UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF APPALACHIAN WOMEN: DON'T TOUCH MY MOUNTAIN

A Thesis

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School

Appalachian State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2009

Department of Government and Justice Studies

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF APPALACHIAN WOMEN: DON'T TOUCH MY MOUNTAIN. (MAY 2009)

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Women in Appalachia constitute a great deal of the leadership and activism against mountaintop removal coal mining in the region. While a great deal of literature addresses female, environmental, and Appalachian political participation, much less is available that explains the differences of Appalachian women on environmental issues and female activists in general. Here, a case study is employed in which twenty female activists against mountaintop removal are interviewed in their home communities in an attempt to determine what drives the activism of this particular group of women. A feminist ideology and the Appalachian cultural value of sense of place prove instrumental in explaining the activism of this group. A different way of looking at the impact of feminism on women with a culture strongly adhering to traditional gender roles, as well as a deep spiritual connection with the land, point to ways in which these women differ from what past scholarship shows of female and grassroots environmental activists in general.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research for this thesis provided me the privilege to study my heroes. The women in the coalfields who struggle everyday through indescribable odds to save their families, their communities, their heritage, and the mountains they so deeply love, have presented me with the most remarkable depiction of true courage and passion. I cannot thank them enough not only for allowing me to interview them, but also for imparting in me a better understanding of who I hope to one day be: Patty Amburgey, Barbara Bailey, Cathie Bird, Caroline Brown, Sharmin Chapman Crane, Evelyn Gilbert, Sara Holtom, Pat Hudson, Ann League, Mary Miller, Cari Moore, Janice Nease, Lorelai Scarboro, Patty Sebok, Lora Smith, Patty Tarquino, Brenda Urias, Erica Urias, and Patty Wallace.

I owe special gratitude to one of my interviewees, Judy Bonds, who was the inspiration for this thesis. Judy truly exemplifies a "Strong Appalachian Woman."

I also wish to express my appreciation for all the support I received on this thesis and throughout my time in graduate school from the wonderful professors I was blessed to have:

My advisor, Dr. Phillip J. Ardoin has gone far beyond what I could have asked for in providing support both during my work on this thesis and throughout my graduate as well as undergraduate career at Appalachian.

Dr. Adam Newmark has pushed me to strive beyond what is merely acceptable, and without whose guidance, I would have never entered into my graduate program.

Dr. Renee Scherlen has provided me with encouragement, patience, and new perspectives.

Finally, I must thank my parents, Rob and Alma Palmer. They have provided me with a solid foundation to stand on, unconditional support for my dreams, and have always been there whenever I faltered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Women in the central Appalachian Mountains currently represent a large portion of the leadership and active volunteer force of interest groups which have formed in opposition to the removal of mountaintop coal mining. These women and their interest groups lobby Congress and their state legislatures, travel the country speaking out, organize opposition within their communities, and engage in protests. Many have overcome harassment by those employed in the coal industries but continue as active members of the movement. While women have become an essential and driving force of the movement against mountaintop coal mining, nationally women lag behind men in almost all forms of political participation (Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue 1995).

While there is a wealth of literature examining female political activism, there is little research examining the factors that influence the political activism of Appalachian women regarding the issue of mountaintop coal mining. Building on previous scholarship, the purpose of this thesis is the development of an improved understanding of the various factors which drive the political activism of women in coal mining communities of south central Appalachia. Looking at this particular group is important as the literature on Appalachian political activism indicates that differences may exist in the factors that impact Appalachian women compared to women in general (Fisher 1993; Seitz 1995).

In order to address this issue, I employ a case-study of twenty female activists involved in the anti-mountaintop removal coal campaign to determine whether traditional models of political activism apply. I find the theoretical framework of political participation by past research fails to fully explain the activism of these women. Rather, the most important factor in understanding their activism is socialization, but not in the way it is traditionally considered by political participation scholars. It is the socialization of a feminist ideology without the actual recognition of oneself as a feminist, as well as the socialization of the core Appalachian value of sense of place which has driven the activism of this particular group of women.

I first came into contact with the activists studied here through my own work with a regional organization combating the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining. During my interactions with these activists, it became clear both that these groups were dominated by female leadership and volunteers, and that these female activists displayed very unique characteristics from what would be expected from the literature on political activism. The women I met were rarely well-educated, typically had low paying employment, and valued a lifestyle and belief system resembling that of a stereotypical image of backwoods Appalachia. Most live in hollows, go to church every Sunday, and deeply embrace the cultural heritage passed down to them.

These women quickly became my heroes. The strength they displayed in the face of what often appeared an impossible struggle, and the passion and intellect that they put into their activism, was inspiring. With personal roots in the same cultural values, I connected deeply with these activists; yet from an academic perspective, it was difficult to understand

the inconsistencies in what I saw in these activists and the characteristics I would expect to find based on the scholarship I had encountered in the field of political science.

The first time I visited a mountaintop removal coal mining site, it brought tears to my eyes. Afterwards, I listened to numerous women tell their personal stories on living in the coalfields. I heard of children who could not sleep at night when it rained for fear of disastrous flooding. I heard of illnesses from poisoned water and coal dust in the air. I heard of an elementary school where almost half of the children were routinely sent home around lunchtime because their faces became pale and they experienced major headaches and nausea from the chemicals from a 2.8 billion ton sludge impoundment just a few hundred yards above the school and dust from the coal loading silo sitting directly next door. Then I heard one woman's story of what finally pushed her into action. She'd seen asthma rates continuously grow, property destroyed, and one day her grandson, seven years old at the time, walked into the house crying. He had wanted to go fishing that day, but when he walked down to the river all the fish were dead at the top of the water. That was the day Judy Bonds, a former manager at the local Pizza Hut, living in a tiny house next to the Coal River, was driven into action. Judy Bonds received the Goldman Award in 2004 which is given each year to recognize one grassroots environmental hero from each continent.

When I interviewed Bonds, she had video cameras up around her house and a shotgun by every door because of death threats she had received, but she still currently serves as the co-director for Coal River Mountain Watch, an organization formed in the middle of the Coal River Valley in Southern West Virginia to fight against the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining. The same day I interviewed Bonds, I went to Mary Miller's house for an interview. Miller is a seventy-eight year old former postmaster for the small community of

Sylvester, West Virginia. She exhibited the hospitality one would expect from an older Appalachian woman, while her husband, a former telephone line worker, wobbled around the front porch taking the long time that it takes an elderly man to sweep up the mess from a plate he spilled. Miller, along with an eighty-one year old woman, took on the plight of their whole community and spent years with lawyers at West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection hearings working to get a cover for the coal being transferred through Sylvester which had caused many respiratory problems and destroyed the property values in the area. The residents of the Coal River Valley affectionately refer to these women as "the Dust Busters." Mary Miller then told me of the day "the grandmothers got arrested." The image of three grandmothers being arrested for their participation in a peaceful protest to protect their families and communities is one that will stay in my memory forever. She then looked me point blank in the eye, and referring to Coal River Mountain, whose mountaintop removal mining permits are currently being held up, said, *"If they give them that permit... I will go to jail, I'm ready, I'd be an old woman going to jail, never been to jail in my life, but I will go to jail before I see that mountain taken down."*

The central Appalachian women I have had the privilege to know have demonstrated to me the most passionate activism I have ever encountered. The puzzling nature of their activism compared with the literature on environmental and political activism presents a paradox that could not be left unstudied.

LITERATURE REVIEW

OVERVIEW OF MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING

The issue of mountaintop removal coal mining has been described as one of the major environmental issues of our time (Montrie 2003; Burns 2007). The EPA defines mountaintop removal as:

> a mining practice where the tops of mountains are removed, exposing the seams of coal. [It] can involve removing 500 feet or more of the summit to get at buried seams of coals. The earth from the mountaintop is then dumped in the neighboring valleys.

This practice has harmful effects on the land and water of Central Appalachia. Over 500 mountains have been destroyed, and loss of vegetation, soil erosion, loss of animal and plant habitats, and polluted streams and groundwater has come along with this destruction (Montrie 2003).

The practice of mountaintop removal is not simply an environmental issue. Its impacts on the region are wide-ranging. Mountaintop removal coal mining can be characterized as both a human rights issue and an economic issue. It is a human rights issue as the citizens in the region have been subjected to the pollution of their drinking water and in many cases the loss of their homes. The coal slurry, water mixed with coal dust from the washing of coal, and valley fills from this form of coal mining have led to massive flooding, which has proven to be fatal to some residents (Burns 2007). Homes have been destroyed from both flooding and blasting during mining which cracks the foundation of homes in the

surrounding area. Blasting has also led to the sinking of many wells, destroying the water source of many families. Additionally, layers of coal dust cover much of the area presenting health hazards and discomfort. Finally, discomfort comes from the constant presence of extreme noise which residents are subjected to daily from the blasting (Montrie 2003; Burns 2007).

Mountaintop coal mining is also a serious economic issue as it increases unemployment on central Appalachia, an already economically depressed region. Mountaintop coal mining decreases jobs in the region as it employs less workers to produce the same amount of coal compared with traditional underground mining practices. Loss of property value is also a problem, due to the destruction of surrounding land and the impact of blasting and coal dust from the mountaintop removal mine sites on homes throughout the area (Burns 2007).

GENERAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In order to understand what drives Appalachian women to participate in the movement against mountaintop removal coal mining in their communities, it is necessary to consider factors which have been shown to influence political participation in general. A great deal of scholarship exists to provide a theoretical framework regarding political participation which examines the various factors which either promote or inhibit activism.

SOCIALIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

Much scholarship on political activism points to socialization as a primary factor in determining how active an individual will choose to become. This socialization begins during childhood and continues through an individual's adult years (Easton and Dennis, 1969). Hyman's classic work, *Political Socialization* (1959), provided one of the first

contributions to understanding the impact of socialization on political participation. In this work, Hyman explains both the socialization process that takes place during childhood and the impact that socialization plays on the decision to participate in political affairs. He identifies four indicators of future political behavior among children. These include choice of "ego-ideals" or childhood heroes, preference of media, level of political knowledge, and responses to direct questions on political behavior (31). Though a convincing argument and theoretical discussion, his work lacks the empirical basis to determine any direct correlation between childhood socialization and political participation.

Utilizing surveys of 12,000 children, Easton and Dennis (1969) provided an empirical basis for the classic argument presented by Hyman (1959). They find images of government and government officials begin to develop in childhood which ultimately have a significant impact on socialization and participation. With regard to their work, however, it is important to note biases present in their study which excluded rural and minority children from the sample.

The importance of childhood socialization on political participation is also presented by Jaros (1973) in his work, *Socialization to Politics*. Jaros (1973) shows that childhood attitudes toward political figures, that of passivity as a "subject" or activity as a "citizen," affects their later attitudes toward political officials and their own ability or right to exert influence on government (38).

Childhood socialization may also have a less direct role in determining adult activism through its impact on the development of an individual's moral reasoning. O'Connor (1974) demonstrates that one's level of moral development is related to the inculcation of moralistic principles derived from their parents. He argues that college-age activists overwhelmingly

exhibit post-conventional moral reasoning, characterized by morality being viewed through the lens of abstract principles of universality, and an adherence to what we refer to as "the golden rule."

Childhood socialization also occurs in the learning of cultural norms. Hechter and Opp (2001) explain norms as phenomena specific to one's culture that proscribe behavior in different circumstances. Fine (2001) emphasizes that normative behaviors must be taught through socialization. The performance of norms cannot be separated from the "meaning system" in the culture which is learned through socialization in one's culture (161). Hechter and Opp (2001) argue that these learned norms are in part responsible for regulating social behavior. As political participation is itself a social behavior, it follows that the learning of cultural norms then affects an individual's propensity to participate in the political system. Easton and Dennis (1969) claim that political socialization does not end after individuals reach adulthood; rather, it continues on throughout their life. The social network to which one belongs as an adult influences their likelihood to be politically active.

Lane (1959) shows a connection between social environment and personal action. He demonstrates, with supporting statistical data, that social classes do develop different characteristic attitudes, beliefs, and goals. He also explains that association with politically active individuals increases the likelihood of an individual becoming politically active themselves.

Opp (2001) argues that norms are learned through personal networks, particularly if members of such networks are closely connected. He finds these networks are particularly important for the emergence of protest norms. Kenny (1992) provides further support for this argument, as he finds significant and substantial evidence that the level of political

activity of those in one's social network is strongly related to one's own level of political activity. He also notes that this is not simply the product of an individual choosing like-minded individuals to make up their social network. Rather, he demonstrates that, unlike activism levels, similar political preferences are often uncommon among members of the social networks.

In general, the research of these authors point to the socialization of individuals, being socialized in an environment which encouraged political figures as childhood heroes, exposure to political or historical media sources, emphasized the importance of political knowledge, and encouraged active attitudes of a "citizen" role as such factors which lead to political participation. Additionally, belonging to a social network in adulthood in which political activism is the norm also works to increase an individual's likelihood to be politically active.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND PARTICIPATION

The influence of socioeconomic status on political participation has been the focus of a great deal of scholarly discussion on political participation. Lane (1959) was one of the first scholars to focus on socioeconomic status in his classic work *Political Life* as a key factor in understanding variation in levels of political participation. Specifically, he found individuals with of higher socioeconomic status were significantly more likely to participate in politics. More recently, Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) declared that the socioeconomic status (SES) model does "an excellent job in predicting political participation" (272). While Brady et al (1995) noted problems in the SES model's ability to determine the link between socioeconomic status and political activity they confirm its strength as a predictive model.

Conway (2000) also finds socioeconomic status is important both to the frequency of citizen's political participation and the type of activities they choose to participate in. Conway (2000) claims individuals of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to have civic orientations, such as perceptions of government responsiveness and a sense of obligation to participate, both of which lead to greater participation. These characteristics exemplify what Putnam (1995) terms as social capital, or social networks of community involvement, and the social trust which comes with them. This social capital is strongly correlated with civic higher levels of civic engagement.

There are differences in the importance of each of the components of socioeconomic status. Conway (2000) claims education is the most important of these factors. She gives multiple reasons for this, including that higher educated individuals generally know more about how the political system works and are therefore typically more aware of the consequences of government action on their lives. She explains that education encourages the development of certain skills which facilitate participation in government. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) refer to these as the direct influences of education on political activism. There are also indirect ways in which education leads to greater levels of political activism. Conway (2000) explains that individuals who reach higher levels of educations attainment are more likely to have an environment where considerable social pressure exists to be politically active. They are also more likely to follow political events in the mass media. Additionally, they are more likely to have opinions on a wide range of subjects and to be more easily stimulated to engage in political activity, to discuss politics with others, and to believe they can have an impact. Putnam (1995) also asserts education to have the strongest correlation to civic engagement. The impact of education is increases the higher the

level of education, with the final two years of college education increasing social capital by twice that of the first two years of high school. Conway (2000) also notes it is not the absolute level of education a person has, but their amount compared to others, which explains why increased educational attainment of the US population as a whole has not resulted in an increase in political participation overall.

A second component of socioeconomic status, income, does not have as great an impact on political participation, but Conway (2000) finds it does play a role. She states within each level of educational attainment, those who have higher incomes tend to participate more in politics. Conway (2000) offers three possible explanations for this increase in participation. The first is that the poor must focus a disproportionate amount of their attention on obtaining the necessities of life, so less time and energy remain available for politics. Politics may therefore be regarded by this group as a luxury item. The second explanation offered is that citizens with higher incomes are likely to have environments that stimulate interest in politics as well as create social pressures and provide opportunities for political participation. A final explanation offered is that the possibility that some effects of higher income on political participation are related to personal characteristics. It holds that individuals, who succeed financially, especially when they have not attained higher educational levels, may have personal attributes reflecting emphasis on purposive activity and personal competence, and a tendency to pay attention to events outside their immediate environment. Such characteristics are consistent with political activity according to Conway (2000). Putnam (1995) finds less importance of income on promoting any form of civic participation. He argues that since the last quarter of the twentieth century, declines in social capital, and therefore civic engagement, have been greater among wealthier citizens.

The third component of socioeconomic status, occupation, is shown by Conway (2000) to have a limited impact on levels of participation after levels of education are taken into account. However, she does find that for three occupational groups, participation rates are higher than would be predicted by education level. These include farm ownership, government employment, and clerical and sales work. Farm ownership may increase participation because these individuals are well aware that their income and job security are directly and significantly affected by government activity. The greater participation of government employees may be attributed to their tendency to have higher levels of political interest and a strong sense of civic duty. Clerical and sales workers may participate more because their jobs force them to deal with abstractions and to cope with bureaucratic reforms on a regular basis. Lack of occupation, or unemployment, is seen to have a strong negative effect on participation rates. Conway (2000) credits this to those unemployed having to focus greater efforts on personal economic concerns. Though not considering the same possibility for the reason offered by Conway (2000) on why unemployment leads to lower levels of activism, Putnam (1995) reinforces the assertion of a negative effect of lack of occupation on participation rates through his finding that among women, those who are employed outside the home are more likely to become involved in civic voluntary organizations.

AGE

Age is another social characteristic which impacts levels of political activism. Conway (2000) explains that younger citizens are less likely to engage in political activities. She credits this to a number of causes, including lower marriage rates, less information about local issues, fewer political contacts, and fewer social and organizational ties due to their

higher rates of mobility. Putnam (1995) finds age to follow education as the second best predictor of civic engagement. He claims that as American grow older, they increase in their levels of activism, which stabilizes during their middle age years, and then falls as they reach their elderly years.

RESOURCES

While socioeconomic status relates to a person's income or wealth, Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) have found it is not, alone, a substantial explanation for the increased participation correlated with these characteristics. They have taken an alternative look to consider how *resources* impact political participation and find evidence that it does have an impact. Resources such as income, free time, and civic skills as acquired through employment, organizational, and church involvement all lead to increased political participation. The primary difference between this approach and the socioeconomic status model is that the resource model takes into account the costs of participation, which is important in looking at political participation from a rational choice perspective.

Downs (1957) explains how the costs of participation can have an extreme impact on an individual's decision to participate. The author explains that a rational man chooses to act in a way which he believes makes him best able to reach his desired goals while utilizing the least of his resources possible. He goes on to explain all of the costs of participation, which include information costs as well as the cost of acting in itself. Information costs include determining ones goals, the best methods to achieve these goals, and the consequences of choices. The procurement and analysis of information to make these decisions require both the time and skills mentioned by Brady et al (1995).

In addition, Downs (1957) explains that once a rational man decides how he wants to act, the costs involved in doing so may prevent him. The man must view the impact of the returns he will receive from participation to be of enough benefit to offset the costs involved in acting. The rational voter theory presented by Downs (1957) provides a strong argument for non-participation. However, Conway (2000) argues that this cost-benefit analysis of voting provided by Downs (1957) may actually make non-voting political participation more likely among many citizens. Individuals may view other activities as more cost-effective. For example, time spent writing a letter to an elected official takes no more time than going to the polls to vote, and may be seen as more likely to achieve one's desired outcome. Olson (1971) also argues that in smaller or "privileged" groups, often, the public good may be seen by members, or potential members, to outweigh the cost of participation, leading them to act when they otherwise might choose to be a "free rider," withholding their limited resources while expecting others to participate (76).

Additionally, Conway (2000) believes the rationality of citizens may lead them to the most aggressive forms of participation, such as protest activities, in a further effort to participate in the most cost-effective ways possible. Tarrow (1991) helps to explain participation in such aggressive forms with rational choice theory in another way. The greater the depths of one's grievances, the stronger the benefits will appear to them in their cost-benefit analysis. He provides support for this argument by referring to the number of social movements and reactive protests which have taken place by disadvantaged, largely impoverished groups: those groups who would appear to have the least resources, but the greatest need to act.

ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Rosenstone and Hanson (1993) argue that the mobilization from organizational involvement makes all individuals more likely to participate, and increases the extent to which they choose to participate. They claim that this holds true for all individuals, regardless of their reasons for participation, which can vary a great deal from person to person. Rogers, Bultena, and Barb (1981) also provide evidence of the importance of organizational involvement as a factor of political participation in their work, "Voluntary Association Membership and Political Participation: an Exploration of the Mobilization Hypothesis." Rogers et al. demonstrate that membership within an organization increases the likelihood of political participation by the member. The authors addressed concerns of a spurious relationship by controlling for socioeconomic status and attitude. Their analysis shows a continued independent effect of organizational involvement after these controls.

Each of these findings reinforced Erbe's 1964 study of "Social Involvement and Political Activity." Erbe's (1964) findings were exactly in line with those of Rogers, et al. (1981). Additionally, Erbe's (1964) study answered some more detailed questions regarding the organizational involvement factor. Erbe (1964) suggests that the type organization one is involved in does matter, but only to a small extent. The causal relationship between organizational involvement and political participation is stronger for instrumental, as opposed to expressive groups; groups with higher levels of political discussion also lead to stronger correlation. Despite these slight differences, Erbe (1964) makes it clear that no matter the organization type, this factor remains a strong predictor of political participation. More important in Erbe's (1964) findings is the slightly greater predictive value of this measure on political participation than the factor of socioeconomic status.

Finally, Conway (2000) discusses the importance of organizational involvement as it provides political information through formal and informal messages, which may contribute to motivating members to be politically active. Such involvement also serves as a training ground for the communication skills that facilitate active engagement in political activity. Like Erbe (1964), Conway (2000) finds that the positive impact of organizational involvement on political activity occur regardless of whether the organization's individuals participate in are political or non-political. Conway (2000) also points to organizational involvement as helping to strengthen social networks which may promote group consciousness, as well as social and political trust.

GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS

Group consciousness also has an increasing impact on political participation. Group consciousness, as defined by Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk (1981), consists of three components, group identification, polar affect (preference to one's own group over others), and polar power (expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current status, power, or material resources held by that group in relation to that held by others). As these components grow stronger, political participation is more likely.

Bone and Raney (1967) argue that it is identification with a reference which provide members with the values which prompt them engage in political activism, and allow them to justify that activism. Group consciousness also leads to a longer survival of civically engaged member organizations. Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson (2000) claim organizations are most successful when then they arise from the shared values and objectives of cohesive communities.

Lane (1959) shows that isolation, the alternative to group consciousness, leads to political apathy. Gaventa (1980) asserts that failing to develop a class consciousness may prevent a political consciousness, creating a "culture of silence" (18) in individuals, preventing their activism on issues of importance to them.

Putnam (1995) also presents an important argument regarding group consciousness. He discusses the decline in social capital, which he attributes to television, and how this decline in social capital has led to a decrease in citizen political participation.

POLITICAL INTEREST

What seems an obvious factor of importance in predicting political participation is political interest. Anderson (1975) stated what many would take for granted: that citizens will only participated if they have some interest in a political outcome.

The classic work *The American Voter*, by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) concentrates primarily only on voter turnout, but their findings are likely applicable to other forms of political participation as well. The authors find that, as expected, as the concern over outcomes increases, the likelihood that an individual will participate increases as well.

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) present the idea that political interest in itself is not a causal factor of political activism, but rather the underlying source of political activism is actually driven by other factors, namely two components of socioeconomic status. Increasing levels of educational attainment and occupations of higher status or those bringing greater awareness of political issues lead to amplified political interest within individuals. The authors mention here a concern that this disparity among political interest levels of

different social classes may have a detrimental effect, as there is potential that it "works to reduce the representation of the needy" (494).

While general political interest may help to explain participation in certain forms, such as voting, it does not explain extremely high levels of activism on particular issues. Tarrow (1991) states that an individual's probability of participating is dependent on their level of concern over the issue at hand. When grievances regarding an issue are high, the likelihood of acting on said issue increases as well.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Political scientists have also pointed to certain political attitudes as factors impacting an individual's decision to participate in or abstain from political affairs. Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (2005) identify four such attitudes as sense of moral obligation to participate, strong personal political efficacy, loyal commitment to a candidate or political party, and interest in a policy issue as important in stimulating political involvement.

The personal politically efficacy mentioned above is a particularly important attitude in contributing to political participation. Verba, Burns, and Schlozman's (1997) study explained the attributes which led to high personal political efficacy, such as having a job which requires training and education, high family income, the exercise of civic skills at work, in nonpolitical organizations, and at church. The authors claim that this exercise of civic skills is associated with a personal sense of being a leader.

Conway (2000) emphasizes the importance of external political efficacy. As an individual's views on government responsiveness, as well as their level of trust in public officials increase, the likelihood of them participating increases as well.

Oliver (1984) finds that the level of pessimism one has over others willingness to make active contributions plays a role in their level of political activism as well. The more pessimistic they are about others activism, the more likely they will choose to participate themselves.

Despite the importance of those mentioned above, not all personal attitudes have an impact on political participation. Performing a partialling operation on his data, Erbe (1964) found feelings of alienation had no significant impact. Initially his study found support for this attitude as a negative influence on political participation, but this correlation disappeared after controlling for the variables of socioeconomic status and organizational involvement.

VALUES

Values can also play a role in driving individuals to participate. The benefits one seeks through their activism, as well as the goals of their activism are shaped by their values. Olson (1971) explains how individuals are motivated to act by various selective benefits. These benefits include material, such as monetary incentives or tokens such as t-shirts members of an activist group can receive. Another benefit is group solidarity, a feeling of belonging to a social group. A final type of benefit is purposive, the feeling of doing good. The values a person places on the benefits offered by participation can play a role on what issues and groups they choose to focus their participation.

Finally, Conway (2000) explains that the type of activism a person performs is affected by their values. She argues that more aggressive forms of political protest are more likely to be taken up by individuals who are more concerned with non-materialistic values.

FEMALE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION RATES

Gender has been shown to be an important predictor of political activism. Conway argues that women are less likely than men to take part in political activism. Burrell (2004) claims that despite women now being as likely to vote as men, there is still a substantial difference with regard to other forms of participation.

Verba, Burns, and Schlozman (1997) claim that there is a difference in activism levels of about one third of a political act between men and women, with women participating less. This difference is roughly equivalent to someone with some college education to someone with a Bachelor's degree.

This gender difference is also emphasized by Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (2005). These authors find men are more likely to report that they follow politics, care about politics, and have higher levels of political involvement in general. While such gender differences are shown to exist today, gender now has less of an impact than it has in the past. Lane (1959) stated that lower political participation by females had at the time become a fact so familiar now that it has been taken for granted.

While Lane's (1959) statement was more in reference to voting than the more active forms of political participation which are of concern here, Anderson's (1975) finding that gender differences hold even stronger for forms of participation requiring more effort than voting, qualifies Lane's (1959) claim as applicable for the purposes of this current study. Almost twenty years after Lane (1959) published his work, Anderson (1975) found that sex differences regarding all forms of political participation remained enormous. Writing around the same time as Anderson (1975), Welch (1977) found that women participated less than

men in eleven of thirteen acts, significantly in three of these, all activities dealing with electoral campaigns: trying to influence others to vote a certain way, following campaign activities on the radio, and expressing a high or moderate interest in the election campaign. The one activity Welch (1977) found that in 1972, women significantly more likely to engage in was belonging to a political club.

Consideration of these studies demonstrates that the impacts of gender on political participation have decreased over time. Welch (1977) compared her 1972 data with that from the same Survey Research Center's election studies done in 1952. At that time, men were significantly more likely to participate in eight of twelve activities. Utilizing the same set of SRC election studies, Anderson (1975) claims that the gap in participation rates between men and women was approximately cut in half over that twenty year period. Despite a narrowing of the gap since Lane's (1959) writing, gender remains a strong predictor of political activism today. On almost every political activity, men participate more often. Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue (1995) point out the one exception. Gender parity exists when it comes to protest activities.

Despite their less frequent rate of overall participation, it is important to note that once involved, women do not lag their male counterparts in the amount of time they contribute. Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) show that among the active, women are actually more likely to give a greater number of hours to political activity than men. The opposite is true with regard to financial contributions. Not only are men more likely to be donors, their contributions are typically larger than those of female donors.

The type of political activity women engage in also differs from men. West an ,d Blumberg (1990) claim that women have always, and continue to participate more in social

protest rather than formal politics, such as campaign work. While the authors directly state no explanation for this difference, they do claim that women are drawn primarily to act based on issues of social justice. It may be inferred from their work that this difference in types of activism be attributed to women being more likely to become participants when it centers around specific issue movements, which by nature involve different types of political activities, such as social protest, than forms of participation more common within formal politics such as election work. The authors exclude from this discussion any impact past exclusion from formal political arenas may play in their discussion of types of activism women engage in.

HISTORY/ IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Differences in participation rates of men and women carry strong implications for the political system. This is exemplified by the importance of women in various political movements in the history of the United States. Prior even to being granted their full citizenship rights in the United States, female political participation played a major role in the American political system.

As far back as the revolutionary era, women have been vital to political change. Contributing to the American revolution from British rule, women organized public demonstrations and boycotts. They formed such groups as the Daughters of Liberty and Anti-tea leagues. They wrote poems, signed petitions, and raised funds, all contributing to the cause of revolution (Burrell, 2004). They played a role in the American politics regarding Indian removal in the 1800's. Catherine Beecher organized the first women's petition to Congress on an issue of national policy in 1829 and 1830, signed by over fifteen hundred women against President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal (Portnoy, 2005).

Women were also a driving force in the abolitionist movement of the 1800's. In 1831, Lucretia Mott submitted an anti-slavery petition signed by over two thousand women to Congress. At the time of these petitions, such petitions were the only means American women had to address their grievances on a national level (Portnoy, 2005).

Women of course played a crucial role advocating for their own rights of full citizenship. The women's suffrage movement was led primarily by women. This movement was one which started from the revolutionary era, originally advocated by women such as Abigail Adams and continued on by women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony until women were nationally granted suffrage rights in 1920 (Sochen, 1971).

Since being granted full citizenship rights, women have had a significant role in affecting public policy through activism. A major example of this is the women's peace movement. Many women's groups have placed much focus on peace activism. They have been the major promoters of peace since the nineteenth century through current international conflicts (Burrell, 2004). West and Blumberg (1990) claim that women are, and have been, the "backbone" of both the US and the global peace movement.

Many other issues would never have even been dealt with through public policy were it not for female political participation. A prime example of this is domestic violence legislation. Women's activism was necessary for this issue to even be considered as a social problem for government action. Wittner (1998) argues that this movement represents one of the most successful political movements of recent history; and it was led almost exclusively by women's groups.

Of particular interest to this study, is the major role women have played on environmental issues. Driving much of the grassroots environmental movement, women

have been a key force in the formation of government legislation on toxic waste disposal. The earliest community activists on this issue were white, working-class women (Krauss, 1998).

Government regulation of the mining industry has also been driven in arguably equal part by women compared with men. Though men have made up the leadership of miner's unions, Maggard (2004) claims that women played a crucial role in union success in influencing government policy regarding coal mining. They were active in strikes, regularly organizing and standing in picket lines and protests.

The importance of women's participation in US history shows that female political participation on issues does impact how issues are handled in the political system; and the differences in how various factors influence activism by men and women is important to consider, as the participation of women in political system has been shown to have a profound impact on the shaping of political movements and influencing the direction of US policy.

GENDER DIFFERENCES WITH REGARD TO SPECIFIC FACTORS

While there is a difference in levels among political participation between the genders, the paths to participation are not different (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba, 1994). Rather, there are differences between the sexes with regard to the various factors shown to influence activism levels. Women and men in the United States may differ in how they are socialized, in their levels of socioeconomic status, resources, opportunities and encouragement for involvement, identify at different degrees within groups, and exhibit different political attitudes and values. Women may also be subjected a factor of

discrimination not experienced by men. It is the differences with regard to all these factors which may cause this gender difference.

SOCIALIZATION DIFFERENCES

Differences in childhood socialization contribute to the gender gap in political activism. Lane (1959) finds that political learning differences begin as early as age twelve. Jaros (1973) finds sex differences appearing even earlier, often as early as the fourth grade.

Conway (2000) argues that children are socialized to view political interest and activity as more appropriate for males. Lane (1959) explains that this different socialization of the sexes manifests itself in differences of the ego-ideal and differences in media preference. He finds that boys are more likely to identify political and historical figures as their heroes; while girls are more likely to identify teachers and family members in these roles. Boys also receive greater encouragement to read works on history; while girls are more often offered books of fiction as reading materials. These socialization differences present themselves in adulthood, as what Jaros (1973) refers to as the "cultural tradition of feminine nonparticipation transmitted in childhood" leads to females having less an orientation to engage in many forms of political action.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS DIFFERENCES

Women typically have a lower socioeconomic status than males. They tend to reach lower educational attainment, have smaller incomes, and work in lower status occupations. This has a considerable impact on levels of political activism. In fact, Welch (1977) argues that if such structural factors, along with situational factors of family responsibilities, were removed, women would actually participate more than males in most political activities.

Beckwith (1986) finds that socioeconomic status may be the most important factor to consider when looking at gender differences; as she claims the factor to be the most potent predictor of political activity. This can explain why blue-collar women, or those women raised in working-class backgrounds are the least politically active women. Even dating back to some of the first documented political participation by women, those of higher socioeconomic status were more likely to engage in political activism. During the Anti-Indian Removal Campaign, Beecher targeted those considered to be "the most judicious and influential ladies" (44), in other words, those of high status, to petition Congress (Portnoy, 2005). The earliest female activists for women's suffrage were those college educated, from upper middle class backgrounds (Sochen, 1971).

Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) break down the different components of socioeconomic status to determine the impact of each on the gender gap in political participation. They find that each measure of educational attainment is statistically significant in predicting levels of activism. The predictability of these measures is the exact same for males and females; demonstrating that women traditionally having reached lower levels of educational attainment is a central cause of their having less of a predisposition to participate. Sochen (1971) argues that it is through education, specifically experience in college, which brings women to realize the ways in which different groups are disadvantaged and that solutions may be reached through political activism, thus leading them to participation.

When looking at the impacts of income, Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) find that income is a significant factor, but has a much smaller role than education. While the

impact is smaller, it is still important to note, as there is a gender gap evident in income levels, even within occupational fields.

Occupation is also found to be important by Schlozman, Burns and Verba (1994). The traditional adult roles which have been prescribed to women have helped lead to their lower levels of activism. Women have been less likely to be employed outside the home, and this has led them to be less interested in politics. Anderson (1975) offers an extended explanation of the importance of employment outside the home on levels of political activism. She finds evidence that such employment allows both for contact with a broader environment and growth in an individual's feelings of independence and political competence. This in turn provides them with a greater desire, faith in their ability, to act. Putnam (1995) provides evidence that employed women are more likely become civically engaged, acting as members in a greater number of voluntary associations than housewives. However, Putnam (1995) does not go so far as to make a causal inference on the subject, instead speculating the possibility that it may simply be that women who are inclined to join the workforce are also more likely to become involved in civic organizations. Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (2005) add to this discussion by pointing out how peer pressure toward activism can be presented by coworkers. They also add that employment outside the home may cause women to experience the effects of government more directly, therefore increasing their levels of political interest.

McDonagh (1982) presents another view of how occupational status plays a role in political activity, and demonstrates it to be somewhat less a cause of the gender gap in activism than is presented by Schlozman, Burns and Verba (1994). He claims activity in the labor market does not itself have as strong an impact on participation as the status derived

from one's occupation. McDonagh (1982) then argues that status may be achieved or derived. Housewives may derive status from their husband's occupation rather than achieving it themselves through their own participation in the workforce. Finding no difference between the impact of achieved versus derived status, women who do not work outside the home may actually be no less likely to engage in political activism than women who have occupations outside the home.

RESOURCE DIFFERENCES

Women often have less political resources, making it difficult for them to participate on the same level as men. Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) point out that they often have less civic skills. As civic skills are largely gained through education and employment, the greater likelihood of men to achieve graduate, doctoral, and professional degrees has an impact. The lower educational attainment of women leaves them lacking the civic skills derived by those with such higher degrees. The lack of higher degrees also affords them less opportunities to gain civic skills from their jobs, as higher education leads to jobs which present greater opportunities for building civic skills as well.

The lower family income which women usually have as a political resource also decreases their activism levels. Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) explain that it is not only their overall lower family income, but their lower contributions to family income in two-partner homes, which contributes to their lack of finances as a political resource compared to men.

Conway (2000) shows women to also be lacking in the political resource of free time. This is due to their disproportionate responsibility for household chores and caring for children. Childcare responsibilities are also shown to be important in decreasing female

political involvement by Welch (1977). She finds that women with children are significantly less likely to follow mass media coverage of politics. Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) find the presence of pre-school age children in the home, however, decreases the involvement of both men and women. Putnam (1995) presents a case that calls into question this assumption that less free time enjoyed by women compared with men leads to decreased activism. The greater civic engagement by women who would be assumed to have less free time, due to full-time employment, compared with women not in the workforce, presents a discrepancy with other scholarship on the subject. In this discussion of time as a political resource, it is important to note that, as explained by Conway (2000), when women do become active, they actually contribute more time to political activism than their male counterparts.

ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT DIFFERENCES

Organizational involvement is one area which actually serves to boost female political participation compared with men. Affiliation with organized groups is shown by Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) to boost women's overall political activity by one half of a political act, while the same does not hold true for men. These authors also show that organizational affiliation plays a particularly important role in boosting activity among women not employed outside the home. For women who, in the past five years, have not held a job for as long as a year, organization involvement has twice the impact on political activism than for other women.

Despite organizational involvement being a factor which could serve to decrease the gender gap in political activism, Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue (1995) find women are less likely than men to be involved in any type of organization, both political as well as

non-political. This in turn contributes to the continued lower levels of political involvement by women. Furthering this gender gap, according to Putnam (1995) the recent decline in organizational involvement has occurred to a greater extent among women.

GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS DIFFERENCES

Group consciousness helps to decrease the gender gap in political activism. Defining women as a disadvantaged group, Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk (1981) argue that group consciousness can be particularly strong in women as their polar power, or expressed dissatisfaction with group's current status may be particularly strong.

Klein (1984) points out, however, that being a member of a disadvantaged group does not in itself lead to activism. Women must first recognize that their individual problems are shared by other women, and that there are political solutions to their unequal social conditions. This brings about the importance of feminist consciousness of female political activism. The term feminism was first coined by historian Nancy Cott. While Cott then explained it to mean "a complete social revolution in the roles of women," and various perspectives define the ideology in different ways, the general ideology of feminism is based on the main tenet that women should be equal to men, politically and otherwise (Burrell, 2004). This main tenet provides the basic definition which scholars have used to study the impact of a feminist ideology on female political activism. Klein (1984) explains that a consciousness develops as women come to view traditional sex roles as incompatible with goals of equality with men.

Fulenwider (1981) argues for the importance of the polar power discussed above by explaining that it is women who experience the greatest material deprivation who are most likely to embrace a feminist ideology. While a feminist ideology increases group

consciousness, and therefore leads to greater political activism among women, Fulenwider (1981) also shows that it serves to decrease external political efficacy as well. The lower trust feminists have in government officials is important to consider as external political efficacy has been shown to be an important factor of political partipation.

POLITICAL INTEREST DIFFERENCES

Conway (2000) claims that women have a lower interest in politics than men, paying less attention to politics, and being less likely to follow mass media coverage of politics. Verba, Burns and Schlozmen (1997) claim this lower interest level in politics, as well as their inferior levels of political knowledge due to that lower interest level, to play a decisive role in creating the gender gap in political activism.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES DIFFERENCES

Women and men differ with regard to certain political attitudes. While they exhibit equal levels of external political efficacy, Conway (2000) finds that women tend to have lower internal political efficacy than men. Lane (1959) helps to explain the possible cause of this lower internal political efficacy. He finds that images of women presented in American culture have traditional been less than competent. Instead the culture has emphasized dependent images, reducing women's personal sense of their ability to be politically effective.

Lane (1959) also claims that American culture has not traditionally defined political activism as part of women's social duties. This has in turn led to women lacking a strong moral obligation to participate that men may develop from the expectation of political involvement as one of their social duties.

Women and men may often participate for different reasons, which may influence which issues they choose to be involved on, and which groups they choose to be involved with. Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue (1995) find that the selective benefits that drive political action differ in their levels of appeal to the sexes. Social benefits have a greater prominence that material benefits in what women claim as motivators for their activism. This does not hold true for male activism.

VALUES

Different values have also played a role in the differences in activism between men and women on various issues. Naples (1998) claims that often women's activism is shaped by their gendered experiences. Moses and Hartmann (1995) claim that women often act toward many issues in response to their "humanistic" or "maternalistic" values (341). West and Blumberg (1990) claim that this explains women's higher levels of activism on what they describe as humanistic or nurturing issues, such as peace, environmentalism, or education, those issues that can be seen to directly threaten their children and families. This concern with the direct threat to their families does not necessarily mean that the concerns of most female activists are narrow, impacting them most personally. Burrell (2004) states that women actually tend to have a more sociotropic view of the economy, looking at the impacts of policy on society as a whole, rather than simply on the impacts of policy on their specific personal situation. They have a propensity to concern themselves with the community as a whole. Maggard (2004) argues that women often justify their involvement in political issues as an extension of their role as caregivers, explaining their political action as a struggle to feed, house, and clothe their children.

This type of justification dates back to early women's activism. Portnoy (2005) explains that during the Indian Removal debates of the 1800's Beecher and other women claimed that it was their duty as the sex responsible for caring for the home and the preservation of life which gave them right to concern themselves in an issue which affected the homes and life of others, in this instance the Native Americans. In the early 1800's women argued for state and local policy through what Portnoy (2005) describes as a "discourse of domesticity" (54). The issues they acted on included those they believed dealt with the home, such as female education, city services, and orphanages.

Krauss (1998) states that women, in addition to being drawn to activism by maternalistic values, also term their social protest goals through the ideologies of motherhood. Rather than presenting themselves as identical to men in their political activism roles, they often accept a traditional sexual division of labor which assigns them the primary responsibility for caring for their families.

DISCRIMINATION AS A FACTOR

Gender discrimination can also help to explain lower levels of political activism by women. Welch (1977) argues that sociological and other differences in motivation to participate are not enough to explain the gender gap in activism levels. Rather, she claims that the discrimination against women which has hindered them in receiving equal education or higher paying jobs has been a factor in preventing them from reaching equal levels of political activism. Finally, Conway (2000) argues that the negative attitudes of female political activism held by the men who have often led political organizations and movements have acted as gatekeepers, sometimes preventing them from gaining the opportunity to act, and many times relegating them only to menial tasks.

OTHER DIFFERENCES

Conway (2000) claims a specific gender gap within one specific age group. Within the older population, women are particularly less likely to vote than their male counterparts.

Welch (1977) also explains that the social characteristic of marriage has a different affect on the likelihood of participation between the sexes. She finds that marriage decreases the probability of political activism among women.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

FACTORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Of environmental activists, Milton (1996) argues there are two types. There are preservationists and conservationists. Preservationists wish to protect the environment from human use. They recognize a moral obligation to nature itself. Conservationists act for a different reason. They emphasize nature for its use by humanity. They wish to protect the environment as a resource for humans to use.

Among environmental activists, there are also various justifications used for their activism. Hannigan (2006) describes three rationales for the defense of the environment. These include the Arcadian, the Ecosystem, and the Justice rationale. In the Arcadian rationale, nature is viewed as priceless for its aesthetic and spiritual value. In the Ecosystem rationale, human interference in biotic communities is viewed as negative, as it is considered to upset the balance of nature. The Justice rationale holds that all citizens have a basic right to live and work in a healthy environment. Those activists acting based on the justice rationale would fall in Milton's (1996) category of Conservationists.

Of the three rationales presented by Hannigan (2006), the justice rationale has been used to the greatest extent in recent history. Hannigan (2006) refers to the first Earth Day in 1970 to represent the emergence of the modern environmental movement. The creation of this day is based on the environmental justice rationale. The environmental justice movement, however, did not emerge to a great extent in the United States until the early 1980's. At that time, the environmental justice movement was brought on by discontent of urban citizens with toxic landfills and garbage incinerators in minority communities.

Hannigan (2006) explains that the framework of the environmental justice rationale has four major components. Each of these is based on the concerns of citizens living in an environment, rather than on the concerns of nature itself. These components include (1) the right of citizens to obtain information about their environment and its impact on them, (2) the right to be heard regarding decisions which impact their environment, (3) the right to be compensated when their environment is negatively impacted, and (4) the right to participate democratically in environmental decision-making.

Among all types of environmental activists, there are various factors which contribute to their participation. Certain cultural values play a role. Nash and Lewis (2006) find empirical evidence that a specific set of values, collectively known as the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) discourage environmental activism in the individual's who hold them. There are three dimensions of the dominant social paradigm: technological, economic, and political. The technological dimension is the assumption that technological progress will solve existing environmental problems. The economic dimension is the belief that the continued economic growth in a nation and the increased material well-being of citizens will result in the resolving of environmental problems. The political dimension is the belief that

solutions to environmental problems will best be reached through political, or rather, economic freedom, as citizens act as self-interest individuals in a free-market economy. Environmental concern and adherence to any such values are negatively correlated. Nash and Lewis (2006) claim that the importance of influence of the DSP lies in its subtlely. It impacts political attitudes, which in turn impact participation levels.

GRASSROOTS ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

It is important to note that there is a difference between national grassroots environmental organizations. The Appalachian women who are engaged in the fight against mountaintop removal coal mining in their communities belong to grassroots organizations.

Freudensberg and Steinsapir (1992) claim that while the primary constituency of national environmental organizations are white and middle-class, grassroots environmental groups are comprised by individuals from a broad cross-section of class and occupation categories. Unlike national organizations, grassroots environmental groups are distinguished by their characteristic of often being led by mothers and housewives. These women typically have very little organizing experience.

Freudensberg and Steinsapir (1992) also claim there are various shared perspectives of grassroots environmental organizations which also distinguish them from national organizations. The activists involved with these organizations tend to be conservationists following the justice rationale. The primary motivating factor of members of these groups is human health. Concern for the health of one's self, their families, and future generations is the most often cited cause for participation.

Additionally, Freudensberg and Steinsapir (1992) claim the shared perspective of an ambivalent attitude toward scientific and technical expertise exists among members of

grassroots environmental groups. While maintaining close relationships with some members of the scientific community, there is a strong distrust of other scientists. These activists distinguish between the two groups by placing distrust on scientists who work for industry, and oftentimes those working for the government as well.

Another shared perspective of grassroots environmental activists found by Freudensberg and Steinsapir (1992) is the emphasis on citizen participation. There is often a distrust of public officials and agencies. Citizen enforcement of federal and state environmental legislation is highly valued.

A final shared perspective of grassroots environmental activists is a challenge to the economic dimension of the DSP. Freudensberg and Sapir (1992) explain that these activists typically do not hold the belief that economic growth benefits everyone. At the same time, these activists rarely recognize the anti-capitalist implications of their views.

Helping to explain the greater participation of citizens in general on grassroots environmental efforts rather than national environmental movements, is the factor of internal political efficacy. Nash and Lewis (2006) show this factor to play a powerful role in citizen participation on environmental issues. Citizens are much more likely to have higher political efficacy on issues which are local, dealing with them on a closer, day to day level. They are therefore much more likely to act on local rather than national environmental issues.

WOMEN ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

There are differences between the factors which influence women to act on environmental issues compared to men which should be noted as well. Maggard (2004) argues that environmental issues make up one area in which women have historically been particularly drawn to activism. Moses and Hartmann (1995) claim that women have been

shown to participate in environmental issues in response to their "humanistic" or "maternalistic" values, viewing environmental protection as important for its impacts on people, rather than seeing it as important for the environment itself.

However, Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue (1995) find little difference between the motivations of female and male environmental activists. In their study, they expected to find that women would be more likely than men to be motivated to engage in environmental activism based on their altruistic, communal, peaceful, and nurturing attributes. Their results did not confirm this idea.

APPALACHIAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Appalachia should be looked at as a unique region and culture when considering what drives political activism of its residents, as any subculture may vary somewhat from the general population of a nation with regard to the specific factors which influence participation. Appalachians are a distinct subgroup, referred to by Keefe (1998) as an "emerging ethnic entity" (137). Walls (1977) argues that a distinctiveness of the region comes in part from Appalachia's place in US capitalism. Appalachia is a peripheral region, outside the core of capitalist society. Peterson, Novak, and Gleason (1980) claim that cultural norms, as well as dialect and sense of identity as a group distinguish this subculture from others.

While limited, there is some information on what factors influence Appalachian political activism provided by scholarship on Appalachia. As rates on the amount of political activism in Appalachia are unavailable, scholar observations, while potentially subjective, can be used to gain an idea of political activism levels in the region. While Ryan (1975)

argued that Appalachians were unlikely to participate in non-election related activities, and only minimally in those, there appears to have been a significant increase in levels of activism. Fisher (1993) states that there is a good deal of Appalachian political activism today, which has continued since an "outburst of grassroots activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s" (5). Billings and Blee (2000) reinforce Fisher, asserting that "Central Appalachia may well lead the nation today in the proliferation of vigorous citizens' movements" (325).

FACTORS LEADING TO POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN APPALACHIA

There are a few factors which have been demonstrated to lead to political activism in Appalachia. While typically some of the strongest predictors of political activism, Montrie (2003) finds the socioeconomic status components of education and income are poor predictors of activism on the issue of mountaintop removal coal mining.

Ryan (1975) claims that residents of Central Appalachia are more likely to act on tangible, or narrowly defined goals. Other characteristics of a goal, or issue, also play a role. Montrie (2003) argues that with regard to the issue of mountaintop removal coal mining, fear of destruction of "homesteads" and job loss motivate activism, while ecological concerns have much less influence.

Who benefits from political activism also differs for Appalachians compared to other groups. Ryan (1975) claims Appalachians are more likely to participate on particularized terms, when their family, friends, or themselves will be impacted. This differs for example from African-Americans who are more likely to participate on communal terms, for society. This may help to explain why many Appalachians have been motivated to act on the specific

issue of mountaintop removal, as it is their own families and communities who are most greatly impacted. Neo-populist thought, as presented by Fisher (1993), echoes this idea. It holds that close community ties may mobilize activism among Appalachians, whereas broader ideas of class consciousness would fail to do so.

Seitz (1995) demonstrates the importance of the Appalachian cultural norm of familism, claiming that working-class Appalachian women base their decision to act on concern for their families. Gender roles are also shown to be a factor as this group is more likely to participate when their activism can be seen as an "extension of the private and domestic sphere" (28). Finally, the ethnic identity of Appalachians is also a factor. Seitz (1998) asserts that women in the region are driven to act by the consciousness that develops from their self-perception as a member of the 'Appalachian ethnicity' (215).

Fisher (1993) explains that neo-populist thought holds that Appalachians will engage in activism based on "shared cultural memory and values" (317). When an issue appears to threaten the cultural values of the region, residents are more likely to act. This perspective holds that the individuals within the region most likely to engage in activism are those who maintain most solid sense of having roots in the regions. Land, family, and an emphasis on social equality comprise these traditional cultural values expected by neo-populists to mobilize activism.

HINDRANCES TO APPALACHIAN POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Certain characteristics of Appalachians have proven to be hindrances to the political activism of those in the region. Jones (1976) claims that the norm of individualism prevents action as it leads to the avoidance of those who would solicit their involvement on social causes. However, this observation, unsupported by any research, could be debated. Keefe

(1998) explains the cultural norm of individualism as one of "cooperative independence" (145). Additionally, Fisher (1993) argues that community relationships are of high importance to Appalachians.

Gaventa (1980) describes another hindrance to political activism in the region, powerlessness. In the second dimension, the 'rule of anticipated reactions' or even direct sanctions may prevent an individual from participation. The third dimension of power may prevent activism by manipulation of information, or through the reinforcement of a sense of powerlessness from repeated failures in past experiences of political activism. This is particularly important with regard to the issue of mountaintop removal coal mining, given that coal companies in Appalachia have held a tremendous amount of power in the region.

While some understanding of what drives political activism in Appalachia is presented, it is very limited. No large-scale empirical studies have been done on the topic, and case studies on the subject provide findings on only a few factors of political activism. The difference between Appalachians and other groups is in their cultural norms. Applying these cultural norms to a theoretical framework developed from scholarship on political activism in general may provide an idea to the differences in Appalachian political activism compared with other groups. While this will not offer any reliable findings, it may point out areas where future study would be desired.

APPALACHIAN CULTURAL NORMS

It is necessary to consider the culture of a region when discussing what drives individuals within the region to activism, as Hechter and Opp (2001) argue that cultural norms serve to regulate the behavior of individuals. Jaros (1973) claims that the learning of culturally defined values, even those seemingly non-related to political attitudes, can have

political consequences. Naples (1998) argues that cultural practices have a major impact on how, and on what issues, women, specifically, become involved in political activism.

The discussion on the region's cultural norms which follows is specific only to white Appalachians. Though somewhat incomplete from exclusion of other races in the region, I have chosen to focus on white residents alone for two important reasons. First, it is not simply location which serves to create a reference group from which members accept norms as guides to behavior. Conway (2000) explains that identification with such a reference group is also necessary. Keefe (1998) asserts that Appalachian African-Americans have a distinctive identity as both "Appalachian" and "black," making up a separate subculture, with conceivably different cultural values and norms than their white neighbors. Additionally, Keefe (1998) states that making up only eight percent of the population in the region, the literature available on Appalachian political culture has tended not to focus on black residents, but rather only on white residents (134).

Appalachian cultural norms have also been shaped by the history of the region and its residents. Keefe (1998) asserts that The Great Awakening, which replaced Calvinism with evangelical Protestantism, the fractured political and economic link to the South following the Civil War, and the transformation of the region from a Jeffersonian frontier to a peripheral region, exploited for its land and resources, all worked to shape the culture which characterizes this group today.

Resulting from the Great Awakening, Jones (1976) asserts a religious world view characterized by a high level of religiosity, an emphasis on personal salvation and fatalistic religious attitudes is a major part of the Appalachian value system today. Keefe (1998) claims that the strength of religion as a core value over the norms of this region can be seen

in many aspects of Appalachians' daily lives, from regular church attendance to a preference for music which incorporates religious themes.

Keefe (1998) claims that egalitarianism is a value of high importance to Appalachians as well. People in this region take special care to ignore differences in social status. Rather than valuing what may be seen as a traditional American ideal of achieving great success, Appalachians instead tend to embrace economic strategies based on the value of adequacy. Pretension is frowned upon, and self-deprecating is a common practice.

Another core value to Appalachians presented by Keefe (1998) is individualism. Self-reliance is emphasized, leading to cultural norms of resisting charity no matter how great a need for such charity may be. Jones (1976) claims that this individualism has also led to a tradition of resisting government authority.

While individualistic, Keefe (1998) asserts that this group is also characterized by personalism. A high value is placed on relations with others. Jones (1976) claims that norms of friendliness and hospitality are practiced, and socializing is a regular and important part of every activity. In addition to being personable, Keefe (1998) finds avoidance of conflict is the cultural norm. Negative opinions of others are not expressed publicly, and authoritarianism is considered rude. People often avoid leadership roles simply to avoid any possibility of confrontation.

Keefe (1998) also states that the core value of familism is a defining characteristic of almost every aspect of Appalachian life. "Family" refers to the extended family, which is the "fundamental social institution" of Appalachia (147). Seitz (1995) argues that Appalachian values are rooted in kinship. Fisher (1993) claims that kinship is the basis of community in the region as well, and community is considered extremely important.

Cultural norms defining gender roles also have a strong impact on Appalachians. Moore (2001) argues that differences between masculinity and femininity are more pronounced here. Gender expectations tell women to be domestic. Seitz (1995) asserts that Appalachian women develop "maternal" or "relational" thinking (41). Moore (2001) and Seitz (1995) both find that women are socialized to be subservient, and often patriarchal social hierarchies are reinforced in the church.

A final Appalachian core value is sense of place. Keefe (1998) asserts that this subculture identifies strongly with the land, and has deep attachments to the mountains. Appalachians identify with their community as the place as well as the people and feel a responsibility to be stewards of the land.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the factors motivating activism on this issue of mountaintop removal coal mining, and the specific role of women in this movement, I conducted interviews with twenty female leaders and activists from key interest groups working to eliminate mountaintop removal coal mining in the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. These interviews included board and staff members as well as active volunteers. In order to determine which individuals in the selected groups were active participants in the groups and movement, I relied on the judgments of the top staff within each of the groups.

The interest groups included in the study were the Coal River Mountain Watch (CRMW), Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC), Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM), and the Lindquist Environmental Action Foundation (LEAF). These groups were purposely chosen among a total of thirteen groups in the United States who are working toward bringing an end to mountaintop removal coal mining. Of the thirteen groups working on this issue in the United States only six reside in the coal fields. Because the focus of this study is to understand the activism of women on this issue in their communities, I limited my sample to these six groups who reside in the coal field region. I was able to attain interviews with women in four of the six groups. I contacted the groups through personal contacts made through my work with Appalachian Voices, a regional conservation group based in Boone,

North Carolina. I initially contacted the co-directors or vice chairs of each of the groups in order to determine which members were active participants in the group and movement and to acquire their contact information. I then contacted the referred individuals by telephone to set up the interviews. Ultimately, the twenty women interviewed included nine volunteers, six staff members, three co-directors, and one of the founders of these organizations.

As noted above, the groups which my interviewees represented were limited to those groups based in the coal fields (Coal River Valley West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and Tennessee). These interviews were conducted in-person in the communities which the women reside. Eleven of the interviews took place in the interviewees' homes, four took place in the offices of the interest groups, two took place at a local library, another two took place in a community park, and one took place in a local coffee shop. The interviews were conducted between the months of May 2008 and September 2008. The state of residence, position of the interviewee within the interest groups, and the interview setting are provided in Appendix C.

The interviewees ranged in age from under twenty-five to seventy-eight. All were Caucasian with the exception of one Hispanic woman. Seventeen of the twenty were born in or near the coal field communities and continue to reside in these communities; the three other women had either lived in the region for over fifteen years or since adolescence.

Overall, this group was relatively representative of the population of this region and activists within the movement. Most notably, there is little racial diversity within this region, with over ninety percent of the population being Caucasian, and that is represented in this sample. One minor concern with my sample is the absence of southwest Virginia women

from the study. This exclusion occurred do to an inability to obtain interviews with any individuals from the one interest group in this region.

The purpose of the interviews was to gauge the influence of various factors presented by the literature on mobilizing female activists in the region. Considering previous scholarship, the interviews were made up of questions which addressed the following concepts. Social characteristics, including socioeconomic status, education, and occupational status, as well as marital status and age are questioned. Other than occupation, these are all addressed in a written demographics response sheet included in Appendix A.

Another concept addressed is socialization, including both political socialization as it has traditionally been considered in the general political participation literature, as well as socialization to Appalachian cultural norms. Questions on political socialization included those typically cited by studies of political participation in general, such as "Were your parents involved in the community?" Those addressing the role of socialization to cultural norms ranged from specific factors, "How close would you say your extended family is?" to those encased in questions addressing other general factors, such as "Do you attend a church or other religious institution regularly?" which served not only to demonstrate characteristics of organizational involvement and resources of civic skills, but also allowed the women to express the weight placed on religion and or spirituality in their lives. (This particular example serves to demonstrate the importance of the open-ended interview format, as the majority of the women chose to elaborate on why they attended such an institution if they did, and the role it played in their lives outside of their activity within the institution.)

Other factors presented as important in the general political participation literature are considered as well. These include political attitudes of internal and external political

efficacy, partisanship, ideology, resources of free time and civic skills; organizational involvement, group consciousness, and political interest.

Additionally, feminist ideology and values, asserted by the scholarship on female political participation to be critical motivating factors on female political activism, are addressed. Similar to the factors of socialization to Appalachian cultural norms, these factors were directly questioned, including "Do you think it is more difficult for women to succeed in politics or other areas compared with men?" They were also encased in questions regarding other specific factors, such as "Were your parents involved in the community?" which, for example, allowed a format for some of these women to discuss a "strong womanhood" exhibited by their mothers which they claim to have shaped their political views.

Finally, certain factors indicated in the literature to impact environmental activism, including the type of environmentalism adhered to and the influences of the dominant social paradigm (DSP) were considered. The type of environmentalism adhered to is determined by responses to value questions, such as "What was your main motivation for becoming involved on this issue." Responses referring to the health impacts on the community point to the Justice rationale, while those referring to the destruction of the beauty of the land demonstrate an Arcadian rationale. The influence of the dominant social paradigm is determined by a specific question for each dimension of the DSP. For example, the economic dimension of the DSP is measured by responses to the question "Do you believe greater economic progress in the US is more likely to be beneficial or detrimental to the environment?"

Other than demographic questions, the questions were designed to be open-ended and semi-structured. The interviews lasted from thirty minutes to over three hours. All of the interview questions are listed in Appendix A.

My analysis looked at interviewee responses to questions measuring the different variables (see Appendices A and B) in order to determine which factors of political activism were present in each of the interviewees. In addition, I used an open-coding method through the entirety of the interview transcripts, seeking out references to any concept considered in responses to all questions. I include such references in data collected by the variable measures for each of the concepts referenced. Finally, I also examined the interviewee responses for statements implying the holding of certain cultural values.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of the interviewee responses demonstrates a failure of the theoretical framework provided by past scholarship. This group of female activists should not be expected to engage in political activism based on a review of the literature. The high levels of activism exemplified by this group present a paradox which calls into question what we currently know about political activism.

The importance of considering the culture of the region when examining factors of political activism is profoundly demonstrated in this case study. Where inconsistencies arise between the general, female, and environmental political participation scholarship and the interviewee responses, previous literature on Appalachian cultural norms helps to fill in these gaps. It is only through a distinctive interpretation of the relationship between the culture of this region and the motivating factors of political activism that the activism of this specific group can be understood.

Interviewee responses to questions gauging the influence of specific factors shown by past research to be important in influencing political activism, including situational and structural factors, factors of socialization, political factors, the factor of group consciousness, and values factors all differ from what would be expected. It is clear that the theoretical framework provided by past scholarship fails to apply to this particular group of female

activists. Standard assumptions about political activism would not have predicted that these women would be engaged in political activism.

Factors strongly related to activism are clearly missing. Socioeconomic status, one of the most highly predictive factors of political activism, is low in these women: only eight of them received a four year college degree or higher, and though all but three had worked outside the home at some point during their lives, most were not employed in occupations which have been shown to encourage activism. Other social characteristics of age and marital status were also less than helpful; these women spread across a broad range with respect to these characteristics. Organizational involvement is low in these women; only five of the women were very actively involved in other organizations prior to their involvement on the mountaintop removal coal mining issue. External political efficacy is virtually non-existent; none of these women expressed even a moderate level of trust in the responsiveness of government or in the concern of government official's for citizens' opinions. While exhibiting certain components including polar power and individual versus system blame, the components of group identification and polar affect were not present; overall, group consciousness cannot be used to explain the activism of these women either.

As this theoretical framework would predict, these women do demonstrate some of the factors related to activism on the environment in general, including high levels of political interest, internal political efficacy, resources of time, and lack of adherence to the dominant social paradigm. They also perceive the same selective benefits, those of group solidarity and purposive benefits, which we would expect of women in general.

SOCIALIZATION TO "BORN FIGHTING" MENTALITY

The factor of political socialization proves to be the most important. However it is not in the way it is traditionally considered. Considering the women's direct encouragement from parents to become interested and involved in politics does not in itself serve as a strong predictor. However, through stories of their childhood, we are able to see how a tendency toward activism in the community was presented to them early in their lives.

A few of the women did have parents who encouraged them to take a political interest in conventional ways of watching the news and getting involved in local politics. For instance, a co-director of one organization recalled:

> *Um, yeah, my mother used to take me the Charleston Gazette, because the Backwoods Paper she said was a Republican paper, she said, and it was, she's right. You know, she, she would read the paper a lot and show us things.*

The majority of the women spoke of a different experience. One activist explained: *"You know you really didn't have time to talk about politics, because you were just worried about surviving actually."*

Of those women that didn't speak of such direct encouragement, many of them expressed memories of parents who played significant, if not extremely conventional roles in their communities. One woman told of a unique influence of her father:

> *We really didn't have any political discussions... He was in the UMWA back in this area when they was trying to get the UMWA established, and so him and some of his nephews and cousins and things did a whole lot of things to get that established, and a lot of illegal things, like blowing up a railroad bridge or something, you know, to keeping from, you know, taking the coal out or something. But yeah he was pretty adamant about working to make things better for his family.*

Among this group of women, there was expressed a value of standing up for themselves and their families that they learned from their upbringing. An attitude of having

been "born fighting," that they believe characteristic to their heritage, was presented by many of the women. A West Virginia activist stated:

> *And I think that's true, given how tough sometimes it can be to survive here, and that's handed down generation after generation. I think my mother was born fighting, and I think that I was born fighting.*

These responses exemplify the importance of the socialization to Appalachian cultural values presented in the literature. Jones' (1976) and Keefe's (1998) assertion of the importance of individualism as a core value of this region is particularly visible in these responses. While the scholarship provided by authors such as Conway (2000), Jaros (1963), and Hyman (1959), fail to provide an explanation of the activism of this group through their consideration of childhood political socialization, as the majority of the women did not demonstrate a great deal of encouragement to be active in politics or civic organizations in their childhoods; Jones' (1976) work provides an explanation of how their childhood socialization did prove influential in spite of what could be seen as an inconsistency with the literature here. The norm of individualism, here seen in the stories of witnessing parental resistance to authority, in some cases through miner's unions, in others through resistance to societal political pressures, are demonstrated influences on the willingness of these women to act against coal companies and governmental policies with which they disagree.

Disputing Jones' (1976) contention that this individualism would hinder interest group activism in the region, Keefe's (1998) argument of Appalachian's "cooperative individualism" appears to accurately describe the values of the interviewees. The women are more than willing to act as a group against what they view as their oppressors (the coal companies and the government).

TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

The deep impact of socialization is also seen in the core values of the women. The literature addressing cultural values of gender roles in Appalachia (Seitz (1995), Keefe (1998), and Moore (2001)) would predict low levels of political activism among the women in this region. Embracement of traditional gender roles resulting from socialization, which is prominent in Appalachian women in general also appear dominant in these women as well. However, rather than hinder their activism, they have actually served to promote their activism on this issue.

Like most female political activists, these women exhibit a strong emphasis on "maternalistic" values. This emphasis is amplified in this group of women by the Appalachian cultural norm of familism, as well as the acceptance of traditional gender roles as caregiver, which are clearly demonstrated in interviewee responses. Concern for their families and communities was the primary motivation most of these women claimed. Some became active in response to immediate threats to the health of one's family. A co-director of one organization described the health of her grandson as her primary motivation:

> *My grandson started getting sick with asthma and he couldn't breathe, and then there was a series of black water spills. And the day my grandson stood in a stream full of dead fish is really what motivated [me].*

One woman explained that her activism began after the family's water tested at 130 times the amount of arsenic level allowed by the EPA:

> *And so, and knew it wasn't good water, but I mean how do you explain to a 2 yr old, 3 yr old that she can't drink her bath water.... And how do you explain to her that that's gonna kill you. They don't register that. So, that's one of my main issues.*

Also in line with what would be expected by the previous scholarship, the women spoke of not only concern for their families and communities at the present time, but also of

concern for the impacts on future generations. One activist claimed her work was: *" trying to preserve this for my children and grandchildren and their children."* The co-director of a faith-based group against mountaintop removal vocalized her belief that these maternalistic values were what led women to be more active on this issue than males in the region: *"The women are braver on those issues I think, because we tend to worry more about the future and our children, what's gonna happen to them."*

The female activists interviewed do participate in response to "maternalistic" or "humanistic" values, as would be expected based on the work of Moses and Hartmann (1995) as well as Blumberg (1990). However, contrary to what is claimed by Moore (2001) and Seitz (1995), the traditional gender roles of nurturer for one's family and community, was not accompanied by any indication of a subservience these authors claim to come with traditional female roles in the region.

Fisher's (1993) assertion of the importance of familism, where the community is based on kinship, is seen here as a motivator for activism. These women are not simply concerned about protecting their own families, but their entire communities.

In the case of the female activists interviewed, acceptance of the traditional gender roles which typically hinder their levels of activism, actually serves to motivate high levels of participation on this issue in particular. This finding is inconsistent with the previous literature on Appalachian political participation (Seitz, 1995), which argues that the embracement of traditional gender roles leads women to avoid participation in politics. For these female activists, it is their embracement of the traditional gender roles of caretaker which led many of them to view fighting against mountaintop removal coal mining as their responsibility.

FEMINIST IDEOLOGY

Fulenwider (1981), Klein (1984), and Burrell (2004) argue that a feminist ideology is an important factor in motivating political activism among women. The socialization of these traditional gender roles combines with the "born fighting" mentality of these Appalachian women to provide a unique role that feminist ideology plays in promoting the activism of these women.

While adherence to a feminist ideology plays a role, actual self-identification as a feminist is itself not high. While twelve of the women consider themselves feminists, and another two responded with "maybes", almost all of the women hesitated, expressing the need to explain that they were not radicals. Moore (2001) and Seitz (1995) help to explain this tendency, as it falls in line with their assertions of the socialization of Appalachian women to maintain an identity of femininity. As identification as a feminist departs from the acceptance of patriarchal social hierarchies traditionally promoted as proper by the culture, particularly within its religious institutions, it could be difficult for those who embrace a feminist ideology to personally acknowledge, and particularly to openly identify themselves to a term viewed as inconsistent with the cultural ideal of womanhood prominent in the region.

Looking at views on women in political office, all of the women interviewed supported the need for women to run for political office. The acceptance of traditional gender roles actually seems to promote this. A co-director of one organization explained:

> *Absolutely, I think it's very important for women to run... I think the government needs a mother in government, so that she can be protective of her future generations, of her children. I think the government needs that, so women have to run, they have to.*

The female activists interviewed also overwhelmingly believe that women experience more difficulties in succeeding in political elections. They also believed that the greater difficulties to success were not limited to elections, but were present in many other areas as well, such as the workforce. One activist claimed: *"Everything a woman does, she has to work twice as hard as a man."*

Many of the women interviewed have experienced personal obstacles to their success due to their gender. The predominant view of the interviewees is that sexism is alive and well in their communities. A co-director of another organization described:

> *Because here in West Virginia and even in parts of Kentucky, but particularly in West Virginia there still affects, a sort of attitude toward women. And uh, you know, particularly the old timers, because they'll quote you Bible versus that says that women, you know, should not be part of, you know, a man shouldn't take orders from a women.*

A few gave accounts of experiences when they had to overcome initial discrimination based on their sex. One woman recalled of a past experience as a restaurant manager: *"Well, when I took the job that I took, I had young men that worked under me, and they didn't respect me the first week, but the second week they did."*

Some of the women had encountered obstacles in the anti-mountaintop removal campaign in response to their gender. A lifelong activist in her seventies described a recent experience: *"I can remember going to Frankfurt... some of them wouldn't have time to talk to the women... but we took our magistrates, men... but somehow we got their attention, they would talk to the men."*

These women do profess to having experienced discrimination due to their sex in different areas, including their activism. This discrimination has not hindered their activism,

as Conway (2000) explains that it might, rather it contributes to the development of a feminist ideology, creating a stronger polar power within the women in the region.

Most notably, a feminist ideology manifests itself in an expression of attitudes embracing the title of "strong women." One group of women in West Virginia referred to themselves as the "Ironweeds," never backing down and always *"showin' them some strong Appalachian women."* This attitude may come from childhood socialization of these women. A common theme throughout the interviews was a reference to strong mothers. Many of the women told stories of mothers who were defiant toward oppression. One woman, now a co-director of one of the organizations, told of a mother who threatened an insurance man with a pistol to save her family:

> *So, she pulled that pistol out and said mmhmm you're not leaving here with that piece of paper in your hand, I'm keeping that piece of paper, that's the only way my husband has to prove he has black lung so he can retire.*

Some of the women would speak of mothers who stood their ground politically regardless of the consequences. One activist stated:

> *My mother was even election officer, and the strongest Republican as there was, and she was election officer and Knott Co. is 95% Democrat, and that tells you where I got my guts from. My mother was known as the fire side hell raisers.*

Many of the women had mothers who underwent very difficult struggles just making it through day to day life where they had to be strong women simply to survive. Another activist stated:

> *My father was killed when I was 11, so, um, and my mother had 9 kids to raise... given how tough sometimes it can be to survive here, and that's handed down generation after generation. I think my mother was born fighting.*

It is clear that regardless of self-identification as a feminist, the value of being a "strong woman" is very important to these women, and has helped to drive their high levels

of activism on the issue of mountaintop removal coal mining. The adherence to a feminist ideology, despite a lack of recognition by these women of their adherence to that ideology, fits in partly with the literature on the importance of feminism in motivating activism. The findings support the previous literature (Fulenwider, 1981) by displaying the importance of this ideology, yet refute the need for group identification as a feminist. The previous scholarship on feminist ideology and female political activism is shown to be very beneficial to understand the political activism of this particular group of female activists, as a strong adherence to a feminist ideology is present within these activists. However, the implications of this particular study point to the need for a greater understanding of the relationship between regional cultural values and the specific role they play on the influence of a feminist ideology on female political activism.

SENSE OF PLACE

Fisher's (1993) discussion of neo-populist theory, Keefe's (1998) work on a sense of place as a cultural value in Appalachia, and Hannigan's (2006) scholarship on the Arcadian rationale of environmental activism provide a basis for considering a sense of place as a motivating factor for the activism of the female activists interviewed. Looking further at the factor of socialization, to another important cultural norm of Appalachia, while considering the specific issue of mountaintop removal coal mining, displays another important factor for the activism of this group of women. A consideration of neo-populist theory presented by Fisher (1993) that Appalachians are driven to act based on shared cultural values allows for an understanding of why these women overcome the factors which could prevent them from becoming active, and have engaged in a vehement response on this particular issue.

The cultural norm of a sense of place proves to be particularly helpful in understanding the drive of these women to act on this specific issue. One activist stated that: *"We still do have such a sense of place in Appalachia. The land really does shape us and our ideas and our thoughts and our feelings."* Another claimed: *"There's a sense of place here, that's difficult, that a lot of people don't have."*

A deep appreciation and concern for the beauty of the land itself is mentioned by every woman. A seventy-eight year old activist described with a sense of wistfulness: *"There's nothing like these good ole mountains."* Another young activist became tearful stating: *"We're losing the beauty of the land, something that's really special, I think about this place."*

However, the aesthetic value of the region's geography, characterized by Hannigan (2006) as an Arcadian rationale, is not where their passion on this issue is derived. Rather than simply an appreciation of the beauty of the land, a strong attachment to the mountains as home is displayed by these women. The land is rarely talked of as property. The loss of property value was mentioned only once, and in that case it was made clear that the woman was far more concerned with losing her home than with her financial loss: *"So what we've got is a $12,000 home, that we've worked on a lifetime...And I don't think that we should have to give up our home."* When one's own property was discussed, as it was by about half the women, it was often referred to with respect to the loss of their personal heritage. The value placed by these women on their own property was based on it having been passed down through generations in their family. One woman stated:

> *That was my great-grandfather's home, he settled that area and it was named after my great-grandfather Robert Sumpner. That's where my mother lives now, I've lost my father, and my mother still lives at the homeplace that was built by my dad's*

> *mother, and that's just a very special place to me, and I'm seeing it destroyed, the mountains and everything destroyed.*

Another woman explained: *"My family has been living there for almost 200 years, and my sister and I are all that's left. And my family's cemetery is left."*

Rather than as property, the land is most often referred to as home. The land is strongly associated with family, and family is mentioned constantly in concerns over losing the land. One women spoke of her property as: *"The home where I raised my kids, the home that I made with my husband, uh the cemetery that he's buried in, all of that becomes, is at risk, if they are allowed to continue."*

Many of the women spoke of the area as though it was a part of who they were, fundamentally. There were several occasions in which one of the respondents became emotional discussing this, a few shedding tears. One tearful activist claimed: *"This is, I consider this my home, it's in my heart, the state of Kentucky is my home and I feel it in my heart. And I have seen them do all around to our mountains."*

A responsibility to protect the land is felt by many of these women, because of the deep respect they were socialized to have for the land. One women said: *"I was raised to respect the land, I was raised to preserve the land, take care of the land, and conserve it in any way. I was raised that way."* The co-director of one organization said:

> *So, I can't remember a time when I didn't think, I don't know that we labeled it environmentalism, but it was just you took care of what was taking care of you, which of course was the land.*

This connection with the land as home is not truly addressed in the literature. While Keefe (1998) discusses a sense of place, her study does not look at how this cultural value impacts levels of political activism. This is a weakness in the scholarship on political activism. The factor of a sense of place is identified by the women interviewed to be a

primary motivator of their activism; yet this cannot be predicted by a current framework of political activism.

The cultural norm of a religious world view described by Keefe (1998) also combines with a sense of place in creating the responsibility the women feel to be stewards of the environment. Only one of the women interviewed did not claim to be religious; all but two professed to a Christian belief system. Of the Christians, most were members of denominations which would be characterized by evangelical Protestantism, which has been prominent in the region since being introduced during the Great Awakening.

The connection between the environment and their religious belief system exists both in their view of the environment as God's creation, a gift bestowed on mankind, and also in their deep association with the land, providing for some of the women as something of a spiritual link to their Creator. This spiritual connection to the land is exemplified particularly well by one interviewee:

> *[I] feel close to God in nature... to me, like knowing or sensing God in the environment... if you believe that there is a God or a being who created this world, then you have to believe that it's God's art... So this is what's left of paradise, and I think that we should protect it.*

The preservation of what they view as God's creation is discussed by many of the women. It is seen by some as a Biblically-called duty. They see the destruction of creation as "sin." An elderly activist expressed: *"And it just seemed like such a sin against God, to put it how I feel."* Another women claimed that when looking at the mountaintop removal coal mining sites: *"I start crying, and asking God to forgive me for not doing more, and forgive the people for destroying this creation."* One woman went so far as to express intense frustration at those who professed to the same faith as herself and also took part in mountaintop removal coal mining:

> *I think there's a lot of people that does go to church that works for these mountaintop removal jobs. I really don't see how they can sit right. The Christian side of us supposed to be good stewards and protecting the land for God and all of this stuff, and then work for a coal company that's destroying what they can destroy.*

This spiritual connection partially fits with Hannigan's (2006) work as it describes in part an Arcadian rationale, in the importance of the spiritual connection to the land. While viewing the activism of these interviewees through this Arcadian rationale is helpful, it fails to provide a full understanding of this specific group. The nature of this religious world view should be viewed as a distinct spiritual connection, as it is one which identifies very fundamental religious beliefs of creation by a living God and a duty to this living God, and not simply a feeling of spirituality with the land.

FACTORS CONSISTENT WITH PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

Much of the previous scholarship fails to accurately explain the activism of the interviewees. There are, however, certain factors demonstrated in the interviewee responses which are consistent with previous scholarship, including high levels of political interest, internal political efficacy, resources of time, and lack of adherence to the dominant social paradigm.

Political interest, argued as important by Anderson (1975) and Tarrow (1991) proves to be an important factor in the activism of these women. All of them hold a deep interest in the issue they are working on, mountaintop removal coal mining. Additionally, all of them claim to read or watch the news on a daily basis, and an overwhelming majority, excluding only a few who began working on the issue almost immediately after entering adulthood, state that their level of attention to the news was the same before their activism began. They did not, however, express similar characteristics with regard to their interest in local politics or their level of engagement in political discussion. Rather, over half claimed that these two

variables increased after their activism on, or at least concern for, the issue of mountaintop removal coal mining began:

> *Um, not very much, you know, I was one of those, like I said, consumerism, mainstream American, you know, just going along with my daily life. Until those issues happened to me. And the black water, and the asthma, and the concern for my grandchild and my daughter. And you know that changed, that really changed.*

The political attitude of internal political efficacy presented as important by Verba, Burns, and Schlozman (1997) does serve as a extremely reliable factor for the activism of these women. They all expressed a firm belief in their ability to make a difference: *"I definitely think that, I think that everybody can make a difference."* They also all expressed at least a moderate amount of confidence in their own understanding of politics: *"I think that I have a good deal of confidence, much more so now."* This particular variable received the most consistent answers from all the women interviewed. This belief appears to be something of a prerequisite to activism on the issue, and this factor serves as the most indisputable predictor of the theoretical framework provided by past scholarship. This factor displays an area in which these activists actually depart a great deal from what we would expect based on the cultural norms of central Appalachia. High internal political efficacy contradicts the idea of fatalistic attitudes discussed by Jones (1976) and the historical reinforcement of powerlessness from repeated failures of activism against coal companies and the government asserted by Gaventa (1980) to be embedded in residents of the region The self-assured nature in which these women expressed confidence within their own ability and understanding also proves inconsistent with Keefe's (1998) description of Appalachians as self-deprecating.

Resources of time, introduced as an important factor of activism by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) also proves an accurate factor of activism for these women. Of those

not employed specifically on the issue of mountaintop removal coalmining, only four carried full-time jobs away from the home. Only one woman in the group has a young child living in the home. As financial resources and civic skills are typically scarce for this group, the value of time resources may account for part of the ability of these activists to mobilize when the other resources demonstrated by these authors as important are less available. In particular, resources of time allows for these activists to gain civic skills through their work on this particular issue where they may have not had or utilized the opportunity to do so through other venues.

The lack of adherence to the dominant social paradigm shown by these women supports what we would expect from environmental activists, based on the work of Nash and Lewis (2006). On the technology dimension, the most optimistic response from these women was that they were "hopeful." On the economic dimension, none stated a belief that economic progress in the United States itself would be beneficial; three stated the idea that economic progress in the country could be detrimental to the environment:

> *I think it would probably be worse on it, b/c the gas and coal issue, it would just start speeding things up, right now everything's slow b/c the economy's slow, so now it's given us a breather.*

The interview question measuring the political dimension of the dominant social paradigm received a greater variance in answers. While all the women stated the need for greater government regulation of the coal industry, as well as stronger enforcement of such regulations, the overall view of government involvement in private business was mixed. Perhaps exemplifying the Appalachian cultural value of individualism, a small majority of these women emphasized the importance of minimal government involvement regarding most businesses, excluding the coal industry: *"Well I think the government needs to keep*

their nose out of a lot of stuff, especially small businesses." There were also women who believed greater government involvement was needed in all businesses: *"I think they need to be active, very active myself."*

While this group of activists is in many ways uncharacteristic of female environmental political activists in general, all of the findings presented in the previous literature do not fall short. Certain fundamental factors of political activism on environmental issues: political interest, internal political efficacy, resources of time, and a lack of adherence to the dominant social paradigm continue to prove essential in motivating activism. These factors are notably resistant to cultural variances compared with others offered by the past scholarship on political activism, and are critical to understanding the mobilization of this particular group.

CONCLUSION

The women involved in the anti-mountaintop removal campaign are not typical of female environmental political activists. While they hold certain characteristics which would be expected to weaken their likelihood to act, such as low socioeconomic status, low organizational involvement, and almost non-existent external political efficacy, the relationship of certain aspects of their culture to this particular issue is most important in understanding how they overcome such barriers to activism. This group of women may not be expected to engage in political activism on many issues. Yet their socialization combined with the particular aspects of the mountaintop removal coal mining issue, motivates a passionate active response.

The paradox between the high levels of activism of this group of women and their low likelihood to engage in political activism based on the theoretical framework provided by past scholarship demonstrates the need to take local and regional culture into account when studying what motivates political activism. The distinct culture of Appalachia shared by these activists both motivated them to act, and allowed them to overcome the obstacles of activism due to their lack of certain factors activism indicated by the previous literature. As this region has unique characteristics influencing the mobilization of atypical political activists, it is reasonable to assume that other distinct regions within the United States may as well. Consideration of this is crucial to a thorough understanding of political activism. The

importance of local cultural values displayed here presents a weakness in the current literature on political activism and a need for further research on the subject.

The relationship of feminism and the activism of these Appalachian women is a unique one which brings implications for the future of the women's movement as well as female activism in general. While overall the activists do not see themselves as part of a current women's movement, and generally do not express recognition of a feminist ideology within themselves, they stress the importance of empowerment for themselves, their families, their communities, and women as a whole. The emphasis on having been "born fighting" and regular, emotional references to strong mothers, and personal experiences of gender discrimination by males in the region provides evidence that these women gained at least aspects of a feminist ideology through their socialization from their families as well as their Appalachian culture.

Regional perceptions of feminism deserves further study. As feminism may be viewed as a derogatory term by many in this region, other regions maintain different perspectives, and women with similar ideologies in such a different region may be less likely to veer away from this term. It may even be the case that women with much weaker feminist views may be quicker to identify themselves as feminists because the term is viewed as positive by the culture in which they live. The overall importance of self-identification when determining the role of feminism should be called into question. This case study presents evidence that self-identification may be less important than other indicators of a feminist ideology when considering its role on mobilizing political activism.

This research does find the factors of political interest, internal political efficacy, resources of time, and a lack of adherence to the dominant social paradigm resistant to

cultural variances. The past scholarship providing these factors may be the most beneficial in providing a universal explanation of political activism across regional and cultural differences. Further research on cultural differences in mobilization is necessary to determine the validity of this idea.

This relationship of feminism to the activism of these women may point to the future of the feminist movement as a whole. Despite the negative connotation of the term feminist in today's society, acceptance of the term may no longer be necessary for the idea represented behind it to manifest itself in Appalachian as well as American women as a whole. The feminist movement may continue to build and grow even as recognition of it as a movement may not. Feminism itself may now be more than an ideology held by most activists of women's rights, but one shared by most women in American society in general.

This research also shows that female empowerment can exist even in the areas where traditional gender roles are still prevalent. The socialization to embrace traditional gender roles in the region, though typically expected to decrease the likelihood of political participation, actually help motivate this group of women to activism. The embracing of maternalistic values push these women to act as this issue is seen to affect the health and safety of their families, and therefore falls within the domain of domesticity.

While this may point to an unequal division of issues which women and men in the region may engage on, the empowerment these women gain from their activism on this issue has led them to express a sense that they can learn and act on almost any political issue, which may lead to an end of staying within the domain of domesticity by even those women who have embraced traditional gender roles.

There are also possible implications from the importance of a sense of place in driving the activism of these women. While most grassroots activists have mobilized around the justice rationale, as these women do to an extent, the importance of home place in promoting grassroots activism has been ignored. For this particular group of activists, the environment represents ones heritage and family. From this, we can expect that grassroots activists in other regions act in part to preserve what they view as their home. This concept should receive consideration by studies of grassroots organizing in general, as it may be likely that other groups involved in environmental activism for their home communities may do so in part out of a sense of place as well. Research on this may also help to further understand the differences between national and grassroots environmental activists.

The role of a religious world view in the sense of place of this group of women may be specific to Appalachians, as this cultural norm is especially strong in this particular region. However, even if such a strong religious connection should fail to exist in the grassroots environmental activists in other areas, the findings here do show that any spiritual connection with the land deserves consideration when attempting to understand what motivates grassroots environmental activists. This subject certainly provides an interesting area for future scholarship on environmental activism.

Finally, there are practical implications of this research for grassroots environmental organizations. A better understanding of what aspects of an issue can drive individuals, not otherwise likely to engage in activism, to participate can benefit such organizations in attempts to increase and mobilize their membership bases. A greater emphasis on values most significant for a particular group can serve to diminish collective action problems. Among environmental interest groups in Appalachia, a dual focus on the Justice and

Arcadian rationales should be used in membership building. Acceptance of religious ties to the environment is also important for mobilizing activism. Failure to utilize this motivating factor may lead to a less active membership than what could otherwise be possible.

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APPENDIX A

Operational Definition Chart

Concept	Measurement
Social Characteristics	Age Q33 Marital Status Q34 Education Q35 Income Q36 Occupation Q11
Socialization	Watch/Read news as a child Q30 Parental involvement in the community during childhood Q31 Political discussion in the home during childhood Q32
Resources Income Civic Skills Free Time	Income Q35 Involvement/Leadership in an other voluntary organization Q5 Occupation Q11 Church Involvement Q12 Children living in the home Q23 Children under five Q23 Hours spent in other employment Q11
Organizational Involvement	Involvement with another organization Q5 Type of organization (expressive/instrumental) Q5 Level of Participation Q5
Group Consciousness	Group ID (a psychological feeling of belonging to a particular social structure) Q25 Polar Affect (self-expressed preference for member's of ingroup and dislike for outgroup) Q26

	Polar Power (expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the group's current status, power, or material resources in relation to that of the outgroup) Q6 Individual vs. system blame Q6
Political Interest	Expressed personal interest level Q16 Attention to news Q13 Q14 Level of engagement in political discussion Q15
Internal Political Efficacy	Expressed personal confidence level in own understanding of politics Q17 Expressed personal belief in own ability to make a difference in politics Q18
External Political Efficacy	Opinions on government responsiveness Q19 Opinions on government official's concern about citizen's opinions Q19
Partisanship	Self-identification as a member of a specific political party Q28
Ideology	Self-placement on ideology scale Q29
Feminist Ideology	Opinions on women in political office Q20 Opinions on gender impact on chances of success for women in politics Q21 Opinions of gender impact on chances of success for women in areas outside of politics Q21 Self-described experiences of challenges to their own success due to gender Q21 Self-identification as a feminist Q22
Selective Benefits	Benefits respondents state they derive from their involvement Q2

Sense of moral obligation	Expressed personal motivations to participate Q1
Pessimism about other's willingness to make active contributions	Expressed belief about whether others would resolve the issue without their involvement Q3
Values	Self-expressed issue concerns Q1 Q4
Closeness of extended family	Respondent perception of extended family closeness Q24
Type of environmentalism adhered to (conservationist/ preservationist)	Respondent placement of higher importance on environment or people Q7
Influence of the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP)	Technical dimension- Opinions regarding potential impact of technological advances on environmental issues Q8 Economic dimension- Opinions regarding potential impact of economic progress on environmental issues Q9 Political dimension- Opinions on government involvement in regulating the free market Q10

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

I'd like to start by asking you about your activism on mountaintop removal and any other issues you may be active on.

1) What was your main motivation for becoming involved on the mountaintop removal issue?

2) What benefits, if any, do you feel you receive from your involvement on this issue?

3) Do you think other people would do enough to deal with this issue without your involvement?

4) Other than mountaintop removal, what would you say are the most important political issue(s) to you?

5) Are you involved in any other organizations which work on mountaintop removal? Are you currently involved in any other organizations not related to mountaintop removal?
   What types of organizations are these?
   Do you hold any leadership positions in any of these?
   Prior to your involvement on mountaintop removal, were you involved in any organizations?
      What types of organizations were these?
      Did you hold any leadership positions in these groups?

6) Do you think your community is disadvantaged compared to other communities in the US, such as environmental, job opportunities, healthcare, or education?
   (If yes) Can you describe in what ways your community is disadvantaged?
      Where do you place the blame for this?

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself and your opinions

7) Would you say it is more important to save the environment <u>for</u> people or protect the environment <u>from</u> people?

8) Do you believe technological advances in the future are more likely to be beneficial or detrimental to the environment and how?

9) What kind of impact do you believe that greater economic progress in the US would have on environmental issues?

10) How active do you think the government should be in regulating businesses?

11) Before you started working on mountaintop removal, what was your occupation?
   Other than your work on mountaintop removal do you have another, different occupation?

How many hours a week would you say you typically spend/spent at this/each of these job(s)?

12) Do you attend a church or other religious institution regularly?
Are you active in your religious institution?
What kind of roles do you play?

13) How often do you read or watch the news?
Every day
Once or twice a week
Once or twice a month
A few times a year
Never

14) Think back to before you began working on the mountaintop removal issue, how often did you read about or watch the news?
Every day
Once or twice a week
Once or twice a month
A few times a year
Never

15) How often did you engage in political discussion before becoming active on mountaintop removal?
Every day
Once or twice a week
Once or twice a month
A few times a year
Never

16) How interested would say you were on local politics before becoming active in mountaintop removal?

17) How much confidence do you have in you own understanding of politics in general?

18) Do you believe you can make a difference in politics?

19) Do you think the government is responsive to citizen's concerns?
Do you believe government officials care about citizen's opinions?

20) Do you think it is important for women to run for political office?
Do you think women are as capable of doing a good job in political office as men?

21) Do you think it is more difficult for women to succeed in political elections compared to men?

Are there any other areas where you think it is more difficult for women to succeed compared to men, for example, in the workplace?
Have you personally ever felt it was harder for you to succeed or that you were taken less seriously because you are a woman?

22) Do you have children?
Are they still living at home?
Are any under five?

23) How close would you say your extended family is?
How much interaction do you have with your extended family?
How often do you talk with them?
Do they live in the region?

24) How long have you lived in your community?

25) How do you personally feel you fit into your community?

26) In general, do you see any differences between your community and people outside your community?
What are these differences?
Are they positive or negative?

I'd like to ask you a few questions about your exposure to politics during your childhood.

27) As a young child, before age 13, how often did you ever watch or read the news?
Every day
Once or twice a week
Once or twice a month
A few times a year
Never
What about your teenage years
Were you encouraged to by your parents?

28) Were your parents involved in the community?
What type of groups were they involved in?
Did they get involved in local politics?

29) Was there much political discussion in your home as a child?
Do you recall ever being encouraged to be active in the community?

Written demographic questions

Please answer these questions for demographic reasons:

33) Age: 18-25
25-39
40-55
55+

34) Marital Status: Single
Married
Divorced
Widowed
Separated

35) Highest education level completed: no high school
Some high school
High school degree
Some college
2 year degree
4 year degree
Graduate/ Professional degree

36) Would you consider yourself a feminist?

37) Are you a member of a political party?
Which one?

38) On a liberal/ conservative ideology scale, 1 being most liberal, 7 most conservative, where would you place yourself?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX C
Interviewees

State	Organization	Position	Interview Setting
Kentucky	KFTC	Staff member	Local library
Kentucky	KFTC	Volunteer	Local library
Kentucky	KFTC	Staff member	Chapter office
Kentucky	KFTC	Staff member	Chapter office
Kentucky	KFTC	Volunteer	Home
Kentucky	KFTC	Volunteer	Home
Kentucky	KFTC	Volunteer	Home
Kentucky	KFTC	Committee member	Community park
Kentucky	KFTC	Volunteer	Community park
Kentucky	KFTC	Volunteer	Home
Tennessee	SOCM	Vice President	Coffee shop
Tennessee	SOCM	Volunteer	Home
Tennessee	LEAF	Co-director/founder	Home
West Virginia	CRMW	Co-director	Home
West Virginia	CRMW	Co-director	Home of another
West Virginia	CRMW	Staff member	Office
West Virginia	CRMW	Staff member	Home
West Virginia	CRMW	Staff member	Office
West Virginia	CRMW	Volunteer	Home
West Virginia	CRMW	Volunteer	Home

VITA

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