ABSTRACT

Parent-Adolescent Conflict in Central Appalachia: The Effects of Parental Authority, Familism, Conformity, and Autonomy

by Valerie L. Gerbus

This paper explores the effects of four types of parental authority (i.e., expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive) as well as familism, adolescent conformity, and autonomy on parent-adolescent conflict in Central Appalachia. This paper explores the research question of whether family socialization climates either foster or discourage conflict within the parent-adolescent relationship. Results were analyzed via multiple regression analysis of four models (i.e., mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, and father-son dyads). There was a decrease in parent-adolescent conflict when daughters perceived their mothers as having expert authority. There was an increase in parent-adolescent conflict when fathers were perceived as having coercive authority. Reward authority served to decrease parent-adolescent conflict for father-daughter dyads. A greater sense of familism decreased parent-adolescent conflict with daughters and conformity decreased parent-adolescent conflict for sons. Autonomy from mothers inhibited conflict for both sons and daughters, while autonomy from fathers inhibited conflict for sons.
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Valerie Lynn Gerbus
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Advisor ___________________________________________
Dr. Kevin R. Bush
Reader ___________________________________________
Dr. Charles B. Hennon
Reader ___________________________________________
Dr. Gray W. Peterson
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Introduction

Conflict between parents and adolescents is one of the oldest areas of scholarship and research in the study of childhood development (Collins & Laursen, 1992; Laursen & Collins, 1994; Hall, 1987; Schiamberg, 1969; Steinberg, 1999). Throughout much of the past century, adolescence in Western cultures was supposed to be a developmental stage characterized by “storm and stress,” declining family influences, and a growing separation from parents (Arnett, 1995; Blos, 1979). As a result of these traditional conceptions, parent-adolescent conflict has been the subject of a long history of scholarship in the social sciences (Arnett, 1995), though only limited research has been conducted on this topic in the sub-culture of Appalachia (Wilson & Peterson, 1988). An important aspect of the study of parent-adolescent conflict requiring greater attention, therefore, is how family socialization climates, possibly rooted in cultural patterns, have consequences for how conflict is either fostered or discouraged within the parent-adolescent relationship (Billings, 1974; Peterson & Peters, 1985). An approach of this kind will provide insight into how a more collectivistic social orientation, such as that within Appalachian families and communities, deals with parent-adolescent conflict in contrast to the more individualistic social orientation prevalent in the broader United States culture (Peterson & Peters, 1985).

An important possible origin of parent-adolescent conflict, therefore, will be the type of broader relationship context consisting of parent-adolescent and family relationships that will foster or inhibit (i.e., manage) conflict between adolescents and their parents. Collectivist cultural patterns have been described by Triandis (2001) as emphasizing interdependence, ingroup goals, and as behavior consistent with group norms. These collectivistic attributes contrast with the qualities emphasized in individualistic social orientations common among most families in the United States, which emphasizes autonomy, independence, freedom, and behavior that is shaped by personal goals. Thus, within collectivistic cultural groups, parent-adolescent relationships are expected to emphasize conformity, respect for parental authority, interdependence, obedience, security, and reliability, rather than patterns characteristic of individualistic cultures such as independence, self reliance, and self-expression (Peterson & Peters, 1985).

Appalachian parenting, because of its reputation as having collectivistic cultural roots, is widely expected to encourage conformity by the young and to emphasize integration into social
groups (Peterson & Peters, 1985). From this perspective, children and adolescents of Appalachian cultural origins are socialized to demonstrate less overt conflict, particularly that which is directed toward parents. Instead, the Appalachian parent-adolescent relationship is more likely to socialize the young to diminish overt conflict in favor of valuing group harmony and deference to parental authority as part of becoming socially competent (Peterson & Hann, 1999). Consequently, the primary objective of the present study was to examine how aspects of family and parent-adolescent relationships consisting of familistic beliefs, perceived parental authority, autonomy-granting behavior by parents, and the perceived inclinations of adolescents to conform to their parents’ expectations predicted the degree of parent-adolescent conflict in Appalachian families (as perceived by adolescents).

This research is an analysis of the collectivistic culture of Appalachia concerning parent-adolescent conflict. The focus is on the parent-adolescent relationship as a whole, examining child effects, parental effects, as well as family system level effects as possible predictors (i.e., inhibitors or facilitators) of parent-adolescent conflict. More specifically, parental effects were examined through assessment of several dimensions of parental authority (i.e. reward, coercive, legitimate, and expert); family system level effects were examined through measures of familism; and child effects were examined through measures of adolescent conformity and autonomy.

Theory

Collectivist cultures have been defined by Triandis (2001) as being interdependent, focused on the goals of their in-group, and as shaping individual behavior based on group norms. Triandis defined individualist cultures as autonomous, independent, with behavior being shaped more by personal goals than by group norms. Thus, “in collectivist cultures, child rearing emphasizes conformity, obedience, security, and reliability; in individualist cultures, child rearing emphasizes independence, exploration, creativity, and self-reliance” (Triandis, 2001, p. 912).

Appalachia has long been recognized for close-knit kinship communities. There is a focus on the immediate and extended family. The family and kinship network are the main focus of social organization in Appalachia. The kinship network includes a long line of blood relatives (i.e., mothers, fathers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles) as well as those who the family considers fictive kin. Fictive kin are non-blood/non-legal relatives who are treated as family, are
emotionally close, and are committed to share similar values and beliefs. Fictive kin help the family and kinship network to form a cohesive group and are also geographically connected. Families are not independent but instead are frequently connected to a larger social organization (Stewart-Burns, Scott, & Thompson, 2006). The larger kinship group is the source of many social norms and determines how most situations are handled, including parenting (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996). The collectivism of Appalachia is different from collectivism elsewhere as it is family-centered and communal on the land. Information obtained from looking at how the collectivist culture in Appalachia effects parent-adolescent conflict cannot be used to explain behavior in other collectivist cultures throughout the world (Triandis, 2001). That is, the historical and current social contexts provide patterns of collectivism fairly unique to the region and people.

The region commonly referred to as Appalachia is made up of tight-knit communities where family is essential to both the individual as well as the local culture and society. The family functions as a network of social and emotional support, helps form personal and collective identity, and acts as the cornerstone of social and community life (Stewart-Burns et al., 2006). This type of community or society has been explained by Triandis (2001) as being collectivistic and relies on the close surveillance of each other to maintain group norms. The people of the community are more cooperative with each other and due to patterns of socialization in the group, they do what the group expects, and they do it joyfully. They think of their society as stable and honor their duties and obligations to it. Violations, or rebellions, evoke feelings of contempt, anger, and disgust (Stewart-Burns et al., 2006).

There is poverty in Appalachia. The median family income is only 83% of the median family income of the United States and 20% of children are living in poverty (Rural Appalachian Consortium, 1996). In Central Appalachia the poverty rate is 27% (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2007). The economy in the region is struggling and the unemployment rate is twice the national average (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996). It has been shown that cultures or regions that are made up of lower income groups have more collectivistic attitudes (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995).

Parent-Adolescent Conflict

According to Jensen-Campbell and Graziano (2000), conflict occurs in all social interaction and occurs independently of culture, time, and life stages. Shantz (1987) described
conflict as mutual opposition that results from one person doing something that is against the
goals, expectations, or desires of the other person in the relationship. This definition is widely
accepted in the literature on parent-adolescent conflict and has been noted as a reliable and
objective definition. In this particular study, the persons involved in the conflict are parents and
adolescents.

The adolescent period has long been defined in Western culture as a time when
adolescents are beginning to have a greater sense of personal identity and becoming more
autonomous (Peterson, 1999; Steinberg, 1999). This would suggest a greater focus on personal
goals and differing expectations within the parent-adolescent relationship. Steinberg (1999)
described the adolescent period as a time of transformation in relationships between parents and
adolescents, when the young, to some extent, gradually turn away from parental influence and
reduce the amount of interaction they engage in with parents. During this distancing process, it
is common for disequilibria in the family system to develop. In situations where parents are less
inclined to allow greater autonomy, increases often occur in the difficulty and conflict that
occurs between parents and adolescents (Dekovic, 1999; Peterson, 1999).

A study by Laursen, Coy, and Collins (1998) indicated that the frequency of parent-adolescent
conflict is higher during adolescence than in earlier periods of development, but
further explained that over the course of the adolescent period, both the number and types of
conflict changed. Dekovic (1999) found that no differences existed between early, middle, and
late adolescence in the presence of parent-adolescent conflict. The current study is focused on
mid-adolescence.

Conflict between parents and adolescents is common but the frequency and intensity is
believed to be variable and influenced by socialization factors (Peterson, 1999). The current
study proposes to look at the frequency and severity of parent-adolescent conflict as it pertains to
dyads within Central Appalachia and the socialization factors that have been identified as
prevalent in collectivistic cultures such as Appalachia.

Conflict with parents frequently begins in the form of a command or a request by parents
for the young to either do something or not do something. These commands or requests often
concern functions of everyday family life, such as doing chores or housework, completing
schoolwork, or performing other tasks that the parent views as beneficial. Parental directives or
requests also include asking the adolescent to avoid such things as certain situations (e.g.,
associations with deviant peers), staying out past curfew, and refraining from using the telephone, television, or computer. Conflict with parents arises when adolescents do not comply with the parents’ requests for things that their elders believe the young should or should not be doing (Hall, 1987; Barkley, Edwards, & Robin, 1999; Smetana & Gaines, 1999; Yau & Smetana, 1996).

Collectivistic cultural patterns, if they are truly dominant in Appalachian culture, will guide parenting and discourage parent-adolescent conflict by encouraging conformity, integration into social groups, and expect the adolescent to contribute to group harmony rather than conflict. This suggests that collectivistic patterns of family and parent-adolescent relationships (e.g., parental authority, familistic expectations, conformity to parents’ expectations, and autonomy granting by parents) will function to diminish or manage overt forms of parent-adolescent conflict.

Yau and Smetana (1996) suggested that conflicts between parents and adolescents in a more collectivistic society might be muted or expressed differently than in a more individualistic society. In Appalachian culture, the family is held in high importance, making cooperation an important social tool (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996).

**Dimensions of Parental Authority**

There are five dimensions of parental authority that are based on the perceptions of the adolescent of their parents’ ability to influence them (e.g., Peterson et al., 1999; Peterson et al., 1985). First, there is reward authority, which is the parents’ perceived ability to supply incentives to the adolescent. Second, there is coercive authority, which is the perceived ability of the parents’ to provide harsh negative consequences or punishments. Third, there is legitimate authority, which is the perceived right to influence the adolescent based on socialized norms. Fourth, there is expert authority, which is the perceived parental ability to provide knowledgeable information. Lastly, there is referent authority, which is the parents’ perceived ability to act as an important person in the adolescent’s life (Peterson & Hann, 1999). These dimensions have been developed out of the theory that there is a social base of influence (i.e., social power theory; French & Raven, 1959). That is, one person (the adolescent) attributes the abilities of another person (the parent that is viewed as having the authority based on the perceived competencies) and that the attributes then become a reality for the first person (the adolescent).
This definition of parental authority has been used in research that has shown a positive relationship between reward, legitimate, and expert authority, as well as adolescent conformity and autonomy. When parents are perceived as having reward, legitimate, or expert authority the adolescents are more likely to conform to parental expectations (Peterson, 1986; Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999; Peterson & Hann, 1999) and have greater autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). This would suggest that when the adolescent perceives the parent as being able to provide rewards or incentives (reward authority); having the right to influence them (legitimate authority); and the knowledge to provide them (expert authority), the adolescent is more likely to meet parental expectations and parents are more likely to allow them to make some of their own personal decisions. In such cases, the parents and the adolescent would have a more cooperative relationship and this would lead to decreased frequency and intensity of conflict. Hypothesis 1, 2, & 3: When adolescents perceive their parent to have these forms of parental authority (i.e., reward, legitimate, and expert) there will be a decrease in the frequency and intensity of parent-adolescent conflict.

Peterson, Rollins, and Thomas (1985) found that the more the parent is perceived as having coercive authority, the less likely it is that the adolescent will conform to the parents expectations unless they are in danger of being caught. The study also suggested that when perceived coercive authority existed, there was more immediate compliance but the adolescent resisted internalizing the parental expectations. Peterson, Rollins, and Thomas (1985) looked specifically at mothers and fathers on the dimensions of parental authority, they found evidence that perceived reward authority had a positive effect on compliance but not on internalization (i.e., the form of conformity assessed in the study). This research would suggest that when the adolescent perceives their parent as being harsh with consequences and punishments (i.e., coercive authority) the adolescent would not internalize parental expectations. Because the adolescent is not internalizing the parental expectations, over time, the adolescent would meet parental expectations less. Such a situation would likely create an adversarial relationship between the parents and the adolescent leading to more conflict. Hypothesis 4: When the adolescent perceives the parent to have coercive authority there will be more conflict.

Familism

Appalachian culture places great emphasis on the family. Their loyalties are to their immediate and extended family. The family is often defined beyond the household of mother,
father, and child(ren) and typically includes many extended family members as well as fictive kin who are within close geographic proximity. The family unit can sometimes contain many different households (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996). Rural Appalachians have long emphasized the importance of kin relations such as being members of cohesive, extended, and geographically connected communities. This includes blood relatives as well as fictive kin, who are viewed as relatives due to their emotional connection with and proximity to the family. Each community in Appalachia is made up of people who have committed to living together and have similar thoughts on spiritual, economic, environmental, and/or social workings (Stewart-Burns et al., 2006).

Appalachian culture exemplifies an importance of the in-group with a focus on the immediate and extended family as well as fictive kin. Families strive to achieve the goal of fostering the interest of the whole. Children are socialized to the community norms and behavior and encouraged to stay close geographically. Large familial networks share common property, provide support for each other, and a desire to make an improved community for the entire group. These values closely resemble the way Bardis (1959) defined familism and is a prevalent definition within the family literature (Losada et al., 2006; Peterson et al., 1999; Rudy & Grusec, 2006).

An important factor contributing to a sense of familism is that each member of the family put family interests before his/her own individual interests. There is a sense of connectedness and cohesiveness that comes from this. Peterson, Bush, and Supple (1999) showed that an increase in familistic attitude, stemming from connectedness and cohesiveness, armed the adolescent with increased self-confidence and belief in their own personal decision-making.

Appalachian youth are socialized to have strong family ties, frequent contact with immediate family, extended family, and fictive kin, obligations to others, and cultural consensus regarding norms and behavior (Wilson & Peterson, 1988). Hypothesis 5: Familism (i.e., devotion to the family and the interest in keeping group harmony) would lead to less frequent and less intense parent adolescent conflict.

Conformity

There are two dimensions of adolescent conformity identified in the literature. The first, internalized conformity, is the personal commitment of the adolescent to make choices and behave in ways that are consistent with parent or cultural expectations. The second is the
external compliance of the adolescent, where the adolescent follows expectations in order to receive rewards and avoid punishment but does not internalize the standards of the parents and culture. Both types of conformity can exist in a parent-adolescent relationship and external compliance can ultimately lead to internalized conformity over time (Peterson, Rollins, & Thomas, 1985).

Adolescent conformity is of high value in collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 2001). Instead of achieving personal goals that are in the best interest of the adolescent as an individual, it is expected that the adolescent will have personal achievement that will serve the group interest, conceptualize themselves in regards to the group, and develop their social skills to form cohesive relationships with others (Peterson, 2005). The main goal of the adolescent is to develop as an individual who is aligned with group norms and expectations that will fit harmoniously within the in-group. Hypothesis 6: [Internalized] conformity to parental goals and expectations would lead to decreased parent-adolescent conflict.

Autonomy

As an adolescent gets older they expect to have more control over their own lives and behavior. During adolescence, the ability of the adolescent to make decisions about their behavior and form their own social identity plays a significant role (Peterson et al., 1999). The adolescent expects that with increased age and maturity their parents will begin to give them increased autonomy. Parents are often slow to give adolescents such control over day-to-day activities and continue to make decisions regarding their adolescent. It is the discrepancy between how quickly adolescents expect to gain autonomy and how quickly their parents grant autonomy that can cause conflict (Dowdy & Klierwer, 1998).

It has been shown that during adolescence the child has great desires to attain autonomy from their parents and family and establish individuality (Steinberg, 1999). Adolescents report more conflicts over everyday issues and choices than parents typically do, which suggest that adolescents are concerned with attaining individuality and autonomy (Smetana & Gaines, 1999). One purpose of the current study was to examine whether the autonomy of the individual adolescent is influenced by the group socialization climate that exists in Central Appalachia and the effect that autonomy has on parent-adolescent conflict.

Autonomy encompasses both the distancing of the adolescent (or self) from others as well as [the adolescents] beginning to make decisions for themselves (Kagitcibasi, 2005).
Kagitcibasi stressed the importance of realizing that adolescence is a time when the teen is negotiating a separation of themself from the family but at the same time maintaining a healthy interdependence with them. Families in Appalachia are typically very close, placing high value in their relationships with immediate and extended family. They are more likely to be interdependent and focused on an orientation towards the group (Milnisky-Sapiro, Turiel, & Nucci, 2006). They are less likely to become involved in groups outside of their kinship network made up of immediate family, extended family, and fictive kin. Their families make up the community in which they are involved in and socialized by. Because of this, many families find that they do not provide much autonomy, in the sense of separation, for the adolescent (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996). Adolescence is a time when the teen is seeking to gain control over his or her own behavior and begin the path towards a life of self-governance (Dowdy & Kliewer, 1998). The Appalachian family places great emphasis on group norms and group governance. It is expected that the adolescent would behave appropriately in conjunction with what the family expects. The adolescent therefore would be more dependent on the family for socialization and have less autonomy.

In a study on African American families, Smetana and Gaines (1999) hypothesized that when greater parental control existed and the child had less autonomy, that there would be more frequent and more intense conflicts. They found that conflicts occurred less often than they had hypothesized and were only mild in intensity, but also that conflicts were more intense in families where the parents had more control and monitoring. Smetana and Asquith (1994) looked at the frequency and intensity of conflicts perceived by both the parents and adolescents as well as the types of issues addressed. They found that parents are concerned with maintaining morals and social order and fostering family beliefs. They also found that adolescents continue to desire greater autonomy within the family (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Peterson, Bush, and Supple (1999) also supported the idea that the stronger, more connected, and supportive the family was, the greater autonomy the adolescent was able to develop.

Fuligni (1998) brought forth a research question regarding cultural variations in beliefs about autonomy and authority and whether or not autonomy played a role in parent-adolescent relationships. He further questioned whether the role it played was different based on the beliefs of the larger society. Kagicibasi (2005) reviewed the literature on individualism and collectivism. The review led to a future research question of whether the collectivistic value of
harmony and interdependence would decrease conflict. The current study seeks to provide insight into this question.

Since conflict often occurs out of the balance of an adolescent’s request for personal decision-making ability and the parents’ willingness to grant them governance over their personal affairs (Dowdy & Klierwer, 1998), it follows that autonomy would be an influential factor for parent-adolescent conflict. Research has shown that a more connected and supportive family aids in fostering adolescent autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). Families in Appalachia are close-knit and supportive of each other (Stewart-Burns et al., 2006). The current study examined the relationship between autonomy and the frequency and intensity of conflicts between adolescents and their parents. Hypothesis 7: Adolescent autonomy will decrease the frequency and intensity of conflict.

Gender

Yau and Smetana (1996) brought forth the need for future research regarding gender differences, specifically parental gender and adolescent gender, in parent-adolescent conflict. Past research on parent-adolescent conflict is inconclusive with some studies reporting that adolescents have more conflict with mothers than they do with fathers (Yau & Smetana, 1996) but that conflict with fathers influences the adolescent more than conflict with mothers (Shek & Ma, 2001). McGue, Elkins, Walden, and Iacono (2005) showed that over time parent-adolescent conflict increased and that the changes were greater for girls than for boys. Due to the possibility of gender differences based on past literature, the current study explored the differences between mother-son, mother-daughter, father-son, and father-daughter dyads.

Method

The data used for examining these research questions for the current study consisted of extant data was obtained from 705 high school students in Central Appalachia. The Appalachian region, as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2007), is made up of 410 counties in thirteen states. The Appalachian region is an area and subculture within these thirteen states, which include New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The poverty rate in Appalachia is higher than in the non-Appalachian United States with poverty rates are 1% to 5% higher than the national average. The 2000 United States Census indicated that there is a greater number of families with children
18 years or younger in Appalachia households than in the non-Appalachian United States with Central Appalachia containing the largest percentage of families (Werner & Badagliacco, 2004). Central Appalachia is considered the region most closely resembling the traditional idea of Appalachian culture because of its heterogeneity and mostly non-Metropolitan environment. It is also the region of Appalachia with the most poverty (Foster, 2003).

A total of 705 high school students from two high schools completed questionnaires. The ages of these 9th through 12th graders ranged from 14-19. The median age was 16 ($M = 16.12$) at the time of data collection. There were nearly equal numbers of males (356; 50.5%) and females (349; 49.5%), with six hundred ninety-eight (96%) of the participants being white. The level of education completed for mothers and fathers was similar, with the mothers on average completing high school and some additional training and fathers on average completing high school or had taken the General Educational Development (GED) exam.

**Procedure**

The procedures followed in each high school were identical. Self-report questionnaires were administered during required English courses. Class time was used for completion of the questionnaires and the high school teachers were present. The entire survey consisted of a broad range of questions relating to behavioral and psychosocial issues. The survey took 35-45 minutes to complete. Completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and students were not provided compensation for participation.

Permission was obtained through the schools to administer the questionnaires in the classrooms. Passive parental consent was obtained by sending letters home with the students. The letters described the study, invited participation, explained the consent process, and informed parents how their child may opt out of the study if desired. The parents were to inform the school office if they did not wish for the student to participate in the study. The schools did not receive any parental objections. All students present in the designated English classes on the day of the study were administered the questionnaire. Assent forms and questionnaires were separated at the completion of the study to ensure participant confidentiality.

The human subjects review board (i.e. IRB) at the University of Kentucky approved the questionnaire and the procedures prior to data collection in 2002.
Measurement

The questionnaire for the study consisted of items that assessed the characteristics of the relationship between the adolescents and their parents. The survey requested that the adolescents respond separately for their mothers’ and fathers’ authority (i.e., the adolescents’ perception of their parent’s reward, legitimate, expert, and coercive authority) and other relationship qualities (i.e., adolescent autonomy, conformity, and familism). The participants responded to items for each of the predictor variables (e.g., dimensions of authority, autonomy, conformity, and familism) in terms of four-point Likert scales that varied from “Strongly Agree” (4) to “Strongly Disagree” (1). Demographic questions included those assessing the adolescents’ age, parents’ and adolescents’ gender, and parents’ educational attainment.

Perceived Legitimate Authority. Adolescents’ reports of perceived legitimate authority in reference to mothers and fathers, a potential predictor variable for this study, was measured by a scale of six items. Specifically, the items from this scale measure the adolescents’ perception of their mothers’ or fathers’ right to influence the adolescent based on socialized norms (Peterson et al., 1985). A sample item from this scale is: “This parent has the right to influence my decisions about the friends I choose.” See the full list of items in Appendix C (page 33). Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .82 to .86 for each of the dyads (i.e., mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) demonstrating good reliability for this scale of items.

Perceived Coercive Authority. Adolescents’ reports of perceived coercive authority in reference to mothers and fathers, a potential predictor variable for this study, was measured by a scale of six items. Specifically, the items from this scale measure the adolescents’ perception of their mothers’ or fathers’ ability to provide negative consequences or harsh punishments (Peterson et al., 1985). A sample item from this scale is: “This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very bad if I didn’t follow his or her advice about the friends I choose.” See the full list of items in Appendix F (page 36). Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .79 to .83 for each of the dyads (i.e., mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) demonstrating good reliability for this scale of items.

Perceived Expert Authority. Adolescents’ reports of perceived expert authority in reference to mothers and fathers, a potential predictor variable for this study, was measured by a scale of eight items. Specifically, the items from this scale measure the adolescents’ perception of their mothers’ or fathers’ ability to provide knowledgeable information (Peterson et al., 1985).
A sample item from this scale is: “This parent knows a lot about what it is like to be a teenager.” See the full list of items in Appendix D (page 34). Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .80 to .85 for each of the dyads (i.e., mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) demonstrating good reliability for this scale of items.

**Perceived Reward Authority.** Adolescents’ reports of perceived reward authority in reference to mothers and fathers, a potential predictor variable for this study, was measured by a scale of three items. Specifically, the items from this scale measure the adolescents’ perception of their mothers or fathers’ ability to provide incentives (Peterson et al., 1985). A sample item from this scale is: “This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very good if I followed his or her advice about the friends I choose.” See the full list of items in Appendix E (page 35). Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .77 to .80 for each of the dyads (i.e., mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) demonstrating good reliability for this scale.

**Familism.** Adolescent reports of the amount of familism, or focus on the family, that exists within their family unit, a potential predictor variable for this study, was measured by a scale of four items. Specifically, the items from this scale measure the adolescents’ perception of the importance of family and family loyalties. A sample item from this scale is: “Family ties are more important than friendships outside of the family.” See the full list of items in Appendix H (page 38). Cronbach’s alphas were .51 for daughters and .65 for sons, demonstrating poor reliability for this scale for girls and moderately acceptable reliability for boys.

**Adolescent Conformity.** A scale of nine items measured adolescents’ reports of conformity to mothers’ and fathers’ expectations, a potential predictor variable for this study. Specifically, the items in this scale measure the extent to which adolescents conformed to parental values, beliefs, and expectations about leisure time activities, friends, dating, education, and careers. A sample item from this scale is: “If this parent did not want me to go to a particular movie, then I believe that I would not go.” See the full list of items in Appendix G (page 37). Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .79 to .82 for each of the dyads (i.e., mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) demonstrating good reliability for this scale of items.

**Adolescent Autonomy.** Adolescents’ reports of the amount of autonomy achieved in reference to their mothers and fathers, a potential predictor variable for this study, was measured
by a scale of ten items. These items were based on previous research about the extent adolescents viewed themselves as being self-directing in reference to the mothers and fathers (Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999). Specifically, items from this scale measure the extent to which parents allow the adolescent to make their own decisions about friendships, lifestyle, clothing, educational goals, and career plans. A sample item from this scale is: “This parent allows me to make my own decisions about career goals without interfering too much.” See the full list of items in Appendix B (page 32). Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .85 to .87 for each of the dyads (i.e., mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) demonstrating good reliability for this scale.

**Parent-Adolescent Conflict.** The sum of two items used to assess the adolescents’ perceptions of the frequency and severity of conflict with their mothers and fathers was used to measure parent-adolescent conflict. A preliminary analysis indicated that the questions were assessing the same construct of parent-adolescent conflict as evidenced by the significant positive correlations between the two items within the subsamples. The two conflict items were worded: “How often do you argue with your parents?” and “How serious are your fights or arguments with your parents?” (See Appendix I, page 39). Responses to these items were presented on a six-point scale that was scored 1-6. For example, scores of “1” on the item measuring the frequency of conflict corresponded with the response, “My parents and I rarely or never have serious arguments or fights.” Scores of “6” on this item corresponded with the response, “My parents and I have serious arguments or fights several times and day.” Similarly, scores of “1” on the item measuring the intensity of conflict corresponded with the response, “If they ever occur, our fights and arguments are very minor.” Scores of “6” on this item corresponded with the response, “These fights or arguments are always serious.” Cronbach’s alpha for this measure of parent-adolescent conflict was .71 for males and .78 for females demonstrating good reliability for this scale of items.

**Sociodemographic Variables.** The sex of the adolescent was determined through a standard fact sheet included in the questionnaire that requested that respondents answer whether they were “male” or “female.” The age of adolescent was measured on the day of the survey by requesting that respondents provide their age in number of years. The adolescent reported the educational attainment of both fathers and mothers as part of a standard fact sheet response such as “some high school” or “graduate degree.” See a full list of items in Appendix A (page 31).
Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the magnitude and direction of relationships between several independent or predictor variables (each of the four dimensions of parental authority, familism, conformity, and autonomy) and the dependent variable (parent-adolescent conflict). Separate statistical models were conducted for each dyad (mothers-daughters, mothers-sons, fathers-daughters, and fathers-sons) for a total of four models.

Each multiple regression model involved a two-step procedure, with the sequence of entry being the socio-demographic variables (adolescents’ age and parent’s education) in the first step and each of the independent variables (i.e., legitimate authority, expert authority, reward authority, coercive authority, familism, conformity, and autonomy) in the second step. A summary of the multiple regression analyses is presented in Tables 1 (page 16) and 2 (page 17).

Results

The purpose of the current study was to examine how the collectivistic culture of Central Appalachia fosters or inhibits parent-adolescent conflict within the broader family relationship. The current study specifically investigated dimensions of parental authority (reward, coercive, legitimate, and expert), familism, and adolescent conformity and autonomy. Seven hypotheses were presented:

**Hypothesis 1:** When adolescents perceive their parent to have reward authority there will be a decrease in parent-adolescent conflict.

There was a negative significant relationship when daughters perceived their fathers as having reward authority ($b = -.223$, $p = .002$). That is, perceptions of the adolescent daughters that their fathers have reward authority served to decrease parent-adolescent conflict. None of the other dyads were significant at the $p < .10$ level. Thus, the first hypothesis was supported only for the father-daughter dyad.

**Hypothesis 2:** When adolescents perceive their parent to have legitimate authority there will be a decrease in parent-adolescent conflict.

The relationship between legitimate parental authority and parent-adolescent conflict was not significant at the $p < .05$ level in any of the four dyads. However, a negative relationship was found for the father-son dyads with a trend towards significance ($b = -.162$, $p = .062$). Thus, when the son perceived his father as having legitimate authority there was a decrease in parent-
adolescent conflict. This hypothesis was not fully supported (i.e., at the $p < .05$ level) in any of the dyads, only a trend towards significance was found for the father-son dyad.
Table 1

Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Parent-Adolescent Conflict
Maternal Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Adol</td>
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<td>-.113</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>.091</td>
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<td>.073</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.083</td>
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<tr>
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<td>n.s.</td>
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<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.108+</td>
<td>.030</td>
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<td>-.114+</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>-.137*</td>
<td>.026</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.085</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.050</td>
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<td>.057</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>R² Change</td>
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<td>F(9,315)=5.735, p&lt;.001</td>
<td>F(9,315)=6.349, p&lt;.001</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Total Adj. R²</td>
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<td>.127</td>
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Note: +p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; b=unstandardized beta; β=standardized beta; S.E.=standard error of b.
Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Parent-Adolescent Conflict
Paternal Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Adol</td>
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<td>.096</td>
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<td>.092</td>
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<td>-.003</td>
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<td>.070</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.093</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>.084</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.015</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.118*</td>
<td>.068</td>
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<td>-.152**</td>
<td>.051</td>
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<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.029</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.130*</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg Auth</td>
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<td>-.162+</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-.030</td>
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<td>.049</td>
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<td>Exp Auth</td>
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<td>.033</td>
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<td>-.093</td>
<td>.035</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.073</td>
<td>-.231</td>
<td>-.223*</td>
<td>.075</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coer Auth</td>
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<td>.200***</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.187**</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R² Change</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.192</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F(9,297)=7.149, p&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td>F(9,306)=8.327, p&lt;.001</td>
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<td>Total R²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Adj. R²</td>
<td>.153</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.173</td>
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</table>

Note: +p < .10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p=.001; b=unstandardized beta; β=standardized beta; S.E.=standard error of b.
Hypothesis 3: When adolescents perceive their parent to have expert authority there will be a decrease in parent-adolescent conflict.

Examination of the results for the maternal models (see Table 1) indicated that within the mother-daughter dyad there was a significant negative relationship \((b = -.174, p < .05)\) between the perception that the mothers have expert authority and parent-adolescent conflict. There was also a negative relationship within the mother-son dyad with a trend towards significance \((b = -.148, p = .068)\). Specifically, when the mother is perceived by the adolescent (either son or daughter) as having expert authority there is a decrease in parent-adolescent conflict. There were no significant relationships within the paternal models. That is, when either the son or daughter perceives the father as having expert authority there is no significant impact on conflict. This hypothesis was only fully supported in the maternal model for girls, and a trend towards significance for mothers and sons.

Hypothesis 4: When the adolescent perceives the parent to have coercive authority there will be more parent-adolescent conflict.

Examination of the results for the paternal models (see Table 2) indicated a significant positive relationship for daughters \((b = .187, p < .001)\) and for sons \((b = .200, p < .001)\). Specifically, when either the son or daughter perceives his/her father as having coercive authority there was an increase in parent-adolescent conflict. However, none of the relationships were significant within the maternal models; thus, this hypothesis was only supported for girls and boys in relation to their fathers.

Hypothesis 5: Familism (i.e., devotion to the family and the interest in keeping group harmony) would lead to less parent adolescent conflict.

There was a significant negative relationship between familism and parent-adolescent conflict for father-daughter dyads \((b = -.152, p < .01)\) and a negative relationship with a trend towards significance for mother-daughter dyads \((b = -.073, p = .078)\). Specifically, when the adolescent female perceives themselves and their family as being more familistic in nature, there is a significant decrease in parent-adolescent conflict. This hypothesis was not supported with the male adolescents.

Hypothesis 6: [Internalized] conformity to parental goals and expectations would lead to decreased parent-adolescent conflict.
In the father-son ($b = -.145$, $p < .05$) dyad, conforming to parental goals and expectations showed a negative significant relationship to parent-adolescent conflict. In the mother-son ($b = -.106$, $p = .077$) and mother-daughter ($b = -.108$, $p = .078$) dyads, conforming to parental goals and expectations showed a negative relationship to parent-adolescent conflict with a trend towards significance. Specifically, when either the male or female adolescents conformed more to parental goals and expectations of their mothers there was less parent-adolescent conflict. The same relationship existed for males who conformed more to parental goals and expectations of their fathers. There was no significant relationship for the female adolescents in relation to their fathers, thus, this hypothesis was only supported in the father-son dyads at the $p < .05$ level, with trends towards significant for mother-son and mother-daughter dyads.

**Hypothesis 7: Adolescent autonomy will decrease parent-adolescent conflict.**

Autonomy was significantly negatively related to conflict for mother-daughter ($b = -.137$, $p < .05$) and father-son ($b = -.130$, $p < .05$) dyads. Additionally, autonomy was negatively related to conflict with a trend towards significance for mother-son ($b = -.114$, $p = .079$) dyads. More specifically, the perception as having more autonomy leads to fewer parent-adolescent conflicts between mother-daughter, mother-son, and father-son dyads. Thus, this hypothesis was supported for the mother-daughter and father-son dyads, with a trend towards significance for mother-son dyads.

**Control variables (i.e., Age of Adolescent and Parental Education).**

The parental education of the father was significantly positively related to conflict for father-daughter ($b = .118$, $p < .05$) dyads. None of the other dyads were significant at the $p < .10$ level for parental education. No significant relationship was seen for age of adolescent (at the $p < .10$ level) for any of the dyads.

**Discussion**

The results of this study indicated that there are significant relationships between parent-adolescent conflict and dimensions of parental authority (reward, expert, and coercive). There is also some evidence that collectivistic patterns of socialization (familism and conformity) serve to inhibit parent-adolescent conflict. Adolescent autonomy also had a negative relationship to parent-adolescent conflict. A somewhat surprising result was the pattern of gender differences seen across the models.
The current study explored four dimensions of parental authority (Peterson & Hann, 1999) predicting that reward, legitimate, and expert authority each would decrease parent-adolescent conflict. The results provide some support for these hypotheses; however, the support was not consistent across all the gender dyads.

Parental Reward Authority

Reward authority only served to decrease parent-adolescent conflict between fathers and daughters. Reward authority is defined as the perceived ability of the parent to supply gratifications (Peterson & Hann, 1999). The relationship between parent-adolescent conflict and reward authority for father-daughter dyads could be explained by Appalachian culture. In the Appalachian family, the father is the economic provider and makes all the important decisions (Rural Appalachian Youth & Families Consortium, 1996). Thus, the father would be the one supplying the adolescent with gratifications. Research has shown that the father-daughter relationship is more distant (Larson & Richards, 1994). So the daughters could be more cooperative with fathers to ensure that they provide both material and emotional gratification to them. It would be expected that the father-son relationship would be similar; however, no relationship was found for the father-son dyad. More research is needed to explore this relationship. No relationship was found between reward authority and parent-adolescent conflict within the maternal models. Adolescents have a much closer relationship with their mothers and receive more emotional support than from their fathers (Steinberg, 1999). If the adolescents are not in need of emotional gratification and fathers provide material gratification by means of being the economic provider (Rural Appalachian Youth & Families Consortium, 1996) then perception of the mother as having reward authority could have little effect on parent-adolescent conflict.

Legitimate Parental Authority

A trend was seen between parent-adolescent conflict and legitimate authority for the father-son dyad; however, there was not an overall significance ($p < .05$) across the models. The lack of significant relationships between legitimate authority and parent-adolescent conflict is contrary to the hypothesis of the current study that legitimate parental authority would decrease parent-adolescent conflict. Legitimate authority is when the adolescent perceives the parent (either mother or father) as having the right to influence them based on socialized norms (Peterson & Hann, 1999). It was expected that when an adolescent perceives their parent as
having the right to influence them there would be less parent-adolescent conflict because past research has shown that in the presence of the perception of legitimate authority the adolescent is more likely to meet parental expectations and the parents are more likely to give adolescents the ability to make some personal decisions (Peterson & Hann, 1999; Peterson et al., 1999). These previous findings suggest that this would create a more cooperative relationship resulting in less parent-adolescent conflict. In Appalachian culture, children are expected to respect their parents’ expectations and the rules of the family (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996), resulting in the children being socialized to believe that their parents have the right to influence them. Therefore, the perception of legitimate authority could have had little relationship to parent-adolescent conflict due to the expectation that legitimate authority rests with the family as a whole.

*Parental Expert Authority*

Expert authority, the adolescent’s perception of the parent being able to provide knowledgeable information (Peterson & Hann, 1999) served to decrease parent-adolescent conflict between mothers and daughters. There was also a trend towards significance for mothers and sons. The decrease in parent-adolescent conflict was due to the fact that the adolescent is more cooperative and agreeable with the parent because they perceive that parent to be knowledgeable. Past research has shown that when the parent is perceived as having this type of parental authority the adolescent is more likely to conform to parental expectations (Peterson, 1986; Peterson et al., 1999; Peterson & Hann, 1999). However, there was not a significant relationship between expert authority in relationship to fathers for either boys or girls. Mothers are typically the parent providing the interpersonal care and who adolescents report as having more intimacy, affection, and time spent (Montemayor & Brownlee, 1987) that would lead to greater attachment of both sons and daughters to their mothers. Moreover, past research has shown that daughters develop stronger attachments to their mothers (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002), thus the daughter would look to her mother for guidance. Daughters have also been shown to perceive their mothers to have more knowledge (Shek, 2002). When the mother is perceived as being able to provide knowledgeable information, the daughter would more willingly accept her guidance and advice leading to a more cooperative relationship.
Parental Coercive Authority

Perhaps the most interesting finding, due to the high degree of significance and distinct gender difference, was the pattern found with coercive authority (the perception of the parents’ ability to provide harsh punishments). While coercive authority did not serve to foster or inhibit conflict between mothers and their sons or daughters, it significantly increased the amount of conflict between fathers and both their sons and daughters. Past research has shown that when this type of authority is present, the adolescent is less likely to conform to the parents’ expectations unless they fear being caught (Peterson et al., 1985). The Appalachian family is patriarchal with the father serving as the chief authority figure. Appalachian fathers are also recognized as being authoritarian and as using harsh discipline. Also, due to the economic stress and instability of the region, fathers are more temperamental and thus, more punitive (Rural Appalachian Youth & Families Consortium, 1996). It is expected that over time, when coercive authority is present, a more adversarial relationship could develop, thus increasing the potential for parent-adolescent conflict.

Familism

Sense of familism decreased parent-adolescent conflict between both parents and their daughters; however, having a greater sense of familism had little effect on parent-adolescent conflict as it relates to the male adolescents in the current study. Familism is a very important part of Appalachian culture. Each person shows loyalty to their immediate and extended family (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996). Children are socialized to the community norms and behavior (Bardis, 1959). They are socialized to have strong family ties, frequent contact with family, and to have an obligation to others (Wilson & Peterson, 1988). Previous research has also shown that the sense of familism gives the adolescent more self-confidence and the ability to believe in him or herself (Peterson et al., 1999). In this study, sense of familism served to inhibit conflict with female adolescents. This could be due to female adolescents being socialized to be closer to the family and developing relationship competencies such as empathy, emotional expressiveness, and intimacy with their sense of self defined more by their relationships with others (Gilligan, 1982). Male adolescents, on the other hand, are socialized to develop themselves more outside the family and they do this by demonstrating independence and school and work competencies (Gilligan, 1982). Thus, female adolescents would place greater emphasis on the amount of familism experienced. Less parent-adolescent
conflict may lead to a greater sense of familism for female adolescents. It has also been shown that attachment security is more important to the well being of daughters than it is for sons (Kenny & Donaldson, 1991).

**Conformity to Parents**

Conformity to parental expectations significantly decreased the amount of parent-adolescent conflict between fathers and sons. It also showed a trend towards significance in both maternal models; however, no significant relationship was found for fathers and daughters. Thus, conformity to parental expectations served to inhibit parent-adolescent conflict for the mother-son, mother-daughter, and father-son dyads. Collectivistic cultures place great emphasis on adolescent conformity (Triandis, 2001). The adolescent is expected to develop as an individual that fits harmoniously within the in-group (Peterson, 2005). It is expected that when the adolescent conforms to the parental expectations there will be less conflict. Appalachia is a patriarchal society where fathers are the main authority figure. Fathers have a higher expectation of their sons (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002) and it is expected that the sons will respect their fathers and serve the family, often following the family tradition.

**Adolescent Autonomy**

Adolescence is a time when the child desires to gain autonomy from their parents (Steinberg, 1999). Adolescents begin to distance themselves from others and make decisions for themselves (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Previous research has shown that the supportive nature of collectivist cultures, specifically the close-knit nature of collectivist families, fosters healthy adolescent autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). While the Appalachian family may not provide much autonomy in the sense of separation to the adolescent (Rural Appalachian Youth and Families Consortium, 1996), research has shown that the more connected and supported family aids in fostering adolescent autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). The current study explored this variable as a function of collectivist culture and hypothesized that this sense of autonomy would decrease parent-adolescent conflict. For relationships between mothers and both their sons and daughters as well as fathers and their sons, autonomy significantly decreased the amount of parent-adolescent conflict. No significant impact was seen for the father and daughter pairs. In general, mothers give the adolescents more autonomy than fathers (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002). The mothers are also the primary caretakers of children due to the fact that the fathers are out earning the main family income. Thus, the amount of adolescent autonomy granted by the
mothers has a greater effect than that of the fathers; however, because fathers have higher expectations of their sons (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002) it is important to the sons to be granted autonomy from their fathers.

*Parental Education*

Overall, the control variables for this study did not have a relationship with parent-adolescent conflict, however, a significant positive relationship was found for father’s education for father-daughter dyads. Specifically, when the father was better educated, there was greater parent-adolescent conflict between the father-daughter dyads. This result is not easily explained due to the lack of research into the area of how socio-economic status affects family and child outcomes (Hoff et al., 2002). More research is needed to explore how socio-economic differences such as parental education may be related to parenting processes and parent-child relations.

**Conclusion**

Interestingly, there were a great number of gender differences found in the current study. It appears as if gender of both parent and adolescent may serve to moderate the relationships between parent-adolescent conflict and several of the predictors in the current study. This observation is consistent with previous studies (Bush, Peterson, & Lash, 2007; Kenny & Gallagher, 2002) in which gender differences were found. In the current study, there were differences found both between mothers and fathers as well as sons and daughters. Appalachian culture is patriarchal with fathers earning wages and mothers performing reproductive and domestic tasks (Oberhauser, 1995). Mothers have a more active role in the daily parenting of children whereas fathers are more involved in discipline (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002). The expectations of sons and daughters follow cultural socialization in this respect. Sons are raised to learn the trades of their fathers and to make a living for a family. Daughters are raised to perform domestic tasks and to take on a similar role as their mothers. All children are expected to conform to these cultural norms and respect their parents.

The greatest limitation of the current study is the number of questions asked of the adolescents pertaining to parent-adolescent conflict. This study was completed using extant data, thus, operational definitions of the variables were limited to the measures used and adjustments could not be made to the measures. The adolescents were asked one question to determine the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict and one question to determine the severity of parent-
adolescent conflict. Ideally, a multi-dimensional scale pertaining to various aspects of parent-adolescent conflict would be used. There were time limitations prohibiting more questions pertaining to this topic. Future research in this area would be useful with a more comprehensive scale for parent-adolescent conflict within an Appalachian sample.

Another limitation of the current study was the low reliability coefficients for the familism measure, especially for girls. Thus, considering the low reliability, we cannot be sure that familism was consistently measured across participants, and can have little confidence in the findings regarding familism. The particular measure used here is almost fifty years old, so it may be that many of the items no longer adequately fit for teens, at least teen girls. Future studies need to conduct factor analysis with the familism items, and perhaps even include other familism items or measures to find or construct accurate and reliable measures for Appalachian adolescents.

The current study set out to explore whether or not collectivistic cultural patterns, if they are truly dominant in Appalachian culture, discourage parent-adolescent conflict by socializing the child to conform to parental expectations, remain close-knit and loyal to their families, and expect the adolescent to contribute to group harmony rather than conflict. The results of this study provide some support for the theory that the presence of such a socialization climate may inhibit conflict. The results, however, were not consistent across the gender models. Familism and conformity did not decrease parental-adolescent conflict for all dyads and the effect of the dimensions of parental authority varied based on gender as well.
References


Appendix A

I. Background Information

Are you male or female?
1. Male
2. Female

What is the highest educational level of the person who functions as your father most often on a daily basis?
1. Some grade school
2. Completed grade school
3. Some middle or junior high school
4. Completed middle or junior high school
5. Some high school
6. Completed high school or GED
7. Completed high school and also had other training, but not college (i.e., technical training, business school)
8. Some college
9. Completed college
10. Some graduate work
11. Graduate degree, including M.D., M.A., Ph.D., J.D., etc.

What is the highest educational level of the person who functions as your mother most often on a daily basis?
1. Some grade school
2. Completed grade school
3. Some middle or junior high school
4. Completed middle or junior high school
5. Some high school
6. Completed high school or GED
7. Completed high school and also had other training, but not college (i.e., technical training, business school)
8. Some college
9. Completed college
10. Some graduate work
11. Graduate degree, including M.D., M.A., Ph.D., J.D., etc.
Appendix B

II. Adolescent Autonomy Scale

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father, or the persons who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA= Strongly Agree (4)  A= Agree (3)  D= Disagree (2)  SD= Strongly Disagree (1)

1. I feel that this parent gives me enough freedom.
2. This parent allows me to choose my own friends without interfering too much.
3. This parent allows me to decide what is right and wrong without interfering too much.
4. This parent allows me to decide what clothes I should wear without interfering too much.
5. This parent allows me to choose my own dating partner without interfering too much.
6. This parent has confidence in my ability to make my own decisions.
7. This parent encourages me to help in making decisions about family matters.
8. This parent allows me to make my own decisions about career goals without interfering too much.
9. This parent allows me to make my own decisions about educational goals without interfering too much.
10. This parent lets me be my “own person” in enough situations.
Appendix C

III. Legitimate Authority Measure

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father, or the persons who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA= Strongly Agree (4)  A= Agree (3)  D= Disagree (2)  SD= Strongly Disagree (1)

1. This parent has a right to give me advice about my relationships with members of the opposite sex.
2. This parent has a right to influence my decisions about the friends I choose.
3. This parent has a right to give me advice about my education.
4. This parent has a right to influence me about my education.
5. This parent has the right to give me counsel and advice about selecting an occupation.
6. This parent has a right to influence my choices in planning for my occupation.
Appendix D

IV. Expert Authority Measure

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father, or the persons who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA= Strongly Agree (4) A= Agree (3) D= Disagree (2) SD= Strongly Disagree (1)

1. This parent knows a lot about what it’s like to be a teenager.
2. This parent knows a great deal about the friendships of teenagers.
3. This parent knows how to help me do well in my school work.
4. This parent has a great deal of knowledge about education.
5. This parent knows little or nothing about the names and activities of various academic fields and college departments (reverse coded).
6. This parent is able to give me useful advice when it comes to choosing an occupation.
7. This parent has a great deal of knowledge about occupations.
8. This parent knows a lot about the training required and the type of work involved in the various types of occupations.
Appendix E

V. Reward Authority Measure

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father, or the persons who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA= Strongly Agree (4)  A= Agree (3)  D= Disagree (2)  SD= Strongly Disagree (1)

1. This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very good if I followed his or her advice about the friends I choose.

2. This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very good if I followed his or her advice about studying and getting good grades.

3. This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very good if I followed his or her advice about preparing for an occupation.
Appendix F

VI. Coercive Authority Measure

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father, or the persons who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA= Strongly Agree (4) A= Agree (3) D= Disagree (2) SD= Strongly Disagree (1)

1. This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very bad if I didn’t follow his or her advice about the friends I choose.
2. If I did not follow this parent’s advice about the friends I choose, I would really suffer the consequences.
3. This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel very bad if I didn’t follow his or her advice about studying and getting good grades.
4. If I did not follow this parent’s advice about my classroom behavior, I would really suffer the consequences.
5. This parent is the kind of person who could make me feel bad if I did not follow his or her advice about preparing for an occupation.
6. If I did not follow this parent’s advice about preparing for an occupation, I would really suffer the consequences.
Appendix G

VII. Conformity to Parental Expectations Measure

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father, or the persons who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA = Strongly Agree (4) A = Agree (3) D = Disagree (2) SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

1. If this parent did not want me to go to a particular movie, the I believe that I would not go.
2. If this parent did not like me to talk in certain ways, then I would stop talking that way.
3. If this parent wanted me to go to a different school, then I would go to the school that he or she wanted me to attend.
4. If this parent wanted me to go around with a particular group of friends, then I would do as this parent wanted me to do.
5. If this parent wanted me to attain a certain level of education, then I would try to attain this level of education.
6. If this parent wants me to marry a particular person in the future, then I would marry that person.
7. If this parent wanted me to live at home, then I would do so as long as the parent wished me to do so.
8. If this parent wanted me to choose a particular career, then I would try to prepare for this career.
9. Generally speaking, I believe that I do most things in the way this parent wants me to.
Appendix H

VIII. Familism Scale

Please circle an answer for the following statements which are about your perceptions about family values.

SA= Strongly Agree (4)  A= Agree (3)  D= Disagree (2)  SD= Strongly Disagree (1)

1. Despite opportunities in other areas of the country, I should try to live near my parents (legal guardians) in the future.
2. Family ties are more important than friendships outside of the family.
3. It is important for the family name to be continued.
4. A person should always be completely loyal to his or her family.
Appendix I

IX. Parent-Adolescent Conflict Questions

How often do you argue with your parents?

1. My parents and I rarely or never have serious arguments or fights.
2. My parents and I have serious arguments or fights only occasionally (about once a month or less).
3. My parents and I have serious arguments or fights about once a week.
4. My parents and I have serious arguments or fights about 2-3 times a week.
5. My parents and I have serious arguments or fights almost every day.
6. My parents and I have serious arguments or fights several times a day.

How serious are your fights or arguments with your parents?

1. If they ever occur, our fights or arguments are very minor.
2. Sometimes (less than half the time) these arguments or fights are serious.
3. About half the time these fights or arguments are serious.
4. Quite often (more than half the time) these fights or arguments are serious.
5. These fights or arguments are serious almost all of the time.
6. These fights or arguments are always serious.
Appendix J

Figure 1: Proposed Model for Mediation of Parent-Adolescent Conflict by Familism, Conformity, Adolescent Autonomy, Legitimate Authority, Expert Authority, Reward Authority, and Coercive Authority.