FAMILY MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES OF SATURATION, BONDING, AND LEISURE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Family and Child Development

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

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April 9, 1997
Blacksburg, Virginia

Key words: saturation, leisure, bonding, family, feminist
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by

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Abstract

Theoretical tensions between theories of saturation, bonding, and leisure were explored from feminist perspectives. Saturation, defined by Gergen as a state of relational overload, may cause lack of connection between family members. Leisure scholars suggest that bonding occurs during leisure, and a feminist perspective emphasizes that leisure includes conflict and inequality in families. Participants were primarily White, and all were upper-middle class married couples with children aged 6 to 12. Individual and family interviews were held with parents and children. Data was analyzed qualitatively according to Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) grounded theory procedures.

Saturation, as a metaphor, does not capture the dynamic nature of how people grappled with time use. Being saturated reflects being filled up, but the experience described by participants may be closer to feeling drained, and more useful may be a concept that attends to both. Parents demonstrated four kinds of orientations to saturation: resistant, reformed, absorbent, and saturated. The persons who defined their experience as saturated were two men, both breadwinners with homemaker wives. Women took time-stress for
granted, and were the main organizers and monitors of family leisure. Technology did not seem to add to time-stress, but TV in most households was restricted to weekends.

Parents did not clearly associate bonding with leisure time. Bonding was defined as building connections and trust, showing warmth and caring, and being involved in each other's lives. While bonding required attentiveness, leisure was an event where parents were free of responsibility for others.

Parents discussed ideal vs. actual employment arrangements. Female homemakers were interested not in leisure, but in finding part-time work. Male breadwinners were wedded to their provider roles. Many adults would make changes in their employment situations, but felt stymied by gendered workplace culture.

Children could describe times they felt time pressured, but mostly were content, and asked for parents not to rush them from one activity to the next. Children's leisure preferences were free time and family time, as opposed to organized activities, chores, and TV.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents,

Deloris M. and Joseph A. Zangari

who always wanted a doctor in the family,

and to my husband Bill, and children Daniel and Johanna,

who already knew everything about leisure and bonding.
Author's Acknowledgments

Special recognition goes to my daughter, Johanna, who designed and illustrated the picture boards for this research, and to my son Daniel, who patted me on the back when I looked weary. Equally important has been the support of my husband, Bill, a renaissance man in a postmodern world.

My committee helped to make learning and researching an exciting process. I am thankful that I chose Scott Johnson for my chair. He provided safe passage through my graduate school adventure, along with wise counsel, patience, kindness, and warmth. Katherine Allen shared with me her intellectual rigor, strong ethics, and careful reflexivity. I am grateful to have had family, friends, and professors to support me through my time at Virginia Tech.
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FAMILY MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES OF SATURATION, BONDING AND LEISURE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Chapter One

Introduction

For many family theorists, 1990 marked the end of a decade and an occasion to review and rethink patterns of family life. A major theme among family scholars (Acock & Demo, 1994; Baber & Allen, 1992; Cheal, 1991; Scanzoni, Polonko, Teachman, & Thompson, 1989; Scanzoni & Marsiglio, 1993; Skolnick, 1991; Stacey, 1989) has been that standard theories about families do not adequately describe the way that families live outside the pages of textbooks and journals. These scholars have challenged the "standard theory of the family" (Cheal, 1991, p.3) consisting of a married heterosexual couple with children, featuring a stay-at-home mother, and father as primary wage earner. In contrast to the standard formula, family forms have become increasingly more diverse (Kain, 1990).

Specific changes in contemporary American families include fewer children among the white middle class, later marriage and childbearing, increasing divorce rates coupled with a continuing interest in marriage and remarriage, more step families and single parents, a steady increase in the number of working women, rising rates of teen and single mother childbearing, and the emergence of the dual-career or dual-working couple as the most common family form (Acock & Demo, 1994; Ccontz, 1992; Kain,
1990). Families look different and therefore, so must theories that serve to describe family life.

According to Cheal (1991), feminist scholars have contributed an especially rich and profound critique and reconstruction of family theory. "It is above all in the history of feminist influence upon theories of family relationships that the major directions of change today can be discerned" (Cheal, 1991, p.3). The present study is guided by feminist family perspectives in examining family experiences of leisure time as a substantive example of the tensions in family theory.

**Theoretical Tensions and Research Questions**

"The family that plays together stays together" evokes an image of families and free time that may bear little resemblance to how many families actually spend their hours away from school and work. Instead as Gergen (1991a, 1991b) believes, family members often feel scattered by trying to meet individual commitments, and have little time to play together as the homily recommends.

Saturation is the term Gergen (1991b) has introduced to describe his view of contemporary family life. His particular perspective is that families are becoming increasingly fragmented as family members pursue individual interests, leaving little time for cohesive family interaction. Specifically, saturation refers to the flooding of one's identity with the multiple
intrusions of technologies such as telephone, FAX, TV, and computers, all primarily isolating activities which leave the individual without solid grounding either personally, or in terms of family membership. While Gergen cautions that his description applies more often to those families with greater resources, he proposes that saturation is becoming a strong cultural trend across socio-economic groups.

While Gergen fears that family ties are loosening because members spend less time together, other scholars (Orthner, Barnett-Morris, & Mancini, 1994) have emphasized the importance of shared time for families, especially shared leisure time:

From the perspective of the family, there are several key needs that leisure experiences support over the life cycle. The most critical personal and relational needs include attachment and bonding, relational identification, interaction, stress management, and social support....We contend that the context within which most family members develop their attachments to one another, their sense of cohesion to their relationships, and the communication and problem solving that make family relationships successful occur during leisure experiences. (p. 178)

Orthner and Mancini (1980) introduced a model of cohesion and conflict in relation to leisure, and feminist leisure scholars have gone on to develop analyses of conflict specifically in
terms of gender. Shaw (1994) contends that family leisure time is not homogeneous or uniformly pleasurable. Women, for example, do not have equal access to leisure activities. Women spend overall less time in leisure activities than men (Firestone & Shelton, 1994), and their "leisure" often includes work or child care, and generally providing and arranging leisure opportunities for others (Henderson & Allen, 1991). Another source of family conflict associated with gender and generation arises in choosing leisure activities that are equally appealing to all members (Shaw, 1994).

I was intrigued by the picture that formed by combining these three views of family life: 1) family members spend less and less time together, 2) yet leisure time is an important medium in which families create themselves, and 3) families consist of individuals who disagree on how to spend leisure time, and have uneven access to leisure activities. In this study I explored the concept of saturation in families, linking it with family bonding, while maintaining an awareness of the various positions that parents, children, men and women occupy in families. I interviewed upper-middle class families in a series of qualitative interviews about saturation, leisure and bonding. Both parents and children were interviewed and the resulting data was analyzed qualitatively. The specific research questions in this study were:

1. In what ways is saturation a salient concept in family
experiences during non-work, non-school time?

2. In what ways do family members associate leisure time with bonding?

3. How do gender and generation influence family members' experiences of saturation, bonding and leisure?

**Purpose of the Study**

Boss (1988) asserts that a major source of family stress is time pressure. She states "Most important, perhaps, is the loss of leisure; there is less and less time for couples to relax together or to spend time with people they care about" (p. 10). Information gained from this study may help family therapists, family researchers, and family members to make informed, deliberate, and conscious decisions about the use of family time so that leisure can become more meaningful, and satisfying, and make a better fit between behavior and desires.

The research questions in this study might also encourage discussion among family members to uncover unmet needs and increase sharing of resources equitably. Hawks (1991), in his decade review of family research on leisure, and Orthner and Mancini (1991), call for research that examines the meaning of leisure for individual family members. I sought information about beneficial and stressful aspects of leisure time use, especially for women and children, and to explore the tensions within leisure time.
Leisure choices and use of time reflect values and meaning in family life which are the core of family therapy work (Daly, 1966a). Family therapists can use information from this study to better understand family experiences of time and leisure, and thereby better help families with these issues. Data from this study will also help answer Orthner and Mancini's (1990) question of "whether family leisure experiences indeed contribute to family bonding" (p. 135.) In the following section, I describe my own path in deciding on the study of saturation.

**Reflexive Theorizing**

There are several reasons to include a description of my own process in choosing this topic for study. The first is to examine personal bias which is always present in any human endeavor. A second reason is that the researcher's own experience and observations are important data to add to the information that is gathered from a literature review (Farnsworth, 1994; Farnsworth & Allen, 1996; Thompson, 1992).

I became interested in how families spend their time as I observed my friends taxiing their children to sports, birthday parties, music lessons, and playdates after school and on weekends. It was common for children to attend two birthday parties in one day. The adults' own schedule was just as hectic. I found myself actively resisting such a pattern, and talking with my husband about how we wanted to spend our time and to arrange
the time of our children. I was excited to discover Gergen's notion of saturation because it gave a name to what I observed in my peer group. But I noticed that not everyone was complaining about feeling saturated. Many of our friends delighted in the range of choices from which they made their schedule. I began to examine my own stance on how to use non-work non-school time and the conflicts that exist in my own family around this issue.

I am married to a full-time physician who earns far more than the salary I receive for my part-time work as a family therapist. We have a 14 year old son and a 12 year old daughter. I come from a working class family where we never had vacations or paid for leisure activities of any kind. Summers were spent at my great-grandparents' country house where my mother cleaned and cooked and cared for children. My father stayed in the city to work, visiting us on the weekends when he mowed grass and made repairs. While we six children enjoyed these summers, it was clear to me that my mother was not at leisure, and I know little about how my father experienced these summers.

Such family of origin experiences have influenced my views about leisure time. My working class childhood leaves me pledging allegiance to unstructured time for day dreaming and self-discovery and also feeling ambivalent about the advantages that my family now has compared to my family of origin. These experiences have led me to believe that family time is often wasted on competitive, organized activities for children (many are in
competitive swimming at age 4) that detract from free time for imagination, relaxation, conversation and creativity. I dislike using my time arranging logistics and transportation and feeling the stress of keeping up with a schedule. Because I observed that my mother had so little time to herself, I appreciate my privilege in having discretionary time and feel it is important to take care in how I spend it.

In my own family, we often conflict in our opinions on how to use our time. We use bargaining, cajoling, and persuasion to get our individual agendas met. For example, my husband likes travel vacations where he can ski or mountain climb while I like beach vacations with simple food and lots of biking, running and tennis. I am aware that our tastes are connected to our respective incomes. On my own I could seldom afford to take the kind of vacations he enjoys, and I often lobby for finding vacations that are inexpensive because I do not feel comfortable spending lots of money on leisure.

In the same way that a literature review and theoretical framework provide a context for new information the researcher will gather, reflexivity sensitizes the researcher to personal issues against which she must compare the answers she gets from participants. As Nichols (1987) noted, writing is often an attempt to master something with which one is struggling.
Definitions

In this section I define and operationalize terms that were introduced in the previous section, and that appear in the research questions: leisure, bonding, and saturation.

Leisure

Various definitions of leisure exist both in theoretical and operational terms. The number of definitions has been characterized as confusing by Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber (1991) but an alternative view is that the variety of definitions in leisure studies reflects scholars' world views, politics and personal standpoints. The concept of leisure comes from the Greeks, who in 200 BC, advocated that citizens lead lives of learning and contemplation in order to create ideal communities. Leisure was equated with freedom but was suitable for men of status, not for slaves or for women (Kelly & Godbey, 1992).

Goodale and Godbey (1988) view leisure as a state of mind, not simply an activity like golf, "not a commodity of time but a way of life which reveals our natures" (p. 9). Csikszentmihalyi and Kleiber (1991) associate leisure with self-actualization "a context of expressive freedom that is experienced as such" (p. 94). In contrast to these idyllic definitions, Rojek (1993) asserts that leisure is not an expression of freedom but rather a reflection of particular contexts of class, gender and social structures. In capitalist cultures, for example, leisure activities do not express freedom because under capitalism people are
tied to pressures to produce, and these pressures are reflected in leisure as a consumer activity. For Rojek (1993), leisure is impossible to categorize into neat categories of work versus non-work time.

In operational terms, Schor (1992) defines leisure as the time remaining after subtracting paid employed time and household labor from total time available. Zick and McCullough (1991) made two categories: in one was paid work, housework, school, and unpaid work. The second category contained social recreational activities, eating and personal care. Firestone and Shelton (1994) said that leisure was everything left that was not housework, paid work or personal care. In order to separate out gender differences they made a further distinction between domestic (activities done at home) and non-domestic leisure.

Since one of the interview questions in this study asked for a personal definition of leisure, I did not wish to establish a rigid definition against which to compare answers, but rather used the above as theoretical examples with which to compare responses. Operationally, the focus of this study was the non-work, non-school time of parents and school age children because, for both these groups, school and work are not discretionary. I did not differentiate between paid work versus housework but left that for the respondents to explain in their own words. The terms leisure, discretionary time, and non-work, non-school time were used interchangeably to avoid repetition.
Bonding

Bonding is a ubiquitous theoretical term found in the literature on attachment (Ainsworth, 1989), family therapy (Akerman, 1966; Kane, 1989; Napier, 1988) and systems theory (Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Scanloni et al., 1989). Both Napier (1988) and Ackerman (1966), in their clinical books on family therapy, use the term loosely to refer to marriage as a bond or to the bonds of love and loyalty. Ainsworth (1989), extending Bowlby's work on attachment, identifies an affectional bond as "a relatively long-enduring tie in which the partner is important as a unique individual and is interchangeable with none other" (p. 711). She identified many types of affectional bonds through the life cycle: sexual pair bonds, caregiving bonds between parents and children, friendships, and kinship bonds. Orthner and Mancini (1991) who are primarily family and leisure scholars, use the terms cohesion and bonding interchangeably. Working within a systems framework, they define cohesion as emotional bonding between family members that is ideally balanced between enmeshment and adaptability. In this sense a healthy family bond allows for both connection and difference. Finally, Kane (1989) combines attachment and family systems theories to define family bonds as those connections that are created through care and protection.

In this study bonding refers to perceived ties, connections, or closeness among family members. In Chapter Two, where I describe the theoretical framework of this study, bonding is inte-
grated into a general systems framework and connected to the term boundaries.

Saturation

Kenneth Gergen developed the concept of social saturation in *The Saturated Self*, a text for a popular audience, and in "The Saturated Family", appearing in *The Family Therapy Networker* magazine. He has done no empirical testing of his concept, nor to my knowledge has anyone else. Given the lack of research data, I present Gergen's ideas in some detail so the reader can judge the validity of his thesis.

Gergen explains that his original aim in writing *The Saturated Self* was to translate for the public a shift in epistemology from positivism and modernism toward social constructionism and postmodernism, a shift that has been a recent subject for debate among academicians. Using concepts of the self as his reference point, he describes this shift as one from certainty and essentialism toward a belief in multiple points of view, and pluralism. In moving from academia to public discourse, Gergen observed that individuals were already living the conditions he sought to tell them about. That is, people were behaving as if notions of the self had changed. His book is a narrative of observations and interpretations of his own experience and that of his peer group. Realizing that simply writing a monologue about his ideas was unsatisfactory, he hopes to start a conversation. "I began to realize that what was needed was not a mono-
ogue--my voice making contemporary academic debates intelligible to a broader audience--but a dialog" (Gergen, 1991b, p. x).

One aspect of Gergen's concept of saturation is a state of relational overload, caused in part by the advent of technologies that allow us multiple ways of making contact with people and places. Television, radio, car telephones, computers, fax machines, e-mail, all allow us to have many frequent and brief contacts through the course of our day (and night). A second aspect of saturation is the possibility of entertaining multiple points of view about ourselves and others, and ideas in general. In individuals, these conditions lead to a state of saturation, in which one's consciousness is flooded by so many competing realities that one must choose which to attend to.

In families, Gergen suggests there is "competition for relational time" (Gergen, 1991b, p.1) and a sense of anxiety about the number of choices involving how to spend one's time and with whom. He continues:

We have all inherited a view of the ideal family as having coherent mutual goals and heading in a common direction. Yet the technologies of social saturation, especially the car, telephone and jet plane, have made it possible for any member of the family to be in virtually any state of mind or motion at any time. The ordinary, daily confluence of multiple lives within one household makes for a sense of fragmentation, as if the members of the family were being
scattered by the centrifugal force of postmodern life.

(Gergen, 1991a, p. 29)

His contention is that family members feel stressed by technologies that save time but also compel them to do more in less time. Technology allows one to expand world consciousness and gives one the ability to make contact with almost anywhere on earth, but we are then pressured to attend to more and more information as we create a wider circle of concern for ourselves.
Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

It is not surprising that a study about postmodern families does not have a grand theory to serve as a guide. I searched for a unifying metaphor to illustrate the theoretical framework that guided this study. Imagine a telescope that is able to survey a landscape of family theories and then focus in on a select few. The telescope is my feminist world view that informs my private life and my professional life as a family therapist. With the aid of this telescope, I bring into focus postmodern feminist theory, systems theory, and related concepts of bonding.

A feminist perspective guided the formation of research questions, method and analysis. I was further guided by postmodern feminism, a particular branch of feminist thought, because it links feminism with Gergen's conceptualizations of postmodern family life. An additional link is that Gergen and feminism share social constructionism as a unifying epistemology. Postmodern perspectives of family life also served to situate this study both historically and theoretically. A feminist revision of systems theory was used to combine the constructs of bonding and boundaries as a means of understanding how family members experience leisure time.

Feminist Postmodernism

Postmodernism has been described as "a name for the way we live now" (Wicke & Ferguson, 1994, p. 1). As such it is a way of
thinking and living within the historical period of the late 20th century. It is a time of questioning the reliability and even the necessity of grand explanatory theories, a shift toward constructivist notions of knowledge, and a deep inquiry into previously taken for granted definitions of family, language and power, and for feminists, gender.

A feminist postmodern perspective recognizes families as they are in real life: single parent, ethnic, lesbian and gay, child-free, dual-earner, as well as married couples with children. In this view, there is also no one way to behave as a family, allowing for the existence of conflict, change, uncertainty, and the emergence of new ways to be connected. Stacey (1990), for example, found extended kinship networks among divorced couples and their new partners and families. Such a perspective allows for the emergence and recognition of new ways and meanings for the ways families use leisure time.

Postmodern feminists deal with issues of identity (hooks, 1990; Thompson, 1992; Weedon, 1987). They have been concerned with women defining their own identities as well as understanding that identities change within context, and that identities can be assigned by those in power, thereby masking the texture and depth of our identities. This aspect of feminist postmodern theory enhances an analysis of Gergen’s concept of saturation in families because it accounts for multiple experiences within families and within individuals.
Feminists understand knowledge and experience as emerging from a particular personal situation or context which is different for each person (Baber & Allen, 1992; Nicholson, 1990). In this view, researchers do not discover essential truths, rather they describe a particular point of view. Further, each family member has a standpoint which can be understood in terms of factors such as age, gender, and power. As a feminist, I was guided to research time-use in family life by including all family members in the study.

Postmodern feminists have struggled with the risk that entertaining multiple viewpoints can dilute feminist values within a sea of relativism (Allen & Baber, 1992; Nicholson, 1990). Individuals can be left adrift, without anchors of values, ideals, or preferred ways of living. To correct for this risk, feminists attempt to practice reflexivity—a constant self-examination to uncover bias and mismatches between stated values and actual behavior (Allen & Farnsworth, 1993).

Reflexivity is also a method of deconstructing accepted modes of thought for the purpose of changing lives. For example, feminist family therapists (Boss & Thorne, 1989; Hare-Mustin, 1987, 1994; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988) have examined common beliefs about gender differences, male sexuality, and heterosexual marriage, concluding that women are disadvantaged in therapy when therapists adhere to traditional and unexamined views of how women should behave in families.
Lather (1991) states that the goal of feminism is emancipation while the goal of postmodernism is deconstruction. Postmodern feminist researchers attempt to think reflexively as they write openly about their assumptions, bias, and agenda for their work. They include the personal as part of the context for the research. To this end, I included in this study an explanation of how I came to be interested in social saturation and leisure, along with a description of my social position and my experience with my study topic.

**Systems Theory**

The revision of systems theory by feminist family scholars has been an important and necessary addition to the existing body of work on families. Feminist theorists have critiqued the systems view of the family as ignoring the different levels of power that are held by individual family members (Hare-Mustin, 1980, 1987; Hoffman, 1990). Strict adherence to systems theory blurs the individuality of family members, and encourages a blind neutrality toward the actions of individual members. The addition of a feminist perspective encourages an examination of family life in terms of individuals within families. A feminist perspective insists that individual concerns, especially those of females and children, who have traditionally been absent as *individuals* in the research literature, will be treated with the same importance that the family as a "system" has enjoyed. For
these reasons, all family members were interviewed in this study.

As defined in Chapter One, bonding and cohesion are terms used to describe the glue or the emotional pull that holds a family together, and gives individuals a sense of belonging to it. The concept of "boundaries" also designates family as a shared sum of activities, values, and other commonalities that are unique for a particular family group (Minuchin, 1974; Nichols & Schwartz, 1991). Boundaries can be very tight, allowing little freedom for outsiders to enter the family, or for family members to leave its boundaries. When boundaries are ill-defined, then there is no sense of belonging, and individuals may lack a family identity or loyalty. In systems terms, a lack of boundaries is associated with poor family bonding or cohesion.

Jordan's (1991) work on empathy is a feminist revision of boundaries. She suggests that "relational growth" and "growth in connection" are more useful concepts than boundary as an organizing factor in women's lives. Another reworking of boundary concepts is Scanzoni et al. (1989) who have emphasized the importance of relationships outside of conventional kinship ties. "Refusing to reify the conventional nuclear family means that we must also reject the reification of the boundaries that allegedly surround it" (Scanzoni et al. 1989, p. 63).

The postmodern family in Gergen's portrayal has very loose boundaries. The loyalties of individual members are spread thinly among all the contacts and loose attachments that occur on
any given day. The term "saturation" does not refer to an intense relationship within family boundaries, but rather to many brief, fleeting connections that take place outside of the family walls. This study examined the nature of boundary keeping as constructed by families in their leisure time.

**Review of Literature**

This section addresses five topics: time use studies, the popular press, saturation and leisure, bonding and leisure, and feminist perspectives on leisure constraints.

**Time Use Studies**

Reasoning that saturation might be reflected in shifts in time use (this idea was also suggested to me by Kenneth Gergen in a personal communication), I consulted time use research, and found that there is no consensus regarding changes in the amount of leisure time available to Americans. Two major time studies contradict each other on the issue. Reviewing diary time studies conducted at the University of Michigan in 1965 and 1975, and at the University of Maryland in 1985, Robinson and Nicosia (1991) conclude that because of declines in paid work time and men doing more housework, Americans have more free time. Schor (1992), using data from Michigan Time Use Studies and Current Population Surveys, asserts that work-hours along with productivity have steadily increased over the last 20 years, resulting in more pay but less leisure time. Schor contends that the conflict between
her conclusions and those of Robinson, is due to sampling "particularities" (p. 168) of race, affluence, and gender.

Zick and McCullough (1991) designed research to eliminate the methodological problems of previous studies, in particular addressing gender differences and focusing on two-parent, two-child households. Comparing 1977 and 1988 data, they found that wives had more hours of paid work, fewer hours of housework, and less discretionary and maintenance time. Husbands did more housework and lost maintenance time, while leisure time stayed constant. Thus women lost leisure time, had more hours of paid work, while families' overall incomes remained the same.

Hochschild (1989) combined quantitative and qualitative data in her study of two career couples raising a child under age six. She began her research by reviewing major time studies, deciding that Robinson's sample was skewed because the time-consuming data collection process had likely caused the busiest people to drop out of the study. Conducting her own analysis of time-use data, which focused on the present rather than compared reference points, she found that women worked (housework, childcare, and paid employment combined) 15 hours per week more than men. In the qualitative part of her study, Hochschild used traditional single earner families as a reference point. She observes that families in which women work at paid employment and raising children, are hit by a "speed up" (p. 8) mainly absorbed by women. Only 18% of the men shared at least half of the housework
and child care, leaving women with little leisure. Hochschild notes:

Most women cut back [after the birth of children] on their personal needs, give up reading, hobbies, television, visits with friends, exercise, time alone....I interviewed no working mothers who maintained hobbies....It was part of the "culture" of the working mother to give up personal leisure, and most did it willingly. (p.199)

Children and husbands also felt the effects of time pressure. Children often resented mothers for rushing them from one activity to the next. Men who did not share housework and child care experienced tension in their marriages, specifically, a lack of intimacy with wives. Hochschild concludes that men, women, and children all lose when work and leisure are out of balance for any family member. While one could attribute these difficulties to a time-limited stage in family development, Hochschild asserts that the problem is more one of gendered behavior and institutional structures in transition. Workplaces still operate as if someone is at home caring for the family, and "men do not share the raising of their children and the caring of their homes" (Hochschild, 1989, p.x).

Schor (1992) also worries about decreasing quality in family life related to changes in leisure time use. She fears (as does Erenreich, 1989) that many Americans are caught in a work/spend
cycle in which they have more money but less free time. "Consumers crowd increasingly more expensive leisure into smaller periods of time" (Schor, 1992, p.3). She recommends becoming a more genuinely leisured society in order to become a more caring one. This can be done by both men and women taking part in caring for children and the elderly, and spending more time nurturing the communities in which we live.

Robinson and Nicosia (1991) acknowledge that their findings of increased leisure time are "counterintuitive" (p.178) and have been contradicted by other researchers and media reports as well. Recognizing the psychological component missing in their time studies, they state "Time diaries tell us what is done but not why it is done or what benefits the person derives from the activity. We know almost nothing about how time is experienced by consumers or how people organize their time activities" (p.180). They advocate more studies on what people experience about their time use.

**The Popular Press**

Many stories have appeared in the popular press describing families as time-stressed, overworked, and short on leisure. USA Today, Time in 1889 and 1995, and the Family Therapy Networker all ran cover stories on the topic. Gibbs (1989) headlined her story "Workers are weary, parents are frantic and even children haven't a moment to spare: leisure could be to the 90s what money was to the 80s" (p. 58). Time stress is generally framed as a
problem of the affluent, baby boomers, and dual career families (Edmonds, 1995; Elkind, 1988; Gibbs, 1989) who have fallen prey to excessive ambition and competition: "We are uneasy with ease" writes Samuelson (1992, p. 50).

Elkind (1988), Gibbs (1989), Ventura (1995) and Wright (1995) echo Gergen's theory that time-saving technology may be displacing human companionship and interfering in human bonding. Wright (1995) suggests that asocial entertainment like television creates alienation. "When you're watching TV 28 hours a week--as the average American does--that's a lot of bonding you're not out doing" (p. 54). According to Rifkin (1987) and Rechtschaffen (1995) we have gradually altered our time consciousness by aligning ourselves with machines, clocks, and now computers, and thus are losing our connections to human biologic rhythms. "We have become more organized but less spontaneous, less joyful...more detached, self-absorbed, and manipulative in relation to others" (Rifkin, 1987, p. 20). Rechtschaffen (1993) suggests that families do not need time management, but rather time awareness, and recommends family rituals as a means of enhancing time awareness.

All of these popular works conclude that families feel time pressures and they can improve life quality by evaluating how they spend time. Ventura (1995) believes that families suffer when there is not enough "shared experience" (p. 24) and observes that therapy is often a unique experience for families who find
themselves finally altogether in the same room.

**Saturation and Leisure**

Since I found no formal studies that deal specifically with Gergen's concept of saturation, the literature in this section pertains to issues that are saturation-like or that look at stress associated with leisure. Most of this work is theoretical; I found only two empirical studies that applied to the topic. The theoretical pieces deal with leisure ideology (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber 1991, Goodale & Godbey, 1988), leisure and health (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993) and leisure and consumerism (Dimanche & Samdahl, 1994). On the whole this material suggests that when leisure becomes pressured because of time constraints or because of noxious social context, then it loses its value as recuperative and restorative.

For example, Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) contend that free time can protect against stress through the rewards of companionship and freedom of choice, but leisure activities can be counterproductive when related social contact is negative or when the activity feels out of the person's control. Chick and Roberts (1989) tested a similar hypothesis in their study of players in a recreational pool league. In this study, some players who dropped out of the league reported experiences that the authors termed "anti-leisure": a feeling of tension created by the design of the pool matches, by uneven competition, spectator comments, and a general feeling of loss of freedom surrounding
the playing of the game itself. This study suggests that when an activity is overly structured, its recreational value may be greatly reduced.

Meeks and Mauldin (1990) investigated claims in the popular press that children are over-programmed as a result of two career couples using leisure activities as status symbols. Using 1981 data, the authors measured structured vs. unstructured time use in a sample of 400 children ages 3 to 18. Significant findings were that children overall spent less time in structured than unstructured activities, with preschool children having the least structured time and 13 to 18 year olds with the most structured time. Boys had more leisure than girls, mothers' employment did not affect time in structured activity, and family income did not increase time in structured activities. Although these findings speak against saturation as a problem in school age children, the data are 15 years old (which the authors acknowledge) and there may be a subset of children that were not identified in this study who are involved in a great many structured leisure activities. "Some families may need to carefully examine the activities their children are active in, to insure that they are the child's choice and fulfill the developmental needs that leisure supplies for a child" (Meeks & Mauldin, p. 277).

Csikszentmihalyi and Kleiber (1991) address the leisure needs of children with their model of "flow", which may be the polar opposite of a saturation experience. In contrast to
changing foci, multiple self-concepts, and frequent distractions (characteristics of saturation), flow is an experience of deep concentration and attention in which one loses awareness of self. Further referring to experiences of self, the authors state, "involvement in an activity must be deep, sustained, and disciplined to contribute to an emerging sense of self" (p. 94), and "whereas the self disappears during a flow experience, it reappears afterwards stronger than it had been before" (p. 96). Estimating that Americans spend half of their leisure time watching television, the authors assert that most leisure does not provide flow experiences, rather most leisure is passive and redundant. In order to provide children with the opportunity and atmosphere to achieve flow, the authors advise parents to attend to daily routines, as well as specific leisure activities. Children (and I would add adults as well) need activities that balance challenge and skill, and that have a satisfying end point or goal that centers the activity and provides a sense of satisfaction. In addition, work and everyday tasks can and should be enjoyable when there are adequate time and minimal distractions.

Another theoretical treatment of saturation is the perspective that leisure is taking on the negative characteristics of work in that we are pressured to achieve more leisure activities in a finite amount of time. As we measure our value in terms of work produced, we have come to view leisure activities as status symbols, and are thus drawn to "produce" more leisure rather than
increasing our enjoyment of discretionary time (Dimanche & Samdahl, 1994; Hemingway, 1966; Rojek, 1993).

**Bonding and Leisure**

In this section, I limited my review to literature on family bonding and leisure, excluding studies that focus on couples only because couples were not the focus of this inquiry. The literature on family bonding and leisure is becoming dated. The two most recent works I could find are from 1985 and 1986 with neither yielding strong findings, and both using non-random specialty samples. Allen and Donnelly (1985), investigating with whom people recreate when doing their two most enjoyable activities, found that their sample of Wyoming adults preferred engaging in outdoor activities with family or friends. A secondary preference was engaging in the same activities alone. Gustafson (1986) conducted his study with adults attending Sunday church services at a random sample of Protestant churches in suburban Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He found no statistical significance between cohesiveness and total leisure participation, but did find a significant positive association between family cohesiveness and special family times like reading, walks, hikes, and games.

In an earlier study, Lynn (1983) used a national sample of families who identified themselves as "strong" to examine the relationship between leisure activity participation and family strength. Findings were positively significant for family
strength and mass media, social activities, outdoors, sports, cultural, hobbies, parallel and joint activities.

While Hawks (1991), in a 60 year review article, concludes from these studies as well as from earlier works, that bonding and leisure time are positively related, other scholars (Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Orthner et al., 1994) think that much more study is required. Previous analyses of bonding and leisure have been rather "flat" in that individual family members have not been considered in relationship to each other, and the studies have been largely atheoretical, thus preventing meaningful analysis of results. Also, causal relationships have not been established between family strength and leisure activity. An issue only marginally examined in previous studies is how much time family members need to spend together in any activity for bonding to occur. Stinnett, Sanders, DeFrain, & Parkhurst (1982), using the same data base as Lynn (1983), found that 26% of respondents thought that a busy pace was a "big problem" and dealt with it by scheduling family activities and cutting down on outside events.

Looking at bonding and leisure from an entirely different perspective are authors (Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Rojek, 1993) who suggest that leisure may not provide positive experiences for families.

There is the possibility that leisure as actually practiced may be dysfunctional rather than functional. That is, it may contribute to the dissolution of the
social system in some ways. For example, there is evidence that leisure in modern societies tends to become more and more 'privatized'. It draws people away from common and community-building activity to retreat into enclaves of their own entertainment.

(Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p. 177)

According to the concept of saturation, leisure can also draw family members away from each other, as each pursues individual interests.

Demo's (1992) meta-analysis of parent-child relations may portend a change in our conceptualization of how and where bonding occurs. He suggests that as a result of structural changes in families over the past 30 years, parents and children, while still bonded, now spend little time together. Introducing the concept of "supportive detachment", he states "most parents care deeply, although often from a distance" (p. 114). "Parents also tend to be detached from their children in the sense that direct interaction is severely restricted by the substantial periods of time children spend in daycare settings, schools" (p. 113).

**Feminist Perspectives on Leisure Constraints**

The idea that leisure may be constrained or problematic is a relatively new concept in leisure studies (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Traditionally, the term "barrier" was used to indicate a structural obstacle (like lack of transportation, or money)
between an individual and a recreational activity (Jackson, 1991). More sophisticated conceptualizations have been offered by Crawford & Godbey (1987) who added intrapersonal and interpersonal kinds of constraints as concepts to use in understanding factors that impede family leisure participation. Feminist research has been important in analyzing constraints in terms of gender, age, class, and power, as well as in bringing qualitative research methods strongly into the picture (Freysinger, 1995; Shank, 1986).

Most pertinent to the present study was feminist work toward "dereifying" (Shaw, 1992) family leisure. This body of work critiques the leisure stereotype of the perfect family benefiting from having fun, hampered only by lack of time to be together. Henderson (1990) has described feminist research as "critical, corrective, and transformative" (p. 229) to static treatments of family life. The following studies are examples of how feminist research has looked closely inside families to dereify family leisure and understand individual experiences, particularly in terms of gender.

Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) conducted a pilot study in which they interviewed a convenience sample of women to understand lack of entitlement to leisure as a kind of constraint. Their analysis suggests that contrary to the institutionalized image of the weekend backyard barbecue, women often wish to "do nothing" with their free time, and, while believing they had a
right to leisure for themselves, they viewed it as a privilege, not a priority. Firestone and Shelton (1994) also looked inside families to examine domestic (at home) vs. nondomestic (outside of home) leisure, finding that women had significantly less leisure time than men in both categories.

Shaw (1992) studied 46 mothers and fathers who kept time diaries for two days. Participants were asked to identify selected activities as "work" or "leisure". Shaw reported, it is evident from this study that family leisure is not always easily obtainable and is not the ideal, problem-free situation suggested by ideologically based popular depictions of families having fun together. Much of the time that families spend together and that parents spend with their children is not leisure, especially for mothers. (p. 283)

Shaw suggests the following points for future research: attend to children's feelings and sense of choice about leisure, analyze family interaction, and include both negative and positive aspects of leisure.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has presented the study's theoretical framework and a review of literature relating to the study's research questions. The following comments serve to summarize findings from the literature review. Regarding time-use research, while large scale studies have given mixed results, smaller studies,
especially those including qualitative data, and focusing on
certain family forms, do indicate less leisure time, especially
for women and mothers. Lack of a clear answer about whether
people have less leisure time now than in the past does not
invalidate the feeling of time-famine in certain family struc-
tures, notably in families with young children in which both
parents work. Moreover, Ferree (1991) observes that all time
budget studies are now too dated to accurately measure contempo-
rary time use patterns. This body of literature indicates that
family interaction is associated with certain developmental
stages, and that gender and generational issues must be part of
family process analysis.

Saturation, while not appearing as a specific term in empir-
cical research, has been shown to be a potentially useful concept,
and deserving of study. Scholars have suggested anti-saturation
techniques to increase the benefits of leisure experiences. The
literature also indicates that pressures of competition and being
observed negate pleasurable aspects of leisure experience.
Because children may not have the option of dropping out of
activities, this possibility is especially important to consider
when young children compete in organized competitive sports.

Bonding has not been firmly established as a result of
shared family leisure time. The literature review indicates
greater complexity in family processes regarding time use than
has been acknowledged in studies on bonding and leisure, and sug-
gests the use of qualitative studies which include both parents and children, and that consider gender relations as part of the analysis.

Finally, there is reason to consider that American practices of leisure may be heavily influenced by our culture of consumerism. At least in the middle class, pressures on children and adults to engage in certain status activities, to "pay to play", to appear to work very hard at leisure, and the disconnection of leisure from community or neighborhood based activities, have all been suggested as negative aspects of capitalist consumer cultures. These are also issues that require attention in any examination of family leisure experiences.
Chapter Three
Methodology

Overview

The choice of a qualitative design in this study was guided by the purpose of the research, the theoretical framework, and the review of literature (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The purpose of this study was to remove saturation from its conjectural bookshelf and examine it within the context of family experiences about discretionary time use. Van Manen (1990) advocates qualitative research for the purpose of "investigating experience as we live it, rather than as we conceptualize it" (p. 30). Taylor and Bogdan (1984) describe qualitative methods as a means to understand phenomena from the perspective of the research participant rather than that of the armchair theorist.

Besides allowing a focus on meaning, qualitative research is also suited to studying complex family processes holistically by focusing on interaction patterns and negotiations (Daly, 1992). Qualitative study has been a tradition in family studies (Handel, 1992) and is gaining importance as a research paradigm in family therapy where problems have always been examined in a family context and attention has been paid to hearing from all members (Moon, Dillon, & Sprinkle, 1990).

Feminist family scholars in particular have emphasized qualitative design as a means of understanding context and individual perspectives. Examples of feminist informed qualita-

Other feminist derived research strategies have been described by Stewart (1994). She recommends a focus on unheard voices, which in the present study were those of women and children in families, as well as experiences of men that have been cloaked by male stereotyping. In addition, it is important to look for ways that women overcome social constraints rather than simply describing how women are oppressed (Allen & Walker, 1992). Of critical importance is the analysis of gender as it defines and constructs power relationships in families. Both Henderson (1994) and Shaw (1994) offer approaches to leisure research that are based on gender analysis of both women and men. "Gender scholarship addresses the complexity of expectations, roles and behaviors associated with being male as well as female" (Henderson, 1994, p. 127). Gender was a primary focus of analysis in this study.

Along with gender, feminist scholars explore other features of social position such as race, class, and sexuality (Harding, 1987). These factors are discussed in the section on participant
selection.

Finally, Stewart (1994) advises researchers to avoid simplifying the stories that participants tell us, and instead to listen for exceptions and inconsistencies. "This effort to organize and structure the different voices and selves must be understood as an effort to control—literally to impose an order or unity on what is in fact multiple and even disorderly" (p. 30). Such an endeavor was highly consistent with this study's postmodern perspective, and particularly suited to an exploration of saturation, a state which, by definition is multifaceted and discontinuous.

Connected with a postmodern perspective is the feminist concern with treatment of research participants (Lather, 1986, Thompson, 1992). Consistent with such a perspective, participants were active parts of the research process, and were consulted for accuracy and completeness of the data, as is reflected in the procedural design of this study. Another important aspect of methodology is the research "agenda" which, in feminist work, is emancipatory (Flax, 1990; Thompson, 1992) and action oriented (Fonow & Cook, 1991). Information about time use in families may give family therapists greater insight toward helping family members to negotiate effectively for greater equity in leisure benefits. Other changes might be realized in the areas of public policy, legislation, and attitude change.

A feminist research agenda also addresses contradictions in
family life (Jaggar, 1994), particularly by examining ideologies that obscure conflict and diversity within and between families. Ferree (1991) asserts that family scholars need to "rethink both the separateness and the solidarity of families" (p. 103). The present study attended to many aspects of discretionary time use in families, including the conditions described by Hartmann (1981). She holds that families are not units with a single purpose, but rather are often "locations of struggle" where people compete for limited resources like time.

Pilot Study

In preparation for the study, I interviewed an upper-middle class married couple with two school aged children. I conducted a one hour interview with each partner separately. The data analysis convinced me that the research questions would yield important data, but that a follow up interview would be necessary to more fully understand the participants' answers. I also realized the need to interview children as well as parents. The pilot couple reported that receiving the interview questions prior to the actual meeting helped them to prepare more thoughtful answers, and that participating in the study led them to discuss time use in their family, thus indicating to me that the research would be useful to families.

Following this pilot project, I tested different interviewing tools with children of various ages to find methods that helped them to discuss non-school experiences. I used this
information to design the children's interview section.

In the final stage of piloting I interviewed three complete families following exactly the procedures set forth in this chapter. My advisor and I determined that these families would be part of the present research.

**Rationale for Selection of Participants**

The families selected for the study were two-parent households with children of school age (6 to 11) only. I chose families who were upper-middle class, or affluent, because they fit Gergen's (1991b) hypothesis that saturation is more pronounced among those who can afford to buy technology and leisure. Rubin (1994) found that leisure is different for working class people because they have less discretionary time and less money to spend on leisure. In this study upper-middle class persons were defined as college educated white-collar workers who earn $50,000 to $100,000 per year (Macionis, 1994). Walker (1990) further defines class by the indicators of social activities and consumption patterns. The important criteria for families in this study was their ability to purchase leisure and have discretionary time and money.

Families were of similar structure and developmental stage as advocated by Zick and McCullough (1991). I used two-parent families living in the same household because one-parent families are likely to have fewer resources and more time demands made on the solo parent, as well as different processes than two-parent
families (Acock & Demo, 1994). I excluded couples who parented children in different households, reasoning that time management issues would be different for stepparents and blended families. Same sex couples were included in the criteria, although I did not expect that school administrators would be able to help me locate families with gay or lesbian parents.

I consulted the leisure studies literature in order to decide on the inclusion of ethnic groups other than European American. Research available on this topic dealt primarily with African Americans. Dardis (1994) found that families with Black heads of households spent less money on leisure than families headed by Whites or non-Whites. Philipp (1995) examined race as a factor in leisure constraints and found that African Americans and European Americans ranked leisure activities in a similar manner, but also had significantly different opinions about the appeal and comfort of certain activities. Shinew, Floyd, McGuire, and Noe (1995) looked at leisure preferences of various subgroups defined by gender, race, and class. They found that middle-class Black and White men were similar in their leisure interests, and that poor working-class Black women had interests distinct from Whites and from middle-class Blacks. All of the studies were tentative in their findings and suggested further research before stronger conclusions could be made. Based on this information, I saw no reason to exclude any ethnic group from participating.
Families all had children of school age (6 to 11). I did not include families with infants or adolescents because of special developmental issues for these age groups. Timmer, Eccles, and O’Brien (1985) found that children age 12 to 17 use time differently than younger children, and that by age 6, children could adequately answer questions about time use.

Participants

I recruited participants from three private schools located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area of 200,000 people. I received an enthusiastic and affirmative response from each of the school administrators that I contacted for introductions to families. Each school had distinct characteristics. School A emphasized academics and college preparation along with athletics. School B was religiously oriented and included daily religious instruction, although children of other denominations were welcome to attend. School C focused on individualized learning, narratives rather grade evaluations, and mixing students of different ages. All schools required tuition and offered scholarships and tuition assistance.

School administrators sent contact letters to all potential families. My own letter of invitation to the study accompanied the school’s letter. I contacted a total of 65 families by letter and then by follow-up phone call. I interviewed all the families who agreed to participate and who could schedule appointments with me within the 6 months I had available for data
The final group of participants consisted of 10 families, three from school A, three from school B, and four from school C. All couples were married and heterosexual, ranging in age from 33 to 47, with 41.6 as the average age for men and 38.6 as the average age for women. Nine families were European American and one family was African American.

The families had a total of 22 children: one family had 4, one family had 3, one family had 1, and the rest had 2 children each. Children ranged in age from 6 to 12. The 12 year old turned 12 during the course of the interviews. Average age for children was 8.1, so this was a young group of school-age children.

Among the children were 17 girls and 5 boys. The total pool of children from which the participants were chosen consisted of 265 girls 283 boys. I am aware of no bias that would account for the larger number of girls among the participants.

Parents were a highly educated group, with advanced degrees distributed evenly among men and women. Among the women were 2 lawyers, 1 physician, 2 M.S. degrees, 4 B.S. degrees, and 1 Associate degree. Among the men were 3 physicians, 1 Ph.D., 2 M.S. degrees, 3 B.S. degrees, and 1 high school graduate. Total family income ranged from $50,000 to over $100,000 with the following breakdown:
$50,000 to $75,000    3 families
$75,000 to $100,000   5 families
over $100,000        2 families

Eight of the men worked full-time continuously during the course of the interviews. Two men lost their full-time jobs during the course of the study and went to temporary part-time work. Four women worked full-time, two part-time, and four were unemployed.

Despite the fact that all families were classified as upper-middle class, there was a wide range in their incomes, and much diversity in where families lived. Four families lived in isolated rural areas, one lived in a very small town, two resided in elite neighborhoods, and three were located in suburban or city neighborhoods.

Procedures

Initial contact with families was made by sending a letter to parents (see Appendices for all letters and forms) explaining the study and time requirements for interviews. Letters were followed up by phone call. With all interested persons, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the study, and checked that the family met the participant criteria. With parents' consent, a separate letter of invitation to the study was sent to the children in the family. Once everyone had a chance to discuss the study and ask questions, an appointment was scheduled in the participant's home, or in the researcher's office. Before the
first interview, families received a packet containing consent forms, activity sheets, and a list of the interview questions. Participants signed consent forms as required by this university.

Most of the interviews were held in participants' homes. A few interviews were held in my office or in the parent's workplace. I was able to visit 9 families in their homes at least once. One family elected to have all their interviews in my office, and did not offer a reason for their choice. At the conclusion of the interviews, families were given a small gift in thanks for their participation.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted from April to October of 1996. The first stage of the process consisted of individual interviews with each family member. A second interview was held with the entire family. Second interviews were held approximately 2 weeks after the initial interviews, but in some cases the first and second interviews were separated by several months.

In order to give family members both the time and opportunity to think about the questions, interview materials were sent to the home before the interview. Parents and children were asked to fill out an activity check-list for each member (Appendix E, p. 178). The activities on the list were chosen from common activities for children and adults in their geographic area and social class and from lists found in the literature (Allen & Donnelly, 1985). The checklist was meant as a springboard for
discussion; it was not intended for quantitative analysis.

The interview guides are found in Appendices H and I. It was expected that each interview would be different from the last. This was due in part to the loose structure of the interview, but also because of the type of analysis that was conducted.

The interview design was guided by principles from McCracken (1988), and the content derived from the research questions. "The long interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory" (McCracken, 1988, p. 9), allowing the researcher to capture experience and meaning without the invasiveness of being a long-term observer in homes or workplaces. McCracken (1988) advises researchers to aim for a structure that allows order but does not impose meaning on the participants' answers.

Children's Interviews

In order to meet their individual and developmental needs, I designed different methods for interviewing children. While children can be expected to report past events as accurately as adults, they need more encouragement to provide detail. When interviewing children, researchers should design questions to avoid responses that might stem from the child's desire to please the researcher (Breakwell, 1990; La Greca, 1990). Other issues I kept in mind for the 6 to 10 age group are the tendency for children to make literal interpretations, become easily distract-
ed, and to quickly answer "I don't know" (Breakwell, 1990).

Breakwell (1990), and Hughes and Baker (1990) suggest the following ways to improve interviews with children: use age appropriate vocabulary, short simple questions with concrete terms, sentence completion techniques, cartoon bubbles, and story boards. Children also respond to imaginative methods of research. Britt (1992), studying seriously ill children, enlisted their help in writing a story about a child who was ill. The research resulted in a book written by the child participants.

Children in this study received a separate letter explaining the study and asking them to participate in helping me with my "homework" for a class at Virginia Tech. I spoke with parents and children by phone to insure that children were willing to be part of the research. When I met children in person, they were somewhat familiar with me and had already talked with their parents about the study. To further put children at ease, I showed them the portable file I carried with me, and asked them to work the two tape recorders. The child and I also looked over the activity sheet that each child had completed. Usually, interviews with children were done on the floor.

Various approaches were used to facilitate discussion with children about out-of-school time use. All methods were based on five picture boards, one for each of the following categories: free time, family time, organized activities, chores, and TV. Before an activity, I discussed all the picture boards with the
children so that we had a mutual understanding of each category.

Free time was defined as "when you can do whatever you want with your time" and illustrated with pictures of children on swings, reading, running with a dog, and so forth. Family time was "doing things with your family" like having dinner, walking, playing a game, or just talking. Organized activities were "things you or your parents had to sign up to do" like piano or dance lessons, Scouts, and team sports. Chores and TV were self explanatory.

I customized the picture-boards for each child by adding Post-it notes. For example, if a child told me they liked playing in the sandbox for free time, we wrote or drew "sandbox" on a Post-it and added it to the picture board.

Older children used these picture boards to draw pie charts (see Appendix I) designating how time was allocated. A second approach geared for younger children was ranking the picture boards in various ways. In addition each child was asked to draw their favorite thing to do when they were not in school. Children then told me about their drawing and their words were recorded on the picture.

Researcher as Instrument

The quality of data in a qualitative study is dependent in large measure on the skills of the interviewer (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; McCracken, 1988). Family therapists can be considered to be expert at attending to the many variations and
complexities of human communication. Moon et al. (1990) point out that the assessment of families during therapy sessions is actually a kind of qualitative analysis. In this study an important research tool was my training and experience as a family therapist. In addition, reflexivity by the researcher is an important research instrument which has been addressed in Chapter One.

Data Analysis

This study was conducted following Strauss and Corbin's principles of grounded theory research (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The text was analyzed according to an adaption of procedures developed by Strauss and Corbin in their grounded theory method of qualitative analysis. In this procedure, the analysis begins with the first piece of interview data and proceeds by systematically revising each successive interview based on an analysis of the previous interviews.

The overall process is one of first deconstructing the text by open coding data into concepts and then categories. The next step is axial coding in which the data is put back together by making connections between categories. The researcher also studies the processes that tie the data together. This process is explained by the paradigm model which links together causal conditions or context, interaction among family members, strategies or tactics, and consequences. This paradigm guides the
researcher both in organizing the interview and in coding the data.

I kept track of my evolving conceptualizations by systematic memo writing. These were daily notes which record current ideas that became increasingly theoretical as the analysis continued. They served as a record of the researcher's thinking process as concepts, categories, and theory were created.

Before I started my analysis I already had several conceptual categories that were derived from the research questions. These categories were: saturation, bonding, leisure, gender, and generation. These categories formed a frame for me as I listened for other themes in the interviews. All hypotheses about emerging themes or connections between categories were written as memo notes in a journal that I carried with me to each interview.

Strauss and Corbin advocate analyzing each interview before proceeding to the next. Although this was my intention, I found that I had to be ready to do an interview when a participant was available, and so often I could not get completed interviews transcribed and analyzed before the next scheduled interview. Therefore, I developed an adaption of their process by partially analyzing the data as the study proceeded. Also I intended to interview as many families as I could during the 6 month period I had available for data collection, so I was not worried about choosing families to fill in gaps in understanding.

My analysis began by reading through and simultaneously
listening to the audiotape of each individual interview. I made notes and organized my thoughts into questions in preparation for the family interview. I also read through my journal to sensitize myself to issues that I wanted to pursue. By the time I got to the family interview I had a wealth of data from each individual, so having the family altogether was an opportunity to hear the family discuss my perceptions or to have them comment on a statement that one person had made about others in the family.

Once all the data was collected, I began a thorough formal analysis. I had the interviews recorded on audio-tape, on computer disk, and on paper. At first I read through each interview, listening to the tape recording at the same time. This allowed me to make corrections on the hard copy and to hear voice inflections, laughter, pauses, interruptions and other such data that lend context to words on paper.

On the next read through of the data, I began coding by noting abstractions, themes, categories, or topics that seemed of interest. For example an initial code note read: definition of bonding 4dad12, indicating that this code note came from family #4, interview with dad, page 12. I used 8" x 12" paper to make code notes on each interview.

During the first half of the analysis (first 5 families) many new codes emerged. In the second half (last 5 families) fewer new codes were identified. At this stage there was more refinement of existing codes.
When I completed this stage, I went through my code notes and transcribed them to 18" x 24" pieces of newsprint. Using such a large sheet of paper allowed me to group codes together and to see connections more clearly. I found that having the large empty space of the newsprint encouraged me to relax instead of worrying about fitting the data together tightly too soon. I needed the empty space to lay out the data and observe it from a distance. During this process I further refined categories and began to organize the data into higher levels of abstraction. Finally I cut the newsprint into pieces 3 x 5 inches, each piece containing one code note. I divided the notes into stacks according to category. I now had piles of various sizes allowing me to see at a glance the depth of any particular category. Some pieces of data fit into more than one code and thus had more than one code assigned to it. At this point the data was at the highest level of abstraction, allowing me to make a final refinement of codes, and to begin to hypothesize connections between codes.

Reading through the previous process may sound tedious, but that was not my experience. I found the procedure to be relaxing because I was not forcing data to fit into any particular place. When I began to actually outline the findings chapter, it felt as though the data was falling into place before my eyes. I also found it helpful to get distance from the analysis. When I did begin to feel too immersed in detail, I took long walks during
which I was able to visualize the material with greater perspective, and came back to the analysis with fresh ideas about organization or meaning.

When I needed to retrieve quotations from participants for the findings section, I was able to go back to the original data quickly because I had the source of each code written next to it. Although I did not use a data analysis computer program, I did use my computer to retrieve text from the data. I had all interviews filed on computer disk, and was able to quickly find the exact quotation I sought and decide if it was the example I wanted to use in my findings.

Besides transcribed interviews, I had data in the form of activity checklists, pictures by children, and pie charts. I used the activity checklists to clarify assertions made about time use. For example I used checklist data to verify my qualitative hypothesis that children had more structured leisure activities than did their parents. I made separate analysis of children's pictures, pie charts, and rankings by putting all the material into table form.

Reliability and Validity Issues

"Work becomes scientific by adopting methods of study appropriate to its subject matter" (Silverman, 1993, p. 144). A qualitative design was selected for this study in order to capture diverse experiences of family members. Heath and Atkinson (1991) recommend that qualitative researchers should address
issues of reliability and validity. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), qualitative researchers need not fulfill the requirements of quantitative research methods. They must, however, be precise in defining their procedures and analytic techniques so that others can evaluate the research results. If the researcher follows the procedures of grounded theory research, then the study's results are expected to have validity. External validity is achieved by the continuous abstraction given to the data throughout the coding process. The researcher gives a detailed description of the phenomena and context under study, allowing others to decide if the results of a particular study can be applied to other situations. The results would also be reliable in that another researcher who studies a similar phenomenon in a similar context would reach very similar conclusions.

Lather (1986, 1991), using a feminist perspective, also suggests ways to increase the validity or "trustworthiness" of research findings. She recommends designs that demand intense and systematic researcher reflexivity, multiple data sources (the voices of all family members), multiple methods (interviews, drawings, and pie charts), and multiple theoretical schemes, all of which were incorporated into this study. Silverman (1993) also advocates multiple methods and data sources (triangulation), but not as a stringent proof of validity. According to Silverman, triangulation should not be used to insure validity or the "real truth" (a positivist, not a social constructionist perspec-
tive), or as a check on the veracity of participants' contributions. Triangulation is a method of obtaining a fuller, more complex description of participants' experiences. Complex, thick descriptions are the strengths of qualitative research designs.

Lather (1991) proposes that feminist research attend to catalytic validity. This kind of validity focuses on the ability of the research process to entice participants toward self-exploration and deep discovery of beliefs, assumptions, and motivations. I believe that catalytic validity was present in this study as evidenced by the time commitment that family members made in order to participate, the thoughtfulness of their contributions, and the curiosity and interest they displayed toward the research questions and findings.
Chapter Four

Findings

The results of this study were obtained by following the analysis as described in the previous chapter. Table 1 provides an overview of the research design. Theories of saturation, leisure and bonding were examined from feminist perspectives. Three research questions were derived from the primary theories. Next, interview questions were developed from each of the research questions. Finally, a grounded theory analysis of the data yielded three major coding categories (100, 200, and 300). A complete list of codes is found in Appendix J (p. 189).

In the interview excerpts that follow, all persons's names, other proper nouns, and potentially identifying details have been changed in order to protect the privacy of the participants.

Experiences of Saturation

In this section, I answer research question #1: In what ways is saturation a salient concept in family experiences during non-work and non-school time? Three major coding categories emerged from the interviews: acknowledgment of saturation and self-reflection, monitoring and boundary-making, and supporting ideologies.

Acknowledgments of Saturation and Reflections on Self

Saturation was a salient concept for family members in this study. Both parents and children instantly acknowledged that families can and often do feel rushed or overwhelmed by activi-
Table 1

Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturation</td>
<td>1. In what ways is saturation a salient concept in family experiences during non-work, non-school time?</td>
<td>-Give me some idea of what your family does in non-work, non-school time.</td>
<td>100 codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Responses to two schools of thought about family members going in different directions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Children's interviews.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure &amp; Bonding</td>
<td>2. In what ways do family members associate leisure time with bonding?</td>
<td>-How do you define family bonding?</td>
<td>200 codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-How do you see it occurring in your family?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-What is leisure for you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Children's interviews.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Perspectives</td>
<td>3. How do gender and generation influence family members' experiences of saturation, bonding and leisure?</td>
<td>-How do family members decide how to use time?</td>
<td>300 codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-How do you think gender influences decisions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Questions about ideal time use and barriers to ideal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Children's interviews.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ties beyond work and school obligations. While parents tended to
be abstract, children gave vivid descriptions of their experienc-
es.

A 9 year old girl told me about a time that she felt frazzled:

I was taking swimming twice a week, dance, and piano, so I
had no free days and I had a lot of projects and homework
and I thought I was gonna die because it was AWFUL. I would
get home and I'd have to stay up until ten o'clock because
I hadn't done anything [homework].

Children differentiated between leisure that felt relaxing
and leisure that felt pressured. A 12 year old girl tried to fit
lazy time by the pool into her summer athletics training. She
poignantly described how her schedule takes her away from the
rest of her family:

The pool hours are limited. I can only go, like, for an
hour or two hours, and that's if I just make it and then
when I get home, everybody else had already had dinner so,
you know, I'm sort of eating dinner by myself and then by
the time I finish it's time to go to bed. And last year,
the practices were from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. so I came
home to an empty home and it was just hard trying to be
quiet so that you wouldn't wake anybody up.

For some children, after school events were a mere continua-
tion of the demanding pace they kept during the school day. An 8 year old boy explains the fragmented fullness of his day:

When I'm in school things are going too fast. Like we went to this assembly, then we went to music, then we came straight back to class and then did math, then we came back, then we went to art, then we came back and did reading which was supposed to be in the morning. And then went outside for recess and then we went to gym and we came back, did a little bit more work, then the day was over. Then I got out. Well, the day wasn't over. Then I go swimming. Then go back home and get to do homework. After that, I have pretty much free time.

Free time for some children, was infrequent and divided into short segments. This father tells about how much time his 8 year old son had to play outdoors with neighborhood friends:

This outdoor playing is kind of...it borders on other things that we're getting ready to do. Like he may go out in the yard, we'll head out and call him to take off to go somewhere. So it's not like he gets home and goes out and he's there until it's time to go to bed or anything. It's like little, little spots of time that he'll just play with a guy until its time to do something else.

Being absorbent. While all parents and older children
acknowledged at least sometimes feeling time pressure and frag-
mentation, not everyone experienced it as problematic. For some,
being very busy was viewed as manageable, inevitable or taken-
for-granted. As one dad explained,

I mean, we have quite a few activities we're involved in
and we are constantly on the go...well, sometimes it's
stressful. Sometimes it keeps you motivated...I don't
really think it causes us a lot of problems, but it defi-
nitely keeps...its always something different. You know, so
it causes us to be, I guess, kind of flexible. Flexible, I
guess is the word. We constantly are having to juggle
things.

Another parent, a mother of two who worked full time, de-
scribed her typical after-work schedule:

Most of the time, there's a scheduled activity that the
kids are scheduled to do. You know, like Monday
there's gymnastics and karate and Tuesdays there's
something else or else I've got a practice to get them
to. So that takes up quite a bit of time. In between
driving them places and picking them up I'm usually
fixing dinner and you know, just kind of light housework.
Just straightening up things so that we can have a path to
walk through. I have meetings. I don't think I go two
weeks without having some kind of evening meeting, you know
associated with Junior League or sorority. Let's see. On weekends we do have more leisure time and then that just depends on what season it is. Because there are times when Saturdays are just as bad as far as planned activities.... There are times, you know, when I just feel like pulling my hair out and, oh, we're too involved in too many things and we've just got to give something up.... It's just what we do, so I don't think about it that much. And, you know, some people I work with, they'll say, and that's when I really think about it, how do you do that, aren't you tired, or whatever? And then I'll think about it. But for the most part, it's just, it's just what we do.

Some parents reveled in the variety of ways they could spend leisure time and found that they could readjust when things got out of hand. A mother of four children who had recently quit her part-time job in hopes of decreasing the stress of managing her family said,

From what I've heard from an older friend of mine, I'm sure families are probably going in more different directions than they were years ago. Whether it's good or bad or somebody wants to say it's good or bad, I don't know and I'm sure as different as every family is, will be as different as the assessment of the good or the bad in it. And I think there's a balance in all of that. I mean there has to be
some of that....And I'm sure it can go to one extreme or another. And I mean, we went to one extreme one year when my husband and son were doing Scouting and it was EVERY SINGLE WEEKEND. But we talked about it and it was like, this is just too much. Because there was NO family time.

My assessment of families with absorbent parents was that they tended to have heavy family schedules. Table 2 shows a leisure time schedule that was typical for the families I have characterized as absorbent.

Being resistant. Other parents acknowledged the phenomenon of saturation and had seen it in other families, but they themselves actively resisted running their own lives that way. These families were characterized by lots of free time after work and school, and a limited number of organized activities. A mother of one child said,

I think that many suburban families do tend to go in many different directions. There always seems to be a push and a pressure for everybody to be doing something organized all the time and, I often wonder who really wants to be doing it or if they're all caught up in this crazy treadmill that they can't quite decide to get off. Because I have friends, mothers who say, oh you know, I take my kids to school and from the time they get off the bus or the time I pick them
Table 2

Schedule of an Absorbent Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUES</th>
<th>WED</th>
<th>THURS</th>
<th>FRI</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>SUN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOM</td>
<td>work 8-3:30</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>C CHOIR</td>
<td>C CHURCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>volunteer mtg</td>
<td>health club</td>
<td>volunteer mtg</td>
<td>health club</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAD</td>
<td>work 8-6</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>C CHURCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>health club 6-7</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAU Age 10</td>
<td>school 8:30-3</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>C CHOIR</td>
<td>C CHURCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gymnastics 4:30-7:15</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>gymnastics 4:30-7:15</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>piano 4-4:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ballet 5-6:30</td>
<td>gymnastics 4:30-7:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SON Age 9</td>
<td>school 8:30-3</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>C CHOIR</td>
<td>C CHURCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>soccer practice 4-6:30</td>
<td>----&gt;</td>
<td>soccer practice 4-6:30</td>
<td>----&gt; Scouts 4-5:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>karate 6-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>karate 6-7</td>
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</table>

Note. Schedule does not include homework, piano practice, birthday parties, orthodontia, travel time, etc.
up, then it's karate and it's swim class, it's dance, it's gymnastics. I'll call people and say Crystal would like to get together and play with your daughter and they'll say, well, only on Wednesday afternoon between five and six, that's the only free time we have.

In one family, a 9 year old girl was indifferent to saturation. Her father commented that even though he was willing, his daughter was not interested in joining teams and taking lessons.

I think there are parents that probably push their kids in too many directions....I have known people that put their kids into a lot of different activities, you know, soccer, and scuba diving...and I'd be really happy to comply if Crystal were interested in more of those areas....If she was the type of manic child that wanted to do soccer and karate and tennis and swimming and scuba diving and ice climbing, then I'd probably try to discourage her from getting too far strung out.

Some parents described living above the fray and feeling comfortable sticking close to home. A mother who described her family members as "homebodies" observed:

I think that there probably are a lot of choices of things to do, but I at least, am not interested in a lot of them, so I don't see them as potential things to do....The sort of
like hurried child, get your child into everything that you can get them into so that they'll be prepared for Harvard at a very early age, that is something that I just don't buy into at all...And in terms of stuff for Jim [her husband] and me to do, I'd rather just stay home most of the time.

Reformed ("we used to be that way"). Similar to the resistant parents were those who said they previously had been caught up in an undesirable schedule and had changed their ways. Some had seen themselves unfavorably reflected in other families and had discussed what to do about the problem. Andy described how his family had changed:

We used to live in a pricy neighborhood for awhile and I can see our neighbors, some of them were the group that were [always] doing, they never stayed home. And it was never as a family. They never did anything as a family. She took Joey to the soccer camp and while he was at soccer camp, he took her to dance lessons, and then, you know, they ran this way and that way and it was just like constant. It was too busy....I do know that we purposely kept us from becoming too fast-paced.....and in the meantime the kids are just standing there like what am I doing next, Mommy, where am I supposed to be next?"
Andy's wife agreed that she also had wanted to slow down the pace:

I thought about when we were in Bridgewater, we were running all the time. And you had a calendar full of schedules for this one and that one and, really, we're much more relaxed than most of our peers. And we don't run a lot....but, yeah, when we go to a lot of activities we get too hectic. I think everyone gets overtired, angry.

I have cautiously classified the families according to their stated orientations to saturation. The 10 families fell into three groups: 1) resistant or reformed (5 families), 2) absorbent (three families, and two mothers), and 3) saturated (two fathers). Caution is necessary because such a classification seemed to work to a point, but in the saturated group, experiences of time use differed within couples. In these two families, men and women were split, with fathers tired and complaining about strained family schedules, while mothers were absorbing and managing. Also I did not want to assume that children would necessarily agree with parents' characterizations of the family, and I did not have enough data about children to comfortably classify them. For the remainder of the study when I refer to family types as resistant, reformed, absorbent or saturated I am referring to parents only, and to the ideals they create in the family as a whole.
Saturated fathers. Two fathers fit the concept of saturation in that they frequently felt time pressured and cut off from other family members. One father, Joe, told me his experience of non-work time use:

My general impression is of a lot of driving around because we live out here, as we do, a half hour from [the city] and because the kids' friends are not necessarily living close by and a lot of their activities are spread out. We tend to have to drive a great amount. It often seems as though the scheduling of leisure is just as challenging as scheduling work.

Joe expressed puzzlement as to why he felt time pressured because he considered himself to have a set of "happy circumstances" in that his wife was a full-time homemaker who focused exclusively on managing family life.

I think we are pretty fortunate in a lot of ways. One of which is the choice that Judy has as to whether she is to work full-time or not and we've sometimes been incredulous at the thought of what families do with single parents or if both parents are working, on the basis that we feel that we are hurried all the time as it is. [Later in the interview he said] We have a pretty happy set of circumstances here and so it takes more kind of steadied insight to see that there is just not enough time [to be
with my children].

Joe's wife took care to schedule the children's many after-school activities for weekdays so that he could be with them on the weekends. Even so, the couple thought that they had maybe one-half day of the weekend to relax and read the newspaper. Adding to the picture of saturation for Joe was his contention that the only time he experienced leisure was when he was in bed at night, just before sleep. While he expressed saturation, his wife was an absorber, even a reveler in her busy schedule, and felt overall very pleased with her time use. Her one source of dissatisfaction was that she wanted, and could not find, an interesting part-time job to do while the children were in school.

Neil, a second father whom I characterized as saturated, said that he felt time pressure because of his children's leisure schedule. He too, was a sole wage earner with a full-time homemaker wife. Neil made many comments about the differences between the way his own children were growing up as compared with his own childhood. He observed that kids today have less freedom to roam in neighborhoods, that they rely on adults for entertainment, and that parents are much more involved with their children today: "I think that there's more focus and scrutiny of children, and the children are given less freedom than when we were children". Neil also felt that his own leisure came second to that of his children:
Well, the way I look at it is the children have activities that they're interested in and we [the parents] fit our discretionary time to the children's activities. You know, yesterday was a perfect example. We got up and went to church and then we came home and we had one hour to sit around before the activities began. So we had lunch and then we watched the Redskins play for a half hour or 45 minutes. I took my daughter to a ballet trial from 2:00 to 3:30 and while she was there, I went to the golf course and hit golf balls for 45 minutes and came back and picked her up. And then my son was at a birthday party from 2:00 to 4:00 and I got home around 4:00. He was there about 4:10 and then he wanted to hit tennis balls. So I hit tennis balls with him from 4:30 to 6:15. And my wife in the meantime between taking him to the birthday party was at a soccer meeting planning for next year....She's not there because she's on the team, she's there because of her involvement in the children and the soccer team.

Neil felt that his two children were often stressed by too many leisure activities but he had been ineffective in changing things: "I guess my only position is that I complain at times. You know, I say it's too much and let's knock it off and everybody gets upset." What suffered, according to Neil, was his relationship with his wife: "I think if there's one thing, and I
enjoy spending time with my children, but I'd say the one area that lacks is I think probably my wife and I don't spend enough time for ourselves".

**Nostalgia and Changing Times**

A final way that parents talked about feeling saturated was in comparing the present to the past and noting the changes, both real and imagined, that they experienced or had heard about from their own parents. Participants reported that when both parents worked full time, it did not leave much time for family leisure. This woman, who had been resisting carrying a pager, or being linked to her workplace by home computer felt that even though her own parents had both worked, it was different now:

We spend, unfortunately, a lot less leisure time together than we did when I was growing up. It seemed like my mom and dad were always able to leave work and not think about it again until 8:00 the next morning when they went away. And I don't think Albert and I are like that. I think that work is constantly infringing on family and home time.

Part of the perceived shift in time use experienced in these families is that parents felt they had to be part of their children's leisure: taking them to events, waiting for them, and getting them home. This makes the adults' schedules fuller. One father complained:
I think there's just not a tremendous amount of sit around time where something is not, you know, [scheduled]. I think one of the big things that children today as opposed to when we were children was children today don't know how to be bored. When I was a child we had to entertain ourselves.

According to another parent, an added factor is suburban living which dictates that children must be driven everywhere rather than walking to activities or having all recreation resources under one roof, as this mother remembers:

I went to school in [the Northeast] and their athletic programs were far more advanced than schools in the South. So they had gymnasiums in the school. Of course, this was maybe years ago difference also. But the pool was in the school, the hockey field was outside. So, you know, we did everything in the school and if it was something that you really liked and you were interested in it, they you stayed after at the school and participated in the sport at the school.

A frequent observation made by parents was that neighborhood life was now different for families. Besides living in a community, they also held affiliations to other institutions that were not necessarily part of their neighborhoods, and each affiliation competed for time commitments from families. Parents felt they
had to choose where to place their energies, as this father observed:

The going in different directions, the fragmentation. It is so easy to get involved. We don't even want our church to have Wednesday night services because of it. You are going in too many directions. The kids often times, if they are going to a school like the Appleshed School, they live in a neighborhood and they go to church, then that is three different communities right there that they are confronted with. In the old days you had one community. You may go to a different church, but it was usually pretty close and you walked or drove from the country. But there weren't so many options and directions to go in....So, we just made the choice. We are not going to be running around and chasing ourselves all the time. Its just not healthy.

Perceptions of Technology

In Gergen's formulation of saturation, technology is largely to blame for fragmenting families. The families in this study did not often mention technology as part of the saturation experience. Although most of the families were sophisticated technologically, and many had home computers, only one dad said that it increased his leisure time. This dad was able to transmit his work to his office which saved him trips back to the city on the days when he could work at home. He was able to have
dinner with the family. A business executive said her boss wanted her to carry a pager and to be on line to her office by computer, but she had refused these impositions on her time at home:

    I have home access to my office. I can bring my computer in and dial into the mainframe at work and I refuse. And my boss will ask me, "Have you checked [your E-mail]?"....If it won't wait until tomorrow morning then there must be more to it than I can see. I just refuse to do that. I don't think technology is bad in that sense. I just think that we have a tendency to not focus on what's more important to us. And if that's the family then we need to keep that foremost in our minds and just say, no, I'm not gonna do it.

Focusing on the technology of electronic games, her husband commented on how the games absorb attention:

    You give somebody a Gameboy and all of a sudden you take one person out of your family. Give them a Gameboy and now there's one person with a Gameboy and there's everybody else.

Looking back on the interviews now, I think all the parents, and myself as well, ignored technologies that we now take for granted and which have become almost invisible to us. For instance, while many families talked about spending time driving
children to activities, listening to music only in their cars, and having special moments with children while on road trips, no one said that the car contributed to time pressures. While cars transport us quickly, they also invite us to expand our range of possibilities. In retrospect I observe that the logistics of carpooling and driving to activities contributed greatly to perceived saturation.

Most striking in terms of technology was the almost universal ban on television in these families. Eight of these families did not allow TV at all during the school week, and limited viewing to an hour or so of special programs on the weekend. Three families had no cable hook up and very poor reception, so in effect had no TV at all. In all families, children asked permission to watch TV and the particular programs were monitored by parents. Parents themselves did not watch much TV, and said they limited children's TV because they wanted children to engage in more desirable activities like reading, and because they objected to the content of network programs. But one father admitted that if there was a TV in the house "I would turn it on and watch it too much".

**Monitoring and Boundary-Making**

Besides relating experiences of saturation, participants also described certain strategies that they used to control time. These strategies reflect that parents felt the need to manage,
monitor, limit, and control a scarce resource. They also had to manage their own energies and those of children. The images and metaphors that respondents used indicated that time management was difficult and often involved warding off outside influences. No one actually used the term "saturation" but there was steady vigilance to avoid something very much like it. These are phrases used by parents to describe their experience: on a treadmill, under pressure, pulling away, juggling, fighting against, guarding against, running around, chasing around, driving around, strainer over my brain, fragmentation.

Every parent considered monitoring leisure time to be an important parenting job. Mothers often did background support jobs or calendar tending for the rest of the family, while fathers took responsibility for discrete activities that particularly interested them. For example, a father who loved music spent early mornings with his children supervising their violin and piano practice. Another dad, a former school athlete, coached his son's baseball team.

Parents, primarily mothers, managed time by monitoring, evaluating, limiting, consolidating, balancing, and streamlining activities. Mary explained how she and her husband keep track of the family:

Well, sometimes, he'll suggest something or he'll hear about something or someone's daughter at work is doing something and he'll say to me, "Doesn't that sound like a good idea?".

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And then I'm the one who will say, "Well, but we already have two things on Monday and three things on Tuesday and Wednesday is this". And I have to remind him that at a certain point there are just some things we just can't do.

Mary watched over the children for signs of fatigue:
I think when, the children were too tired, that's one thing. And that's something that I've noticed at certain times of the year, usually around Christmas time and around the end of the school year, or if we're working on a big project for school and you're just tired. Where you know, it's really hard to get them up in the morning and they fall asleep in the car and that sort of thing. That would send off a signal that we need to look at what we're doing. Or behavior problems, if I went to pick Kevin up from soccer and they said he was belligerent, or sat down the whole time or something that they weren't enjoying it and they were expressing that....I know one thing Meg was involved in for years was Scouts. And she really wanted to continue with it and we just could not, but she didn't want to give up anything else....I had started to notice that it was Scout night and, oh no, we're gonna have the tears that don't stop. I think she was nine, and as a nine year old, she didn't recognize it.
The previous examples of mothers’ monitoring boundaries may also serve to illustrate that children themselves, especially younger children, did not often set limits on activities. Parents told stories of children being irritable or tired but children themselves infrequently told parents directly what they needed. One 8 year old boy and one 8 year old girl were exceptions in that they told parents when they felt rushed or uncomfortable with particular events. These exceptions may have had to do with the child’s temperament, and with a family atmosphere that permitted voicing objections.

Sometimes the number of obligations that family members were trying to meet became unacceptable and that’s when parents (usually mothers) called a time-out for the family.

Saturday when we're supposed to be at choir practice or whatever, I may just say we're not going. I'll just take the time and just say we're not doing anything today. Just now and then I just have to slow down the pace.

Mothers also helped children to balance school and other activities. A mother and her daughter told how they try to avoid overload:

We've had discussions regarding homework, getting worn out, when you need a break, when you have to stay home and catch up on homework...or rest. Like yesterday, huh? It's not going to be something that wears you into the ground. There
still has to be an element of fun.

The daughter agreed with mom that she has to balance things for herself:

I've got a goal of making it to the Olympics some day, so if I really want to do it, then I put a lot of time and effort into it. But I mean, I really wanna make it there every day but some days it's just like I've got other things to do and I wanna be a kid while I can be a kid, so I spend some days just being a kid.

In order to conserve time most families clearly set limits and made rules about what members will and won't do. No phone calls during dinner, no overnights with friends on weekends, reserving weekend time for family, and certain nights for couple time only, were some rules used by families in the study. Parents acted as gatekeepers for their children by not putting all the leisure options on the table, and not allowing them to accept every invitation that they received, as this mom stated:

We end up almost limiting the time they can go out to see friends and go different places. Like for a while, Lyn would have been out every night on the weekends at different paces and we wouldn't have seen her so we cut her back to one night a week and one night on weekends. We pretty much try to keep them at home. Rick [their father] really likes to see them and he wants me to try to get all their activities
in during the week when he is at work. So, we make a point of sticking together on the weekends.

This same mother (who was not employed) said it was hard work to keep everyone together. "I wonder how other families hold it together if they don't have the leisure that I do to invest in just trying to keep everybody close and together."

One family responded to the pressure they felt to conform to their neighbors' busy schedules by switching from many diverse leisure activities to raising horses. Said the father,

When we lived in Louisville, Amy was involved in dancing, Cara was involved in dancing, Amy was a Girl Scout, Cara had a play group. We would kind of flitter all over the place. But once we got the horses, we pretty much decided that we didn't want to focus on... a little bit of this, a little bit of that.

Besides keeping close watch on boundaries, parents also tried to relieve pressure (from coaches, other parents, and merchants of leisure) on their children to commit to activities at an early age. One father told a story about getting a phone call from his crying eight year old son who was at a summer basketball camp:

Up until the day basketball camp started he was gonna go. He decided he wanted to bail after he was there for four hours.
I'm not gonna make my kid sit in basketball camp for a whole week and be miserable.... I mean we signed him up, paid 100 bucks and he was there for four hours and wanted to go home. Hey, he's eight years old, you know, come on.

Another way to relieve time pressure in this family was for one parent to have a flexible schedule. This dad went on to explain, later in the interview, that his ability to adjust his working hours prevented stress in the family, and that although he hadn't planned it that way, it helped enormously. "Everybody at the house would be a stress case if we both had 8 to 5 jobs".

Lowering standards, eliminating things that needed too much maintenance or streamlining responsibilities were other strategies used by parents. One woman said that she had given up keeping her house as clean as she ideally would like it. A dad vowed to simplify his life:

There's a lot of stuff at work and there's a lot of things to take care of here [at home], just maintenance things. There's a lot I would like to eliminate just materially from this home, to get rid of the chores, like having to clean it up and repair it. Like when you arrived I was trying to repair some cheap little toy of Crystal's that she broke.

A structural method of keeping out outside stimulation was that four families lived in out of the way areas, away from neighbors and far from work and school. Most acknowledged this
as a strategy to keep the outside away from the family at home. This strategy came with the consequence of families having to do more driving.

Ironically, many families were happy when they had a break from their leisure schedules. One child noted how relieved she was when there was empty space on the calendar: "It is kind of nice, you know, it's rarely ever that we get to come straight home from school. It's usually soccer, music lessons or whatever. It's kinda nice to come just straight home once in a while." Her father agreed, "We all certainly celebrate when we don't have any place to go or anything to do".

Supporting Ideologies

When parents recounted why they embraced or resisted the variety of choices before them, they revealed their beliefs about family life. At first, parents seemed unaware that their behaviors were based on certain beliefs or assumptions, but through the course of the interviews, their awareness increased. Within the 10 families, there was a continuum of how well belief systems were integrated into facets of daily life. Some parents had given extensive thought to how to dedicate time. For example, one mother had developed her own metaphor of having a "strainer over her brain" to explain how she filtered outside influences, and kept true to her beliefs about family life:

Probably Randall and I go back to our non-negotiables. So it
really gives us a structure to be able to--I look at it this way--with all these messages going into my brain: I should act like this, I should do this, I should take my kids here. And some of these messages I accept and some I reject. So, how are you going to know what you accept and what you reject? You have a standard and this is like having a strainer over the brain. You have to filter out some things.

Fathers in particular had opinions about the importance of being a family. One father put raising children first, "I would say the main controlling factors right now in our lives are the kids and what we need to do for them, what we think they need versus what we think we [the parents] need." Another father thought that it was important to avoid fragmentation,

There are families that go too many places that are pulled too many ways, I'm sure. But how long do they stay families?... For us, the family: that word, that concept, is the issue. We do things to maintain being a family. We don't get pulled too many directions so that we lose contact with each other.

Another dad, feeling inundated by his children's activities, expressed his frustration with trying to implement his priorities:
Well, we're supposed to, number one, be a family. And their [the children] number one job outside of the family is to produce in school in terms of getting a good learning experience and to exercise their potential so that they'll have a sound foundation when they grow up to be able to go out into the world and find their way. And that's our number one job above ballet and soccer and these other things. And I think that when any of these activities encroach upon that, I think that they need to be reevaluated and maybe cut back.

As a group, parents who were resistant to saturation shared an anti-hurried child ideology (Elkind, 1988) of rearing children. These parents were united in the belief that children need free time. A sampling of their comments:

I think that they will reach their potential through themselves without, you know, they don't need all this outside stuff coming into them. I think that they need parents who believe in them and want them to do what they want to do and don't rush them but give them time to do it. I think that they will be a lot more secure in themselves if they're allowed to go at their own rate. (from a mother of two)

I just think kids need a lot of down time....I don't mean that they're just sitting like duds. They're being imagina-
tive and creative and making up their own dance routines or making up their own play or that kind of thing. (from a father of two)

I realize that I have deeper stronger feelings about it since our interview than what I was aware of before. That I do feel actually very strongly that it would be to her detriment to organize all of her day except for her sleep time and keep her on the move from this to that. And actually not to give her the opportunity to learn what to do with her free time. (from a mother of one)

In contrast to the free spirit ideology was one absorbent couple who believed in a structured life for their children. Sam explained:

I believe an idle mind is the devil's playground and for kids to not have activities, structured activities, I think they'll tend to want to look at more TV and be influenced by that so I figure keeping them busy with things that help them grow, develop leadership skills and all that....The whole thing is to enrich their lives with something other than going to school and them coming home and playing, free play, you know?

For Sam, being creative comes from structured activities and boredom was to be avoided because "a bored kid with nothing to
interest them is a kid who can be misled. Part of teaching good leadership is to give them activities and keep them occupied."

Mira, Sam's wife, agreed that kids need steering away from:

Just too much idle time. Too much just coming home from school and not having anything to do but just sit in front of the TV or talk on the phone and beef, you know just hanging out with friends and just not having a direction.

Besides the ideologies dealing with more or less structure of children's time, families also had unique ways of organizing themselves around time. One dad described his family as "self-contained. We sort of provide our own structure and entertainment. We like each other. We like to spend time together." His daughter agreed that their family was exceptional:

Yeah, because nowadays most families really don't spend time with each other as much as they should. They mainly feel more about their work or what they like to do instead of their kids. Usually most of them only have like one or two children and we've got four, although there are some pretty big families. And like Chad [her brother] said we're a very athletic family. All of us have been involved in some type of sports during the past year.

One family had consciously decided to focus all their spare time on raising horses, not just as a hobby, but as a way of
organizing all of their discretionary time. As this father explained, raising horses afforded a way to pass on important values to his children:

There's a lot of life's lessons that can be taught with the horses and the farm. I shoot the woodchucks here. I'm not a hunter. I can't, I don't shoot deer or turkeys or anything else. I'll shoot the woodchucks. And Joanie will go out with me and we'll sit there and she'll point them out to me. But after I shoot them and if I hit them I always go out there and make sure they're dead. Because I do not believe in suffering and I can explain to Joanie that we do this because of the horses. Because they [the woodchucks] make holes [that the horses can fall into and break their legs]. So one of life's little things is that you don't let things suffer unnecessarily.

This father also thought that horses had helped each of his daughters to grow in a different way. One daughter was reckless while her sister was overly cautious, and the horses helped each to develop more fully.

For Joanie, it helped her try more things. Once she found out she could control a horse, it was [great]...because she's so timid and it was such a big leap even to get her to try. Because once she got on it was like, well, I don't want to go fast. And Rose on the other hand, the first time you put her on the horse she was kicking it and trying to
get it to go as fast as she can. So Rosie slowed down and Joanie speeded up.

Summary

Saturation was recognizable to most family members. Parents had four different orientations toward saturation. One group was absorbent, that is, they enjoyed being busy, or found it stimulating and challenging, or denied feeling pressured by a heavy schedule. A second group (resistant) actively avoided pressures to take part in organized events outside of work or school. Closely related to the resistant group were the reformed parents who had observed saturation in others, and had made active, deliberate decisions to curb their own schedules. The persons who defined their experience as saturated were two fathers, both breadwinners with homemaker wives.

A common way that parents related to saturation was by making comparisons between what they remembered or assumed to be true about the past and their current experiences. Parents were nostalgic about family life in the past having been simpler, more intimate, and less pressured, even though researchers like Coontz (1992) assert that this was rarely the case. While parents appreciated the variety of choices they had before them, they also felt it was difficult to make choices about the best way to use time.

Despite Gergen's contention that modern technologies are a
conspicuous for its absence in these families. Most parents did not think that technology contributed to their sense of time pressure, and one man mentioned that use of a computer gave him more time at home. Most families had computers which they used for writing, or educational purposes, but computer games were infrequent. Most families had strict rules about television use, usually limiting it to weekends, or vacation, and some families had no cable access at all.

Leisure time use was closely monitored, usually by mothers, who kept track of family scheduling, observed children for signs of overload, and made adjustments accordingly. Some families also had well developed ideologies which they used to guide their decisions about time use.

Leisure and Bonding

In this section I answer research question #2: In what ways do family members associate leisure with bonding? I asked each parent to define bonding and also to describe how it occurred in their family. I also asked parents, "What is leisure time for you?"

In Table 3 are summarized the answers that parents gave to define family bonding. Parents gave more than one answer, and I noted no differences in definitions given by men as compared to women, with the exception of several fathers who felt that bonding took place even in their absence.
<table>
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<td>Parents' Definitions of Family Bonding</td>
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- doing and enjoying things together
- spending time together
- sharing experiences
- security, routine, continuity
- sharing values
- showing affection
- shared intimacy
- caring for children
- connection
- emotional ties
- feeling part of a whole
- psychological bond or base
- understanding each other
- being concerned for each other
- helping each other
- knowing about each other
- open, honest interactions
- mutual trust
- mutual respect
- irrational love for your children
Some parents focused on temporal aspects of bonding, and specifically defined bonding in terms of time, as these excerpts illustrate:

spending time together, just sharing, talking, not necessarily in an authority parent/child relationship but in a relaxed way.

I guess [I] just enjoy being together. I don't think it can happen without: one, a conscious effort and without the demonstration of doing things together, and three without time.

More often parents defined bonding in personal terms which seemed to have special meanings for them. For example, one father felt that being in his family had taught him to "come to grips with problems and expressing them to other people". He defined bonding by contrasting his wife's demonstrativeness with his own difficulty in showing affection:

It's [bonding is] an understanding of each other's feelings and a personal closeness. I think that I come from a non-huggy, feely, touchy family, a family of cold fish. And my wife's family is more touchy huggy feely type person you know. Just the way we were raised, I don't think there's any difference in the sense of feeling about one another; it's just she comes from a more tactile environment than I
do, and is better able to express feelings than I am.

This mother of a 9 and 6 year old, thought bonding was about being safe enough to tell each other the truth:
Number one true bonding would be to be able to communicate and discuss anything, any event, openly and honestly. And that's one of the things I try to stress to my children, that if they've done something or said something, that I'd rather them tell me than to lie about it or deny it.

A mother who was at home full-time and acted as the family "switchboard" said this about bonding:
To me it means that everybody remains connected to the others and they know what each member is doing and they continue to talk about the other person's activities or concerns. Jay is constantly helping and advising me on all my [volunteer work]. I tell him every little thing that happens and he either tells me what to do or helps me do it. Likewise, I don't know if I am as helpful to him in his work, but I also ask and I interfere and I comment. It's the same with the kids....I think it is just knowing what is going on and being concerned and helping each other out with their lives.

As parents talked about bonds, they frequently discussed
boundaries in their families. Some parents made reference to different kinds of bonds, such as bonds between parent and child, or parent to parent, or child to child. This woman expressed her concept of bonds reaching beyond her immediate family:

I actually probably have a fairly broad definition of bonding because I have a fairly broad definition of family...I think that family can be more loosely defined than parents and children. My own family that I grew up in, we had this sort of running joke that there are honorary Jacksons.

One father discussed boundaries in terms of the protectiveness he felt toward his daughter:

I think it's very important to be protective but not over-protective of Crystal. Mostly, I'm interested in her physical well-being, safety and her psychological and spiritual well-being. And I already find myself thinking about how to protect her from stuff that she'll be running into years from now. You know, automobile safety, sexual discretion or indiscretion, like STD's or pregnancy type issues. I find myself thinking about college....I feel protective of her constantly, but I do it in a way that I try to keep as discreet as possible so that I don't smother her in a bubble of protection.
This mother had a visual metaphor for how she experienced bonding in her family:

I think the bond that is there needs to be both strong and elastic. I think that the bond can also serve as a base from which to go. From having that confidence, the girls knowing that Joe and I are there for them, Joe knowing that I'm there for him, me knowing that he's there for me, allows us more freedom to mess up. Because I know that if I mess up big-time, it's not going to matter to him. That won't change his perception of me and his feelings for me.... And the girls know that too.

A father of two children spoke of the importance of not overstepping the boundary between child and parent:

I think bonding is that issue of loving your kids and your wife like you wouldn't love anyone else. Like, I could bond with the staff here [at work] but it is not the same kind of bonding. I don't want my bonding to cross boundaries with my children. In other words, I don't want my bonding to be so tied to them that they don't have their own identity or their own thinking.

Not everyone, however, liked the term "bonding". One mother objected to bonding as a way to describe her experience. She associated bonding with self-indulgence and focus on personal
gratification: "I prefer words of love, caring for, respect, giving, that focus on my responsibility, not the feelings I must receive from an experience." This woman held definitions of bonding that were similar to other participants, but her objection was to what she perceived as a current self-centered orientation to the term.

**Processes in Bonding**

Further information about how parents experienced bonding was demonstrated when they described how bonding occurred in their families. Several fathers talked about the origin of their feelings saying that bonding began when they learned of their wife's pregnancy or when a child was born or when they began hands-on care of their first child.

This dad's words captured many different aspects of his bonding experience, including an ability to express anger in close relationships.

We are a physical family. We hug and kiss and there's verbal bonding through, you know, very intimate whispering kind of conversations. There's screaming, yelling in your face bonding...[and a lot of] helping each other out, getting a cup of coffee for one another and doing the laundry that needs to be done, dragging the laundry down to the basement. Those things, I think, contribute to bonding, to building an emotional connection.
Many of the families credited reading together every evening as a bonding experience: "At night when we're reading, right before we go to bed, that's when I feel the closest. We lay down in bed together and read and that's very special". Family members read aloud to each other, dividing long stories into installments that carried over from night to night. One mother described how reading stories by Laura Ingalls Wilder wove a thread throughout the week:

I said to the kids "Guys, guess what I got at the library?" and they say, "What is it?" "Well, I found a picture of Laura Ingalls Wilder when she was a girl." "Oh, I can't wait, save it for dinner." See this is exciting. It is something that we share together and it bonds us. And then dinner comes around and we are all looking at that picture together and we share that and it doesn't take a lot of money....So [the reading] and family dinners are times when we are together and we are talking and we are treating each other as persons and not machines. It is very important.

Bonding took place under the most ordinary circumstances, like driving in a car, or having dinner. It happened at both planned and unplanned occasions, and, and as some fathers explained, when family members were not altogether:

It sometimes occurs best in a less formal or planned activity. So in that respect our quality time might actually be
time that afterwards you couldn't define necessarily in terms of an activity....I sometimes feel a sense of bonding more when the kids are separated than we are all together as a family. For example when I, on occasion, go with one child and I will be taking her somewhere, and she will sit in the front seat and we'll talk, I feel a much better sense of bonding than sometimes when we are all together. Then the kids will typically interact more among themselves rather than with us....I have been taking the kids sort of one at a time [to the symphony] and it is really kind of fun because they see it as some kind of date or something fun and we talk about stuff.

The following father felt bonding occurred all the time even in the absence of being physically together.

It occurs even when we're not together. I don't think we separate it into little time slots of the day...I think it's actually a continuous process ...their knowing that their father and mother are there, somewhere, thinking about them. The security they have knowing the routine, the continuity of what they expect from us, we're loving parents who will be there. I think bonding is taking place all the time.

According to this father, bonding did not need a special event or effort to occur, nor did an activity have to be a family
event:

I don't think it's something where it's set out to do. It's something that should naturally happen by itself, us being social creatures and primates and all that good stuff. And I think it's very important to have a cohesive group of people that love each other that make up a family and that do things together or do nothing together... I could be doing something in the study inside, and Joan can be doing her landscaping out there and Brenda could be just bouncing off the walls having fun spontaneously, there's a certain bonding that goes on with that, even though we're in three different rooms.

A few parents mentioned taking trips or vacations with children. Two fathers said that it had been a privilege to take their children on their first ski trip. One mom mentioned taking her four children on day trips, and children remembered beach vacations fondly. Overall, however, formal vacations were not often cited as special bonding time.

Some families invented their own forms of play:

What do we do to bond? We have snuggle time. Jason will say, come on everybody lets snuggle. And we all get on the bed and we just kind of sit and chit chat about what we're gonna do during the day. And then Keri is the big instigator once she found out the name of this. Its called Beat
Up, and we all get on the bed and we rough and tumble and we tussle until somebody actually gets hurt. [getting poked with an elbow or falling off the bed]

Leisure

Table 4 lists the responses that parents gave to the question "What do you consider to be leisure for you?" Only a few of the activities were done with children. Most leisure was solitary or done with adults. While reading was named as a family bonding event, when parents identified leisure reading, it was done alone, and most often before bedtime.

Men's and women's leisure was listed separately to illustrate differences. Women's leisure was more often done at home and described as the absence of chores or obligations to others. Women, except for those who were unemployed, spoke of leisure as rare or short-lived, and often interrupted. One mother who loved reading above all else said that she could only do this when she had everyone else occupied, and even then she expected frequent interruptions. In contrast to women, men had leisure activities that took them from home, often for long periods, and their leisure was more predictable and regular (like weekly golf).

One man and one woman from two different families expressed an exceptional attitude about leisure by saying that "everything" they did was leisure. A full time employed father said that he
<table>
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<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<tr>
<td>computer games with kids</td>
<td>art with daughter</td>
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<tr>
<td>plays music with son</td>
<td>swim with kids</td>
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<tr>
<td>whatever is required for family</td>
<td>hiking with family</td>
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<tr>
<td>remodeling the house</td>
<td>day trips with kids</td>
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<td>mascot for baseball team</td>
<td>sitting on porch</td>
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<td>Deadhead</td>
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<td>tinker with cars</td>
<td>nowhere to be</td>
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<td>lunchtime</td>
<td>housework done</td>
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<td>play with dogs</td>
<td>hot bath</td>
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was very excited about his work and most everything at home as well:

I don't know that there's anything I've ever run across that was drudgery. So I can't tell you one thing is leisure. I truthfully don't like doing dishes. But I can go outside and play with Sally and Rita. While that's leisurely, it's also leisurely going to work.

A full-time female homemaker told me:

I see mine as basically all leisure time [because] it's all things I like and choose to do. I mean I go down to the school and I help out there and know all my friends and xerox or something, but that's really leisure time. Volunteer meetings are about the only thing I don't consider leisurely. But all the stuff with the kids...on vacation and my life here [at home] is just the same.

**Summary: Associations between Bonding and Leisure**

Parents associated bonding with spending time with their families, but not necessarily with leisure time. Bonding took place in the tasks of everyday life and under the most ordinary of circumstances. The events that parents described as bonding were most often part of the daily work of life, like doing chores, or preparing a meal. Parents most frequently related bonding to the emotional work of being part of a family, like keeping each other informed, doing things for each other, build-
ing trust, showing affection, and caring for children.

While bonding did require time, it was not the same time that these parents defined as leisure. Parents primarily saw leisure as an event in which they were not responsible for anyone else. In contrast, bonding required responsibility and attentiveness, which, while enjoyable and fulfilling, was not termed as leisure by most of the parents in this study.

**Complexities**

Research question #3 was: How do gender and generation influence family members experiences of saturation, bonding and leisure? Partial answers to this question have been addressed in the previous two sections of this chapter, and are summarized here: Both mothers, fathers, sons and daughters were familiar with saturation during leisure time. Two full-time working fathers were the only adults who identified themselves as regularly time stressed. Mothers were the primary monitors of saturation by keeping family calendars and watching children for signs of fatigue and dealing with them when their schedules needed adjusting.

Regarding bonding, while both mothers and fathers used similar terms to define bonding, fathers, and not mothers, said that bonding took place in their absence. Also some fathers stated that bonding began when they learned about a pregnancy, or at birth when they realized the responsibility of being a parent.
Finally, many mothers and fathers read to their children as a nightly bonding ritual.

There were differences in how men and women described their leisure, with men doing things that took them from home, and women noting the absence of responsibility as leisure, as opposed to naming a specific leisure activity.

Additional answers to research question #3 emerged from the interview data.

**Employment Status: Ideal vs. Actual**

I was surprised to discover how prominently employment figured into the interviews about non-work time use. I had to stop during the analysis to read my journal memos to trace how the theme about work had evolved. I found that during the individual interview part of the study when I asked how family members generally use their time away from work and school, three different women said that they had left paid employment in order to stay home and manage their families. The decision to quit their jobs had been difficult to make, continued to be an issue of concern, and seemed more salient to these three women than what they did with leisure time. After talking with these women, I decided to use the second interview to explore decisions about employment with each couple. I asked adults to tell me about their discussions and decisions regarding who worked full-time, part-time, or not at all. I also asked couples to state their ideal work/leisure arrangement and what obstacles they saw
between their actual vs. ideal situation. Table 5 summarizes participants' answers.

First of all it was difficult for many couples to grasp the concept of choice regarding employment. Participants had to be coaxed into using their imagination to choose the ideal working arrangement. In addition, it was hard for some participants to give simple answers to the question: "Do you work full time, part-time, or not at all?" There was no quick way to condense their experiences into a table. A narrative, not an abbreviation, was needed to tell the story contained in each cell of the table. Also each couple reshaped and interpreted the questions that I asked. For example, couple # 8 assumed that "ideal" meant that they'd have income from some outside source and so would not have to be employed at all. The "ideal" for this husband was to quit his present job: "I would get a bigger farm and probably work twice as hard". His wife told me that she also would not be employed, but would spend her time volunteering at her children's school.

Answers in Table 5 reflect participants' constructions of the meaning of ideal employment arrangements. It was in exploring the fluidity and the obstacles to ideal time use that the influence of gender became apparent. Although most adults preferred paid employment (part-time or full-time) to no job at all, only women in this study had been unemployed for any significant amount of time, and these women had quit their jobs in
Table 5

Parents' Ideal Employment Arrangements

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Note. FT = full-time, PT = part-time, UNEMP = unemployed.

* These men lost jobs during the study.
order to have more time to manage their families.

For example the women in families #3 and #5 had quit their jobs within a few weeks of being interviewed. They had done so as a solution to the time stress they had experienced. One woman said,

This past year, I tried working full time and it depleted our family...and that sort of validated the amount of management that running a family involved and it's very, very hard. Management is extraordinarily difficult. I call it air traffic control.

In family #5, this woman had quit her part time job to escape "the busyness" of being a mother and a physical therapist and because she wasn't satisfied with any of the available childcare arrangements she could find.

A third full-time homemaker's story illustrates the complexity and temporary nature of employment that was typical for some women:

It [sharing jobs and childcare] started very, very even and regimented in Cincinnati when we had Lacy. I was working as a stockbroker then and we [my husband and I] would take turns three mornings a week one week, and three mornings a week for the other person the other week, we'd go into work at 5 a.m. and we'd be back at 3 p.m., and that person would take care of Lacy and cook dinner. We did that for two and
half years or so. And then once Holly came along it just didn't seem like enough time. You know, just the afternoons with the kids wasn't enough time to spend time with two children just to see them from 3:00 until they went to bed. So I guess I went back to part time at that point [after we had a third baby]... I just got to like being at home and I couldn't see how to do it with three children without being home.

**Obstacles to ideal employment arrangements.** In this group of 20 parents, 12 said that given a choice, they'd prefer part-time work to no work at all or to full-time employment. Five of the fathers and one mother opted to continue working full-time, and only six adults had a match between their ideal and actual amount of employment. The obstacles that were cited to account for the lack of match were inability to find part-time work, and a related issue, the inflexibility of workplace culture, and for some, financial issues.

This unemployed woman was trying to find a way back into the workplace, but felt blocked by her husband's needs and her own wishes regarding how she wanted to raise her children:

I taught health education classes but it just got to the point where the only thing I really had available to me were nights... I was really enjoying it. It was probably the best thing I did throughout my career... and I had done a lot
of different things, but it's just Mario is a physician and
with his schedule and meetings and time away from home I
just couldn't give up the carpooling and all that sort of
thing to somebody else, and so I just finally told them, I
said it's just not working out....[Recently] I said to
Mario, well, maybe I should look further into the healthcare
field. And he said, Carol, you know, it just isn't gonna
work. Meaning it's not gonna work for him.
She felt that her husband could not or would not make changes in
his schedule to enable her to work.

Both men and women felt constrained by pressures to conform
to workplace culture. A physician/nurse couple entertained the
idea of either switching breadwinner roles or of each going part
time, so that dad could have more time at home and mom could have
an interesting job, but as the physician husband said, "it would
be hard for me to cut back my work in half and it would be hard
for her to do work that would make up the income".

This woman explained why she and her husband do not each
have part time work:

I think the job market isn't really designed that way, I
don't think there really are as interesting part time jobs.
And I think in Albert's case it's the expectations that
would just be frowned upon to go home and spend time with
the family. Somehow it doesn't count.

Her husband talked further about the expectations of the work-
place. He himself felt compelled to be at the workplace during the regular work day in order to build associations with co-workers, and he too acknowledged that there is a culture that frowns on family coming before work, especially for men.

I was kind of interested by the reaction of people at work when somebody was being considered for a management job and he really wanted the job, but he said he had to be home at a certain time every night. And the reaction that I picked up on was, jeez, he can't be inflexible and be in the kind of position that we're considering him for, and that his priorities conflicted with the flows of the workplace.

Another couple entertained the idea of switching breadwinner and homemaker roles, but have never been able to do it, as Carl explains:

The first year [that we had children] Alice wasn't anymore comfortable with the kids than I was. I mean, I could easily have stayed home. Granted, some of it [why I didn't stay home] was expectations in terms of the mom's expected to stay home, and it was easy just to fall into that pattern....and after talking to the pediatrician you were convinced that you should breast feed, although you didn't really care much about doing that. It was a whole bunch of little decisions that kind of bring you to a big decision. Carl's wife, Alice stayed home with children while Carl
built his career. She continued to try to switch roles: I think it was probably a couple of years ago when the kids were out of the baby stage and I thought, I love work and excitement and people and I could just go and go and go and he's the very child oriented, very nurturing, did they get their naps, did they get their vaccinations, and is the blood sugar low?...And I used to think, well, he can stay home and I should work. But it just never happened, the opportunities, the doors were never opened. And it was too much of a hassle to try to make them open.

Half of the fathers in the study preferred to continue working full-time even if money were not an issue. In one couple, a wife told her husband it was because "you have that male, gotta take care of the family mentality which is why your career will always be more important". Another father said, "Even if I hit the lottery, I don't think I'd quit my job. I think I'd work just as intensely. I guess I enjoy being responsible for getting things done; I'd still want to accomplish something".

Dad #10 said that he'd also work even if his wife could earn enough for the family:

I've gotta get up and go to work and I mean even if they're not paying me, I've gotta get up and go to work. I feel that that's just what I should do. I'm an adult male that
has a family and I should go to work.

Women do the Work of Leisure.

Whether they worked full-time, part-time, or not at all, women were primarily in charge of managing leisure time for the family. Fathers would sometimes provide transportation for children's activities, usually at the request of mothers. Fathers also engaged in spontaneous at home play with their children or in the case of at-home mothers, would take children on outings to give mom time to herself, but mothers were directing most of the action.

In this family, both husband and wife worked full time; the woman was also in charge of both arranging vacations and taking care of all home-based activities. Referring to her husband, she explains:

He is exactly like he said. He is very detail oriented and very crisis, take charge of everything at work. But he's definitely not that way at home. Home is me....and at home it's almost like he completely switches and doesn't do anything unless I tell him what to do. I mean very seldom [does he] take on something unless I'm bitching about it getting done. [He] would go out and play.

Here is a husband also from a dual-earner couple:

Jean usually makes a suggestion [about an event or activity]
and if it sounds good, I'll say, fine, set it up....Once in a while I may have an idea of something and we'll follow through on it, but she usually spearheads anything like that.

Another man talked about his wife who worked part-time:
There aren't very many recreational things that I initiate. Emma tends to initiate a lot of stuff. I think, you know, for almost 17 years, Emma has come up with the inspiration for something. I may have come up with a general desire or inspiration to do something, and Emma will often map out all the specifics of it...Like if we were gonna take a hiking trip...I would sort of suggest we do some hiking and bicycling or whatever the activity is, and she would tend to look through maps and find a place and initiate the actual packing up things and going. She's done that for a lot of our vacations too. Years ago I thought, wow, it would be neat to go to Africa and she's the one that got the plane tickets and reservations and figured out where we'd go.

Regarding their child, he continues "When our daughter has interests and specific things, then we will pursue it, meaning Emma does most of the foot work and phone work."

As I have reported previously, unemployed women said they
had quit work to better organize and facilitate family activities which become, in effect, the job to which they devote themselves:

Researcher: How much of that do you think your husband shares with you?

Linda: Very little. We have had the discussion that at least from my perspective, it's very one-sided, and of course, I'm the one that's doing it so it's easy for me to say that and maybe that's not the case...but I do the bulk. Now, you know, I sat down and talked to him about the [ballet] school is not working for Tara [daughter] and I was concerned about it. But I pretty much make the decisions about those things.

Another at-home mother is described by her husband:

I'd say that she guides more than I do, the decisions we make as to how we spend our time outside of work or school and typically she might call me at work and ask me to look at my calendar at work or she will say, "We have season tickets to the theater. Would you want to go on such-and such a day?" And I will say "Well, that looks good on my calendar." We kind of compare calendars. But more often than not if somebody is planning some kind of activity during our leisure hours then that person deals with Mindy.

An exception to women as leisure organizers was one dual-
earner family, it which it was the dad who frequently took charge of child care. In contrast to the women's descriptions of their duties, this dad had a playful, lighter tone as he described time with his children and their friends:

We spend a lot of time outside just banging around, playing basketball with the kids. I mean I spend an awful lot of time, really, entertaining the kids or neighborhood kids or doing things that really are related to keeping the kids busy. Go out to the mall, go out to eat... In the winter time, the kids and I we try to usually go on a ski trip.... And I am more active [than my wife] in doing things with the school or the kids's Scouts or doing things like that.

**Personality and Personal Traits that Influence Time Use**

Parents and children described themselves and each other as having certain personal traits that dictated their use of discretionary time. Examples include having an attention deficit, having medical problems, being "horse-crazy", a loner, a homebody, a goer and doer, and an introvert.

In this dual earner family, the mom regarded her own need for stimulation as the reason for the hectic pace of their lives:

I definitely don't want it to be faster. Sometimes I want it to be slower and then I think for me sometimes I get bored easily. So I think that's one of the reasons we do so many different things.
This mother described her family as a group of "homebodies," in particular, her husband, who had no need for socialization outside the family. She often socialized on her own:

I have a group of friends and we go out once a month. We have a mom’s night out and that was something that evolved out of a play group that we had and I probably am more outgoing and social than Joe is and that once a month thing meets a lot of those needs that I have that he doesn't. He doesn't have those needs and he is not as gregarious and social, so he doesn't understand.

Another woman asserted that her husband's being a "loner and a hermit" was why the family decided to become a horse and farm family and give up all their other activities. In the family interview, I asked this family how they had made the decision. Taylor, age 11, said that it was really her wild-about-horses sister who pushed the choice: "Elizabeth is the one that really made the decision. She said, "I want horses!"

This mom in her individual interview said that she and her husband were very different in what they liked to do with free time:

Alan is a goer and a doer and let's go, very activity oriented, and I'm more of an observer and let's go see this or go to the museum or that kind of thing. Or let's do
something at home together. I'm more of a homebody because I'm gone so much during the week...I'm the cranky one in the family, so usually if anybody vetoes what's going on, I do it.

I brought her comment to the family interview:

Researcher: I wanted to ask the family about something that mom said about herself and see if you had the same perception. Mom, one of the things that you said about yourself in your interview was that you saw yourself as a restful kind of person.

Son: Yeah, she is.

Mom: Well, and not the active one. I'm not the one who wants to do this or is constantly saying let's go do this or let's go do that. I'm the one who stays here and likes to sit and read.

Daughter: And never takes showers and stuff like that.

Mom: Take baths.

Researcher: What do you think about that dad?

Dad: Oh, absolutely. Can't blow her off the couch somedays. Sonya is much more content to sit here and read the paper in the morning and spend hours doing that when the rest of us are ready to get up and go. I mean, I can go outside and play with Cindy and Tom and when I get Sonya outside with me to do stuff, its almost a...[miracle]

Son: She mainly just watches.
Many parents noted that their children had certain preferences and needs regarding free time use. These parents gave evidence of watching their children carefully, and noting differences among them.

One mom whose daughter had not shown any interest in organized activities said:

Back when she was taking karate classes and swim classes at the same time, it was an hour of karate class two or three times a week, a half hour of swim class once a week, and then school.... She would sometimes say, "Mom I just really need some time to myself. Can I go home and just be by myself?" And I think that she really enjoyed having that time on her own and I've noticed as she's gotten older that now that we have a teenager who is living with us now during the week, and when Sandy is here, I notice that Crystal will go up to her room and will close the door, or close the door of whatever room she's in and will admit that she doesn't feel as comfortable with the door open. That it's not as private. So I think privacy is a big issue for her.

This father explains the differences in his two daughters in terms of their need for guidance in time use.

Raising Mary and Maggie, they're so different. If I looked at Mary cross-eyed because she did something wrong, she'd never do it again. And Maggie, we changed her name to
Maggie-Maggie-Maggie just to get her attention. She's a sweet kid and she can get into trouble easy. I just can't think of enough things to tell her not to do...I think she's very intelligent, but she can scatter herself in a million places....Mary will always be mom's girl, Maggie will always be looking for what's in the next bottle [so we need to help her choose what to get involved in].

**Conflicts, Tensions, Struggles**

Overall, there was a great deal of expressed affection in all of the families. Each home was a pleasure for me to visit because family members treated each other with kindness and respect and wanted to be involved with each other and to take part as a family in the research. There were also, however, areas of conflict among family members. At times, children and parents, husbands and wives, disagreed with each other, and children were competitive for parents' attention.

In some families, children, to their parents' chagrin, said that they liked TV and from my vantage point as an uninvolved adult, these disputes were very amusing:

**Researcher:** Well, I'm interested in how you don't have a TV, and who made that decision.

**Daughter:** All of us [made the decision] except me.
And from another family interview:

Researcher: One of the things that dad said about the family was "We are not really TV or movie people". He said "we" meaning all four of you. What would the rest of you say about that?
Daisy: I like to watch TV.

Mom: Daisy, think about what you like to do. How much of your day or of your week do you really spend watching TV?
Daisy: Well, sometimes when you're on the phone, because I have an hour [that I'm allowed to watch TV] I go overtime because I know you're on the phone and you won't be able to talk to me.

In another family, the parents' view of idle time as the devil's playground conflicted with their son's desire for free play:

The only thing we've been thinking of and just haven't been able to work out was music lessons for Zach. But a number of the things that he is involved in he's real excited about for a while and then at other times we have to make him go to practice. You know, he really does love his free time....Saturday, he had a soccer game and I had to go find him down the street to come and get ready for the soccer game. Once he gets there he enjoys it but he hates to go because he wants to have fun, you know, in the neigh-
borhood or something.

Even in families where mothers were full time family managers, there were struggles about how to use leisure time. In one such family, parents appeared to struggle not only with each other but also against a seeming external pressure to plan every free minute. Mom arranged many activities for the children and dad objected to the kids' busy schedule. He and his wife "but heads" on the issue. He wanted his wife to cut back on the scheduling, so she suggested staying home in pajamas on a Saturday morning with a pot of coffee. Dad said "I think that I wouldn't mind that. But when I see some [time] window like that where [I] could fill it, you know, [I'll] plan something". Mom replied "That's kind of the way I see our family operating nowadays. There's just not much [downtime]."

Some parents admitted that they sometimes felt disappointed or frustrated with family time. For example, one mom talked about the gap between idealized visions of family leisure and her own experience of playing board games with the children:

I always thought, I guess looking at commercials or whatever or just reading articles in magazines, sitting around playing board games with your children...that would be the way [to have special family time]. It just looked like so much fun. But when we actually do that, it's like, oh when is this game gonna be over. They're gonna argue with each
other, and Monopoly and Clue, they just go on and on and on and you feel like, whew.

This dad had the feeling that often his efforts to provide leisure went unappreciated by his children. Here, he describes a weekend day where he gave mom a break and took over the children's schedule and tried to have "family time":

Oh, I laid them out yesterday. I got up went to a soccer game at 9:00, came home and then we went to swimming from 11:00 to 12:00, and while he was swimming, I was doing Jenny's extra credit French with her. And then I figured doing her extra credit French, I'd take them to the French place for lunch. And we went there and had a big time, a big French discussion. And then I took them to play putt-putt and we played 36 holes of putt-putt and about half way through it they were at each others throats. I gave them a lecture. I said, look, you should encourage each other, not fight against each other. Don't laugh when one misses a shot. And then finally-BONG-that was it. I brought them home and they were arguing in the car. I said, hey, this it. I was gonna put them both in their rooms for the rest of the day, and then I come home and you'd forgot about the birthday party they were supposed to go to.

Some children were competitive for parents' attention, as
well as protective of the relative status they felt they occupied in the family compared with their siblings. In a family with four children, a 12 year old girl explained about her younger siblings:

Briah gets mad when it comes to competition season because she thinks she has no time with her mom and I get mom all to myself, but I'm usually at the [studio] a lot, so I don't get to see much of my family. I mean I see more of them than most of the kids today, but I mean I see less than I would like to see of my family and Briah gets all mad when I just get to go with mom. And Seth always tries to learn new skills so he can be just as good or better than me....He wants to start up [karate] classes and, I don't know. Maybe it will work out, but I don't think it will. He's already got piano better than me and soccer better than me, so I don't know why he needs karate to be better than me.

Gender Influences on Time Use

This section presents further analysis of gender in the discretionary time use experiences of these families. Four of the ten families fell into the "standard family" category (Cheal, 1991) of breadwinner father and unemployed mother. Therefore, I was able to compare experiences in standard family to families with different structures. The families fell into three categories:
Group 1: four families with a breadwinner father, and homemaker mother (standard, traditional, or benchmark family)
Group 2: four families with each parent working full-time
Group 3: two families in which the men worked full-time and the women worked part-time.

**Standard families.** Being standard was a temporary categorization for these families. The couples in this group had tried many different arrangements (in that women went in and out of the job market); they happened to be "standard" during the time of this study. Also being standard was not their preferred model. All of the women in this group wanted to trade their leisure hours for part-time employment. As this woman explained, mothers felt frustrated because they couldn't find part-time work that would be interesting and also not interfere with the work of managing their families.

I hate to have ended up so traditionally. But it's what works, you know. It really is what seems to work the best from what I've seen our different phases of life. Me working part-time is even better, but that's pretty traditional too. I don't know. Means there's something to the traditional way of doing it or we just don't even see that we've fallen into it for some reason other than it makes sense.

As a substitute for the stimulation of paid employment, the previous participant did extensive volunteer work. She found it
ironic that volunteer meetings were held in the evening, taking her away from home twice a week during the time she considered important to be with her family.

Contrary to expectations about roles in standard families, I found less stereotyped gender behavior and beliefs about time use in the standard families than in the other two groups. Two couples said that they could and would trade the role of primary wage earner, or they would each work part-time, if the women had earning power equal to the men.

Being in a standard family did not protect family members from feeling stressed by time pressures. Two of the husbands, despite having wives who were full time family managers, felt saturated. I asked one man about his experience of leisure:

Researcher: What do you consider to be leisure time for you?

Wife: (talking to her husband) I can answer that for you. Going to sleep. I mean that is your only leisure time is at night. Watching TV and trying to sleep. And then the weekends probably we get half a day of the weekend when we just sit around the house and read the newspaper or something.

Husband: I don't know. I agree with Carol that both of us don't really have a sensation of leisure until we get into bed.

In another standard family, husband and wife had an ongoing
disagreement about the children's number of activities. Dad thought the children were involved in too many activities, but he had been unsuccessful in persuading his wife or his children to change things: "I just think that things are a little too programmed and too busy, but I don't know how to control it other than to lay down the law and make everybody unhappy."

Dual-earner families. In this group of families there were many traditional gender beliefs and expectations. One couple had organized themselves into inside and outside roles.

Researcher: I wanted to ask you what your thoughts were about how gender influences how you spend your time, meaning being a male or a female, how that might influence what you do with your time.

Mike: A whole lot I think. And mostly, it may sound sexist, but if there's a big, nasty dirty job outside or a dangerous one, I get to do it and if it's house cleaning, she gets to do it....For the most part I'd say my only two inside jobs are doing floors which is on command. I don't do them on volunteer, but I usually do the dishes.

Susan: But I'll drive the tractor, I'll pick up hay, I'll put fence up with you. I'll build the barn. But you won't wallpaper, you don't like to paint. You won't remember to clean unless I ask for help....It's like I go intergender or whatever that word would be, but you don't for the most
Another family thought it was "natural" that women did all the household work. This is an excerpt from the family interview:

Researcher: In talking with all of you it looked like mom did all the cooking and the housework and the laundry. And she also packs the lunches and gets the bags ready. And I wanted to hear from the rest of ya'll if that was your perception, that mom was doing all the work.

Daughter: Yes
Son: Pretty much
Researcher: How did that unfold that mom does all that kind of work?
Mom: It's just kind of...
Daughter: Natural
Dad: People gravitated to what they did better.
Researcher: Vicky said it was natural.
Dad: People gravitated to what they did best. Wynn's always been comfortable with cooking. I guess a good bit of it has to do with how she was brought up. Her mother cooked a lot, didn't she, Wynn? I mean she prepared the meals for you most of the time.
Mom: I think it just sort of evolved from...
Dad: So it's a lot of passed on tradition, I think.
MEZ: Well, Wynn, if you could change how you spent your time when you weren't at work, how would you change it?
Dad: (laughing) Be honest. Don't say hire a cook and hire a maid.
Mom: That's not what I was thinking about, I'm not. I guess I'd like to spend a little less time with that sort of housework, you know, on a daily basis. I guess I'd like to go out and walk, or maybe take some kind of class or something like that. Just be able to do things undistracted because a lot of times I'm trying to get dinner and get Vicky to gymnastics and look over Joe's homework which we have to check and double check....About a year ago a couple who was going around cooking. They would cook for two weeks or something and freeze it and I thought, oh, that sounds great. It does sound enticing.

In another couple where each earned roughly the same salary, the wife felt that she had to put her career second to her husband's so that someone would attend to family work.

Researcher: What do you think gender has to do with how you spend your time?
Wife: I think I step back because I know it would be completely frustrating for him if we followed my career. I mean, he's never gonna be the person who voluntarily says, I'll stay home and spend time with the kids. And that's a
big thing with me. That's one thing I scream and cry about the most is I don't like having a sitter spend more time with the kids than we do. It just sort of means that I get all the family duties, whether that's planning the vacation or planning who gets refreshments for the soccer game or whatever....We could never make my career the most important thing as long as we have kids that are at home. That'll never happen. Because if I do that, that means I spend 60 hours a week at work and then there's no time for either one of us to be with the kids because he won't cut his hours to compensate for that.

In contrast to the previous family, was one couple in which the woman had the more demanding job and the man did most of the childcare and cooking. This couple thought of themselves as unique in this regard because none of their friends had this kind of arrangement. Here, dad describes how mom felt left out of fun time with the family who sometimes went on vacation without her because of her inflexible schedule.

I guess our family is unique...just this past weekend I took the kids to the beach and Flora caught up with us. I took them skiing for three days, not many men do that yet. I mean more and more men are doing it but still...and Flora stayed home. She couldn't go at all. She had to work. She couldn't get off to go on vacation. She had the vacation
time, but her work schedule was just such that she couldn't afford the time to do it.

**Part time/full time families.** Both families in this group had husbands working full-time and wives working part-time or full-time as needed (when husbands lost full-time jobs). In these couples, there was a traditional breakdown of household duties. One of the women did the chores of both roles:

I tend to do a number of non-traditional feminine things, like chop wood or use the chainsaw or build stone walls, but I also do a majority of the traditional female stuff....Most of the cooking and most of the cleaning is done by me. Not exclusively, [my husband] does laundry sometimes. And he vacuumed last week.....And I have to admit, I would probably have a little difficult time with a man who wanted to share those things more equally. I mean, I know men who really enjoy cooking and cook a lot and part of me internally thinks its weird.

**Children's Experiences of Non-School Time**

Children's voices have been integrated into results of the study, but here their experiences are presented separate from their parents. Table 6 summarizes how children answered the question of how they spent most of their time while out of school. Some of the children were interviewed while school was
in session; others were interviewed during summer vacation. As Table 6 illustrates, their answers were evenly divided among free time, family time, organized activities and TV. Only one child thought she was always doing chores and that was because she and her family had been settling into a new house that needed a lot of work before moving in.

Table 7 illustrates what children said they liked to do the best, or wanted more time to do. Most of the children preferred free time or family time. Children knew specifically what they would do with more free time as these comments illustrate:

I would play with friends, I guess read more and write more. (10 year old girl)

I'd spend more time with my family, go to movies together, like, go to dinner together, just go hiking together or something. (12 year old girl)

Well, my dad is on call a lot and so I'd make it so he didn't have to go to the hospital and he really has to all the time. And I'd make it so we could all do more things together. (10 year old girl)
Table 6

Children's Report of the #1 and #2 Ways They Use Their Non-school Time

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Note. Empty cells indicate that some children could not answer. Some children chose more than one category.
Table 7

Children's Favorite Category or Area in Which They Want to Spend More Time

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A child who picked doing chores liked them because it was an activity she did with her mother. A handful chose organized activities or TV. Further information about children's preferences is summarized in Table 8 which describes the drawings children made to illustrate "my favorite thing to do when I am not in school". Most children drew pictures depicting family or free time activities.

At the beginning of the family interview session, I showed parents their children's drawings and responses to the interview questions. Overall, parents agreed with their children's descriptions of time use. Most parents nodded their heads knowingly, commenting that they would have anticipated those answers. Some parents laughed about children wanting to do chores because this conflicted with the parent's experience, and a few parents tried without success to convince their children that TV was not really their favorite thing to do. One mother was chided by her husband for letting their child watch so much TV. One set of parents, perhaps reflecting the father's saturation, was suspicious of their children's motives for asking for more family time because they already felt they were very child-focused:

Cheryl: Jim and I have discussed that...we did not grow up the way our children are growing up with the tremendous amount of attention and time that we are spending on our kids.
Table 8

Children's Favorite Things to do When They are not in School.

**Free time**
* playing in the sandbox at home, climbing a tree
* climbing a tree
* going off a jump with my bike in front of my house
* playing basketball in the driveway at home
* playing on swings and monkey bars in my backyard with a treehouse
* things I do: petting the horses, petting the cat, making flower arrangements
* reading, writing, listening to music

**Family time**
* me and mamma snuggling in a chair, both smiling, TV is off
* having dinner, a plate of meatloaf, mashed potatoes and peas
* visiting cousins in Ohio
* playing ball with my sister in the backyard
* horsebackriding and making pies
* playing hotbox with my family in the backyard
* taking a walk with my family at night time
* horsebackriding
* family time at the movies

**Organized activities**
* me at a baseball game, I hit the ball in the air and I'm running the bases
* dancing at dance class

**Chores**
* no one said chores were a favorite

**TV**
* two children said TV was their favorite

*Note. These are the researcher's descriptions of children themselves describing the pictures they drew for the researcher.*
Researcher: So when they say that they want more family time, what do you think that means?

Cheryl: We haven't a clue.

Jim: I do. They expect it's gonna be something real fun. You know, that's what it is. I don't necessarily think it's being closer to us as much as they know that it's gonna be...[tennis, skiing, golf].

Upon further discussion, the family decided that what they really needed was time when all four of them were together rather than pairing up (adult and child) like they usually did. The children felt that this change would be enjoyable.

Although many children, when asked by the researcher, gave examples of being saturated, absent from the data was spontaneous complaining by children about how their time was spent or much resistance to the activities in which they were engaged. Exceptions to this were the few children who wanted to watch more television, and two children who complained about summer day camp.

When children asked for changes in organized activities they did so by wanting their leisure events better spaced so that they didn't have to rush from one to the other, or they wished they could do less practice. No child asked to be taken off a team or to quit music lessons, and several girls said they would practice piano and dance even if practice was not required.
Most children and parents denied any influence of gender on children's leisure time choices. There were a few exceptions, including one girl whose mother refused to let her play football because she "might get hurt." In one other family, the parents explained that they had chosen activities for their children based on gender, as the father explains:

Well I decided pretty much and it's hard to kind of determine how it was decided because I had known from the beginning that if I had a girl there were three things she was gonna do. Piano, gymnastics and ballet were those three things. Anything else was, you know, fine if she's interested or whatever, but those three things she was gonna do. For a girl, that [ballet and gymnastics] just seemed like natural if you think in terms of being graceful and staying physical to some degree....We're not torturing them into doing things. We're not trying to actually live our lives through them....The whole thing is to enrich their lives with something other than going to school and then coming home and playing, free play, you know....So my thinking is if Fran shows signs of not wanting to do it, I'll try to let that phase pass. Just kind of stay with it and let it pass and let her quit when she's about 25 if she wants to.

The mother in the same family agreed with dad's choices and added that activities separate out for girls and boys at an early age:
We knew a number of girls who were taking ballet and gymnastics at three and four. We waited a little longer than that. But as far as boys, I...did start looking into things for boys and there's not a lot until they can play sports in about first or second grade, and then Scouts. I think there's a difference in the community between what's available for boys and girls.

Children in this study were involved in activities that were already mostly gender segregated. Soccer, swimming, and karate were played by both girls and boys, but no child was engaged in anything that stood out as a crossover activity. (e.g. boys in ballet, or girls in wrestling). Both boys and girls did chores.

Many parents said that they let children choose what they were interested in, and for some of the families this seemed to be so. In other families, I observed that parents who were athletic had children on sports teams, parents who played musical instruments had children who took music lessons, parents who did not socialize much had children who were not in many organized activities, and parents who were very active themselves also had children who were heavily scheduled. Children with unemployed mothers also had heavy leisure schedules.

Also very scarce in the data from children or adults was mention of leisure with neighbors or nearby friends. Only four families lived in neighborhoods with other houses close by. Only
one father said that his children often played with neighborhood friends, and another family regularly invited neighborhood children to have dinner with them at home. Considering that many of the interviews were conducted during the summer months, the absence of outdoor play with neighbors was a surprise finding. In fact, many families said they were less busy during the school year because in summer the children were away from home even more because of day camps, overnight camps, and vacations.

Children in families with resistant or reformed orientations to saturation were not scheduled nearly as heavily as absorbent or saturated families. I formed an impression that what caused families to feel saturated was that children, and not adults, were heavily scheduled after school and on weekends. I checked my impression by referring to the activity sheets that each person had completed and found that adults had relatively few organized leisure activities: 10 activities per 20 adults, compared to 65 activities for 22 children. Most of the children's activities were clustered in the families with saturated or absorbent parents.

Summary

In the previous section, I have presented the main findings pertaining to the ways in which gender and generation influence family members' experiences of saturation, bonding, and leisure. The following comments serve to summarize the results.
Saturation was experienced both differently and the same by men and women. Some women voiced relief from time pressures because they had recently quit paid employment to have more time to manage family life. Other women who were employed seemed to be unaware that (in my view) they carried more than their share of the household work, and less of their share of leisure. These women had heavy schedules but seemed to absorb them as a matter of course, a process called "false consciousness" which protects one against the painful recognition of injustice (Lather, 1986). Women were most clearly the "monitors of saturation" in that they watched children for signs of fatigue and moved in to provide relief when needed.

The most clearly saturated individuals were both men who were unhappy with the number of leisure activities in the family, felt time pressured, and had little subjective sense of personal leisure. Both sexes credited temperament or personality as accountable for why people chose certain leisure time activities or styles.

Children, primarily those older than 6, gave examples of saturation experiences, but overall seemed content with their lives. Regarding their daily schedules, most children did not express resistance either to me or to their parents. A pocket of resistance was a few children's desire for TV. In their interviews and drawings, children expressed a preference for free time and family time activities over organized activities, TV, and
Mothers and fathers used similar phrases to define bonding, with fathers believing that bonding could occur in their absence. Some fathers also identified definite starting points for when bonding with children began. Men's bonding experiences seem related to the traditional father's role of protector and provider through which fathers express caring by being responsible and earning wages. Reading was a beloved bonding experience for everyone in the many families that defined reading as a bonding event.

Pertaining to leisure, parents of both sexes, when defining leisure time, emphasized doing things alone or with other adults as opposed to doing things with children. Men and women had different kinds of leisure definitions, with men doing things more often outside of home, and women wanting time simply for themselves without any specific agenda. Closely related to the already mentioned role of women as "monitors of saturation" was the role of family leisure manager which was also primarily occupied by women.

A theme that unexpectedly emerged from the data dealt with how much time adults wanted to devote to paid work. This area was steeped in gender issues. Almost every woman, employed or not, wanted to work part-time, but was thwarted by workplace cultures, their husbands' inflexibility (regardless of the source), the cumulative effects of being out of the job market,
and perhaps their own inflexible standards for family income and lifestyle. Those who worked full-time did so because of finances. It wasn't that women weren't doing "work" by being at home, but they wanted the stimulation of the workplace and the opportunity to practice their chosen professions. More salient to some women than whether or not they had enough leisure, was their desire to have paid employment. Even women who were largely content with being homemakers, continued to wish for an interesting job.

Men had trouble imagining life without paid employment. Half the men opted to continue to work full-time even if money were not an issue. Those men who wanted to work fewer hours were stymied by the same obstacles that women faced: rigid workplace structures and stereotypes about gender.

I discovered that I was wrong in expecting that mainly couples in traditional family employment structures also would have traditional gender roles. Instead, most couples, regardless of who worked full-time or part-time, practiced traditional gender roles around housework. Childcare seemed more equally shared, but this may have been related to children being school age and needing less intensive parenting than younger children.

A few parents were notable exceptions. One dual-earner couple was unique in that the father did more childcare and cooking than his wife. Two "standard" couples would consider trading or equally sharing the breadwinner role if they could maintain
the same standard of living.

The standard family structure was changeable, with women moving in and out of the job market as children were born and grew older, as husbands lost jobs or regained them, as financial needs changed, and as their own stress levels fluctuated.

Finally, some conflict about leisure time use was common and was connected with all of the issues that have been identified in this chapter. In the following chapter, findings will be discussed in relation to theories that were introduced in the beginning of this study.
Chapter Five
Discussion in the Context of Theory

The goal of this chapter is to take findings from the present research and place them back into context with theories from which the study originated. Stemming from a postmodern feminist perspective, the study's design drew from many theories in the development of the research questions. Major theories and concepts in the design were: saturation, systems, boundaries, bonding and leisure, with attention to gender and generation.

Saturation

Saturation has proved to be a concept that fits the experience of family members in this study. It was easily recognized by both parents and children, and was an ongoing part of shaping behavior in families. Parents developed particular orientations toward saturation (resisting, absorbing, reformed, or saturated) in order to cope with it. Saturation can be explained in this study as a stressful experience produced by efforts to negotiate an unlimited number of things to do in a limited amount of time. Finding optimal time use was a pivotal organizing (or disorganizing) concept in family life (Daly, 1996a). The experiences of these families were not an exact fit with Gergen's explication of saturation. First, Gergen's (1991a, 1991b) thesis is that modern technology is largely responsible for causing saturation. Technology was not overtly time-consuming or distracting in the lives of these families. I question if the design of this study
was capable of discerning the effects of technology or whether I was sensitized enough to observe what effects there may have been. While I directly questioned parents about their use of computers, fax, pagers, and so forth. I did not follow them around to see the hidden ways in which technology may have operated. My impression as I ended the study was that both researcher and participants may take for granted technologies like cars and phones which may be large contributors, but are now invisible to us as intrusions.

TV was not taken for granted by parents. Its use was very limited, and this was a clear strategy to preserve time for reading and homework, and to keep unwanted mass media messages out of the home. Some parents complained about driving to activities as a cause of time pressure, but it seems spurious to blame the car. One participant's experience that computer technology allowed him more family time, fits Daly's (1996a) proposition that the trend of "cocooning" has been supported by technologies that allow home to be more central.

A second aspect of the saturation experience in these families that seemed significant were the metaphors that were used to describe how time pressure felt. The fact that no participant used the term "saturated" may indicate that the term may not capture the experience adequately or completely. Instead, parents expressed themselves in the following ways: on a treadmill, under pressure, juggling, fighting against, chasing
around, guarding against, all of which evoke images of active encounters rather than the passivity of being saturated. "Strainer over my brain" and "feeling fragmented" were closest to Gergen's meaning. These phrases relate to active boundary-keeping, which was a method that some parents in this research used to avoid saturation. Saturation, as a metaphor, does not seem to capture the dynamic nature of how people grapple with time use. Being saturated is a state of being filled up or in overload, but the experience may actually be closer to feeling drained or empty, and more useful may be a concept that attends to both. An implication that stems from the above discussion is the importance of seeking specific meanings about any term or experience when working with families in therapy or research.

Even though many women in this study were monitoring saturation, doing the work of leisure, and "second shift" work (Hochschild, 1989), women were not prominent complainers about time stress. One possible reason for this may be that some women had recently left states of saturation by quitting jobs and now were primarily experiencing relief. Another reason, according to Henderson (1996) is that women's leisure experiences are gendered and are an expression of power imbalances between men and women (Walker, 1996). Many women are accepting of time stress and do not feel entitled to leisure (Bedini & Guinan, 1996), as was presented in the literature review in Chapter Two. During some interviews, it was painful for me to listen to women describe,
without complaint, their hectic schedules. In particular, it was chilling to hear a 10 year old girl tell her mother that it was natural for women to do all the housework in families. Unfortunately, the research design did not allow me a third interview in which to explore such conversations further.

In this study, the participants who clearly voiced feeling saturated were breadwinner fathers with homemaker wives (a traditional or benchmark family structure). This finding is not compatible with standard discourse about family structure. The traditionally structured family exists in our imaginations as an ideal in which no problems exist (Acock & Demo, 1994). Gergen himself (1991a) theorized that members of diverse family structures may be more likely to experience conflict and hence, saturation, than traditional families. While uncovering disadvantages for women in standard families has long been a crucial issue for feminists (Friedan, 1963; Okin, 1989), focus on men in families has come much later (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992). Daly (1996b) studied meanings of family time for fathers from "intact" (p. 468) families. He found that fathers did have saturation-like experiences:

Time was the central experiential axis for the fathers in this study...its importance, scarcity, and problematic nature....[I] found that it saturated [my emphasis] the discourse about being a father. (p. 469)

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Other research supports these findings. Barnett et al. (1992) studied the effects of multiple roles for men and concluded that contrary to the popular belief that paid work by itself defines men, marital and parental roles were as important as the work role for men's mental health. Findings from the present research suggest that men in traditional families are not stress free.

While saturated men did not find families to be safe havens, their wives also did not experience standard family life as their ideal. Homemakers in these families were not looking for more leisure. Instead they continued to look for ways to have paid employment, and at the same time be able to enjoy their families and avoid the stresses of being primarily responsible for all family work.

Leisure and Bonding

Experiences of leisure in this group of families fit theories found in previous work on leisure. Part of the saturation experience was pressure to funnel many activities into a limited time period. An associated feature of saturation includes pressure to join certain groups, or engage in certain status activities that would label one as belonging to the upper-middle class. Parents and children recognized that there was pressure associated with leisure time. This finding fits with the work of others (Dimanche & Samdahl, 1994; Hemingway, 1996; Rojek, 1993) who assert that we are not truly free to experience leisure
because of market pressures to consume leisure as a commodity. Another expression of lack of freedom for participants in this study was that women wanted the freedom to be able to work, and men lacked the ability to imagine life without work. These findings fit into the literature on constraints to leisure stemming from gendered constructions of roles in family life (Henderson, 1996).

For many adults there was no clear division between leisure and work. Some adults liked their work enough to do it even if they didn't have to, and some would use leisure time to do "work" (e.g. farm work, sewing). These expressions of ideal time use support Goodale and Godbey's (1988) view of leisure as a state of mind rather than a specific activity. Both children and adults in this study wanted more time in which to do chosen tasks so that they could focus on the activity at hand instead of worrying about getting to the next event on time. This finding fits with Csikszentmihalyi and Kleiber's (1991) work on "flow", an experience of deep concentration and attention in which one loses awareness of self.

Bonding experiences fit closely with Ainsworth's (1989) work on affectional bonds as unique and non-interchangeable, and with Kane's (1989) definition of bonding as connections created through care and protection. The words of participants found in Table 3 are very close to the above definitions. When parents described being careful not to be intrusive with their children,
they spoke to the point made by Orthner and Mancini (1991) that optimal bonding avoids enmeshment.

In answer to the question posed by Orthner and Mancini (1990) on whether family leisure contributes to bonding I would answer, it depends partly on how leisure is defined. Bonding experiences for these participants were characterized differently than were leisure experiences. Bonding was defined as an active, deliberate set of behaviors carried out by family members in order to build and maintain close relationships. In contrast, leisure was defined as solitary or done with other adults and seemed to connote lack of responsibility for others. If, on the other hand, leisure is defined as time away from work or school, then leisure would contribute to bonding in that it seems to take time and actual contact for bonding to occur.

Very interesting to me were the comments of several fathers who thought that bonding could occur in their absence. Their beliefs echo Demo's (1992) analysis of parent-child relations which indicate a potential need for change in bonding theory. Demo introduced the concept of "supportive detachment" by which "parents care deeply, although often from distance" (p. 114). It would seem crucial to understand just how much time is needed to support family relationships, and to understand Demo's analysis in the context of gender.

Parents in this study who worked full-time wanted more time for self and for family. Full-time homemakers wanted time for
paid employment. Children wanted more free time and family time. These are competing needs voiced by family members who want to maintain close ties while finding fulfillment as individuals. I liked the words of one participant, who said that the bond she shared with her husband and their two daughters was both "strong and elastic". This kind of bond would seem to provide security for each person to express individual needs without fear of not belonging.

One of the conceptual guides for this research was feminist revisions of systems theory, particularly in regard to boundaries. Participants in this study freely used boundary language as they described their strategies to control and monitor time. Parents set limits for mealtime, watching TV, visiting friends, and number of organized activities. When parents talked about bonding they used language that sounded like Jordan's (1991) reworking of boundary: relational growth, and growth in connection. Perhaps bonding may be reconceptualized as a both/and process of making boundaries (systems theory) and building relationships (feminist revisions of boundary). There was also evidence in the data to support the utility of Scanzoni's (Scanzoni et al., 1989) work on the need to open up boundaries around the traditional family to allow for the significance of non-kin relationships.

The theme of personality emerged from the data as an important factor in how leisure time is experienced. I related this
finding to the concept of "temperament" (Kurcinka, 1991; Prior, 1992) which states that humans are born with certain capacities for intensity, sensitivity, adaptability, regularity, energy, and mood (among others). It would seem that temperament is an important individual difference to consider when looking at orientations to saturation, boundary-keeping, leisure, and bonding. In the families I studied, temperament seemed to have been influenced by gender in that women with temperaments that better suited them for the workplace found themselves as homemakers, and men with strong affiliative traits and quiet natures found themselves as primary wage earners.

**Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Generation**

Gender theory was a guide for the present research on experiences of leisure time for family members. A gender analysis goes beyond logging differences between sexes to examining meanings of roles, unequal power, and cultural expectations (Henderson, 1996). Gender theory emphasizes that inequality is continued by the daily creation of difference between sexes, and not by fixed, learned behaviors that remain constant over time (Potuchek, 1996). Interviews with men and women in this study revealed the ways in which they constructed difference regarding time use.

A theme that ran through the findings was the diversity of women's time as compared with the relative rigidity of men's time.
use. Women went in and out of paid employment as they were needed to earn money or to care for children. Women were full-time wage earners while working a second shift of housework. Women spent their discretionary time doing "men's" work (chopping wood, building fences, etc.). Men were reluctant to move out of full-time employment even in their imaginations, and most men did not share in housework. As one female participant observed to her husband, "I go intergender, or whatever that word would be, but you don't for the most part—or less, less so." Men's reluctance to seek change for themselves and their resistance to women's urging for change has been discussed by Goode (1992) in terms of high status persons' unwillingness to give up privilege.

There was, however, evidence in the interviews of diversity and possibilities for change. One couple had reversed roles in that the husband did more household and child care duties, and the wife had the more rigidly time-structured employment. These structural arrangements led to the woman feeling left out of family leisure and school events, and complaining of the same things that men do when their jobs are inflexible, thus supporting Henderson's (1996) premise that "the differences in leisure patterns between men and women are more contextual than biological" (p. 150).

It was exciting to witness men and women as they responded to my questions by entertaining visions of switching roles, reviewing how they had created their present arrangements, and
contemplating the future. As they told their stories, women and men demonstrated a beginning understanding of how they had made decisions about work and leisure that were based more on rigid institutional structures than on their own personal preferences. Even so, women continued to search for ways to overcome barriers to their ideal choices.

Along with the struggle to understand and change gendered behavior relating to time use, there was also evidence of ongoing power inequities. Sex role theory promotes the belief that differences between men and women are natural. This belief was illustrated by one family in this study in which girls took ballet and women did housework on the basis of it being "natural" (see p. 124). Hare-Mustin (1994) states that social arrangements are often power relationships and that regarding differences as "natural" is a disguise for inequality and the wishes of the dominant group. In this family it was painfully clear to me that the mother's "natural" affinity for cooking and housework left her with an unfair share of family work.

Related Findings

Another finding of this study was the presence of conflict regarding leisure time use. This information supports Shaw's (1992) work on the reification or idealization of family leisure, especially since conflict was present even in traditional family structures.

Henderson and Bialeschki's (1991) study asserting that women
don't feel entitled to leisure and that "doing nothing" is an appealing leisure choice is supported by the experiences of women in the present research. In addition, findings here match with Desaulniers and Theberge's (1992, cited in Henderson, 1996) contention that homemakers quit jobs to care for families, and not to have more leisure.

In regard to children, it seemed that children's leisure choices were guided in part by their parent's ideologies. Two clear ideologies were the hurried child and the devil's playground. Elkind (1988) has written non-empirically on the hurried-child, but Elkind's premise that parents over-schedule children for their own purposes has not been supported by the scant literature on the topic. Meeks and Mauldin (1990) failed to show that the school age children in their study were overly structured, but they retained the impression that special groups of children may be over-programmed. The findings of the present research suggest that one such "special group" of over-programmed children may be children with an affluent parent who is a saturation absorber. From the data in this study, I was not able to make a clear determination about decision-making regarding leisure time choices for children; this would be an important area for further research.

Data from the present research also indicated that one of the sources of leisure time stress was the high number of children's organized activities in some families. Children did not
show evidence of wanting to cut down on their activities, but rather wanted better spacing so as not to feel rushed. This overbooking of children is poorly understood. It is not clear how choices get made and what benefits are thereby derived. One hypothesis is that women who are full-time homemakers (although the phenomenon occurs in dual-earner families as well) may take on the job of "children" with the same vigor they would apply to paid employment. This may result in highly educated and "leisured" children as a reflection of parental proficiency. I am aware of no studies on the possible negative effects for children of parents being full-time homemakers.

From a feminist perspective, devil's playground ideology seems designed to repress and control children's behavior. It also suggests a lack of trust in children's ability to choose or to manage leisure time activities. The children in this study did not appear to make their own adjustments when they became time-stressed. Parents clearly felt the need to monitor children, and there were few examples of children setting their own limits, except by exhibiting signs of stress. Perhaps children become better time managers with age and practice. I located one study that used a social control perspective to examine experiences of boredom, time stress, and lack of choice in adolescent's free time (Shaw, Caldwell, & Kleiber, 1996). A social control perspective (devil's playground) advances the belief that organized activities reduce the likelihood that adolescents may
become delinquent. Too much free time invites anti-social
behavior in adolescents. Findings from Shaw et al.'s study were
that adolescents (more often girls) did experience time stress,
that adolescent free time was controlled by adults and character-
ized by time stress as well as boredom. These results fit with
the findings of the present study concerning children's experi-
ences of saturation in leisure time.

Limitations of the Research

Because feminist research is practice oriented and emanci-
patory (Lather, 1986), this study was designed to gain informa-
tion that would be useful to families, researchers, educators and
therapists. The research has produced many fertile ideas that
must be understood within the limitations of the study.

Qualitative research affords a deep understanding of experi-
ence within context (Rank, 1992). Attempts to generalize find-
ings from this study to other or larger populations should be
based on the reader's judgment of whether the experiences of the
participants in this study seem to be applicable to self or to
others in the same or in different contexts (Atkinson, Heath, &
Chenail, 1991). One must judge in what ways the concerns of
these participants might be of concern to others who may differ
in terms of class, family structure, race, and so forth. The
participants in this study have been described in detail in
Chapter Three, and issues of validity and reliability have been
discussed in Chapter Two. For the purposes of this section I note other characteristics that may have produced unique findings.

Since participants were all chosen from private school populations, there may be unique traits that influenced the categories that emerged from the interviews. There were many more girls than boys in the study (17 girls to 5 boys), and given the importance of gender analysis in studying family life, there may well have been different findings if the group of children had been more evenly divided by sex. Also the average age for children was 8.6; an older group of school age children might have yielded different findings.

Interviews were conducted from April through October, which meant that some families were interviewed during children's summer vacation. Perhaps experiences of saturation were influenced by whether or not school was in session. However, it cannot be assumed that summer was less stressful for families, because many potential participants asked to be scheduled in the fall when their schedules were lighter. Families found the time to participate in the study, indicating that they were interested in the subject of leisure time use. Although many parents told me they thought the research was important enough that they had made time to do it, totally saturated families may have refused to even consider being in a study.

One area that was neglected in this study was sex as a
leisure activity for parents. When I designed the research, I
considered including sex on the activity checklist, but decided
against it because the checklist would be used by both parents
and children. In retrospect, I realize I could have made a
separate checklist for adults that would have included sex. In
this way, the subject of sex could have been introduced into the
dialog about leisure time, bonding, and saturation.

**Future Research and Practice Implications**

Findings from this study along with a recent work by Daly
(1996a) suggest that orientations to time are an important area
of inquiry in family research. Further explorations are needed
into the concept of saturation and specifically the effects of
technologies. It is important to gain understandings of how
family members negotiate new technologies and incorporate them
into daily life.

Family professionals also need to attend to meanings of time
use choices as expressed in specific ideologies. Particularly
for family therapists, it seems important to encourage family
members to uncover or examine belief systems that support time
use decisions. Since saturation was not an exact conceptual
match for the time stress experienced by family members in the
present study, it seems important to use care to understand
specific meanings for individuals and not assign meanings auto-
matically.

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More research is needed on systemic effects in families of highly educated and affluent women who stay home with school-aged children. Husbands of these women were saturated; it is important to understand more specifically what men might see as solutions to the time pressures they experience.

Regarding bonding and leisure, it seems important to know how much and what kind of time is needed to maintain close relationships. Research in this area could have implications for non-custodial parents and for the arrangement of child-parent contact in divorced families.

Many adults in this study preferred employment/leisure arrangements that did not match their actual situations. They faced obstacles created by entrenched gendered cultural roles and institutions. These couples were highly educated, and economically comfortable and yet were not living out their ideal. More research is needed to learn what solutions couples have found, and how therapists and educators can encourage men and women to break barriers to ideal time use. Family therapists and educators can also help relieve pressure on families to meet unrealistic expectations for perfect family leisure events.

Much work is also needed on children and the possible trend away from neighborhood play toward organized activities that seems to be occurring in high SES families. What happens to children who have little free time? How are leisure and stress associated in the lives of children?
Finally, it seems that gender analysis continues to be important as a major organizing dimension in family leisure, and should be incorporated into future family research. The use of feminist perspectives in this study allowed family members to provide a rich discourse about theories of saturation, bonding, work, and leisure. Ferree (1991) expressed these ideas well in her classic article, "Beyond Separate Spheres: Feminism and Family Research":

The feminist perspective redefines families as arenas of gender and generation struggles, crucibles of caring and conflict, where claims for an identity are rooted, and separateness and solidarity are continually created and contested. Using a gender perspective to shatter such artificial dichotomies as work and home, money and love, self-interest and altruism, as well as their conventional associations with masculinity and femininity, may now begin to move family studies beyond separate spheres. (p. 117)
References


Daly, K. (1996b). Spending time with the kids: Meanings of family time for fathers. *Family Relations, 45*, 466-476.


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Appendices

A. Letter to parents
B. Guide for phone interview
C. Letter to children
D. Letter to participants
E. Activity checklist
F. Informed consent for adults
G. Children's assent form
H. Interview guide for adults
I. Children's interview guide
J. Coding categories
K. Vita
Appendix A
Letter to Parents

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones,

You and your children are invited to take part in a project to study how families use their time when they are away from school and from work. I am a graduate student in the Department of Family and Child Development at Virginia Tech, and this study is my dissertation project to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree.

I am asking each family member to fill out a simple checklist of leisure time activities. Parents are requested to assist children in completing their checklist. I will use the checklist as background information about how you spend your free time.

Each parent is asked to participate in two separate interviews: an individual interview, and a session with the whole family. Parents can expect their interview to take approximately one hour. Each child will have an individual interview session of around 1/2 hour, and will also be part of the family interview. The children's session consists of simple drawing and story board activities. Parents may choose to be present during their child's interview, but it is not required. The family session will take approximately one hour. Sessions will be done in the family home or at my office, at a time convenient for the family.

Prior to the scheduled interviews, you will receive the checklist and the interview questions in the mail. I will be asking you to talk about the activities that you engage in, how you go about deciding what you do, and how you feel about your use of free time. I expect that you would find the questions interesting to explore.

Families in the study need to be two-parent families, with both primary parents living in the same home. The children need to be school age (6 to 11). In addition, the family income should be such that the members can afford to pay for some leisure activities, like joining sports groups, or going to the movies.

I will be phoning you in a few days to discuss the study and to see if you would like to participate. In the event that you agree, I will send a separate invitation to the children in your family. You may also call me if you have any questions, at my home or my office. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,
Mary-Eve Zangari, MS, RN, CS

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Appendix B
Guide for Phone Interview

Names of adults in household

Names of parents living in household

Names and ages of children in household

School and grade of each child

Employment and job title of each parent

Education of each parent

Combined family income
   up to $30,000
   $30,000 to $40,000
   $40,000 to $50,000
   $50,000 to $75,000
   $75,000 to $ $100,000
   above $100,000
Appendix C

Letter to Children

Dear Johanna,

You are invited to talk with me about how you use your time when you are not in school. I am in school at Virginia Tech. Talking with children is part of the "homework" I am doing in my class.

If you meet with me, you will do some easy drawing and a game with picture cards. I will talk with you about what you do when you are not in school. We would meet at your house or at my office.

I will be calling you on the phone to talk to you about this letter, and to see if you want to do this. You can call me if you have any questions. (Your parents have my phone number.) I hope to talk with you soon.

Sincerely,

Mary-Eve Zangari, MS, RN, CS
Appendix D

Letter to Participants

Dear Participants:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. I have enjoyed talking with you, Sharon, and look forward to meeting the rest of your family. In this packet, you will find an activity checklist and a consent form for each of you.

It would be helpful if each person would fill out the activity sheet before the individual interview. Please do the checklist in a relaxed manner; you don't need to be exact. I just want a general idea about what you are involved in. I will look it over with each person as part of the interview.

I have listed below the questions that I will ask each adult. You can talk about the questions among yourselves if you want to.

Interview questions for parents:

1. I am interested in what family members do with their time when they are not at work or in school. Give me some idea of what happens in this family.

2. I am also interested in how family members decide how to use their time. How do people in this family go about deciding?

3. Some literature about families says that family members are faced with too many choices and often find themselves going in different directions. Other family scholars think otherwise. What do you think about this?

4. I am also looking at family bonding in this study. What is your definition of that term? How do you see it occurring in your family?

5. I would be interested in hearing any of your ideas on these topics.

We have scheduled interviews with you and the children for 11:30 on Thursday, August 29, at your home. Should you have any questions or should you need to change our arrangements, please call me at home or at my office.

Sincerely,

Mary-Eve Zangari, MS, RN, CS
Appendix E

Activities Checklist

I am interested in how each person in this family spends time away from work or school. This is a checklist of many kinds of activities that you may participate in. Please feel free to add any other categories that I may have left out. We will have a chance to discuss the list when we do the interview.

How many hours a week or times per week do you estimate you spend in the following activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
<th>Times per week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yard work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Napping, sleeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious services and groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading for pleasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing nothing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
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<td>TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanging out with friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family get-togethers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dating or couple time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Check the activities you have done in the last 12 months, and say if you were on a team, in a class, or playing in your neighborhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Things I've done</th>
<th>Class or Team</th>
<th>At home</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Football</td>
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<td>Field Hockey</td>
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<td>Lacrosse</td>
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<td>Hiking</td>
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<td>Basketball</td>
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<td>Baseball</td>
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<td>Tennis</td>
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<td>Archery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boating or canoeing</td>
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<td>Hunting</td>
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<td>Golf</td>
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<td>Volleyball</td>
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<td>Horseback riding</td>
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<td>Cheerleading</td>
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<td>Gymnastics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-country, track</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roller or ice hockey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skiing</td>
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<td>Scouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>Art lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
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Appendix F

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Family Members' Experiences During Leisure Time

Investigator: Mary-Eve Zangari

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH
You are invited to take part in a project about how families use their time when they are not at school or at work. I am doing this project to learn more about how family members decide how to use their time. Both parents and children will be in the project.

II. PROCEDURES
Each parent is asked to fill out an activity checklist and to take part in two interview sessions. The first will be an individual interview which takes about 1 hour, and the second is a 1 hour interview with the whole family. I expect that there will be several weeks between the two interviews. The checklist and the interview questions will be mailed to you prior to the scheduled interviews.

Children, with the help of a parent, are asked to complete a checklist, and to take part in a 1/2 hour individual session and also in the family interview. The children's interview consists of simple activities done with the researcher.

I am a graduate student researcher at Virginia Tech, and this study is under the direction of Dr. Scott Johnson, my advisor.

III. RISKS
I expect that the project will be informative and enjoyable for you and your family. At any time, you may choose to withdraw from the study.

IV. BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT
Information learned in this study may help family members make better decisions about how they wish to use their time away from school and work. The study may also help in understanding how individuals develop a sense of belonging to a family group.

No guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate in the study. If you are interested, you may receive a synopsis of the results of the study.
V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Interviews will be audiotaped and then transcribed by a typist who will not have access to names of participants. The typist will be committed to confidentiality regarding all information. After transcription, the tapes will be destroyed. Interviews will be kept strictly confidential. Only myself and my advisor will have access to the information. All names and other identifying information will be removed or changed in any written reports or analysis of the study.

VI. COMPENSATION

There is no compensation of the form of money, goods, or services in exchange for participating in this study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

You may decide to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and by the Department of Family and Child Development.

IX. SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities: I will arrange interview times with Mary-Eve Zangari, and will contact her if I am unable to keep an appointment.

X. SUBJECT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project. If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

_____________________________  _________________________
Signature                      Date
Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

______________________________  _______________________
Mary-Eve Zangari  
Investigator  

______________________________  _______________________
Scott Johnson  
Faculty Advisor  

______________________________  _______________________
E. R. Stout  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Research Division  

Phone

Phone

Phone
Appendix G

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Children's Assent Form

Title of Project: Family Members' Experiences During Leisure Time

Investigator: Mary-Eve Zangari

My name is ____________________________, and I am ______ years old. I have talked with Mary-Eve and my parents about being in this project. I know that it is about what I do when I am not in school.

I know that Mary-Eve is in school at Virginia Tech and this project is homework for her. Her teacher is Dr. Scott Johnson and he will be checking her work. Also, Virginia Tech approved the questions she will ask me.

Mary-Eve and I will meet for 1/2 hour. We will do some easy drawing and looking at picture cards together. She will talk with me about what I like to do when I am not in school. Mary-Eve will visit our family at another time to talk to all of us together about what we have told her.

While we are talking, Mary-Eve will tape us with a tape-recorder. Later, a typist will type our conversation onto paper. Mary-Eve promises to keep my name private. When she writes her report, she will use made-up names, so that no one can tell she is writing about me and my family.

I know that I can change my mind if I don't want to talk with Mary-Eve. I just need to let her know if I change my mind. I have read this paper with Mary-Eve and my parents and they have answered my questions. I understand what I am signing up to do. I sign my name to show that I do understand, and that I want to talk with Mary-Eve.

____________________________________  _____________________________
Signature                                Date
Parent's Permission

My child had read and understands the Children's Assent Form and conditions of this project. I hereby give my consent for my child to participate in this project with the understanding that he or she may withdraw at any time without penalty.

_________________________  _____________________________
Parent's Signature          Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

_________________________  _____________________________
Mary-Eve Zangari            Phone

_________________________  _____________________________
Scott Johnson               Phone
Faculty Advisor

_________________________  _____________________________
E. R. Stout                 Phone
Chair, Institutional Review Board Research Division
Appendix H

Interview Guide for Adults

Thank you for agreeing to work with me on this study. I have a list of questions to guide our discussion. You may have had time to look them over already. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Biographical Data

Birthplace
Date of birth
Education
Employment or work
Full-time, part-time
Children and their ages
Combined yearly income

1. I am interested in what family members do with their time when they are not at work or in school. Give me some idea of what happens in this family.

2. I am also interested in how family members decide how to use their time. How do people in this family go about deciding?

3. Some literature about families says that family members are faced with too many choices and often find themselves going in different directions. Other writers think this is not a problem. What do you think about that idea?

4. In this study, I am also looking at family bonding. What is your definition of that term? How do you see it occurring in your
family?

5. I'd be interested in hearing any other of your ideas about this topic that we haven't talked about yet.

6. Thank you for talking with me today. I will go over what we've discussed and we can talk about it at the family interview.

Guideline for Family Interview

There were no predetermined questions for the family interview. Before the family session, I read through the individual interview material, and made note of gaps or inconsistencies, or areas that were not clear to me. I had also done a beginning analysis of the data. I shared my questions with the family and asked for discussion or clarification. I also asked them for feedback about the interview process itself. Sample questions were: "I am interested in hearing anything you may have talked about with each other as a result of being in the project". "Has anything changed in the family as a result of doing the interviews?"
Appendix I

Children's Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to work with me on this project. This research is a homework assignment for a course I am taking at Virginia Tech. I'm glad that you can help me with it. I am asking children to tell me how they use their time when they are not in school. First, let me find out a little about you.

Name

Date of Birth

School

Grade

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Activity #1

One way that we can find out what you do when you are not in school is to make a pie chart. Do you know what that is?

Here is a picture of one. The pie represents all the time you have when you are not in school. I'd like you to divide up the pie according to these categories:

1. **organized activities**: things that you sign up to do, or that your parents set up for you like a sport or piano lessons
2. **free time**: this is time that you are free to do what you want, like playing indoors or outdoors, hanging out with friends, or just being at home
3. **family time**: this means at home time or time out with your family, for example, at meals, vacation, or movies
4. chores
5. watching TV

I'd like you to make two different pies. One pie shows what you do now with your time. The second pie shows how you would change things to show how you would rather be using your time.

Those look great. Now tell me about the differences between the two pies. What got bigger? What got smaller? Would you add any other categories to the pie?

Activity #2
(This activity is for children who cannot or choose not to do the pie chart. I had five different cardboard picture boards, one picture board for each of the five categories in Activity #1. I discussed each picture board with the child and then asked the child to arrange the pictures in various ways to indicate time use, both preferred and current. Sample questions were: Which of the pictures shows what you like to do the most? Which picture shows what you don't get to do enough? Put the cards in the order of best to worst.

Activity #3
Each child was asked to draw a picture of what they liked to do most when they were not in school. The child then explained the picture to the researcher.
Appendix J

Coding Categories

100 experiences of saturation
101 acknowledgements of saturation and reflections on self
102 being absorbent
103 being resistant
104 reformed
105 saturated fathers
106 nostalgia and changing times
107 monitoring and boundary-making
108 supporting ideologies

200 leisure definitions
201 bonding definitions
202 processes in bonding

300 complexities
301 employment status: ideal vs. actual
302 women do the work of leisure
303 personal traits that influence time use
304 conflicts and tensions
305 gender influences on time use
306 children's experiences
Appendix K

VITA

Mary-Eve Zangari
213 McClanahan St. suite 201
Roanoke, VA 24014
Work Phone: 540-981-8960

Education

1997 Ph.D. in Family and Child Development, Marriage and Family Therapy Program, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA

1977 M.S. in Psychiatric Nursing and Community Mental Health, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

1971 R.N. and B.S. in Nursing, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Professional Experience

1994 to present
Carilion Center for Behavioral Health Mental health outpatient therapist

Sept. 1993 to June, 1994
Lewis Gale Psychiatric Center family therapist for adolescent units. This position fulfilled the internship requirement of the doctoral program.

Jan. 1992 to May, 1993
Center for Family Services at Virginia Tech. Provided individual, family, and marital therapy as part of practicum required by doctoral program.

1988 to 1991
Carilion Employee Assistance Program Provided assessment, referral, and short term counseling to individuals, families, and groups.

1987 to 1988
Employee Assistance of Central Virginia
1983 to 1986

Radford University School of Nursing
Instructor for classroom and clinical experience in psychiatric nursing.

1977 to 1980

Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
Clinical Specialist/Consultation-Liaison Nursing

Publications


Awards

1993 National Council on Family Relations: Jessie Bernard Award for outstanding paper that contributes to feminist scholarship.

License and Certification

Licensed (R.N.) in Virginia and certified by the American Nurses Association as a clinical nurse specialist (C.S.)