought our homes and vehicles. We made the money and this is what we accomplished with it.

Another participant (age 63) gave a detailed account of the events leading up to the plant closing:

People were coming in from Honduras and big management people were there. We'd ask the bosses, "Hey, what's going on?" They'd say, "Don't worry, they ain't taking your job." So, after awhile, there were so many rumors and people were becoming so afraid of losing their job. But they just kept telling us our jobs were secure. Finally we found out it wasn't secure when they started letting some of the units go home...that is when we knew it was reality. They just started walking into units and say, "Get your things and go." Without any knowledge or warning. Couldn't make a phone call or nothing. Then we knew it was really coming. But, the thing about it was that some workers thought the harder they worked that they wouldn't be laid off. But it didn't matter – you could do less or you could do more, it didn't matter. You were going anyway! Sorry! We knew those jobs were going to Honduras! We started reading about it in the paper, and management just kept us in the dark. I think, to my understanding, the labor was cheaper, and they could make money more than here. It was like taking food from your own family to feed someone else.

Many of the participants spoke of how the factory provided no notice and insensitively announced their exodus over the public address system. One woman recounted the unexpected announcement over the intercom:

We thought everything was fine, and it was just a rumor. It came out on the intercom one day, and they told everybody, and we was shocked. I don't recall people being gradually let go. It was just all at the end when they started filtering out people. But, when they made that announcement, nobody knew anything. It was just like a bomb. After the announcement, people started leaving gradually until they got down to the very end. Nobody met with us; it was just announced

over the intercom one day. Everybody was just shocked and jumped up and started crying and crowding the hallways, calling their families to just tell them what had happened. No warning, just like a bomb had dropped. I was one of the last to leave, but it was only a few weeks between the announcement and when I was escorted from the factory. I never really knew what was happening. I heard there were too many bosses in the office and getting paid for not doing their jobs and that the money just wasn't there. I never really knew *why*. Now I know it went overseas.

Another participant exclaimed, "It happened so fast without notice. Bam!"

Disbelief and fear. Without the presence of a union or strong elected official in the community, Fruit of the Loom felt under no obligation to provide an advance layoff warning to its workers. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act of 1988 (WARN Act) is intended to give workers, their families, and the community 60 days advance notice by an employer of any plant closing or mass layoff (unions can negotiate longer notice times). The employer must provide this notice to the union, to the elected officials of the town or city where the workplace is located, and to the proper state officials. Unfortunately, workers were blindsided by the announcement and in the following quotes, participants voice the disbelief and fear they experienced. One participant described her situation:

Everybody was really scared. I seen a lot of them crying and really scared, and you'd think they were having nervous breakdowns. It is all they knew – they didn't know anything else. The fear was losing homes and everything they worked so hard to pay for, they could lose. People always say, "Why did you stay and kill yourself" working there all those years, but I got my home and car and raised my kids and sent them to school. We knew it was about cheaper labor. We sure didn't like it, and to this day, I still boycott Fruit of the Loom products. We started talking about the bill...Free Trade was what killed us. They could move overseas and not paying for this work compared to what they paid us. The last day was sad. It was like a death in the family and having to leave and go home and know you weren't going to see your friends like you had been everyday. You thought, "This is it...what am I going to do?" It was one of the most terrifying things to happen around here and unbelievable that a company that large could just move overseas.

It was devastating to a lot of women and their families. Like a rug being pulled out from underneath ya. Fear!

Many factory workers were unsuspecting and initially reported feelings of distress and disbelief following the closure. Several participants did not want to face the unknown and leave something familiar behind. Many believed there wasn't life after Fruit of the Loom. In one participant's words,

It was such a shock—I don't think we were ready for it. We didn't have support, because no one had time to prepare. It went so fast. No one was ready. People who even owned business around were thinking what were they going to do too. Like my neighbor owned Dairy Queen, and she said the biggest part of their income came from the factory women. We would walk to Dairy Queen, and get our meals, and she said the biggest support came from the workers. They lost a big part of their business. So it just wasn't us, it was the other businesses too. I am sure the local business knew that when the plant closed, people wouldn't be buying either.

A different participant gave a vivid account of feeling fear after the plant closed:

Fear started and we were thinking, "What are we going to do?" I didn't know how to do anything else. It is all I knew. A lot of my friends there were not old enough to retire, and they were too old to get a job anywhere else. They had spent their whole life there, from the time they was 15 or 16 years old. They had been there when it was just 30 or 40 people. A friend of mine worked there 42 years and started out making a dollar a day.

Unpreparedness. Most women affected by the layoffs were not educated, older, and had worked in the factory for several decades. Now, faced with new labor force and market characteristics (i.e., educational requirements, youth, and technological literacy), the majority of participants expressed concerns about finding employment opportunities and wages comparable to their pay at the factory. By 1997, Fruit of the Loom paid between \$10 and \$12 an hour. Those willing to put in enough overtime could make close to \$50,000 a year. One participant remarked,

I only got an 8th grade education, so I got left behind in a lot of things. We could have been hired if we had an education. So what were we going to do now? Things had changed so much in the world, and now you need an education. They just kept telling us that once we got laid off, we could go to school. I was too young for retirement and too old and tired to go back to school. They offered college, and that was the only thing. But so many women couldn't go to college, and they weren't old enough to get retirement.

An older factory worker stated,

But in the end they [Fruit of the Loom] never told us how to access resources, wasn't even supportive, and did nothing for us during the transition. It was just a hard time for everyone. People didn't know what else to do...we so unprepared. Didn't have other skills and fearful of the unknown.

Several women were single mothers and faced additional worries as unskilled, uneducated, and untrained workers in a modern labor force. Numerous participants revealed concerns regarding their children's future and welfare, as shared by one participant:

It was more scary on the older women. But, the possibility they'd offer you school, it didn't enter too many peoples' mind that had children at home, because I had to work and needed immediately insurance for my kids. I had to work full time and couldn't go to school or work part time. At that time, I had divorced and was raising two kids on my own. My main thought was, "I need insurance."

Emotional Effects of a Shuttered Plant

Female factory workers reported having an emotional investment that caused them pain when they were asked to leave before they were ready to stop working. The loss of work can be synonymous to other losses in people's lives in the respect that it causes significant grief and suffering. The theme *emotional effects of a shuttered plant* include descriptions of the women's experience related to feeling like an outcast, their depression and grief, and reflections of oppression (see Table 2).

Table 2

Emotional Effects of a Shuttered Plant

Emotional Effects
1. Feeling like an outcast
2. Depression and Grief
3. Reflections of Oppression

Feeling like an outcast. Tennessee Williams (1970) wrote, “When so many are lonely as seem to be lonely, it would be inexcusably selfish to be lonely alone” (p. 7). Following the layoffs, participants were never “lonely alone,” as confirmed by the women in the study, all of whom reported that job loss triggered feelings of loneliness and isolation. Several of the participants indicated that for the first time in their lives, they felt displaced and without purpose. Other respondents commented on how Fruit of the Loom devalued their years of loyal service, as they cast aside employees after the abrupt layoff. One woman in the study tearfully reminisced about losing contact with her co-workers after working side by side for several decades in the factory:

We were outcasts now. Before, we'd always talk to one another on the phone...like family. Everybody was there for each other. Like we'd go visit someone in the hospital, or take them money if they needed it. The people I worked with were tight knit...it sure wasn't Fruit of the Loom that helped out. I just felt so isolated after the lay-offs. Didn't want to be around those people anymore that I worked with. It was too sad. Some of them had jobs and I didn't.

As evident in the following quote, one participant spoke candidly about the factory's having abandoned its employees during a time of crisis:

People were just trying to help themselves really. You didn't see anyone anymore, so you just relied on your family. No one was around. I was by myself now and away from the people I had seen for years. They [Fruit of the Loom] didn't even

come to you and offer incentives, like school. They made it difficult and didn't share with us what we needed to do. They'd just say, "You can do it," but never offered the information that we needed to do or where we needed to go. It was left up to us. We were basically thrown to the coyotes. They sure didn't give us the resources. It was left up to us! I did stay in touch with some of the girls to see *how* they were going about getting into school. We'd talk and exchange resources on the phone. Otherwise I wouldn't have known where to go or where to start.

Depression and grief. Individuals typically define themselves by what they do for a living and the groups they belong to. Job loss not only brings with it a loss of position and power, but often a loss of identity. As it became obvious that the layoffs were inevitable and the participants' jobs were irrevocably lost, most women revealed experiencing a period of job-loss grief and depressed feelings. In regard to the layoffs, one participant told of suffering effects long after the factory closed:

Many of us were too old and got depressed and started using drugs and drinking or selling drugs to make a little cash just to live. Like selling prescriptions. We just didn't know what to do. People sometimes do bad things just out of fear and desperation you know. It was hard work and we were blindsided. It was like the titanic, and everyone just fended for themselves, trying to stay afloat and survive. I was depressed and missed the girls I worked with.

A younger participant described the frustration and depression she experienced following the layoffs and how other co-workers succumbed to the pressures of bureaucratic red tape:

I'd get so frustrated and felt so down after the factory went out. One of the girls went to Nursing School and when I tried to get in, they'd tell me there were no funds available, or I couldn't go to this particular school or that school...but, I was told to just keep pushing it and pushing it, so I kept telling them, "There was other people that went"; so finally, I got to go to a vocational school. It was an 18-month-long program, but it took me 2 years, after them giving me the run around for 2 months and not wanting to pay for nothing. But I stayed on them every day, because I didn't want to miss my chance to go. A few never got to go, because they just gave up. It was frustrating, and I can understand why girls were like, "screw this!"

Many participants described the post-layoff desperation felt by many women, who consequently partook in illegal activities as a means of their own survival—often committing non-violent drug-related crimes out of economic need:

I used to love going to work for over 30 years, but now I am bitter. Don't want to be around anyone now...so I just stay by myself, and that way, no one can disappoint me again. I'd rather be a loner. I knew many girls who were laid off that started drinking and using drugs. They just didn't feel needed or worth anything. They lost their homes and cars and got real desperate like. Doing all kinds of silly things, like selling their prescriptions and playing like they was sick to get more medicines to sell. Crazy and desperate kinds of things. It was really sad, and a lot of good girls went wrong. Lost their kids and went to jail too.

Reflections of oppression. Displaced workers often mention the hostility and resentment felt related to lost pensions and exposure to years of sexism and racism. A sizeable portion of all laid-off workers lost their pensions at Fruit of the Loom. Many participants were visibly angry as they discussed working in an environment riddled with sexual harassment and racist remarks. A couple of older participants shared how “dreams” of retirement buffered the daily impact of abusive and undue harassment. One participant described her experience working in the factory as a woman of color:

At that time, it was not easy to get a job at Fruit of the Loom for Blacks, they were hiring a few Blacks, but it wasn't something easy to get. I got on in '65 and it took me a whole year to get on. It was so odd, it was so derogatory back then...you know, the plant manager, when you'd go and get a job, he wouldn't take your application; he'd have everybody standing out, and he'd stand out in front and pick you out, just like you were an animal. That is the way it was: "You and you and you come here." I didn't think much about it then, but now that I am older, it wasn't good. That is the way they hired back then.

Another African-American ex-factory worker in the study spoke openly about racism, oppression, and her reflections on racism inside the plant:

I worked with a guy from India, and he was not the best person to get along with. I guess his culture in India, women were low on his status, and if you were a woman that was one strike, but if you were Black that was two strikes. I had two

strikes against me, and he gave me a hard way to go. They'd sprinkle a few Blacks in to keep the monkey off their back. Now the women were too focused on making production, and no racial stuff was going on between the women, because you had to do what you had to do and not concerned with that. Back then, people lined up to go work at Fruit of the Loom, and the guy would come out and say, "you and you and you." He'd just come out and pick certain people...I kept trying to get on and on...he just looked at you to see how sturdy you were or whatever, cause it was like a slaughter house. Now, that I look back, it was degrading...back then, they didn't require an education, 'cause a lot of my friends didn't go past 8th grade, and they worked there for years and years.

After the layoffs, I started getting really pissed off. For years it didn't matter to the management what was going on with us, as long as we made production and they made money. If you had a sick child, they couldn't keep you after the 12 weeks of family leave, so you had to find another job. They sure weren't sympathetic.

The women in this study all spoke unfavorably of Fruit of the Loom and the tremendous loss of their 401K and pension plans. At the time of the layoffs, the majority of participants were too young to retire and too old to hire. With few prospects for these workers, many found themselves in a retirement Catch-22. One such participant stated,

Many women were relying on their 401K and pension. But, they never got anything. A real sore spot for people. If you invest that many years in a place, then you should get it. These women had been there for 30 and 40 years of their life and didn't know anything else to do. They were too old to go to school and start over...including my mom. I heard this from a lot of my mom's friends who worked there, "I am too old to do that or do that or do that." A lot of people didn't know what they were going to do with their lives.

Another similar account from a disgruntled ex-factory worker is depicted as follows:

That is what makes me mad! Because I didn't think about, it but one day someone asked me if I got severance pay and I said "No, I just got a pink slip." I do get retirement when I get 62, but nothing now. When the plant closed we got nothing. Some people say we should have got something. I look back and feel cheated. But, I guess I would do it over. We lost so much, but my sister would tell me all the time, "You can't go back there, quit worrying about what's back there." I focus on the now.

Rural Resiliency

The third theme, *rural resiliency*, includes descriptions of women’s narratives related to their capacity to maintain cultural knowledge, values, and identity as a strategy for dealing with job loss and as a means of support. Descriptions include accounts of humble beginnings, sense of place, self-reliance, and pride (see Table 3).

Table 3

Rural Resiliency

Rural Resiliency
1. Humble Beginnings
2. Sense of Place
3. “Ask for No Handouts”
4. Appalachian Pride

Humble beginnings. All participants reported a modest upbringing in Appalachian Kentucky. Many women attributed poverty and rural child-rearing values as a survival strategy for obstacles faced in adulthood. Participants spoke fondly of living on self-sufficient farms and felt their humble beginnings served the function of an emotional protective barrier. A participant shared her experience of life as a child in rural Appalachia:

I remember my childhood as good. It makes me who I am today. Back then, I always tell my kids, when we played we made our own toys...horses out of sticks, mud pies out of dirt, hide and seek and Simon says...all the kids came out and played together and then came in at night. Mom always ironed for people, and looking back, really, she struggled, and we didn't know it. People would come by our house and pick up their clothes and she'd iron their clothes by sprinkling water...no starch. People would bring us food and presents for her work. We

lived in a 2-room house, which was a living room and a kitchen. The boys and us girls slept in the kitchen and I'm not ashamed of that, because they were the best years of my life. That was our bedroom and the boys would sleep at the bottom and we'd sleep at the top. Sometime I would go out and play, and Mama would ask me something outside, and I'd say, "It's in the kitchen on the bed." She'd say, "Don't say that girl." When I got older, I knew what she meant, because who has beds in the kitchen. It brings tears to my eyes.

Another participant described her similar experiences:

My father was a sharecropper and worked for a White family, and my mom worked with him and the children helped with the chores, and we were poor; but we really didn't know we were poor, because we always had food to eat. Daddy raised tobacco and corn for the people he worked for, and he also had hogs and cows he'd sell. I would have to get up at 5:00 and help with chores, like milking the cows, seeing that they all got milked and especially in the summer and spring we had to help set and pull tobacco, and as it grew, we had to make sure the tobacco got chopped out from the weeds. We gathered eggs and sold eggs to a little place in town that bought fresh eggs, and then we'd take the milk to a place called Carnation. I also helped with the cooking and the canning...help get in wood for firewood or coal. Just anything that needed to be done, it was just part of our daily lives to do. We were close, because we didn't have all the distractions of computers, TVs, and cell phones, or a phone. Back then, we had a tiny transistor radio that had a clip on it; so we'd clip it on a piece of metal, and it was a source of entertainment, and we ate together. We'd go to church twice a month, the first and third Sunday of every month. The only big deal back then was the annual homecoming at church, which was the first Sunday in August. On Sundays, families would take big basket lunches and cook and spread them out on wagons. We really enjoyed that.

All participants perceived their modest origins to play an important role, as mentioned earlier, in providing psychological buffers under conditions of economic change—a major consequence of globalization. One participant felt “living poor” prepared her with the capacity to become a survivor:

We grew up poor, so you know...you knew how to survive. I have to go back to my childhood, just coming from the way we're raised...we were just survivors. We didn't have much, and today it doesn't take much to make me happy. Just give me a home. It doesn't have to be an expensive home...just gimme clothes and shelter, and I can survive. I don't have to have the best in life. That comes from growing up poor, because back then, we thought we had everything. We was clean, fed, and sheltered. I thought I was rich.

The following quote reflects the importance placed on regional values pertaining to modest origins and maintaining humility throughout life:

Women were poor from here. Now they got these big homes around here, but most of us never choose to get that high up. Mama would say, “Don’t get bigger than your upbringing.” She meant to be humble. Most of those people are the outsiders. It was just we had been poor most of our lives or brought up poor and knew how to survive through rough times.

Sense of place. Most participants unquestionably placed high importance on *sense of place*: Land is who they are. Still (1970), an Appalachian poet, encapsulated sense of place below:

I shall not leave these prisoning hills
Though they topple their barren heads to level earth
And the forests slide uprooted out of the sky.
Though the waters of Troublesome, of Trace Fork,
Of Sand Lick rise in a single body to glean the valleys,
To drown lush pennyroyal, to unravel rail fences;
Though the sun-ball breaks the ridges into dust
And burns its strength into the blistered rock
I cannot leave. I cannot go away.
Being of these hills, being one with the fox
Stealing into the shadows, one with the new-born foal,
The lumbering ox drawing green beech logs to mill,
One with the destined feet of man climbing and descending,
And one with death rising to bloom again, I cannot go
Being of these hills I cannot pass beyond. (p. 82)

All women interviewed in the study were unwilling to abandon their community despite greater economic opportunities in surrounding counties and states. The connection to the land is pivotal to understanding the women in this region and why they were unable to leave. Participants often drew parallels between their family heritage and ties to the land, as referenced below:

The worse was thinking about the possibility of having to travel to work...before I traveled 3 miles, but now I travel 40 miles to work. I never thought about relocating, I would rather drive a 100 miles before moving away. I feel safe here. My people have been here for hundreds of years. We have 6 generations buried in this one county. Our blood runs deep through these knobs. It is this place that gives me support. All I have to do is think about my great-great-grandparents workin' this land, and it keeps me humble and going every day.

Many participants in the study spoke of familiarity, family, and trust, which provided them with a sense of belonging and attachment to the region. In the words of one participant,

I am like that, and I think it is just being complacent. You don't know what to expect...the unknown. I am bad about that, because I don't know what is out there. But I will never know if I never try. I am guilty. Like I didn't want to live in Illinois. Most people went there from here to make money. I didn't like the thought of it, because I would be away from Mom and my family. Didn't care for it. Family was the reason even though my sisters were up there. But they came back too.

Relating sense of place to the importance of social support, the youngest participant stated,

Because people that live here know everyone. In the country, you always know if something happens in the community, like a death or a sickness, something like that, you have always got people outpouring and bringing you food. In my little community, if somebody passes away, then everybody is called and chips in money to give the family. You know you got that support and know your neighbors and trust your neighbors. Why go somewhere else when you don't know what else is going on? It's the support. It is knowing you have family here to help you financially. Going somewhere else would mean you didn't know anyone...fear of violence. You always think things aren't going to happen in your own community. You know your neighbors and trust them. In the country, you are not on top of one another, but you're not strangers either. I don't even lock my doors. So that is why I never left or will never leave. It is where I belong.

“Ask for no handouts.” Appalachians are characterized as private, wanting to “take care of their own,” and not accepting of charity; traditionally they do not seek attention, and they try to manage their own problems (Behringer & Friedell, 2006). Many

historical studies have suggested that characteristics of Central Appalachian culture include values and beliefs that compromise Appalachians' overall health, however most participants felt these values served an important supportive role during the layoffs.

We never asked for help on the farm, and my parents would tell us not to ask for handouts...you just don't ask for help...it was bred into you not to ask for anything. I can't explain it, I just grew up with that knowledge. If you ask for handouts, then people would know you couldn't make it out here.

A few participants expounded upon the lack of parental affection shown within their family; however, the following account by one participant explains how "affection" may have been seen as an expression of vulnerability that should never be conveyed by those living in pervasive poverty and adversity:

When I grew up, there wasn't a lot of affection shown...all they thought about was work. But we were farmers, and they didn't know how to express love, ask for love, or show love. Possibly, to show or express love while struggling in here would make ya look weak, especially when there is no room for any type of weakness...maybe a teachin' tool through the generations. You know, too soft of an emotion when one must be sturdy and tough. I often heard growin' up, "Be a bulldog; buck-up; get tough' it will make hair grow on your chest; don't ask for nothin'."

One participant maintained,

We were poor all of our lives, and this was just something we could handle, because we never had money growing up. It wasn't anything we couldn't handle; we could just do with less. So, people around here would rather do with less than to reach out and ask for help. We were really cuttin' off our noses to spite our face.

Several participants described how "asking for help" conveyed weakness to others in the community, and there was pride in the region that individuals had the wherewithal to survive anything. The following passages are from two participants, respectively, who related their survival strategies to both the frugality learned as a children as well as willful self-reliance:

I took a pay cut and everything changed. Now I don't go out to eat or give the kids the money freely like I did. I learned how to save and do whatever to get by. I never got too depressed about it...I just would think the Lord would get me through it, but I have always been that type of person. We had little growing up and learned how to stretch a dollar. Waste not, want not. As long as I have some basic necessities, I could survive.

A lot of people had to do away with things they had, because they couldn't afford it. I had to live very conservative during that time because I had two children. It was by far not easy trying to keep up your house payment, car payment, and food, and so on. I be damn if I asked anyone for anything. You don't ask for nothin' But I had been used to doing without before in my life and just had to live that way again.

Appalachian pride. One of the most obvious characteristics of Appalachia is pride. Participants in the study often described self-reliance and individualism synonymously with a strong work ethic and courage.

We're praising God in everything we do
Thankful we had this to come back to
We don't have much money, but we're dignified
And happy in our Appalachian pride.
----Jones and Cash (1975)

Appalachian stereotypes, such as pride and self-sufficiency, are often seen as obstacles in the region, fostering isolation and alienation. Over time, the prideful Appalachian has become elusive, yet understood by the study's participants within the context of their cultural heritage. Half of the women interviewed identified *pride* as an important personal characteristic that mitigated distress and buffered the negative impact of job loss. The following quote from one participant depicts her belief that pride and emotional strength are often synonymous:

Women here are strong and full of pride...the women my age and older came from ways that they know how to cut wood, they know how to farm the land, they know how to grow gardens, they know how to do a washing pan on the line. They may not want to, I don't want to, but they can do without. We grew up without. The women I worked with could do all that and do without. Stubborn. You want

better...better for your children, better things, and if you work, you can get it. Women are just born strong here...physically and mentally. You *have* to be strong to live here.

Although several women in the study were eligible to receive government assistance following the plant's closure, none of the participants opted to apply for food stamp benefits, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), and/or social security disability. The following participant attributed pride to her unwillingness to accept welfare:

Pride...I am bad like that. I don't want someone else to see me on welfare...I hate to be behind someone in the food line with a food stamp card, because I have always thought I have got to make a living myself. I know it is hard, but it is honest, and I could do it. Yes, it a value with us here! If you want something, you work for it. You are not afraid of work. I have worked a garden since I was a kid. Get up before school and work the garden and then sponge off and catch the school bus. All I have ever known is work. So, not working and asking for welfare was not an option.

Many participants commented that "struggle" remains a private matter, and pride becomes the impetus behind rural women's strength and empowerment:

Even when you struggle, nobody should know it. It's a pride thing. You are so used to doing stuff for yourself, you just don't even think about asking others for help. Struggling will always be something we do here. It will always be like that, because we are stubborn and prideful. Most of your women in Kentucky are stubborn and have a lot of pride.

One participant remarked that despite poverty, a sense of pride has remained a constant throughout her life:

We are prideful though. I knew I was poor in high school, because we didn't have the best. I have a picture of Mom standing in the yard and showed my son. He laughed and said, "Look at that house sitting on rocks." He didn't even pay attention to my mother. I told him those were the best days of my life. As I got older, I guess I compare what I have, but I'd go back. It was peaceful and simple...you didn't worry about stuff, like we didn't lock doors. It was more of a unity. Nobody cares now. We ate together at night, and I miss that. We were proud even when we had nothing.

Social Support Networks at the Individual, Family, and Community Level

Participants maintained that strong family ties (e.g., familism and kinship) and other networks (e.g., church and neighbors) served as emotional protective barriers (i.e., coping mechanisms) to their social, cultural, and economic environments. All women in the study identified “God” and “prayer” as the most significant support in response to economic and labor struggles. The theme *social support networks at the individual, family, and community level* includes sub-themes and descriptions of participants’ social relationships and ties with God, prayer and the bible, family, churches, and neighbors and friends (see Table 4).

Table 4

Social Support Networks at the Individual, Family, and Community Level

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Individual Level<ul style="list-style-type: none">• God , Prayer, and the Bible2. Family Level<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kinship3. Community Level<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Churches
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Individual level: God, prayer, and the bible. Participants reported a personal relationship and strong belief in God. Additionally, each participant placed high significance upon prayer and reading the bible daily for security, strength, and humility, which is one of the cornerstones of Appalachian theology.

The oldest participant in the study worked at Fruit of the Loom for 38 years, sewing hem bottoms. Per her account below, faith in God provided her great comfort and strength during a time of transition and significant loss:

If it hadn't been for my faith, I don't know if I could have made it. I am sure every body's story will be different. But I rely on God; he got me through. Just trust in the Lord to get you through. It has taken a lot out of me.

Two fellow co-workers expressed similar sentiments regarding the power of prayer:

Prayer and being determined to put it forth. Get myself up and don't give up. If one thing doesn't work, try something else. My mama was like that; she was a worker and was always busy. But it was strength in God that made me keep going and faith in God that was my biggest support. Faith in God is the main thing.

Prayer was important to me during that time. Very much, very much and still is today. Very important, and people have prayed for our family, and we are close knit; and we now have prayers for the economy, because we are going through similar times now. So prayer is very important.

In good humor, a disgruntled participant remarked on the factory's abandonment of its employees in relation to her faith in God and prayer:

God wasn't going to head overseas and abandon me like Fruit of Loom. Well, prayer definitely, too. God was probably the biggest support. I can't carry every one's burden on myself, but we can pray and stick together, and it will work out. It was strength in God. God gave us strength.

Family level: Kinship. According to Taylor, Chatters, Hardison, & Riley (2001), "The importance of family and friendships has been well documented and overall, studies report a positive relationship" (p. 444) between participation in social support networks and personal well-being outcomes. Reinforcing this point, Hooks (1984) contended that family support may be the one maintained social support system for oppressed populations, as mentioned earlier. One of the women in the study characterized her stubbornness to ask for help as "hillbilly pride," and all but one participant turned to

family for support. Many women in the study reported their families were not able to offer financial means but provided much-needed emotional support.

One participant shared a bittersweet memory of her son's self-determination and dedication to help the family stay afloat following her job loss:

My son got a job at the hamburger place, and it took a load off my mind, because he had his own spending money. I would go strip tobacco to do just whatever to get us by, but my son helped me out big time. I guess different people have different views. I was just blessed with a strong family. And growing up like I did, I knew that I would survive. Good family support.

Several women turned for advice and support to their parents. The following two narratives reveal how parents and grandparents rallied behind these women during a time of economic upheaval:

I leaned on my parents and listened to what they preached to me. Mommy and Daddy said, "You are young, strong, and healthy. You should bust your butt like we did and not suck up what we paid in by getting' on welfare or drawin' unemployment. That is how I feel, and maybe I shouldn't. They'd say, "If we can work, you can work."

I couldn't buy for my children the way I used to have. Then I was spending all my time in my books and not with them. So, my Mom and Dad stepped up and basically started raising those kids for me. Otherwise, I couldn't have made it. So, I'd say, my mom, dad and grandmother helped me mentally, financially, and babysat.

Another participant reflected on her family and sister's support:

Family helps you survive, and I have been through a lot, but so have a lot of other people. I always believed not to worry about things you couldn't fix. I couldn't have done it without them. We are close and when one hurts, we all hurt. My single sister always helped out with buying the kids things during that time. I just relied on my family.

A select few were afforded the opportunity to enroll and attend college, yet were faced with new challenges that required certain sacrifices from their husbands and children. One participant passionately described her family's invaluable support:

Family. My husband, son, and daughter. It was hard for me to go to school every day. From my perspective, family is close to you and supports you and gives you encouragement and cares about your well-being. My husband...he has taken a lot and did without. My children didn't get to see me much when I was in school either. He was somebody that was there for me when I needed it and not expecting something in return. My faith in God, my husband and kids and sisters and brothers were all there for me.

Befitting the theme of kinship, an African-American participant pulled strength from her dying mother's words and shared the meaning of unconditional family support:

You have to take care of your family...and my family do. My mama said to me when she was dying, "It takes 10 kids to take care of a dying parent, but one parent to raise 10 kids." So, I never complained after that day, and we never felt put-out ever again, especially when our family needed help.

Community level: Church. Warren et al. (2001) stated that "poor people rely on the support of extended family relationships...like churches to survive" (p. 267). The Appalachian coal mine wars provided an example of how families relied upon the support of extended family relationships, churches, and the community to survive (Billings, 1990; Couto, 1999; Fisher, 1993). Therefore, social capital and networks have often been at the forefront of sustaining communities in Central Appalachia. All participants reported "church" as the bedrock of a community. However, contrary to the literature, the majority of women in the study reported their churches provided minimal support following the mass layoffs at Fruit of the Loom. In the words of 2 participants, respectively,

The churches didn't do anything for us. I am not aware that any of them helped out when 4,000 of us lost our jobs. Nobody in the community really helped out then, either. I don't know, but it wasn't there. There was nothing! I didn't really even think about it until now...I was just too preoccupied getting another job. There were no support groups for those who lost their jobs or churches giving counsel. We just thought, "I can find something or get unemployment for awhile."

Looking back, I don't recall the community or church there because everybody was out trying to hustle for themselves. I don't recall any support. I think it was just everybody trying to take care of themselves.

However, a couple of participants who attended smaller churches reported a greater sense of outreach and support from their churches and their fellow parishioners.

In the words of one of these participants,

At church, we would pray for one another. I wasn't the only one out of a job then. Our church is small, so we'd go to the food pantry together. There were just too many of us in the same boat during that time. We couldn't really help each other... We couldn't go that way, but we could all go and get food at God's pantry and different pantries in the county you could go to. I think we rallied behind one another, because we were all going through the same thing. I think times like that and now gives us a wake-up call and that things never stay the same. Change is going to be there, one way or another in your life, and keeps us more aware of what we need to do. We accept these changes; they gonna come and it is not always easy to be prepared and stay in prayer.

Many participants attributed the lack of community support to unpreparedness within the surrounding counties. The region had relied on Fruit of the Loom as the economic backbone and mainstay for their community for over 40 years, resulting in economic complacency, with little need for planning and development.

Two participants provided their rationale on the absence of community:

People had their own worries to worry about...they were facing the reality that there were no more jobs and you don't have time to talk to someone, so it was about you had to go out there and get a job.

Just talking to people, but there wasn't that in the community set-up for us because it happened so quick so people were just trying to take care of themselves. It was just a shock after 26 years working. Didn't have time and just tried to get through. I miss them, yea I miss them. Just keep looking forward.

Cultural Challenges to Social Support Networks

The theme *cultural challenges to social support networks* consists of participants' descriptions of citizenry distrust and suspicion of outsiders, which affected the condition

of social support networks. All women in the study felt social support networks were vital to maintaining income, health, and social opportunities. However, several participants perceived their cultural beliefs of *mistrust and suspicion* as a barrier to the function of social support networks and its means of facilitating access to employment, education, health care, and so on.

Table 5

Cultural Challenges to Social Support Networks

Cultural Challenges to Social Support
1. Mistrust and Suspicion
a. Labor Unions
b. Northerners
c. Accessing Health Care

Mistrust and suspicion. Appalachia has a long history of exploitation. As a result, regional folks are often suspicious and mistrusting of the outside world, especially those in authority, the well-educated, hospitals and doctors—anyone new or anyone who is a stranger to their community.

Labor unions. Historically, organized labor efforts in Appalachian Kentucky have been a source of strength and were significant to improving work conditions in the region. However, companies in Appalachia have often responded to unions through means of intimidating their employees. Several women in the study reported that the mere mention of unions within the workplace often resulted in the reduction of work hours, demotions, unwanted assignments, or termination of employment. Union

membership began to dramatically decline in Appalachian Kentucky in the 1990s as a result of outsourcing, employment decline, and employer opposition to unions. One informed participant, who worked as a plant supervisor, claimed that Fruit of the Loom believed unions did not allow them to be competitive in a global market, which requires increased efficiency and productivity. Candidly, she shared her knowledge, apprehension, and experience related to NAFTA, unions, and outsourcing:

It was like taking food from your own family to feed someone else. I started reading about other jobs around here leaving for Honduras in the paper, and management was just keeping us in the dark. I think, to my understanding, the labor was cheaper, and they could make money more than here. Before all this, supervisors were all taken by a bus to Northern Kentucky University and told about NAFTA, so they wouldn't sign the NAFTA treaty. The unions were there to but we were told to keep away from unions by management. They made them out to be the bad guy but I remember that in the early day Fruit of the Loom was Union Underwear. We used to be protected, and then the unions left us. You really didn't know who to believe or trust.

Conversely, most women in the study had little knowledge and understanding of organized labor and/or the changing labor markets:

We weren't a union; the women didn't want the union. The union would stand outside the factory with papers for us to read and try to give it to the women, and the women would refuse to take it and get so mad. Some women were the sole source of the income for their family. Some thought it was a bad union from the North, and they'd be worse than what they were now. Women made good money and didn't want any interference.

Another participant concurred:

A lot of people said if we had of been with the union that the factory wouldn't have closed. But I also heard a lot of rumors that ... I don't know, I don't know, I really don't know. It was brought up, but we were scared to get involved for fear of losing our job.

Many women expressed regret regarding their lack of involvement with unions:

The women thought the union people got paid, and they didn't want their money going to union dues and thought they'd be worse off. Guess we really didn't

understand their motives. Maybe up to no good, maybe not. I had 33 years in there. Now look at me...I cannot live on the pension I have from there. I can't survive. Maybe we should have listened to the union.

Northerners. There is a general level of mistrust among Appalachians. One common sentiment in the region surrounds the mistrust of Northerners.

The Northern world stripped the mountains
of their riches and then called the inhabitants
backward fools for being enslaved in the
capitalist meat grinder.

---Pinion (2010, p. 2)

Many participants referred to Northerners as “Yanks,” which is often a disrespectful reference harkening back to the Civil War era. Most women in the study directed anger and resentment toward “Yanks,” possibly rooted in folklore, Civil War sympathy, and a history of Northern robber barons exploiting the textile industry and stripping the area of its coal and timber. The participants conveyed that “outsiders” should not be trusted and felt most Northerners lacked good intentions for the region. It was noted during the interviews that women who endorsed these opinions were Caucasian.

One participant described her experience of distrust with unions and Northerners:

We just didn't want to pay union dues. I never heard anyone trying to help us, though. I just heard a lot of talk against unions. People never really said *why* they didn't like them. You just didn't talk about it, and you didn't trust people coming down here from up North. People just went there to make money and go home to their families. You didn't have the kind of supervisors there to help you out. There just wasn't a lot of support inside the factory. I know a lot of people were against unions. A lot! Unions were just considered bad, but I couldn't tell you why.

Another ex-factory worker agreed:

But I will say, when the managers were from around here, we had a union in the '50s, you were treated like a person, and they got involved with your family

life...They were there and stood by ya. But, in the end, when the ol' Yank came in and it became Fruit of the Loom, they wanted quantity, not quality, and the union went away. I am not a fast worker and never was. Ol' Yankee came in with these percentage tags, which I always thought 100% was tops, but it went up to 150-160%, so it became those who put out the most, became those they thought the most of. Like I said, I was a slow worker, but did the best I could do. They expected more out of ya than you could do. After Fruit of the Loom got the plant, it went downhill. The ol' Yankee came in from Chicago and didn't care about you or your family. With the Yankees, they didn't care if you worked until you went into labor or died on the floor. They'd let you come back when your baby was 2 weeks old, but the old managers wouldn't let ya do it. It all changed, and now, look where it's at...all gone.

Some women felt estranged within their own community, often fostering a sense of "us against them":

When we lost our jobs, we didn't even know people in our town anymore. I guess we had just been living in that factory and not paying much attention to what was going on around us. The old farms were sold off, and the local businesses were all gone. I used to be able to tell ya everybody that rode past my house and their vehicles they drove; now I don't recognize anyone. All these foreigners and people from the bigger cities come down here to buy us up cheap. Who are these people? What do they want? I just stay home now.

Accessing health care. All participants reported health-related problems as a result of repetitive strain injuries. Many participants did not utilize health services on a regular basis. Several women in the study only sought medical care in emergency situations or at the urging of their family. Women in the study typically conveyed a mistrust of doctors and relied more on their cultural values of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. Women were particularly wary of doctors who were "outsiders" and did not trust their services.

The oldest participant described her experiences of working while disabled and her reluctance to seek medical care or disability:

I worked on the machines until I had to take my hand and lift my leg to get out of the car. At lunch, I had to get me an alarm clock and took it to my car...I'd lay

my seat back and rest during lunch in order to make it through the day. My alarm would go off, and I would have to go back to work. That was the last couple of years I worked. I was pushin' and tryin' to hang on ...but it was stupidity on my part. I wouldn't even go to the doctors for help. Afraid they'd put me on medical leave, or it would get around that I was too lame to work. I had to go out at 58 on disability, and I was tryin' to make it to 62, but the plant closed. Now I got a bad back, arthritis, tendonitis...wore my body out. It wasn't easy, but it was life and put a roof over our heads.

Another commented,

It wore my hands out. The same repetitive motion, like even today, I know the effects it had on my hands. Not as much my body, but my hands felt it, and they still feel it. Every person that worked there it affected some way. If you had triples or doubles of the men's T-shirts that were really big, now you'd be tired, but it wasn't normally hard, just pain in the hands every day.

All the women in the study refused to apply for disability while employed at Fruit of the Loom. Many participants assumed their primary care physicians would be dismissive of their symptoms, based upon social status and stereotypes. One woman gave a touching account of her persistence to work despite chronic pain:

People's shoulders would get stiff, and it affected women in different ways, but it depended on the job they did. I was diagnosed with tendonitis after I stopped working. I had it several times; they call it carpal tunnel syndrome now, but the same thing. The money kept me going. You could make what you wanted to make...anything over production you could make up to \$100 a day. Back then, that was really good money. It was really up to the individual how much money you made. Yes, it did pay a lot for the time. Every day, I felt like I was killing myself, and my family would say, "Get on disability!" But them new doctors around here didn't know us women or this place and didn't have much sympathy. They probably thought we were a bunch of hillbillies wantin' to milk the system. They'd never help put us on disability anyways.

Others expressed suspicion and mistrust of the local hospitals and felt more comfortable receiving care from their co-workers, unless urgent in nature. In the words of one of the participants,

There was no air conditioning, and it was so hot in there. Women would pass out all the time. All the girls in the factory would take care of ya. We'd never go to

the hospital or ER or nothin'. Well, unless we absolutely had too. Heck, they'd kill ya over there at that hospital anyway. I'd rather die around my girls in the factory than there.

A younger ex-factory worker in the study stated that despite age, pain, and humiliation, the majority of older women opted to forgo visits to their local doctor's office for pain medication or treatment. She explained that many feared the medication would slow down their production and/or place them at risk of injury around hazardous machinery:

I can tell you, the older women were usually picked on by the bosses because they were slow and in pain from years of working on the machines. Leaning over all day and their hands were stiff and swollen. None of us took medicine or pain pills back then either. Don't get me wrong, there were them foreign doctors here who'd fix you right up, but we'd end up sewing our fingers if we'd take what they'd give ya. I confronted my boss when he made them cry. Most are dead now. I would try to mind my business, but I would also be quick to speak up to the bosses, because it was the way I was raised. Treatin' those women like that who worked that factory for 40 years...it was shameful.

Composite Textural-Structural Synthesis

In order to determine the essence of the factory workers' overall experience, I have provided a textural-structural synthesis of *how* (structural description) the 8 participants experienced the phenomenon and *what* was experienced (textural description).

The experience of abrupt job layoffs fostered fear, uncertainty, and depression for several participants in the study. All participants were unprepared for job loss and were therefore thrust into unemployment after decades of working as apparel seamstresses. The majority of participants had dropped out of high school in order to work, possessing limited educational and technological skills, which historically were not a prerequisite for job attainment during the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. After the factory shuttered, women

were propelled into a modern labor force, saturated with younger skilled, educated, and competitive laborers; the older women felt despondent as they vied for work in a now competitive global market.

The participants found themselves “lonely” and “isolated” from the once “tight-knit” social support networks they shared with fellow co-workers inside the factory. All the women in the study experienced emotions of “anger,” “fear,” and “denial” during the layoffs. One worker commented on her “disappointment,” specifically with Fruit of the Loom, because the workers were “cast aside” and devalued of years of service and dedication to the company. As a result, the participants felt “abandoned” and diminished. Many ex-factory workers recounted feelings of “shock,” “depression,” and “desperation” during this transition. A few participants reported self-medicating their “depression” with drugs and alcohol, whereas others sold prescription medication to pay for economic expenses. Others spoke vividly of an “oppressive,” “racist,” and hostile work environment. During this reflective process, many participants explained how these thoughts began to generate feelings of “bitterness” and “resentment,” often compounding their depression further.

As a strategy for dealing with job loss, several women drew upon their cultural values as a means of support. One participant said “growing up poor” as a child prepared her to cope with both “loss” and hardship. All women in the study viewed themselves as “survivors” and credited their modest upbringing as a source of inner strength.

Additionally, the participants placed a high sense of value on their surroundings. The majority of women stated relocation was never an option. One participant reported that “sense of place” provided her much needed support. Many women conveyed an

attachment to the land, often crediting family heritage and “familiarity” as key elements to feeling “complacent,” “supported,” and “safe.”

Several felt their “pride” prevented them from “asking for help” during this difficult time of change. However, the participants explained that “pride” and “stubbornness” were cultural values that demonstrated one’s survival skills, emotional strength, and resiliency. All the participants believed “pride” was an empowering characteristic for rural women to possess, and their “independence” served as a vital supportive structure in the face of adversity.

Women in the study reported “God,” “prayer,” and the “bible” to be their most significant personal support network, providing them comfort and strength. All participants believed in “God” and placed high significance on “faith,” “prayer,” and “trust,” as they searched for employment in a community devoid of economic opportunities. One ex-factory worker in the study expressed that “faith” in God kept her resolute and determined “to put forth.” Of equal importance, all but one participant cited “family” and extended family as providing essential “encouragement” and support with childcare, groceries and transportation.

Conversely, participants felt their community and church provided little to no assistance during the mass layoffs. Churches and the surrounding communities were ill prepared for the impact of over 4,000 displaced workers. Many women believed the community had little time to prepare for this process. One participant summed up the lack of community involvement and cohesiveness by stating, “It was every man for themselves...we were all running around like chickens with their heads cut off.”

Essence of the Phenomenon

The process of creating a composite textural-structural synthesis helped me to illustrate the essence of the overall experience. The experiences of the participants coalesced around three key points that represented the essence of the study's findings. This essence of the phenomenon of rural Appalachian women's social support networks was characterized by *rural resiliency* (humble beginnings, sense of place, "ask for no handouts," Appalachian pride), *social support networks at the individual level* (God and prayer), and *social support networks at the family level* (kinship). The relationship between these core themes and the lived experience of the ex-factory workers' social support networks subsequent to job loss is shown in the following model, which graphically depicts the essence of the phenomenon (see Figure 1).

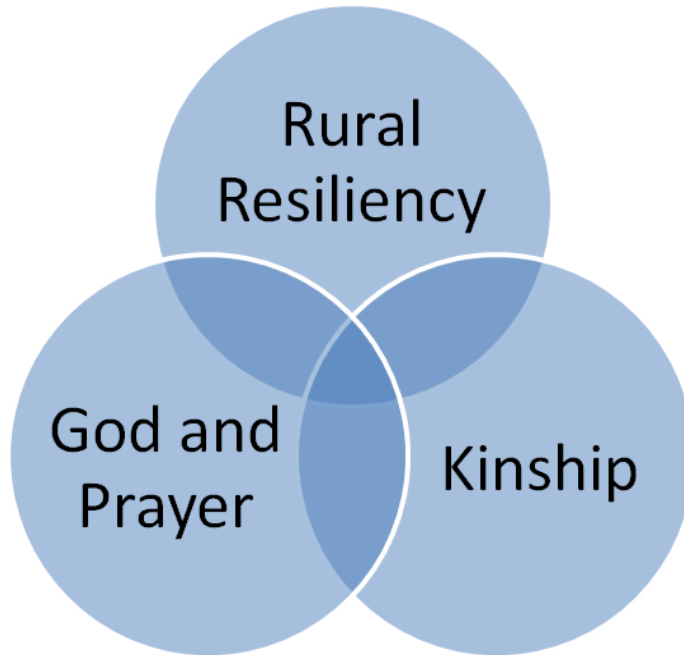


Figure 1. Model representing the composite thematic and structural description of the lived experience of rural Appalachian women’s social support networks following job loss.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Globalization has created numerous challenges and changes for women in Central Appalachia. The negative impact of globalization on Central Appalachian economies has been significant and resulted in severe economic hardship for the region (Herzenberg et al., 2005). Since the year 2000, Appalachian Kentucky has lost nearly 27,000 jobs due to mass layoffs from global outsourcing, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor (2005). More specifically, between 1991 and 2000, Kentucky lost 24,000 apparel industry jobs, primarily located in Appalachian Kentucky. Consequently, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (n.d.) reported that Appalachian Kentucky had the highest poverty rate (24.4%), and for fiscal year 2009, the third highest unemployment rate (11.4%) of all 13 Appalachian states, nearly doubling from 2001 (ARC, 2010).

Social capital literature has alluded to the notion of trust (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 2000) as a key element in relational development, but most of the literature has left unexplained the “processes” individuals use to create and sustain social networks. Worthy of further exploration, this phenomenological study sought to capture the lived experiences of eight ex-factory apparel workers in Appalachian Kentucky and provided a more detailed understanding of the relationship between the global economy and social support networks.

By exploring rural women's current conditions and cultural practices following job loss, the study was able to illuminate their social ties within the context of globalization, allowing social work practice and public policy initiatives to better understand social networking benefits, such as the development of adaptive coping strategies and the creating of social capital.

This chapter discusses the conclusions derived from an analysis of the data, integrating the support of the literature and the implications that evolved from the data. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research and the study limitations.

Discussion of Conclusions

Every stitch of every garment we wear
contains the hidden story of women's
life and struggles.

(Ehrenreich, 2000, p. 44)

In this phenomenological study, participants were afforded the opportunity to be heard, because the research design allowed them to voice their experiences from a feminist perspective, acknowledging the impact of job layoffs specific to women. An analysis of the data revealed a wide range of social network strategies employed by women in the region, three of which were most salient: (a) rural resiliency (cultural practices, sense of place, self-reliance, and pride), (b) social support networks at the individual level (gaining strength from God, prayer, and the bible), and (c) social support networks at the family level (kinship). Based on an analysis of the data, these key strategies, representing underlying themes, constitute the essence of the phenomenon of social support networks following job loss as experienced by women in Appalachian Kentucky. Accordingly, these themes inform the following discussion of the findings.

Rural Resiliency

Fruit of the Loom ex-factory workers perceived their rural heritage and cultural practices as a strategy for dealing with the layoffs. The participants' experience of job loss became analogous to their perspective of rural resiliency. Numerous experiences of rural resiliency emerged from the participants' in-depth interviews.

Historically marginalized, the women in the study drew upon their cultural and experiential knowledge, giving rich accounts of their humble beginnings, sense of place, self-reliance, and pride as a supportive framework and structure in the face of adversity. One ex-factory worker shared her experience on rural heritage, "My people have been here for hundreds of years. We have six generations buried in this one county. Our blood runs deep through these knobs. It is this place that gives me support." The participants characterized their "upbringing" as significant to the formation of social support. Another participant experienced poverty and resiliency comparably, "We grew up poor, so you know...you knew how to survive. I have to go back to my childhood, just coming from the way we're raised...we were just survivors." Many participants' experiences centered on self-reliance. For example, one participant stated, "Women are just born strong here...physically and mentally. You *have* to be strong to live here." Women in the study agreed that traditional cultural practices and beliefs were important and served as supportive protective barriers.

Globalization has had a significant impact on the social capital, communities, and lives of these participants, often leaving them with limited access to networks that could assist the region's current economic situation. "Given the economic, demographic and cultural changes that have impacted the region over the years, it seems appropriate that

attention is being paid to efforts to maintain what has made the region so special for so long—its Appalachian identity” (Bryant & Masson, 2005, p. 11). To preserve Appalachian culture and strengthen social capital and strong network ties, the participants believed it was essential to maintain one’s unique identity, values, and commitment to their culture and place. One ex-factory worker expressed, “Struggling will always be something we do here.” However, preserving this unique identity may present a cultural double-edged sword for Central Appalachia. On the one hand, “self-reliance” is regarded as a strength and asset to the region, with networks primarily rooted in family; and on the other hand, “pride” and “stubbornness” to ask for help may prove detrimental to cultural preservation and community building. A participant reflectively illustrated this sentiment: “So, people around here would rather do with less than to reach out and ask for help. We were really cuttin’ off our noses to spite our face.”

Appalachian communities must advocate for cultural preservation by, first of all, embracing and acknowledging their cultural identity, with an understanding of the vital role younger generations play in the development of social structures, networks, and capital. With out-migration of the “best and the brightest” in Central Appalachia, a call for rebuilding social networks within the context of cultural preservation is essential in fostering a sense of hope, pride, empowerment, trust, and solidarity within the region, while ensuring that young people develop an appreciation and commitment to their regional cultural roots. Incentives to stay, based on concerns and commitments, may ultimately lead younger generations to remain in the region (Bryant & Masson, 2005). Cultural preservation becomes a vital role for young people in Central Appalachia,

because “developing this understanding for one’s own culture is vital for changing and shaping tomorrow’s society” (Bryant & Masson, 2005, p. 11).

Participants placed a high value on sense of place, and traditionally possessed a strong community structure. Women in the study were quick to differentiate and describe the connection between self-reliance and communal bonds. These women emphatically explained that at the foundation of strong communal bonds lay self-reliance and pride. Folks were respected in the community if they were self-sufficient and independent. However, folks could depend upon community support for dire emergencies (e.g., death in the family or illness) or falling upon hard times (e.g., divorce, job loss, or low-yielding crops). Many participants shared common experiences that manifested their self-reliance and pride, as expressed by the following participant: “People around here would rather do with less than to reach out and ask for help.” In most areas, marginalized populations—especially poor rural women—have not benefited from neoliberal economic restructuring (Mincey, 2001). However, many women in the study conveyed only a modest interest in seeking upward mobility in a class-conscious society. One participant stated, “We were proud even when we had nothing.” Another shared, “Don’t get bigger than your upbringing.” Many women in the study shared the following common belief, well expressed by one of the participants:

We didn't have much and today it doesn't take much to make me happy. Just give me a home. It doesn't have to be an expensive home...just gimme clothes and shelter and I can survive. I don't have to have the best in life. That comes from growing up poor because back then we thought we had everything.

The participants also felt individualism (i.e., self-reliance and pride) served an important purpose in the formulation and maintenance of their social support networks,

as has been supported in the literature (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). One ex-factory worker shared her experience regarding “pride”: “It was bred into you not to ask for anything.” Most experiences amongst women in the study were similar; an older participant stated, “Even when you struggle, nobody should know it. It’s a pride thing.”

In spite of economic hardship, all participants felt rich in cultural heritage and resiliency—both proud and determined people, despite enduring a myriad of misfortune. These ex-factory workers’ experiences are consistent with other studies that characterize Appalachians as proud, private, wanting to “take care of their own,” and not accepting of charity; traditionally, they do not seek attention and try to manage their own problems (Behringer & Friedell, 2006; Coyne et al., 2006; Lengerich et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2001) A participant explained, “We were proud even when we had nothing.” Another rural woman detailed her experience as follows: “We had been poor most of our lives or brought up poor and knew how to survive through rough times.” She continued by adding, “I have always thought I have got to make a living myself. I know it is hard, but it is honest, and I could do it.” The above findings were inconsistent with traditional research that typifies the Appalachian region as the culture of poverty (Ball, 1968).

Much of the research of social support networks is based on responsibility and personal choice. One of the pitfalls of these researchers’ conclusions is that “an individual may be blamed for their own lack of support, placing responsibility on an individual to change. While change can be positive, this approach can ignore external conditions over which an individual has no or little control” (Weber, 1998, p. 52). Often, this sentiment of “personal responsibility” has spurred imagery and stereotypes of the region as “backward,” “under-employed,” “lazy hillbilly,” and “unproductive” (Billings,

n.d., p. 2). However, the findings do not support the current literature; women in this study described the factors that led to the crisis of job layoffs, which could be “understood in terms of economic exploitation and political domination [rather] than in terms of cultural traditionalism and economic isolation” (Billings, n.d., p. 4). In fact, the ex-factory workers in the study did not express personal responsibility or feel blame for the shuttered plant. Because globalization’s interests have neglected to reflect an understanding of rural people and their strong ties to the land, participants in the study felt their lives had been significantly impacted by outsourcing; however, they still refused any compensation or “handouts” for their losses. One of the ex-factory workers in the study described her experience in this way: “It was by far not easy trying to keep up your house payment, car payment, and food, and so on. I be damn if I asked anyone for anything. You don’t ask for nothin.”

Therefore, it is important to note that based upon the women’s narratives in this study, they clearly recognized that external conditions (e.g., globalization and outsourcing) inhibited certain social supports, such as community networks; yet the participants also conveyed that the layoffs encouraged several support processes (i.e., cultural and individual-family social supports) to take place. Additionally, the stories of the participants, such as those related to their experiences of refusing hand-outs and welfare, dispelled the myths and stereotypes often attributed to Appalachia. A participant shared, “Pride...I am bad like that. I don’t want someone else to see me on welfare....I hate to be behind someone in the food line with a food stamp card, because I have always thought I have got to make a living myself.” The social support strategies and structures

aforementioned have shattered the typecast of rural Appalachia as depicted and portrayed by most economists, politicians, and the media.

Social Support Networks at the Individual Level

As a result of globalization, rural Appalachian women are experiencing threats to their economic, cultural, physical, and psychological well-being (Coyne et al., 2006; Cushing & Rogers, 1996). A participant described her experience with depression after losing her job: “Many of us were too old and got depressed and started using drugs and drinking or selling drugs to make a little cash just to live.” Another also shared, “I just stay by myself, and that way, no one can disappoint me again. I’d rather be a loner.” The significance of social support networks at the individual level is also confirmed in the literature: “Links between health and social support have been established, suggesting it is an important variable in the study of women’s health issues” (Weber, 1998, p. 1).

Social support was defined by several participants as something received, both tangible (i.e., housing, transportation, and money) and/or intangible (i.e., faith, encouragement, and reassurance). All the women in the study reported intangible social support—“faith in God”—as their strongest social support at the personal level. One woman in the study shared, “It was strength in God that made me keep going and faith in God that was my biggest support. Faith in God is the main thing.” Another participant added, “If it hadn't been for my faith, I don't know if I could have made it.” The present study’s findings were congruent with other studies: A large body of research has documented that faith is invaluable to psychological well-being and a combatant for depression (Brown et al., 1990; Chatters, 2000; Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 1985; Ellison, 1995; St. George & McNamara, 1984).

Worker displacement and outsourcing tend to lead to strained social support networks, accompanied by negative well-being, chronic disease, limited access to health care, and elevated rates of behavioral risks (e.g., tobacco use, substance abuse, poor diet, obesity and physical inactivity, and harmful sexual and criminal behaviors) (Lengerich et al., 2006). Therefore it is imperative for social work practice and policy initiatives to identify these threats and promote the idea that social support networks play a crucial role in well-being, particularly for rural women who are both geographically and socially isolated. Additionally, many community health care providers and policy makers lack the background, training, and cultural sensitivity needed to understand the importance of cultural beliefs couched in rural women's social support networks.

Social Support Networks at the Family Level

Many historical studies have suggested that characteristics (e.g., familism and kinship) of Central Appalachian culture include values and beliefs that compromise Appalachians' psychological well-being, overall health, and social networks. These studies have focused on the region's social and cultural history, its collectivist society, strong familial ties, and social networks, all of which are typically characterized as "resistant to change," based upon the region's social capital—its network strategies and linkages to the family and the community (Billings & Blee, 2000). Appalachian cultural values have also been identified as in direct conflict with economic development, which requires "social mobility rather than traditionalism; achievement orientation rather than familism; and large scale rational organization rather than personalism" (Lewis & Billings, 1997, p. 18).

In contrast, Appalachian familism and the large-scale coal mine wars in the late 19th and early 20th centuries provide an example of how families relied upon the support of family relationships, churches, and the community to survive (Billings, 1990; Couto, 1999; Fisher, 1993; Hooks, 1984). A participant in the study shared, “You have to take care of your family...and my family do.” Another displaced worker in the study believed, “Family helps you survive....We are close and when one hurts, we all hurt.” Reinforcing this point from an economical perspective, Warren et al. (2001) stated, “Poor people rely on the support of extended family relationships...like churches to survive” (p. 267). Strong family ties (e.g., familism and kinship) serve as emotional protective barriers (i.e., coping mechanisms) to social, cultural, and economic environments (Coyne et al. 2006; Lengerich et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2001; Weber, 1998).

Findings in this study support the research showing that family support networks in Appalachian Kentucky provide both emotional and instrumental support. The participants described emotional support as “advice,” “support,” and “friendship.” An ex-factory worker in the study stated, “I leaned on my parents and listened to what they preached to me.” Another participant told about the emotional support she received: “Family is close to you and supports you and gives you encouragement and cares about your well-being.” Another participant described her experience with instrumental support: “My mom, dad, and grandmother helped me mentally, financially, and babysat.” Instrumental support includes material aid and services; information and new social contacts, such as lending money; taking care of kids; and providing transportation (Quick, Nelson, Matuszek, Whittington, & Quick, 1996).

Recommendations for Future Study

Traditional research conducted on social support networks and women has failed to take into account the context of women's lived experiences. Diverse and under-represented groups of women have had minimal to no research conducted that explored their social supports (Weber, 1998). Baruch, Biener, and Barnett (1987) pointed out,

It is unfortunate that the research we draw on although addressing issues of gender, rarely includes analyses of race and class differences. To include women yet treat them as a homogenous group is to limit severely the usefulness and accuracy of stress research. (p. 130)

As a means of including minority groups and addressing diverse needs, the first area for study could expand this research to include participants from other regions in Central Appalachia, older women, racial minorities (e.g., Affrilachians), and/or single mothers. It could be significant in future research to not only determine the impact of job loss on race, but also determine whether differences in social support networks among ethnic groups exist. Research in this area also lends itself to looking at the additional stresses experienced and felt by minority Appalachians.

A second area that needs further research is the effect of job loss on women from another time period. Perceptions of experiences and relevant facts may often be distorted over time; in addition, self-reporting may include inaccurate memories in retrieving past events. Therefore, recent job layoffs due to the current economic recession may demonstrate a different impact on a younger generation of factory workers. Future study may also show that the impact of job loss is more or less significant on a younger cohort of Appalachians who may have fewer vested interests in "place" and cultural traditions.

The final area that lends itself to further study is the exploration of barriers to support from a women's perspective. Social support is often needed by women who are unable to reciprocate, which may be perceived as an obstacle to support if the individual is unable to give in return. The researcher could identify whether fear of being unable to reciprocate may prevent some women from asking for support, especially when that support is inequitable. Women with unequal resources may feel guilt, shame, and indebtedness when more support is received. This may be particularly distressing for rural women whose culture sends the message, "Do it yourself." In the current study, some of the findings identified "mistrust and suspicion" as possible barriers to support for ex-factory workers. Thus, it could be significant in such a study to determine how rural women's cultural beliefs create barriers to asking for help or support.

Through research, we can provide women the opportunity to be heard and have their needs recognized and acknowledged. As the need for social support networks becomes critical in an era of globalization and economic upheaval, it would be advantageous to the practice of social work and public policy initiatives to continue to study social support networks' effects on a wide variety of women's groups.

Implications for Social Work

The analysis of social support networks and social capital is worthy of greater understanding for social work practice, because the changing political and economic climate in the United States poses serious risks to the formation, maintenance, and effectiveness of social networks and social capital within marginalized and oppressed populations. Central Appalachian women now face sweeping changes and adjustments to their social and economic structures, coupled with the extreme cuts to social welfare

programs. Today, as a result of globalization, social support networks are faced with increasing pressures due to disruption of the economies of Central Appalachia, the continual undervaluing of the region's work, and the uncertainty brought about by the increasing occurrence of job outsourcing. Central Appalachians must brace themselves for vast changes wrought by a shifting paradigm. Given that social work is inherent in the environment of *working with the social*, social capital intuitively becomes a tool for its use within this discipline.

Central Appalachia is a region historically immersed in resiliency and must nurture its collective ties. Moreover, by creating trust amongst members of its communities, harnessing assets, setting sights high, and through citizen participation and local development initiatives, this region is capable of restoring and/or bolstering its original strength in collaborative networks. In short, the globalization of the economy has profound implications for social work. A global framework and cultural awareness are paramount in understanding issues specific to Central Appalachia. As a region riddled with poverty, a true need emerges for social work practice to exert a linchpin into Central Appalachia's unsteady social structure. Given that the profession of social work is closely connected to working with oppressed populations, alternative solutions must be explored. Focused attention to the nurturing, building, and expanding of social support network connections, and in turn, social capital, may represent the key to providing one such important alternative.

Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of the study was limited by the sampling procedure and the small number of participants. The first limitation stemmed from the limited perspective

and meaning that can result from utilizing a purposive sampling strategy; and as a result, the findings cannot be generalized to other groups and settings. For example, only the experience and norms of female ex-factory workers were represented in the study. Additionally, even though various ethnic groups were selected, the cases were not representative, given the variations between and within ethnic and racial groups. Consequently, the current status, process, and functioning of social support networks reflected this one framework. To address this limitation, the sample could be expanded in a future research study to include incarcerated female ex-factory workers or other industry workers' perspectives on social support networks to see if the definition becomes extended or remains the same. Secondly, although the study contained a small number of participants, the number is within the sampling range for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 1998).

Another potential limitation was that all of the ex-factory workers in the sample were from one concentrated region in Appalachian Kentucky. As a result, the culture of that particular region may or may not have influenced the participants' perception and experiences of social support networks. This study does not attempt to be conclusive, but presents the lived experiences of rural women. Each personal account offers a snapshot that broadens the scope of knowledge about the well-being of ex-factory workers in Central Appalachia.

Final Observations

Social relationships and networks are a form of capital or resources that can serve as assets in developing a sustainable community. Social relationships are also considered capital because they can be productive and improve the well-being of the residents.

Finally, social relationships and networks serve as a critical form of capital and are important because they can provide investments in time and energy.

As Central Appalachia begins acquiring new capital resources for investing in its region and people, success will largely be contingent on whether “the capacity of a community can initiate and adapt” (Goreham, 1997, p. 632). The importance of re-developing and/or restructuring collective familial and community ties will prove challenging as Appalachian communities continuously face living in a social and economic environment, historically typified by illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and geographic isolation (Pollard, 2003). Hence, corporate deregulation, the search for cheaper labor markets, and the dissolution of unions represent key factors responsible for the Appalachian workers' demise.

Putman (2000) suggested that prosperity lies in the development of social capital. Putnam contended that capitalist ethics should be changed to, “I’ll do this for you without expecting anything specific back from you in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road” (p. 37). Possibly, Appalachia must recapture and nurture its collective asset, community, rather than feeding into “mistrust,” by committing more to community.

As the capitalist elite (e.g., manufacturers, politicians, and developers) come and go, Central Appalachians must restore their community networks and social capital by re-adapting their notion of capitalism to serve the community. As a collective community with shared identities, it is essential that Appalachians increase social and economic equality and (their) communal bonds (Couto, 1999). Communities and their social

support networks are capable of restoring a protectionist role by empowering people from the damaging effects of social dislocation, homogenized cultures, and dehumanization.

Larger national and international movements are exploring community sustainability as a means of assisting and preserving rural economies. These efforts “recognize the interdependence of human beings and the natural environment, linked economic and social development with environmental protection, and called for the creation of the global vision and set of common principles reflecting these viewpoints” (Scales & Streeter, 2004, p. 182). As a means of building and sustaining community assets, Central Appalachia and social work must rally their inherent strengths and assets and mobilize community resources.

Awake At Night

What the world could be
In my good dream
And my agony when dreaming it...
(Wendell Berry, 1985, p. 22)

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Introduce self, reaffirm confidentiality and restate aims of project:

- To find out more about informal personal relationships, the kind of ties people have with family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, church, and community;
- To explore the quality of these relationships and how they have changed over time; particularly post-textile/apparel industry employment.

Socio-Demographic Information:

- Marital status
 - Children
 - Length of time in community/county.
 - Current and previous occupation/employment
2. Could you define “social support (networks)”? What is your definition?
 3. Thinking of friends, family, and community (e.g., church and workplace), the people you can count on the most; describe who makes up your social support system.
 4. Based upon your definition of Social Support, can you give specific examples of strategies, skills, techniques you use in developing and maintaining social support networks?
 5. Describe the role social supports play in your current life and specifically in what areas of your life. Have they been beneficial or not beneficial?
 6. Could you describe the role of social supports during the factory layoffs?
 7. Describe how the factory layoffs supported or challenged your social support networks/relationships?
 8. Do you believe social support relationships have been important to your well-being? Past and/or present.
 9. Among your family or group of friends, neighbors, co-workers, and so forth, what kinds of things do you do for each other?

University of Denver

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED for Research in Rural Women's Social Support Networks.

Female volunteers needed to participate in a study of *Social Support Networks*. Participants must have had at least 10 years of employment at Fruit of the Loom apparel factory in Central Kentucky.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview session of approximately 60 minutes in length.

Your participation will contribute to a better understanding of the issues related to rural women's use of and participation within social support networks.

For more information about this study or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Jennifer Lanham, Ph.D. Candidate
University of Denver, College of Social Work
(270) 692-1466 or jlanham@du.edu

APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON CENTRAL APPALACHIAN WOMEN:

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND NETWORKS

You are invited to participate in a study that will explore the experiences of rural women's social support networks. The study is conducted by Jennifer Lanham, a PhD candidate at the University of Denver. Results will be used to satisfy course requirements for the PhD program and provide an understanding of issues specific to Central Appalachia. Jennifer Lanham can be reached at cooper93@gmail.com, 270-692-1466. This project is supervised by faculty sponsor, Dr. Enid Cox, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, ecox@du.edu, 303-871-4018.

Participation in this study should take about 60-90 minutes of your time and will involve responding to approximately 8 questions about social support networks. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by a code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have. I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called *Impact of Globalization on Central Appalachian Women: Social Capital and Networks*.

I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____

(If appropriate, the following must be added.)

___ I agree to be audiotaped.

___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____ Date _____

_____ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address: