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**ORDINAL POSITION AND ROLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
FIRSTBORN AMERICAN INDIAN DAUGHTER WITHIN HER
FAMILY OF ORIGIN**

By

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

ORDINAL POSITION AND ROLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRSTBORN AMERICAN INDIAN DAUGHTER WITHIN HER FAMILY OF ORIGIN

By

Le Anne E. Silvey

The purpose of this study was to explore the variables that influenced and contributed to the role development of firstborn middle aged American Indian daughters within their families of origin. The exploration involved a search for patterns, themes, relationships, and meanings amongst and between the firstborn daughter, her family of origin, and what were identified as family and parental support resources (values, emotional, financial, spiritual, cultural, physical, and material). Semistructured ethnographic interviews were conducted with each of the five firstborn middle aged American Indian women. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim, and yielded a total of 349 pages of narrative. Data analysis was based on the constant comparative method, using open and axial coding techniques to discover main themes, themes-within-themes, and themes-across-themes.

All seven family and parental support resources were found to influence role development, with culture and values figuring prominently. Two additional themes were uncovered: effects of assimilation on the parents of these women effected how the firstborn daughters were raised, and family secrets which

directly ties in to the former. The data strongly suggest that the ecological and self-in-relation perspectives of women's development are central to understanding the role development of firstborn American Indian daughters.

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1997

DEDICATION

**Helen M. Ludwick
10-23-06 to 04-26-97**

**To my other 'mother', who could not wait any longer
for me to finish and who taught me the meaning of:
To teach is to touch a life forever.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is inconceivable to me how anyone could successfully complete a doctoral studies program, least of all a dissertation, without the support, encouragement, and love of those around her. Given this caveat, it is important to note that the support, encouragement, and love I received during this journey eludes any form of measurement or quantifiable value. The words "Thank You" pale in comparison to what I have received on this challenging, at times arduous, journey; nonetheless, there are several people who deserve to be acknowledged.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The process by which the role of the firstborn daughter develops within the American Indian family of origin is little known and lacks investigative study, especially by American Indian women researchers. Specifically, how structure, function, culture, value orientation, and degree of family and parental support, exist within the American Indian family of origin as well as contribute to the role formation of the firstborn American Indian daughter. Critical exploration and analysis are needed to ascertain whether or not each of these factors can be attributed to the formation and ongoing development of the role of the firstborn American Indian daughter.

Need for the Study

A primary need for this study is to explore and shed light on the variables that influence and contribute to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her American Indian family of origin. It is believed that an exploratory study on the role development of the firstborn daughter, conducted by an American Indian female researcher for, and on behalf of, American Indian women will help to illuminate the process by which her role is developed and thereby, further the understanding of the firstborn American Indian daughter.

Conducting an exploratory study of this nature adds to the sparse existing literature on American Indian women and will aid in filling the need for information for family studies scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines.

In addition, a study that explores the relationship between being a firstborn American Indian daughter and the variables that influenced her role development is needed to determine the interplay among variables that emerges into a pattern of development wherein the firstborn daughter ultimately bears the primary responsibility of and for her family of origin. Through this process, the role development of the firstborn daughter continuously evolves and actualizes as family matriarch. Conducting an exploratory study within this context will provide information that may yield sufficient knowledge for the development of grounded theory on the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the variables that influence and contribute to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her American Indian family of origin. The exploration will involve a search for patterns, themes, relationships, and meanings amongst and between the firstborn daughter, her family of origin, and what are identified as family and parental support resources (values, emotional, financial, spiritual, cultural, physical, and material) throughout the lifespan periods of young adult, middle age, and elderly. However, for purposes of this particular exploratory study, the lifespan period of middle age will be the foci of study.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this research is to explore what themes emerge and how they contribute to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her American Indian family of origin. Specifically, answers to the following numbered and overarching questions, will be sought. Those questions earmarked by an asterisk (*) were directly asked of each interviewee in the study.

1. What is the relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?
 - * What kinds of support or resources did you receive from your family?
 - * What had the most value or meaning for you?
2. Is it a cultural expectation, rite of passage that evolves, wherein the firstborn daughter becomes the keeper of the family?
3. What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?
 - * What values were you raised with?
 - * Who instilled these values?
 - * Did emphasis on values change over time?
 - * How important was culture in your family?
 - * What were you taught? by whom?
 - * When were you taught? what age did you begin to know?
 - * How important is culture to you in your everyday life?
4. Does gender inequality exist in the role development of the firstborn daughter?

- * What role did gender, male and female, play in your family?
5. How is the role of the firstborn daughter prescribed?
- * How were responsibilities assigned or given to you while you were growing up?
 - * Were these responsibilities assigned or given to you primarily by your parents or by others?
6. Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?
- * How has being the firstborn daughter shaped the quality of your life?
 - * How has the role of firstborn influenced your life and shaped your goals?
 - * Are there any positives to being a firstborn daughter?

Definitions

- 1) **Family structure** is defined as relatives and nonrelatives who resided together with the firstborn American Indian daughter in her family of origin. It was determined by the firstborn American Indian daughter self-identifying relative and nonrelative members who resided together while she was growing up.
- 2) **Firstborn daughter** is defined as the firstborn surviving American Indian daughter.
- 3) **Family and parental support** is defined as the level and type of resources the firstborn daughter received from family members whom she resided with while growing up.

- A) **Resources** are defined as values, emotional, financial, spiritual, cultural, physical, and material as energy sources utilized by family members to provide a means of support to the firstborn daughter.
- B) **Family and parental support** was determined by asking the firstborn daughter a series of open-ended and semistructured interview questions which elicited self-identified meaning these resources held for her.
- 4) **Family function** is defined as the instrumental and expressive activities carried out by individual members and how these roles cultivated, combined, conflicted, mediated, and evolved as a means of supporting or maintaining the dynamics of the members as a unit.
 - A) **Instrumental activities** are task oriented and assigned to either or both female and male family members, whose purpose was to be the primary, if not sole, provider of the family's socioeconomic needs (Kingsbury and Scanzoni, 1993).
 - B) **Expressive activities** are ascribed to either or both female and male family members and are person-oriented to the extent that the female or male family members are responsible for child rearing, nurturance, and the enhancement of emotional relationships among family members (Kingsbury and Scanzoni, 1993).
 - C) **Cultivate** is to promote the development or growth of (Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition, 1976).
 - D) **Mediate** is defined as the process of negotiation and reconciliation.
- 5) **American Indian family** is defined as fictive and nonfictive members who reside together, and who are of American Indian descent.

- A) **Fictive kin** are defined as nonblood related members who have a special bonding relationship significant enough to allow incorporation into the blood related family as a member (Red Horse, 1980).
- B) **Nonfictive kin** are defined as biologically, blood related family members.
- 6) **American Indian** is defined as any individual who is tribally affiliated and who was born within the continental United States. The firstborn daughter had to self-identify as an American Indian by stating her specific tribal affiliation, providing either or both the paternal and maternal line(s) of descendency and be recognized as an American Indian by her community, or be a member of a federally recognized tribe.
- 7) **Middle age** is defined as the chronological period of the lifespan of being not less than 40 years of age, and not more than 54 years of age.
- 8) **Ordinal position** is defined as the numerical birth order position held by the firstborn daughter in the structure of her family of origin. Ordinal position was determined by a series of structured questions in which the firstborn daughter was asked to identify her birth order position, how many siblings she had, and to identify the structural spacing that existed between siblings by providing the number of years between each birth. A calculation was then done to determine the overall number of years between the birth of the oldest child and the birth of the youngest child.
- 9) **Urban area** is defined as the boundaries of an inner city and the greater suburban metropolitan areas which are noncountry, rural, or reservation in description. Residence in an urban area was determined by obtaining the current residential address of the firstborn daughter, inclusive of the city and county of residence.

- 10) **Ethic of care** is defined as the anchoring of self in a world of relationships and the experience of self to activities of care and connection; the tie between relationship and responsibility (Gilligan, 1993).
- 11) **Role development** is defined as a dynamic, evolving process where skills are acquired to engage in a combination of instrumental and expressive activities throughout the lifespan.
- 12) **Values** are defined as attributes, characteristics, or things that are intrinsically valuable or desirable; of general worth and importance.
- 13) **Emotional** is defined as being prone to emotion, or feelings, which symbolize the affective aspect of consciousness and the physical reaction subjectively experienced as aroused or agitated in feeling.
- 14) **Financial** means of or relating to money; money matters that effect an individual.
- 15) **Spiritual** is defined as an incorporeal or immaterial being, consisting of or relating to sacred matters.
- 16) **Cultural** is defined as the attitudes, behaviors, values, belief systems, customs, traditions, language, artifacts, and norms characteristic of a particular group or class of people.
- 17) **Physical** is defined as things of or relating to the body; namely, birth, death, illness, physical attributes and skills, and phenotypic characteristics.
- 18) **Material** is defined as relating to or concerned with physical as opposed to spiritual or intellectual things; tangible things that are not related to financial or monetary matters.

Basic Assumptions

It is important for the reader to know and understand the bases for the suppositional statements enumerated and discussed below. These assumptions are predicated on the tacit, or personal, and professional knowledge and experiences of the author. On a personal level, the author is an American Indian as well as a firstborn daughter. Moreover, on a professional level, the author has pursued scholarly knowledge of and has direct practice experience working with, as well as among, American Indian people.

- 1) American Indian family structure incorporates fictive and nonfictive membership (Red Horse, 1980; personal and professional experience).

The structure of American Indian families is often misunderstood and confusing to nonAmerican Indian people. The expansive nature of the family structure, inclusive of extended family systems, is confusing because of the number of nonblood related members inherent in the family. Not all members may be primarily of American Indian descent, or of the same tribal affiliation. A nonblood or fictive member may be an elder who is referred to by other members as an uncle, but who in fact has no biological relationship to other members. Confusing to the nonAmerican Indian is the number of people who reside together and the fact that you cannot necessarily tell by looking at members which ones are fictive and nonfictive.

- 2) "Interactions between families and environments are guided by two sets of rules: physical and biological laws of nature.....and human-derived rules,

such as social norms, that are related to use and allocation of resources, role expectations, and distribution of power” (Bubolz and Sontag, 1993, p. 426).

The goal of family and parental support, within the context of the American Indian family of origin, is to foster interdependence. The family serves as a facilitator in the development of its members and does so according to family or cultural role, not necessarily according to age (Red Horse, 1980). Family and parental support encompasses cultural and spiritual maintenance, satisfaction of physical and emotional needs, and the themes of providing care, being cared for, and preparing to care for, throughout the lifespan. In this regard, the family is strengthened and lifelong interdependence among members is fostered. This approach to familial support contrasts with EuroAmerican family support in that the goal of the latter is independence of members rather than interdependence among members.

- 3) Inherent in American Indian culture is an interdependence with the environment, a harmony or balance with nature.

From personal and professional experience, I have learned that the transactional milieu of American Indian culture is intimately connected with the forces of nature, with the living and nonliving environment. The cultural concept of the “Circle of Life” translates into all living beings are in harmony with nature. Another way of saying this is “What goes around comes around”. Interdependence between family members and nature is paramount. The fusion of American Indian spirituality and philosophy is interconnected with the environment and all transactional processes between members is reflective of

nature in one form or another.

4) The term American Indian is preferred over the term Native American.

The term American Indian has become the politically correct term to use in identifying Indian ethnicity in recent years. My personal experience has reinforced my belief in this assumption. When I first heard the term being used by fellow American Indians, I inquired as to why this term was preferred over the term Native American. The explanation I was given was very simplistic, but it caused a major impact on me in terms of my own identity and thought process. The rationale given to me was that anyone can be a Native American regardless of whether you are of Indian descent or not; Native American means native to America. In contrast, the term American Indian signifies that you are an indigenous member of America, you are truly American Indian. Both terms are used interchangeably by Indian and nonIndian alike. However, my own personal preference—as well as what my personal and professional experience has been—is to be identified as American Indian, not as a Native American.

5) American Indian societies are gynocratic in nature. Specifically, “American Indians have based their social systems, however diverse, on ritual, spirit-centered, woman-focused worldviews” (Allen, 1986, p. 2).

Admittedly, it wasn't until I read Paula Gunn Allen's book “The Sacred Hoop” that I gave any thought to the perspective that American Indian culture is woman-focused, at least for the majority of tribes in existence today. After reading Allen's book, the concept of a gynocratic society made legitimate

sense. The role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter meshes well with the concept of a gynocratic society. The role development of the firstborn daughter is embedded within the context of American Indian culture and historical accounts of American Indian family development. Between the culture, historical accounts, and the concept of a gynocratic society, it becomes easier to see and understand the emerging role of the firstborn daughter.

- 6) As indigenous people, American Indians and their culture lend themselves to ethnographic study.

The study of American Indian families is a study of diverse cultural groups. In this regard, a qualitative approach was utilized in the study of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her American Indian family of origin.

- 7) American Indian culture is full of diversity, with many distinct languages, groups, and identified tribes.

Throughout the continental United States, there are over 500 recognized tribes, bands, or groups of American Indians. There is no uniform language, dress, religious practice, tribal membership criteria, or traditional cultural customs practiced on a daily basis. Rather, the term American Indian is commonly used as a general identifier that does not speak to the diversity inherent in this population.

- 8) Not all American Indian families of origin have a firstborn surviving

American Indian daughter.

Many American Indian families of origin are composed of fictive and nonfictive kin, which may or may not include male and female children. For example, some families of origin are composed of fictive kin from other American Indian families, as well as members who are nonAmerican Indian. In other cases, the firstborn daughter may have died at some point during the lifespan.

- 9) Among American Indians, the lifespan period of middle age commonly refers to a chronological age of not less than 40 years, and not more than 54 years of age.

It is common practice within the American Indian community to regard individuals who are 55 years of age and older as an elder. Exceptions to the lifespan period of middle age are rare. However, in special circumstances an individual who chronologically fits the lifespan period of middle age may be ascribed the status of an elder based on wisdom, spiritual leadership, or esteemed reverence by the community.

- 10) Each of the five women who participated in this study were forthright in the information provided to the Principal Investigator during their interviews.

All five of the firstborn American Indian daughters interviewed by the Principal Investigator volunteered to participate in the study. Given the womens' interest and willingness to participate in the study, the Principal Investigator believed the women answered the interviewer truthfully. The integrity of the findings and conclusions of this study are based on the

interviewees answers.

Limitations

Given the fact that the nature of this qualitative study focused on the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin, the cultural specificity precludes generalizing to nonAmerican Indian populations as well as to American Indian families of origin that are not comprised of female daughters. Moreover, the interview conducted with each of the five women was bounded by targeting specific areas as opposed to being open-ended. As a result, the information obtained from the women was limited to the semistructured interview guide designed to elicit information on particular areas of interest to the author; namely, the preconceived categories which fall under the construct of family and parental support resources (values, emotional, financial, spiritual, cultural, physical, and material). Admittedly, had the interview format been free flowing and completely open-ended, the data collected would be substantially different, as would the findings and conclusions.

The type of selection procedure used and the criteria for participation in the study further limit the scope and generalizability of the research. A selective, snowball sampling technique was used to secure the participation of five women for the exploratory study. The selective nature of the sample size and the absence of randomness effected the breadth of and the ability to generalize to a target population of all firstborn American Indian daughters in the continental United States.

Another limitation is noted in the selection of the site for the interview that each participant was given the opportunity to select. Of the five participants,

only two of the women were interviewed in their own homes; two women were interviewed at their place of employment and one woman was interviewed at a local American Indian organization. This difference in the settings of where the women were interviewed creates a limitation as the settings were heterogenous as opposed to the preferred homogenous nature of the setting. Comparatively speaking, the interviews held with the two women in their own homes provided a rich and insightful context for getting to know these women, as well as understanding and appreciating more fully the meaning voiced by the women in relation to their own life experiences. What is lost in the process of interviewing the participants in settings other than their own homes is experiencing the participant within her own home—the insights gleaned about the artifacts contained within the home setting and the richness of observing the participant in the context of her own home—the nature of the sharing within and the reference to her own home during the interview process.

Furthermore, in order to participate in the study, the women had to conform to the lifespan period of middle age, reside full time in an urban area within three specified counties in Michigan, self-identify and be recognized as American Indian in their community, or be a member of a federally recognized tribe. The women could not be adopted, an only child, or born outside of the continental United States. As a result, both the selection of the women and the parameters inherent in the criteria for participation by the women in the study predetermined the applicability and generalizability of the research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The theoretical foundation used to inform this exploratory study of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development model. The ecology of human development model involves four structural systems within an individual family's environment. The four structural systems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem is the smallest unit of analysis for studying the individual's development in context, of which the family is the primary context or source within which to study the development of the individual.

In light of Bronfenbrenner's conception of human development as development in context, this model readily lends itself to the study of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin. The role of the firstborn American Indian daughter does not develop in isolation from her family of origin anymore than it develops in isolation from other structural systems in her environment; namely, the mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Instead, development is viewed as a process that does not occur in stages or series as other developmental psychologists have held (for example, Gesell, Piaget, and Kohlberg). Bronfenbrenner sees

development as the goal of the active organism who seeks a progressive and mutually accommodating transactional relationship with the environment. As a process then, development is seen as a gradual, evolving and incremental phenomenon that occurs over time. For purposes of this exploratory study, development equals the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter (the active organism) within her family of origin (the environment as context).

However, the ecology of human development model is not adequate by itself in exploring the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter. While this model focuses on individual developmental processes within the family over time, the concepts of time and space demand more emphasis in the study than this model alone can provide. Specifically, the chronosystem model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1986) which deals explicitly with the dimension of time in studying the ecology of human development, and a structural perspective which emphasizes ordinal position and spacing between siblings in the family of origin, are viewed as relevant additions for this study.

Since development is described as gradual and evolving over time, Bronfenbrenner proposes how one can study human development in time dimensions that are either short term or long term in nature. For example, short term developmental studies may involve specific points in time and revolve around ecological transitions, such as the birth of a sibling or the death of a parent. Another form of studying the dimension of time as it relates to development in human ecology is to study over the long term, or the course of the lifespan. The latter approach allows one to focus on the cumulative effects of ecological transitions on development, while the former allows one to study, assess, and gather data before the ecological transition (up to that point in time)

and then do the same after the ecological transition occurs so that the process of development and development in context can be analyzed.

In exploring the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin, development is viewed as a gradual, evolving process that occurs over time. The firstborn daughter's role development can be explored by studying her role at a particular point in time (as a young adult, middle age, or elderly firstborn), or by studying her role development over the lifespan retrospectively, beginning with any of the aforementioned points in time. The advantage of a chronosystem model is to focus on development as it is impacted by various life changes or circumstances, from biological demarcations such as menarche and puberty to structural transitions of divorced parents, loss of a parent or sibling. Factors in development, such as these, over the lifespan allows for the study of stability versus instability in developmental trajectories, and whether the changes that the developing person makes are carried over to different settings and different times.

Central to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter is the structural perspective inherent in ordinal position. The ordinal positions of siblings within the family of origin have characteristic response patterns associated with each position, as well as the concept of space inherent between the ordinal position of each sibling in the family. For example, the ordinal position of the firstborn is commonly associated with being adult-oriented, responsible, mature for one's age, and a leader (Sullivan, 1983).

According to Sullivan, while the firstborn proceeds through life being adult-oriented, the last-born commonly yearns to remain a child. Since parents tend to place significantly more expectations on their firstborn child because of the importance and newness of their experiences as parents, the firstborn

typically carries the responsibility of setting an example for siblings that follow. In this regard, the structural perspective inherent in ordinal position lends itself to deepening the breadth of this exploratory study of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin.

In addition, the incorporation of a feminist perspective further augments the ecology of human development model for the study of the role development of the firstborn daughter. A feminist perspective offers a standpoint epistemology to the study of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin. The standpoint epistemology is best described as the study of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter by, for, and from the voices of firstborn American Indian daughters. This perspective reifies a strength of the ecology of human development model in that it places a premium on the perceptions of the developing person, the firstborn American Indian daughter, in the context of human development. Coupled together, this approach is based on the reality of individuals (firstborn daughters) and families (family of origin context) in their everyday lives as individuals perceive and construct their own reality, and where one person's perceptions can be another person's misperceptions. The perceptions of the developing person (firstborn American Indian daughter) enable one to understand the context of her development as well as the context of the meanings that she holds about her environment.

American Indian Way of Life

In conducting a cursory review of the literature dealing with American Indian family life and culture, from 1975 through the present, the one thing that can be said for certain is that there is a dearth of literature that specifically

addresses American Indian women. More importantly, what literature is available has virtually been written by nonIndians, from the perspective of the dominant culture, and with a particular focus on men and tribal societies (Kidwell, 1979; LaFromboise, Heyle, & Ozer, 1990). The tendency of nonIndian researchers over the past decades has been to focus on Indian men and superimpose their findings on women (LaFromboise, Heyle, & Ozer, 1990). As a result, this research has only served to contribute to and reinforce unhealthy stereotypes of American Indian culture generally, and specifically to the status of American Indian women as inferior.

Historical Perspective

There is a plethora of literature that addresses American Indian culture from a historical perspective, and what literature that does exist relevant to American Indian women in particular tends to compare them to their male counterparts and white women (Hanson, 1980; Mathes, 1975). In the written work that addresses family structure and family behavior, American Indian women are often viewed in the context of expressive roles; namely, child rearing, domestic tasks, and the overall emotional concerns of the family (Hanson, 1980; John, 1988). Further, work on the structural context of the family is immersed in history and traditional cultural values (Red Horse, Lewis, Feit, and Decker, 1978; Red Horse, 1980).

Contemporary Writing by American Indian Women

In more recent work, American Indian women have been attempting to fill the well with contemporary research and have taken on the task of studying American Indian women from an ethnographic and feminist perspective (Allen,

1986; Brayboy & Morgan, 1993; Powers, 1986). Allen (1986) has written about American Indian women from a historical and feminist perspective, cast in the context of a gynocratic society where the centrality of the culture is born in women. The idea of a gynocratic society espoused by Allen is not a universal concept across all tribes in the United States. For example, the status of women of tribes in the west and southwest is of lesser regard than the status of women of tribes from the east and south. Moreover, as carriers of culture women are not suppressed but the same cannot be said for American Indian men. The cultural context of the outside, larger society has negatively effected the role and status of the American Indian male compared to that of the American Indian female. From a historical perspective, the net result over time has evinced a cultural context of adaptation and evolution in the role and status of American Indian women and men, as opposed to tradition.

Brayboy and Morgan (1993) have conducted ethnographic research on what it means to be a traditional and contemporary American Indian woman. Powers (1986) used a biographical approach in her ethnographic study of Oglala women which examined the roles, duties, and pleasures of women and their relations with men by focusing on the effect of gender on the organization of Oglala society. The recent advent of contemporary research conducted by, and for, American Indian women will hopefully serve to captivate and encourage others to conduct research that will help to transform how American Indian women are viewed in the future.

Studies of Ordinal Position

A similar review of the literature pertaining to ordinal position reveals studies that have focused on the effect of ordinal position in relation to a wide

range of themes. Monson and Gorman (1976), in a study which examined female achievers with special focus on the connections between the structure of the family of orientation and female occupational achievement, found that female achievers were from small families, least likely to be only children, and were disproportionately eldest children. Leadership training was the focus of a study by Newman, Pettinger, and Evan (1995). Their study found that while gender does not influence the relevance of birth order for leadership, it does influence the level of political leadership attained. Newman, Pettinger, and Evan's offer support for their finding by citing how women obtain their leadership training within the family by being assigned responsibility within the family, especially older sisters. As a result, women's experiences related to birth order predetermine assumption of political leadership only in smaller entities that enable women to emulate those qualities of leadership fostered within their families of origin.

In 1995, Travis and Kohli explored the relationship between ordinal position and academic achievement of women and men from various socioeconomic backgrounds. They provide an example of research conducted by Cherian in South Africa to illuminate the resource-dilution hypothesis, which is often used to explain the connections between sibling structure and educational outcomes, by emphasizing unequal distribution of resources among children. Based on this research example, Travis and Kohli conclude that ordinal position effects are shaped by cultural norms which regulate family structure, much like the way in which the sibling context one is born into shapes intellectual fate.

A recent inquiry into why, within the same family, some children conform to authority whereas others rebel, was the foci of study by Sulloway (1996). In

his study of human development, Sulloway examined the interplay between birth order, family dynamics, and creative lives by using the work of Darwin and evolutionary psychology as guidelines for understanding family life, especially as it relates to why siblings are so different. Sulloway found that one source of sibling differences lies in the competition for family [and parental] resources. A firstborn child grows accustomed to being the focal point of parental attention and resources until the birth of additional siblings, wherein the firstborn no longer has exclusive domain over family resources. In order to maintain their special status as a firstborn, firstborn children develop adaptive strategies to elicit parental favor as a means to compete for family [and parental] resources.

Frequently cited in the literature as characteristic response patterns, the adaptive strategies of firstborns tend to include such factors as identification with power and authority, maintaining the status quo, conservatism, ambition, and achievement orientation among others. According to Sulloway (1996), "A Darwinian approach calls attention to the constant interaction between nature and nurture, doing so, moreover, within a *developmental* framework. In addition, Darwinian evolution highlights *the uniqueness of the individual*" (p. 89).

In a book written some 11 years before Sulloway's, Dr. Kevin Leman (1985) discusses many of the same themes that were featured in Sulloway's 1996 book. As a practicing psychologist, Dr. Leman has used his training and research on birth order to help clients over the past two decades. According to Dr. Leman, "The relationship between parents and children is fluid, dynamic, and all-important. Every time another child is born, the entire family environment changes. How parents interact with each child as it enters the family's circle determines in great part that child's destiny" (1985, pp. 11-12).

Within the family, there are dynamic relationships that exist between

family members. Birth order is one factor that helps to answer the differences found among and between family members who reside together in the same environment, provided you are aware of the variables that effect each family constellation. For example, variables such as the sex of each child, the number of years or spacing between children, phenotypic differences, the birth order position of the parents, any blending of families as a result of divorce or death, and the relationship between the parents, all contribute to differences found in the relationships between family members. To illustrate this point, Dr. Leman offers a context which supports his contention that being a firstborn has its perks: "A common characteristic of a firstborn person is [her] confidence in being taken seriously by those around [her]. This comes from [her] childhood, when adults took [her] seriously and [she] knew it. It's no wonder that firstborns often go on to positions of leadership or high achievement" (1985, p. 49).

Feminist Perspective

The scholarly work of Janet Mancini Billson (1995) offers a refreshing and insightful view into the lives of women from seven distinct cultures, women who represent cultures that have seldom been given voice to provide meaning to their own life experiences in social science research. Billson conducted a qualitative, ethnographic study of the lives of women who represented rural, immigrant, native, and women of color who reside outside the mainstream of white, middle class North America. This study centered on exploring women's lives within their distinct cultures, their roles, and how the balance of power between women and men has been altered as the context of their communities has shifted from traditional to more contemporary lifestyles. By using the life stories and voices of these women, Billson allows the reader to see how these

women have struggled to maintain the positive aspects of their cultures that provide identity and closeness transgenerationally, while at the same time eschewing those aspects of their cultures that stand in the way of forward progress.

Of the seven distinct cultures that Billson lived among and explored, three represented women of First Nations; namely, the Iroquois, Inuit, and Blood. According to Billson (1995), "The Iroquois had the most clearly woman-centered traditional system, one of the few in the world that closely approximates a *matriachate* (a society ruled by women)" (p. 17). For the Iroquois woman, the traditional role of being keeper of the culture, the faith, and the home is still a key role in contemporary life. Her life continues to be shaped by the traditional image of a good woman as "the anchor of her family, keeper of the faith and the culture" (p. 23). Much like the concept of a gynocratic society advanced by Allen (1986), culture and family are at the heart and center of being an Iroquois woman.

The ethic of care espoused by Gilligan (1982/1993) is critical to the study of ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within the family of origin. Gilligan's research on psychological theory and women's development is based on three studies whereby interviews conducted with women focus on conceptions of self and morality, as well as experiences of conflict and choice. The central assumption of Gilligan's research is "that the way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act" (Gilligan, 1993, p. 2).

According to Gilligan, the study of women's lives produces different developmental constructs which informs a different description of development

based on women's conceptions of self and morality. As a result, Gilligan (1993) found the following

In this conception, the moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. This conception of morality[,] as concerned with the activity of care[,] centers moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules. (p. 19)

Perhaps it is the case that nowhere is women's conceptions of self and morality as the ethic of care more evident than in the lives of firstborn American Indian daughters within the family of origin. Since women are the heart of the culture and the center of the family, giving women voice to their life stories as firstborn American Indian daughters within the context of their family of origin provides testimony for an ethic of care, the connection between relationship and responsibility.

While Gilligan (1982/1993) broke ground on her research in women's mode of moral development as differently constructed and conceptualized than men's development, Miller's (1976/1986) seminal work on women's development of psychological qualities that had been previously characterized as dependencies and weaknesses by conventional psychoanalytic theorists or practitioners, certainly paved the way for viewing the psychology of women in a new light. In a similar vein as the ethic of care espoused by Gilligan, Miller discusses how women's activity—in relation to others—is more aptly depicted in language such as “being able to encompass the experiences and well-being of

the other” (Miller, 1986, p. x). According to Miller, if we really stop to look at what women have been doing in life, we discover that a great deal of what women have been doing can be described as “active participation in the development of others” (pp. xix-xx). The “active participation” that Miller refers to occurs on a daily basis as women interact with adults and children they engage in a relational connection.

If we look at the conventional ways women have been socialized to carry out the expressive activities and functions of the so-called female role—that is, wife, mother, nurturer, responsible for child rearing and the private sphere of home—one can readily ascertain that these expressive activities are focused on serving others’ needs. To put it another way, “women’s reality *is* rooted in the encouragement to ‘form’ themselves into the person who will be of benefit to others” (Miller, 1976/1986, p. 73). For women, then, ties to others represent affiliations based on an ethic of care: the connection between relationship and responsibility.

Miller’s seminal work captures the essence of women’s psychological development as proceeding, not according to the male model of development but, on an entirely different basis than previously thought or characterized.

Miller describes women’s development as follows

One central feature is that women stay with, build on, and develop in a context of connections with others. Indeed, women’s sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships. Eventually, for many women the threat of disruption of connections is perceived not as just a loss of a relationship but as something closer to a total loss of

self. . . . What has not been recognized is that this psychic starting point contains the possibilities for an entirely different (and more advanced) approach to living and functioning -- very different, that is, from the approach fostered by the dominant culture. In it, affiliation is valued as highly as, or more highly than, self-enhancement. Moreover, it allows for the emergence of the truth: that for everyone -- men as well as women -- individual development proceeds *only* by means of connection. (1976/1986, p. 83)

Viewed from this perspective, Miller's work does nothing short of recognizing, re-defining, and understanding the day-to-day lived experience of women. Ultimately, Miller's book, Toward a New Psychology of Women, details the path of women's development as one where "women are geared all their lives to be the 'carriers' of the basic necessity for human communion" (1976/1986, p. 86).

An evolving theory of women's development, variously referred to as "self-in-relation theory", the "relational self", or the "Stone Center model" of development, has been advanced by a group of women practitioners who are affiliated with the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College in a book called Women's Growth in Connection: Writings From the Stone Center (1991). In their book, authors Judith Jordan, Alexandra Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene Stiver, and Janet Surrey articulate a perspective on women's development that more accurately portrays women's experience. This evolving theory of women's development furthers the familiar themes previously discussed in the review of Gilligan (1982/1993) and Miller's (1976/1986) work.

Rather than accept the overarching or male model of human

development which emphasizes separation, individuation, and autonomy as the core of human development, these Stone Center authors make the argument that, for women, the organization and development of self occurs in the context of important relationships. In other words, the primary experience of women's self is relational, through connection with others. Women's development is not seen as lived experience centered around efforts to separate and individuate, or to be autonomous, as it is portrayed and recognized in men's development. Instead, these Stone Center authors (1991) advocate a theory of women's development that is based on the following

The notion of the self-in-relation involves an important shift in emphasis from separation to relationship as the basis for self-experience and development. Further, relationship is seen as the basic goal of development: that is, the deepening capacity for relationship and relational competence. The self-in-relation model assumes that other aspects of self (e.g., creativity, autonomy, assertion) develop within this primary context. That is, other aspects of self-development emerge in the context of relationship, and there is no inherent need to disconnect or to sacrifice relationship for self-development. This formulation implies that we must develop an adequate description of relational development in order to understand self-development. (p. 53)

Simply stated, "self-in-relation" is women's core self-structure in that "the 'self' is discovered, experienced, and expressed in the context of human bonds and relationships" (p. 246).

In the late 1970s, a group of women psychologists interested in human

development became concerned with why women students spoke so often about the problems and gaps they experienced in their learning, as well as their tendency to doubt their own intellectual competence. As a result of their concern, psychologists Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule collaborated on a research project that involved in-depth interviews with 135 women in an effort to discover why women students felt the way they did. Their work culminated in a ground breaking book entitled Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind (1986/1997).

In their examination of women's ways of knowing, the authors' delineate five different perspectives from which women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986/1997). One of the five perspectives described by Belenky et al. has to do with procedural knowledge which is characterized as separate and connected knowing. Here again, a common theme emerges in relation to women's development: an orientation toward relationship, connection to others. The authors' refer to this epistemological orientation as "connected knowing" and one "in which truth emerges through care" (pp. 101-102).

As Belenky et al. (1986/1997) describe it, connected knowing is "the building of knowledge based on empathic connection" (Coll, Cook-Nobles, & Surrey, 1997, p. 191). Empathic connection arises out of the way in which "the connected self experiences relationships as 'response to others in their terms'" (Lyons, 1983 as cited in Belenky et al., 1986/1997, p. 102). Ultimately, then, procedural knowledge known as connected knowing stems from an orientation toward relationship based on care and empathy in "response to others in their terms" (p. 102).

In a recent publication of papers emanating from the Stone Center,

Jordan (1997) reviews and expands on the Stone Center relational model. This model stresses the centrality of connection in women's lives and purports that women grow by interacting in relationships that foster growth. As Jordan states, "Growth occurs because as I stretch to match or understand your experience, something new is acknowledged or grows in me" (Jordan, 1986 as cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 3). Viewed in this context, the relational connection established between self and other is fluid, dynamic, and interactive wherein growth in one helps to foster or shape growth in the other.

Compared to the traditional paradigm in psychology which conceptualizes the self as a bounded, discrete, and self-sufficient entity organized around self-development, "the relational perspective stresses 'being in relation,' an interactional, ongoing 'process of being' rather than a static structure dedicated to increasing self-sufficient functioning" (Jordan, 1997, p. 29). The Stone Center relational model stresses the importance of relational development, as opposed to self-development, in understanding women's development. Inherent in the relational perspective is the concept of empathic mutuality. In order to grow and actively participate in the development or growth of another, Miller (1997) postulates "that all growth takes place within mutually empathic and mutually empowering relationships, and problems follow from the disconnections that occur in nonmutual relationships" (p. 28). Mutuality, then, is created when both people share a respect for and desire to nurture the relationship, the connection that is central to women's development (Jordan, 1997).

The aforementioned discussion of the feminist perspective is steeped in a very rich alternative paradigm—as compared to the dominant paradigm which is essentially based on studies of white, middle class men—and as such, has proven to be highly relevant to the study of firstborn American Indian daughters'

role development within the context of the American Indian family of origin. The American Indian way of life is predicated upon interdependence, mutuality, reciprocity, and strong affiliative connections. American Indian womens' role development is contextualized within the self-in-relation perspective, ethic of care, and an orientation toward relationship based on care and empathy in response to others known as connected knowing, within the family of origin. In effect, this alternative paradigm is critical to the exploration, discovery, and understanding of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin as her development evolves into her role as keeper of the family and keeper of the culture.

In order to illustrate the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin, a conceptual map was conceived during the pilot study conducted in 1994. Based on the current exploratory study, this conceptual map underwent further development and refinement in order to add clarity and a visual guide to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin for the reader. The conceptual map is a visual depiction of the fluid, dynamic, and interactive nature of the firstborn American Indian daughter's role development based on relational connectedness, ethic of care as the center of activity, connected knowing, American Indian culture and value orientation within the context of the family of origin. (See Figure 1).

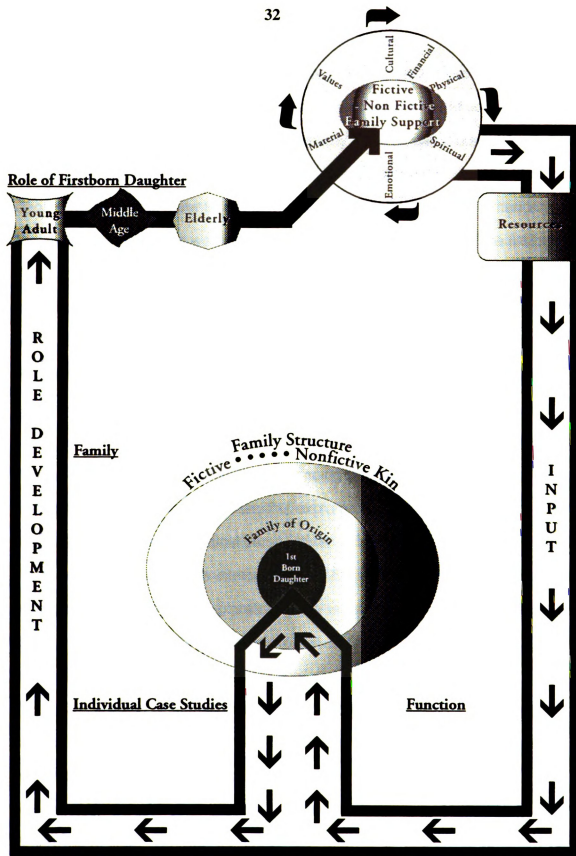


Figure 1 - Conceptual Map
Role Development of Firstborn American Indian Daughter

Summary

The literature reviewed indicates that the process by which the role of the firstborn daughter develops within the American Indian family of origin is little known and lacks investigative study, especially by American Indian women researchers. Specifically, how structure, function, culture, value orientation, and degree of family and parental support (resources), exist within the American Indian family of origin as well as contribute to the role formation of the firstborn American Indian daughter requires critical exploration and analysis. The purpose of this exploratory study is to investigate these variables by giving voice to the retrospective life stories of five firstborn American Indian daughters and the meaning that their development holds for them within the context of their family of origin.

In order to support the contention that each of these variables can be directly attributed to the formation and ongoing development of the role of the firstborn American Indian daughter, this exploratory study relied on an integration of several theoretical perspectives. These theories informed both the research design and the interpretation of findings. The theories which were most useful in guiding this exploratory study were: a) the ecology of human development model; b) the chronosystem model; c) ordinal position or birth order theory, and d) self-in-relation theory.

The ecology of human development and chronosystem models, as explicated by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and (1986) respectively, has provided the framework for this study about the nature of the firstborn American Indian daughter's role development in context while explicitly dealing with the dimension of time. The development of the firstborn American Indian daughter has been studied in the context of her American Indian family of origin,

otherwise known as the microsystem. The microsystem is the smallest unit of analysis for studying the firstborn American Indian daughter's development in context, of which her American Indian family of origin is the primary context or source within which to study her development. Likewise, the dimension of time has guided this study through the examination and tracing of the firstborn American Indian daughter's development as it evolves over time. In this study, the dimension of time studied was from birth through the lifespan period of middle age; the latter of which extended from the period of 40 to 54 years of age.

Ordinal position or birth order theory also has guided this study by providing a perspective that sheds light on the characteristic response patterns associated with being the firstborn daughter, as well as with the ordinal positions of her siblings in the context of her family of origin. The concept of space inherent between the ordinal positions of each of the siblings of the firstborn American Indian daughter also plays an important part in the context of her role development by shaping and influencing the interplay among and between family members. The interaction of all these factors associated with ordinal position directly effected, shaped, influenced, and culminated in the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter as she developed and evolved over time in the context of her family of origin.

The final theory utilized was the self-in-relation or relational theory developed and explicated by Miller (1976/1986, 1991, 1997) and her colleagues from the Stone Center (Jordan, Kaplan, Stiver, & Surrey), located at Wellesley College. This perspective develops an overview about women's identity development that shifts the emphasis from separation to relationship as the basis for self-experience and development. In this context, self-in-relation or

relational theory provided guidance in understanding the development of the firstborn American Indian daughter in that her relational self is her core self-structure. Moreover, for the firstborn American Indian daughter, her “self” is discovered, experienced, and expressed in the context of human bonds and relationships; that is, within the context of her family of origin. In summary, these theoretical perspectives have provided a guiding framework for this exploratory study about ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The current study used an exploratory, descriptive illustrative case study approach to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the role development experience of firstborn American Indian daughters from women's perspective. The purpose of this study has been to answer the six principal questions raised in Chapter I and the findings are presented in Chapter IV. The research questions introduced in Chapter I were:

- (1) What is the relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?**
- (2) Is it a cultural expectation, rite of passage that evolves, wherein the firstborn daughter becomes the keeper of the family?**
- (3) What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?**
- (4) Does gender inequality exist in the role development of the firstborn daughter?**
- (5) How is the role of the firstborn daughter prescribed?**
- (6) Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?**

It has been grounded in an epistemological post positivist mix and shares some characteristics of both the interpretive and emancipatory paradigms for inquiry. Qualitative methodologies--suited to the particular participants, their individual contexts, and the research questions as they have unfolded in the course of this investigation--were chosen for their capacity to reflect the multiplicity of views and the contextual and interactive components of meaning.

The study utilized semistructured ethnographic interviews to retrospectively capture the life stories of a selected sample of firstborn American Indian daughters to further explore and shed light on the variables that influence and contribute to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her American Indian family of origin. Specifically, the study explored the relationship between the variables of structure, function, culture, value orientation, and degree of family and parental support, in order to determine how the interplay among these variables creates a pattern of development wherein the firstborn daughter ultimately bears the primary responsibility for her family of origin (keeper of the family). Ethnographic methodology was employed as a means of capturing and conveying firstborn daughters' voices, in the forms of contextualized meaning and self-revelation that their experiences held for them.

Participants

The participants for this study were five firstborn American Indian daughters who were born in the continental United States. They are recognized in their communities and by their respective tribes as having American Indian ancestry. Each of the participants have both older or younger siblings, and each participant lives in an urban residence full time, bounded by a tri-county area of central, southeastern Michigan. Approval for the project was secured

from the Institutional Review Board for the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, Office of Research and Graduate Studies, Michigan State University on June 14, 1996 (see Appendix A).

Site of the Study

There was no specific site for this study. The intent was to learn from women experiencing their role development as a firstborn American Indian daughter within their family of origin. In an effort to maximize the women's comfort and convenience, the "sites" were varied and preferentially selected by the women participants. Two of the women chose to be interviewed in their own homes, located within a distance of 185 miles of my own. One woman asked for a more neutral meeting place as this would allow her to reconnect with a setting she had not been able to spend time in; we met in the auditorium of an American Indian Center located in a contiguous county of the participant's own residence. The other two women preferred to meet at their place of work during regular business hours. As a result, I met with one participant in her office at an elementary school in the county where she resides, while the other participant and I met in a vacant office at a suburban American Indian organization which also was located in the county where she resides. All interviews were conducted during the day, on week days and weekends, and were located within a maximum distance of 200 miles of my own residence.

Privacy was maximized and distractibility was minimized. Interruptions and distractions were limited to unexpected people dropping in (in the case of one participant's own home and another participant who was interviewed in an American Indian organization's vacant office) and the intermittent comings and goings of people in the auditorium of the American Indian Center. The latter

was due to an election day voting site, although the participant and I were seated at a table some distance away in a corner of the auditorium which helped to minimize distractions from noise or people happening by to see what we were doing.

Sampling Procedure

The selection of participants was based on a selected sample involving the technique known as snowball sampling. The rationale for this selected sample grew out of previous experience in conducting a pilot study for this particular exploratory research. In the pilot study, an assistant was used to secure a firstborn participant who was well known in the American Indian community in hopes that this participant could become an assistant for future research on the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin. While the subject for the pilot study was a firstborn daughter, she also was an only child. Since the literature is replete with studies that document significant differences between only children and sibling compositions in families of origin (Kiev & Sidar, 1993; Leman, 1985; Marzollo, 1990; Sulloway, 1996), only those firstborn daughters with siblings comprised the selected sample and all others were excluded. In addition, firstborn daughters who are an only firstborn daughter do not provide the opportunity to study the interactive dynamics sought between the firstborn daughter, her siblings and family, for purposes of exploring the firstborn daughter's role development within her family of origin.

The sample was selected on the basis of using the participant from the previous pilot study as an assistant to obtain the initial participant for the sample. Thereafter, it was planned that the initial participant would be asked to

act as an assistant to refer another potential participant. The technique of snowball sampling was used to secure a minimum sample size of five subjects, with built in flexibility to add an additional one or two participants to the study. A sample size of five was deemed sufficiently large enough to yield quality information and variability of data for exploratory purposes.

The selected sample was comprised of the minimum of five firstborn American Indian daughters selected on the basis of meeting the following criteria: firstborn daughter must have siblings; firstborn daughter cannot be the product of adoption; must be born in the continental U.S.; must be an urban resident residing in a tri-county area located in the central, southeastern side of the state; and must reside full time in an urban setting and not be a part-year reservation resident. The rationale for residing full time in an urban setting is based on the fact that it is common for many American Indians of central, southeastern Michigan to cross the border and spend the summer months living in Canada on or near the reservation. Further, conventional studies of American Indians have been conducted within the context of reservation settings as opposed to urban or greater metropolitan settings (Billson, 1995; Linderman, 1932, 1972; Powers, 1986).

In addition, the firstborn daughter must self-identify as an American Indian firstborn daughter and be recognized as an American Indian by her community, or be a member of a federally recognized tribe. There are many people who self-identify as American Indian but who do not actively live or practice their culture. By requiring that the firstborn daughter be recognized as an American Indian by her community, this criteria further substantiates self-identification and actively living or practicing the culture. Further, since middle age was the lifespan category of focus for this exploratory study, the firstborn

American Indian daughter had to meet the middle age criteria of being not less than 40 years of age, and not more than 54 years of age. The rationale for the middle age criteria is based on the belief that those American Indians aged 55 and above are considered elders in the American Indian community and, therefore, would fit the lifespan category of elderly.

As I had originally planned, the participant from the pilot study conducted in 1994 was utilized as an assistant, or nonsample facilitator, to select the first participant for the current exploratory study. The rationale behind this plan was based on a familiar concept in American Indian culture known as the “moccasin telephone line”. The moccasin telephone line is symbolic of the way in which information is transmitted and shared among American Indians on an informal basis. For example, in the case of the nonsample facilitator, the author discussed the purpose and nature of the study and the need to identify firstborn daughters that met the sample criteria. The nonsample facilitator would then embark on a mission of discussing the study with other American Indian women in an effort to identify and recruit potential firstborn participants. Much in the same way as the snowball sampling technique works, these American Indian women would spread the information around to other American Indian women and in this manner, the moccasin telephone line is established.

Contact was made by telephone with this first participant, pseudonym Case #691, to verify her willingness to participate, to discuss the nature of the research, issues of confidentiality and anonymity, and to establish a date and time to conduct the interview. A follow up call was then placed within 24 hours of the scheduled interview to reconfirm the time, verify her willingness to participate, and to obtain directions to the interview site selected by the participant.

Case #691 was scheduled to be interviewed during business hours at her place of employment in mid June of 1996. Upon arrival for the scheduled interview, I learned that this participant was not expected to return to work for some time due to an emergency hospitalization the previous night. As I left the interview site to drive back to my home, I felt defeated, frustrated, and full of anxiety. Part of the reality for any researcher undertaking a study is the possibility of the unexpected, unpredictable circumstance which creates an obstacle in your research process. I had learned this lesson all too soon and realized that I had not prepared for the unexpected circumstance, especially for the first participant interview.

Now that my first scheduled participant interview had been immeasurably delayed by the unpredictable circumstance, a major obstacle was thrown into my sampling procedure. Since Case #691 was unavailable and, therefore, unable to act as an assistant for selection of a second participant, I had to fall back on my alternative plan for acquiring my sample. In the event that a participant was unable to serve as an assistant for referring me to another potential firstborn participant, I had devised an alternative method that entailed the use of a nonfirstborn American Indian woman I had used to secure the participant in my pilot study in 1994. This pilot study facilitator was a well known American Indian woman in the greater metropolitan Indian community and was willing to assist me as an external recruiter to refer potential firstborn participants for this study.

I began working with the pilot study facilitator to solicit potential firstborn participants by discussing my research plans and the specific criteria that participants had to meet to be a part of this study. After nearly a month had passed, I received a telephone call from the facilitator with news that she had

located a potential participant who met the study criteria. I obtained the name and telephone number of this potential participant and proceeded to contact her at her place of work to discuss the purpose of my research, my research plans, and to verify her willingness to be a participant. She, Case #692, was eager to participate so plans were made to interview her at her place of employment during business hours near the middle of July, 1996.

Although the final sample of five firstborn middle aged American Indian daughters was selective in type, the sampling procedure was transformed into a mix of external facilitator (facilitator from the pilot study) referral based and snowball from the participants themselves. For example, Case #692 was referred by the external facilitator and was unable to refer another potential firstborn participant. The second participant interviewed, Case #693, was again referred by the external facilitator, but in this instance, Case #693 was able to refer me to another firstborn potential participant. However, she (Case #695) was unable to be interviewed right away due to her traveling schedule so the external facilitator was again used to refer another firstborn. The third interviewed participant, Case #694, referred me to other potential participants but upon contacting them, they were eliminated because they did not meet the sample criteria. The fourth firstborn daughter, Case #695, was interviewed upon return from her travels and was referred by Case #693 I had previously interviewed. Case #695 was unable to refer me to another firstborn daughter. Rather than contact my external facilitator for another referral, I decided to contact the woman I was initially scheduled to interview who had been unexpectedly hospitalized, Case #691. She was able and willing to be interviewed in her home where she was recuperating on medical leave from her job. Fortunately, Case #691 who was initially referred by the participant turned

nonsample facilitator from my 1994 pilot study was able to be a willing participant in this exploratory study some five months after my originally scheduled interview with her.

Participation in the interviews was strictly voluntary. Neither the external facilitator nor the women participants themselves were paid for their involvement in this research, which made all participation strictly voluntary. After the purpose of the research was explained, written consent was obtained from each woman participant. It was anticipated at the outset that some of the participants recruited by the external facilitator or through the snowball sampling technique would also be women known to this researcher. This turned out to be the case as Case #695 was casually known to the researcher through informal contact at various American Indian social and organizational functions in the past. However, no contact was had between this researcher and Case #695 since the mid to late 1970s, and prior to the telephone contact to schedule the interview. Case #691 was known to the researcher from past employment during the early 1980s, as well as through informal contact at various American Indian pow wows in the state during this same time period. As with Case #695, no contact between the researcher and Case #691 was had since the early 1980s and prior to the initial telephone contact to schedule an interview in June of 1996.

Time Frame for the Study

Participants were interviewed over a five month period, beginning in July, 1996 and ending in November, 1996. Two of the participants were interviewed at their place of employment, two were interviewed in their own homes, and one was interviewed at a local American Indian organization. The interviews were

conducted during the day and occurred during the week as well as on weekends; two of the interviews took place on a Sunday morning and on a Sunday afternoon. Each interview took from one and a half hours to two and a half hours, depending on the elaboration each participant provided to the questions. Opportunity was provided for participants who wished to talk at greater lengths to schedule a second interview, or to place a collect call to the researcher at her own residence. Where this was not feasible, participants were encouraged to contact the external facilitator and leave any information they chose to with her and the external facilitator would then forward such to the researcher. All interviews were conducted in English by the researcher.

Prior to the interview, the participants were provided with two opportunities to decline participation in the research. Upon making initial contact with the participant, the researcher verified the interviewee's willingness to participate in the study and once verification was obtained, scheduled an interview at a site determined by the participant. Within 24 hours of the interview, a follow up telephone call was placed to the participant to reconfirm the previously scheduled interview, and the interviewee was given the opportunity to decline participation in the study. On the day of the scheduled interview, and immediately prior to the interview, the interviewee was asked a second time whether she wished to participate in the research. Again, the participant could have declined. If at any time during the interview the participant felt uncomfortable, reluctant or hesitant to disclose information or to discuss a specific topic, the participant was free to tell the researcher that she did not wish to disclose information or discuss a particular topic. Moreover, participants were free to request that the researcher stop the interview at any time, for any reason, without fear of repercussions. With the participants

permission, the interviews were audiotaped. The participants were given the opportunity to request that the researcher shut off the micro cassette recorder at any time, for any period of time, or for the duration of the interview. If the researcher perceived any form of discomfort, reluctance, or hesitancy on the part of the participants at any time during the interview, the researcher offered to end the interview or directed the interview to a different topic.

It was possible that some portions of the information offered by the participants could elicit emotionally painful memories. In light of the retrospective nature of the semistructured interview process, the information disclosed could entail some risks of either or both social embarrassment and harassment to certain participants if their identities were disclosed. Every effort was made to minimize any possible negative effects on the participants by: (a) providing at least two opportunities for the participant to decline participation in the research; (b) providing both written and verbal assurance that information from the findings will not identify them by name; (c) use of each participant's actual transcript as a means to clarify the researcher's own perceptions in line with the information provided by each individual participant; and (d) providing the participants with a copy of the findings as a way of acknowledging their role as participants and not as objects of research. A copy of the informed consent form is listed in Appendix B.

Methodology

The primary method utilized in this research was ethnographic semi-structured interviews with each participant. As the U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1991) has noted, the case study method is a particularly appropriate method of systematically "looking at what is happening,

collecting data, analyzing information and reporting the results” (p. 1). In this regard, such case studies are especially well suited for generating, rather than testing, hypotheses.

Illustrative case studies are descriptive, utilizing one or two instances to show what a situation is like. This helps interpret other data, especially when there is reason to believe the readers know too little about a particular phenomenon. Illustrative case studies serve to make the unfamiliar familiar, and gives researchers and readers a common language about the topic (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1991).

The interview focused on exploring the relationship between participant's role development as a firstborn American Indian daughter, within the context of her American Indian family of origin, and family of origin responsibility (keeper of the family). Embedded in this exploration was a focus on discovering the relationship between participant's role development and the firstborn daughter as keeper of the family, keeper of the culture, and the firstborn daughter's perception of her quality of life as it relates to her ordinal position. Furthermore, the researcher explored how the role of the firstborn daughter was prescribed and to what extent, if any, did she perceive gender inequality in her role development as a firstborn daughter.

Each interview was tape recorded with the permission of the participant. All interviews were transcribed by the author within 48 hours of the interview. Each participant was given a participant number and pseudonym in place of a name to protect the woman's right to confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms were also used for the county of residence and geographical areas.

Along with the semistructured interview, the researcher also made field

notes about each interview with the participant's permission. These field notes consisted of recording the participant's affective state, nonverbal messages, and any other salient features of the interview that were not captured through tape recording. In addition, field notes were also generated aside from the interview context. For example, the researcher often made initial impression notes during preliminary telephone contacts with the prospective participants, as well as any aside comments or particular affective cues that resonated during the course of the interview itself. More often than not, these field notes were made by the researcher in her car as she prepared to drive back to her residence. On occasion, the researcher also made field notes of something recalled after arriving back at her residence, or added further detail to any sketch notes made in the car. Field notes were identified by noting each participant's given number and pseudonym in place of a name to further protect confidentiality.

Instrumentation

The primary instruments for data collection were the human participants: the researcher and the women interviewed. Mechanical instruments, such as the micro cassette recorder and a transcriber, were ancillary and served to augment, clarify, and refresh memory lapses. The primary procedure used for gathering information was the one-to-one interpersonal and interactive interview. The researcher also made field notes during the course of each interview. For example, any salient information provided by the interviewee during the customary social chit-chat prior to the start of the formal interview was noted, as well as any words spoken by the interviewee during the changing of a micro cassette tape. In addition, the ambience of the selected setting for the interview was noted; for example, Case #695 was interviewed in her home and I noted

the pleasant sound of water gurgling from the aquarium she had in her livingroom. Conscious and persistent vigilance in the use of interview processes that were dialogic, reciprocal, and negotiated characterized the procedures employed.

An Interview Guide with open-ended questions, probes and follow up questions was used in this exploratory study (see Appendix C). In format, this Guide contained six overarching questions aimed at discovering the relationship between the ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and her role development as it relates to each of the following themes: keeper of the family, keeper of the culture, gender inequality, role prescription, and quality of life. A series of supplementary questions were used to augment the overarching questions related to the themes of keeper of the family, keeper of the culture, gender inequality, role prescription, and quality of life. These supplementary questions served as avenues for probing and follow up in order to obtain elaboration and clarification of contextualized meaning(s) these themes held for the women. Each participant was also asked about her personal history as it relates to general demographic information.

The Interview Guide was originally developed by the researcher for use in the pilot study conducted in 1994. Based on field work experience gained conducting the pilot study, the Interview Guide was subsequently modified and refined; for example, changing the arrangement or ordering of the questions and adding the additional theme of gender inequality. In addition to the researcher's field experience, other resources were consulted which contributed to the development of this Guide. These included a "Guideline for Interviews" utilized by Billson (1995), in her ethnographic study of women's lives in seven distinct cultures, Fetterman's (1989) "Ethnography Step by Step", and

Spradley's (1979) "The Ethnographic Interview".

Prior to implementing the formal Interview Guide with each participant, a casual dialogue was initiated in order to establish comfort and obtain shared meaning; that is to say, mutual understanding and mutual agreement. Evidence from the researcher's field experience and tacit knowledge suggested that one does not begin by formal means of addressing the purpose of your visit without first engaging in casual, interactive dialogue with individuals of American Indian descent. It is a cultural practice to exchange greetings and engage in casual conversation as a way to establish comfort, trust, and set the stage for more important conversation. To do otherwise is a sign of lack of respect and disinterest in the total value or intrinsic worth of the individual.

Once the casual dialogue took place, usually 10 - 15 minutes in duration, the researcher then moved into asking each participant about her personal history as it relates to general demographic information. This phase served to enhance rapport with each participant and in a prepared fashion, guide each woman into the more formal phase of interviewing. The combination of casual dialogue and inquiry pertaining to the women's personal histories were intended as relationship and trust building efforts so that exploration of information related to the six overarching research questions could be approached in a more direct manner. The data gathered from these questions was analyzed for the purposes of providing a comprehensive profile of each participant.

The proposed open-ended Interview Guide was used only as a tool to guide the interviews, not as a questionnaire (Fetterman, 1989). The purpose of the Guide was to serve as a springboard for discussion. As Fetterman (1989) aptly states, "In exploratory work, letting the participant control the communication flow is most useful" (p. 57). Tacit knowledge and experience

informs the researcher that the tradition of oral storytelling in American Indian culture parallels Fetterman's point; enabling the participant to control the communication flow serves to uncover a wealth of invaluable information without necessitating intrusion by the researcher in the form of asking questions to garner the same depth or breadth of information. As such, slight modifications were necessary as the Guide was used under field conditions.

Planning for Trustworthiness

The research design incorporated elements and procedures outlined in Lincoln and Guba (1985) as follows: use of the human instrument and the natural setting, tacit knowledge and qualitative methods, selective sampling, inductive data analysis, the use of grounded theory, field notes, a case report, and idiographic interpretations. In naturalistic inquiry, the terms "auditability", "credibility", and "fittingness" replace the corresponding terms of reliability, internal validity, and external validity of measures and procedures associated with traditional empirical research (Rudestam and Newton, 1992). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the issue of "trustworthiness" as a general term to reflect corresponding terms of importance to traditional empirical research cited above.

The researcher was the primary instrument for the collection of data. The data consisted of language reports--verbal and written, nonverbals (gesture, tone of voice, body relationship with physical surroundings, etc.), and unobtrusive participant observation measures. Given both human beings and their experiences as the foci of inquiry, the use of the human instrument as a filter for these data allowed for greatest flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness in the research setting. Different realities exist for different women but all of the female participants' life stories were channeled through

one human investigator: me. This process is no guarantee of truthfulness, but allows for consistency of interpretation. The use of the human instrument further encourages a holistic approach, utilizing both tacit and propositional knowledge. Interactive dialogic interviewing offers the opportunity for ongoing negotiation of meaning, immediacy in processing (ambiguities can be recognized and clarified immediately), recurrent features of feedback and summarizing features, and gives the researcher the chance to explore atypical, unusual, or idiosyncratic responses.

Mechanical instruments, while lacking the ability to capitalize on the above features, are used as an auxiliary means of authenticating the veracity of the interview account. Audiotape recordings were made of all interviews and formed the basis for the verbatim transcripts of each interview. The use of the researcher as the primary data collection agent also made it possible to carry out participant observation of the nonverbal responses of the participants, as well as to form impressions of the natural setting in which interviews were conducted.

The “natural” setting denotes the absence of any contrived or experimentally determined arena. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out, all meaning is contextual and inexorably inseparable from its context. Therefore, in a study which aims to capture the phenomenological flavor of the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin, it is necessary that the design maximize trust and rapport between the researcher and participants; participant’s choice of preferred setting is but one manifestation of this direction. A cultural feature of this design, used to maximize trust and rapport between the researcher and participants, was the use of tobacco. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher gave each

woman a box of Carter Hall tobacco as a sacred gesture of thanks. In American Indian culture, it is customary to give tobacco, regarded as a sacred material, to another when there is something important you wish to discuss or in cases where you are soliciting advice and wisdom. It should also be noted, however, that the use of tobacco has broader meaning than what has been cited above. Tobacco is a sacred material that is customarily used in various rituals, ceremonies, and at pow wows. For example, I have been present at state government meetings attended by Indians and nonIndians alike. In this type of forum, tobacco was often used to bless those in attendance and to promote unity and harmony as attendees gathered in common purpose. Participation in this study and sharing one's life story is equivalent to the women providing significant information of importance, advice and wisdom. The author acknowledged the women's individual importance and contribution to the research and gave thanks by presenting a box of tobacco to each woman at the conclusion of the interview.

Triangulation was incorporated into the research design (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). Qualitative data gathering procedures relied on negotiation of meaning and triangulation of the source and method of data collection. Another form of triangulation, what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call "peer debriefing" which is akin to peer consultation in social work practice settings, was used by the researcher. Colleagues and peers who are not directly involved in the exploratory research at hand but who possess knowledge of the philosophical basis for a post positivist inquiry, understanding and an ability to manipulate qualitative methodologies, and a general willingness and capacity to appreciate the parameters of the area of study, were frequently consulted by the researcher. They can be, and in my case, were very helpful at all stages.

Various debriefing sessions or consultations were held between the researcher and a few colleagues and peers for purposes of checking out, sharing, and exchanging ideas related to this exploratory study. This process adds another dimension to the numerous attempts at increasing the “truthfulness” of the study. Colleagues and peers can often act as devil’s advocate, constructively challenge theoretical assumptions, and assist the researcher in the uncovering process.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis . . . is essentially a synthetic one, in which the constructions that have emerged (been shaped by) inquirer-source interactions are reconstructed into meaningful wholes. Data analysis is thus not a matter of data *reduction*, as is frequently claimed, but of *induction*. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 333)

In any post positivist inquiry employing qualitative methodologies—not unlike this exploratory study—data analysis is an ongoing process, interactive with data collection. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) have observed, “Within the naturalistic paradigm (and in updated versions of the conventional paradigm as well) data are not viewed as given by nature but as stemming from an interaction between the inquirer and the data sources (human and nonhuman)” (p. 332). Data analysis commenced with the conclusion of the first interview. It began with mental constructs and ideas, sketchy notes by the researcher to flush out partializing notions, and discussions with a peer colleague who assisted in numerous debriefing sessions. Later, as interviews were transcribed and copies made, analysis formally began with reading through these transcripts and jotting down preliminary ideas on separate pages of notes. Through this

process, once tentative and provisional analyses gradually took shape and formed into subcategories, categories, and integrative theoretical nets with elastic but firm grounding in both the empirical data and the negotiation process.

Various approaches to qualitative data analysis were explored. Spradley (1979) traces the developmental research sequence from selecting a social situation for investigation to making a “componential analysis” and eventually “writing the ethnography”. Fetterman (1989) observes that “ethnographic analysis is iterative, building on ideas throughout the study” and involves a variety of useful techniques to help the “ethnographer to make sense of the forests of data” (pp. 88-89). Among these techniques are “triangulation”, “maps”, and “statistical software packages”. Brewer and Hunter (1989) discuss multimethod research as a synthesis of styles, including “verificational studies” and “validation studies” as approaches to construct validation; a synthesis of two different but complementary multimethod approaches. Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss (1987) develop the “constant comparative method”. Riessman (1993) encourages the “analysis of poetic structures” in conducting narrative analysis, while Goetz and LeCompte (1981) develop an “analytic induction” technique. Other authors discuss the mechanics of the “cut and Paste” method, “put in folders”, “unitizing and index cards”, and “computer analysis” or sorting by preassigned computer coding.

Much of this writing was insightful and thought-provoking. As Spradley (1979) reminds us, social phenomena are complex phenomena. Analysis is interpretation and, therefore, involves all the complex problems cited throughout this dissertation. Keeping all of this in mind, digesting and processing in my own way all the various authors I cited, and remembering that Strauss emphasizes his are “guidelines, rules of thumb and NOT rules”, I modeled my analysis after

Strauss' "constant comparative method".

Type of Analysis

A content analysis was utilized to interpret and categorize interview data, along with triangulation methods for comparative analysis with observations, field notes, and preliminary sketch notes made as transcripts were read. In addition, open-ended and axial coding strategies were used (Strauss, 1987). This researcher analyzed the data independently, identifying, categorizing, and coding individual items of information. In this way, the researcher was differentiating discrete pieces of data and determining their relationship to each other and the whole, identifying general themes. As with most qualitative research the goal of the effort was to identify common themes and primary patterns in the data (Patton, 1990).

Axial Coding

Axial coding is accomplished by the related processes of deconstruction and reconstruction. First, information that has been secured is deconstructed into the smaller units of meaning, such as words or phrases. Once this deconstruction is accomplished at this level, unifying themes across these words and phrases are sought.

A unifying theme serves as an axis, or straight line through the center of a plane, around which similar meanings can revolve. Similar meanings are then collected around each axial theme. According to Strauss (1987), "Axial coding is an essential aspect of the open coding . . . because the analyzing revolves around the 'axis' of one category at a time" (p. 32). Inherent in the axial coding process is intensity of analysis. In many studies, this deconstruction and

reconstruction processes may pass through several phases before all the meanings are adequately and appropriately represented. It is not uncommon for the process to include the generation of several axes, or to arrive at initial themes which are later discarded in favor of themes which more accurately represent the information set.

In this exploratory study, the plan was to first examine the information secured from the participants in terms of the six overarching research questions; that is, in terms of *keeper of the family*, *keeper of the culture*, *gender inequality*, *role prescription*, and *quality of life*. Initially these general topical areas served as core categories. Based on the researcher's intuitive thinking—or induction—and tacit knowledge, these core categories were partialized into five concepts; namely, structure, function, culture, value orientation, and degree of family and parental support that exist within the American Indian family of origin. Next, the researcher deconstructed the concept of family and parental support into seven construct themes, two of which encompassed the concepts of culture and value orientation. The seven construct themes identified by the researcher based on induction and tacit knowledge were: *emotional*, *financial*, *spiritual*, *values*, *material*, *physical*, and *cultural*.

Given the aforecited premise upon which the initial analysis was based, responses secured from the participants were first deconstructed into the five general topical areas, or core categories, cited above. Following deconstruction at this level, the responses were then deconstructed into ever-smaller, more specific meaning units related to the words and phrases that the women used. In this manner, the core categories were partialized into the five concepts of structure, function, culture, value orientation, and degree of family and parental support. As these themes (axes) were constructed, they were

used to re-code the information provided by the participants, moving toward the creation of themes which summarized the details the women shared, but accurately extracted and represented all of the meanings. The re-coding process enabled the reconstruction of the seven thematic constructs, or subcategories of the five general topical areas, previously discussed. These tasks were accomplished by the researcher independent of any computer assisted sorting analysis.

Discussion of the Data Analysis Process

The first interview, Case #692, was conducted in July, 1996. Successive interviews were conducted over the next four months, one each month, with the final interview, Case #691, completed in November, 1996. After each interview was concluded, the researcher transcribed the interview verbatim within a 48 hour span of time. All interviews had been transcribed verbatim by the researcher at the conclusion of the final interview in November, 1996. These transcripts, on average, were 70 pages in length and ranged from a low of 49 pages to a high of 118 pages. Taken as a whole, these transcriptions provided 349 pages of narrative as basic content for the data analysis process.

The analysis began with the researcher reading all the interviews in their entirety, beginning to end, several times. In these initial readings, the greatest attention was directed toward the six overarching research questions that had been subsumed under the five general topical areas or core categories; that is, questions relating to *keeper of the family*, *keeper of the culture*, *gender inequality*, *role prescription*, and *quality of life*. Next, additional readings of the transcripts were specifically directed at the seven construct themes identified by

the researcher based on induction and tacit knowledge. As was previously mentioned, these seven construct themes were: *emotional, financial, spiritual, values, material, physical, and cultural*. However, the researcher grew more open to identifying any other themes which were also evident in the data. It was at this point that an awareness of two additional themes--*effects of family secrets* and *effects of assimilation during the firstborn parents' generation*--began to emerge.

As the researcher became steeped in the analysis, and while in the processes of ordering the data and devising a coding "map", other themes emerged. These themes included *anecdotal teaching, protection of firstborn, work, health, and ethic of care*. In addition, it was noted that all five women made varying references in their interviews to the general topical areas or core categories related to the research questions; namely, *keeper of the family* and *keeper of the culture*. The researcher viewed these references as lending support to a decision to consider them thematically, at least in a first coding effort.

In this way the first coding categories were created. The researcher assigned a color code to each of the categories. For example, orange was assigned to *emotional*, fuchsia was assigned to *values*, yellow was assigned to *spiritual*, and so on. The transcribed interviews were then all read again, beginning to end, and all statements relating to these different categories were highlighted with the corresponding color code. Each interview was thereby deconstructed into its themes.

Once this coding of the 349 pages of transcripts was complete, the interviews were re-read yet another time, but this time only those portions which had not been highlighted were read to determine if any other themes could be

discovered. This reading of the interviews did not produce any new themes, but resulted in some portions of the women's narratives which had not been previously coded being understood as representative of one of the existing themes. There remained, however, in all five interviews, some parts which were purely idiosyncratic and not thematic in any sense. For the most part, these were conversational asides or remarks made by the women which did not relate to the interview questions. No attempt was made to create a coding category encompassing these asides and offhand remarks.

When the researcher was satisfied that this phase of coding was complete, the interviews of each of the five women were literally deconstructed; that is, the themes of each interview were physically separated (cut apart) from one another. Each woman's responses about *emotional, financial, spiritual, values, material, physical, and cultural* were cut from the context of their interview transcripts and assembled together on poster boards--*thematic boards*. The *thematic boards* contained each woman's words on the theme, exactly as she had spoken them, along with her initials and pseudonym case number. When each *thematic board* was completed, it contained all of the attributed statements of all of the study participants on that topic or theme. In this way, 14 thematic boards were created encompassing the seven thematic subcategories, with all of the words from all of the women in the same color code.

After completing this phase, the researcher embarked on an examination of the thematic boards as if they were separate and distinct from one another in order to ascertain if there were *themes-within-themes* to be found. Additionally, the thematic boards were also compared to one another to determine if any *themes-across-themes* could be discerned. From this comparison, the theme of

voices emerged strongly. The discussion which follows elaborates upon this theme as it relates to the findings of the study.

Once all of the relevant data provided by the women in their interviews had been coded into *main themes*, *themes-within-themes*, and *themes-across-themes*, the process began of reconstructing them into units of meaning which could be communicated as the “findings” of this study. At this point, a decision was made to use, insofar as possible, the actual words of the five women in this endeavor. While the researcher exercised judgment in the processes of selecting and arranging these words, they were never edited for style or grammar. Instead, every effort was made to record and present these women’s voices faithfully, in a verbatim fashion.

As the aforecited discussion outlines, this coding effort should be viewed as but one of many ways that this data can be organized and understood. The researcher selected this particular coding effort based on her trial experiences of such in the pilot study conducted in 1994, as well as its utility for this particular type of exploratory study. With the data provided, readers are encouraged to discover or construct other levels and layers of meaning for themselves.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of this study were generated in two distinct ways. The first phase yielded participant demographic data. The researcher extracted demographic data provided by each woman, from the individual interview transcripts, and constructed a demographic chart on poster board which served as a visual compilation of the demographic data. (See Figure 2). The second phase yielded narrative data from a selected sample of five participants. Each of the five women selected met with the researcher for an interview to discuss themes related to the research questions of this study. All of the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and qualitatively analyzed by the researcher.

In order to investigate the research questions, ethnographic interviews were conducted with five firstborn participants. The purpose of the ethnographic interview was to learn about the participants' subjective experiences of their role development as firstborn American Indian daughters within their American Indian family of origin. It was anticipated that involvement in the study would offer participants an opportunity to clarify and amplify their felt experiences of being a firstborn daughter. Further, it was expected that participation would give the interviewees an opportunity to assist in advancing theoretical,

PARTICIPANTS	Chyanne #691	Rayna #692	Sariah #693	Barbra #694	Diane #695
AGE	54	50	46	44	52
COUNTY	X	X	Y	X	Y
TRIBAL ID	Full Blood	Full Blood	Full Blood	Full Blood	Full Blood
EDUCATION	HS Diploma	GED	HS Diploma	HS Diploma	HS Diploma
	Some College	1 Semester College	Associates Degree		Masters Degree
OCCUPATION	Government Full Time	Clerical Non Profit Full Time	Technical Corporation Full Time	Aide Education Full Time	Government Full Time
MARITAL STATUS	1 Marriage Separated	2 Marriages 1 Divorce	2 Marriages 1 Divorce	1 Marriage 1 Divorce	2 Marriages 2 Divorces
SIBLINGS	(7) 5M, 2F	(8) 3M, 5F	(1) 1F	(3) 1M, 2F	(2) 1M, 1F
BIRTH ORDER	Fourth	First	First	First	First
CHILDREN	7	7	2	4	5
PARENTS LIVING	Mother-No	Mother-Yes	Mother-Yes	Mother-No	Mother-No
	Father-No	Father-No	Father-Yes	Father-No	Father-No

FIGURE 2 - DEMOGRAPHIC CHART

therapeutic, and family studies knowledge about their experiences of role development as firstborn daughters. The women appeared eager to contribute to this study.

Demographic characteristics of each of the five participants will be presented briefly below. A description of the interview process and emergent themes and patterns will follow. Due to the very personal and sensitive responses shared by the participants, pseudonyms are provided for each woman in the following material. Also, composite responses are provided when deemed appropriate to further protect each woman's anonymity.

Participant Demographic Characteristics

The women's ages ranged from 44 to 54 years, with a mean of 49.2 years. Two of the women were in their forties and three of the women were in their fifties. Of the tri-county area of central, southeastern Michigan, two of the three counties were represented by the women's residence; three women resided in county X, and two women resided in county Y.

In terms of American Indian identification or tribal affiliation, all five participants self-reported and were recognized as American Indian by their respective communities. Ethnically the sample demonstrated striking homogeneity, with all five women being full blooded American Indian. Equally astonishing was the finding that each participant had lineage with Canadian tribes that were descendants of the three tribes indigenous to Michigan (Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Chippewa). In addition, each of the participants received their tribal lineage from both their paternal and maternal sides of the family.

With regard to their marital status, only two of the women were currently married and both of these were second marriages. One of the women had been divorced twice and was now single. Another woman was legally separated, but not yet divorced nor considering divorce, from her only husband and was now single. The other woman participant had been married and divorced once and was now cohabiting with her long time partner. Three of the women had married white men in their first marriage; one woman was legally separated from her husband while the other two women had divorced their first husbands and were now either married to or cohabiting with American Indian men. Of the remaining two women participants, one woman was single after having married and divorced twice from American Indian men, whereas, the other woman had first married and divorced an American Indian man and was now married to a white man.

Viewing these results in a different way may make them more amenable to analysis. "Married" can be defined as married and remarried and "not married" can be defined as single, divorced, cohabiting and widowed. From this perspective, two of the participants were married and three were not at the time of this study.

Educational achievement evidenced somewhat greater variability among the participants than was found in their American Indian or tribal affiliation characteristics. Four of the five women had graduated from high school, while the fifth woman had a GED. Only one of the five participants did not have any college experience at all. One of the participants had a semester of college

education, whereas, another participant had more than a semester of college but less than an associates degree. Of the final two participants, one woman had earned an associates degree in a technical field and had pursued additional course work but not enough to earn a bachelors degree; the remaining participant had earned both a bachelors and masters degree, the latter of which came from one of the top ivy league schools.

In terms of sibling composition and ordinal position, all five participants had at least one sibling, and ranged to a high of seven siblings. One participant had seven siblings and was fourth in ordinal position; three brothers were ahead of her, followed by two brothers and two sisters. In this sibship, there was an age span of 18 years from the oldest to the youngest child. Another participant was first in ordinal position, followed by five sisters and three brothers; there was an age span of 20 years from the oldest to the youngest child. A third firstborn participant had one sibling, a sister, who was seven years younger than her. Still, another participant was first in ordinal position and had two sisters and a brother with an age span of six years from oldest to youngest. The final firstborn participant was first in ordinal position and had one brother and one sister. In this sibship, there was an age span of four years from oldest to youngest at the time of the study.

Interview Findings

Since the research questions were exploratory in nature, the participants' responses will be reported in a fashion that highlights the significant themes that emerged from the ethnographic interviews. Rather than present each research

question, one at a time, with collective responses from all five participants, I have chosen to present the findings on a case-by-case basis. In this way, each participant will be presented as an individual case profile, with responses to each research question presented in the woman's own voice. Following the presentation of all five participant case profiles, a brief analysis will be given of the collective responses in each thematic area. The most salient themes will be discussed more fully in Chapter V.

Rayna (Case #692; Interview 1)

At the time of the interview, Rayna was 50 years old and in her second marriage. She was employed full time and requested that she be interviewed at her place of employment. Rayna maintains sporadic contact with her mother and siblings; her father is deceased.

Question 1: What is the relationship between ordinal position of the first-born American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?

Thematic Content: Family and parental support, resources and what had the most value or meaning for you.

Rayna's personal story and experiences growing up stand apart from the other participants' stories and experiences. Rayna lived with her family of origin until the age of four when she was sent away to a boarding school. She resided in the boarding school, along with a female sibling who came at a later time, until she was 12. At the age of 12, Rayna returned to her family of origin only to find that she was unable to adapt and again, was placed in a boarding school until

she was approximately 16 years old. From the age of 16 on, Rayna lived for short periods of time with other American Indian families, a white family, and with members of her own extended family. What follows is Rayna's account of these early experiences.

According to Rayna, she knew she had been born at home somewhere on a little island where her family resided. She wasn't sure about how she got removed from her family of origin until a few years ago when she attended a reunion with her mother at the boarding school. In recalling this experience, Rayna shared that: "My first one I asked my mother why she sent me up there [the boarding school], and she said she didn't. But, ah, I said, 'How come I can't remember you?' She said it was because of my grandmother. Took me away from her. Cause my grandmother had me until I went to boarding [school]."

As it turns out, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had removed Rayna from her family of origin and placed her in the boarding school. She remembers returning home to her family of origin at the age of 12 and discovering that this was not going to work out, that she didn't want to be there: "No, not very long because I couldn't adjust after living in a boarding school for so long. You know, you gotta put a girl in the school. Got in line for this or that...and when I went to Terlie was like I was supposed to be part of the family. Get myself up and take myself off to school." What Rayna is describing is her inability to adjust to living with her family of origin, as well as the other families she was placed with, due to the very regimented and structured way of life in boarding school. As painful and difficult a period of time as this was for Rayna, she now views her experience

through a different lens: "But, you know at that time I was up here [boarding school] you know, and I was glad at that time because I would have gotten into trouble. But coming out of those places I had a hard time adapting to life. You, you adapt. A lot of times it feels like...um, walking in two worlds. This state or in that."

Question 3: What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?

Thematic Content: Values and culture; importance of, who instilled; emphasis and change over time.

Though Rayna was able to have contact with her family of origin during the time she was in boarding school, the larger influence on her values and culture was shaped by the regimen and structure of the boarding school during her formative years. Of the boarding schools she was in, Rayna recalls:

"...those were run like ah, ah, the Anglican church. You couldn't leave the yard and there were three groups. And there, the building was separated. The girls on one side and the boys on the other side. So we didn't get much interaction there. And um...maybe those white women took care of us there but they always got served. What they really watched us. That's where I learned to...what, you know, the difference between Indian and white. Because, like we got a lot of strappings too. Leather strap on your bare butt. Yeah, I remember them older girls, that's where I learned that from Molly that Indians don't cry. After awhile, especially me I was bad, I was always getting it. But after awhile it was like it didn't affect me at all."

In Rayna's own voice, we learn that her experience in the boarding school instilled, or imposed, the values of structure, regimented routine, strict discipline, preferential treatment based on race or culture, importance of conformity, internalization of emotions or feelings, and perhaps the importance of interacting with your own kind in that the genders were separated and there was little opportunity afforded to interact with the male gender. With regard to speaking or learning her native language, Rayna's experience illustrates the importance of conformity: "Oh yeah, we lost that." Not only was she prohibited from speaking her language, but everything to do with her native culture was taken away, forbidden. In Rayna's voice, it had to be "The Anglican church way." After age 16 when Rayna was living with extended family and eventually married the father of her first child, she recalls the painful residue of her boarding school experience in relation to the failure of her first marriage: "And I wasn't, I never grew up around men so I couldn't adapt to them very well, either."

At one point, Rayna was placed by an Indian agent with a wealthy, white family. Of this experience, she speaks about the father of the family and his attempts at instilling values: "He was some kind of executive in a real estate firm. He tried to show me his values. I remember we had this huge volume...albumn. And he was buying up this city block so he had gotten involved where, or he owned it all. He built this building and he designed the cottage on the lake he used to go to himself. It was nice. No, that money to me being young and raised in those schools...I had no use for. It didn't impress

me.”

In less than a year, Rayna’s placement with this white family disrupted and she returned to the boarding school environment. She recalls that the bulk of the values in life she learned came from the other kids in the school; the kids taught each other, especially survival skills. An example of this is poignantly captured in Rayna’s own voice: “Those I got from the other kids. That was kind of wrong telling me that, um, Indians don’t cry. Because I still have a bad...it’s very hard for me [to cry, show emotion]. And since we were surrounded by a white community, on Saturday’s they used to take us out for these walks, you know, two by two, and there’d be, what...a hundred of us by then. Oh, it seemed like that. And all these people would turn around and stare at us. And the older girls says, ‘Oh, don’t mind them. They’re just white trash.’ So, I learned not to respect them. And knowing that feeling that they were taking care of us, you know, well...they didn’t have time to give us no affection or nothing. But they did have time for strapping us.”

The early experiences Rayna had during her formative years, particularly during the time she was in boarding school, had a major influence on how she perceived and learned about her own native identity. For example, when she was younger, Rayna acknowledged that she struggled with her native identity and didn’t want to own her native background. “I was like that when I was younger. I don’t know. They didn’t let us practice any of our culture. That’s what those schools sort of did to us, you know.” The pain of her experience resonates in Rayna’s words when she speaks about her life in the years

following boarding school: "But, after just about killing myself, I carried myself to mental health. What was she, she was a psychologist. She was the one that told me I had a mental block. That's why I couldn't remember my mother when I was little. I had no idea. Even if she was there. She used to try to press me but I couldn't remember things like that. I'd get mad." It was a way for Rayna to try to protect herself. "I didn't know what happened. Being taken from my family."

As she grew older, Rayna recalls: "At first you know, I was only attracted to the white man. They had...only if they were...good talkers. The fact that they were quiet people. And being raised in those schools, I guess that's why I didn't...look on white Indian because, especially when I went back to the reserve, it seemed to me like, um...I didn't go with any Indian men because they were stupid or, I couldn't talk to them unless they had a couple of drinks." It wasn't until Rayna met her second husband, an Indian male, that she began to immerse herself in her culture. As she states: "I really didn't start going back to the culture till I met Dwight. Start going to all that drumming, pow wows, spending time at the Indian Center." When asked how important culture is to her today, Rayna emphatically stated: "I resent losing it! Especially our language, you know. And I can't understand why my aunt or my mother, you know, they'll start talking to me in Indian...they expect me to know. She [referring to her mother] couldn't have gone there that long [referring to boarding school] cause she's, my mother's still got it." Rayna's culture is very important to her today. When it comes to keeping her culture alive today with

her family, Rayna shares: "I've tried to. Yeah, but they don't want to follow do they? Just like the baby, yeah. If we put him and told him, and said to sing along and you know, and he says 'Can we know what time to shut up?' Quit singing. No dancing. In fact they was telling me could make a regalia for him. I could probably get it on him but he probably won't dance."

Rayna's frustration about trying to share and keep her culture alive today within her own family is illustrated in her retrospective account of her life as follows: "And um, their oldest sister [referring to her mother and aunt] just died this summer to. She's used to, ah, teach the language to the little kids there. Preschool kindergarten. She wrote an article for a Willow Island, for the newspaper there. Called memories, like old times. She started getting sick. She had cancer. She wanted to quit...they all told her, don't do it, we'll miss it a lot. Brought back a lot of memories with that to." In talking about trying to pass on that history, Rayna shared: "and have something to leave them. Expecting to know what's best for them. And I wasn't taught these things so how can I pass them on. When I became older, basically, everything I had to learn myself. To learn family values—for awhile there—and, I was going to see a psychologist. I also went to church. The Church of Jesus Christ. Non-denominational. And, ah, they believed that, um, the Indians are one of the lost tribes of Israel. I went for quite a few years. It was pretty therapeutic for me at that time."

Question 6: Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?

Thematic Content: Shaped the quality of life; influenced life and shaped goals; and any positives to being a firstborn daughter.

In response to this line of inquiry, Rayna thought a long while before answering: "Well, I haven't had, I never had a change [chance], a problem with the rest of the siblings. Especially since being the biggest. I was very energetic than the rest of them. I remember, being strong, I remember picking up the children...instead of taking them over to the bucket I picked up the whole thing. Ah, I figured to hell with it. So I was always strong. Didn't even cry. I don't think it was so much being the eldest. And we all had a problem with that. My mother let down, the one that was alcoholic. I remember her yelling at my mother about being sent away to those boarding schools. She blamed her. So we never wanted. But I remember kind of feeling like that until I discovered a different way. You know. That was her fault."

Additionally, one key difference Rayna observed between being the firstborn daughter and the eldest compared to her younger siblings is best depicted in Rayna's own words: "The ones, and then the younger ones didn't go there [boarding school] so...she raised...Dot and Leroy. The twins were taken from her. But she raised Dot and Leroy and they were...kind of like brats when I was around. Not listening to mom." For Rayna, this was a major difference in the upbringing she experienced compared to her two youngest siblings, one that holds a lot of emotional pain for her. These were the only two siblings that got to stay with and be raised by mom. In speaking about her

mother, Rayna states: "She, she doesn't, I don't think she's aware that she favors those two."

Today, Rayna continues to struggle with self-in-relation issues with her family of origin. For example, she shared a recent contact made by her third sister: "Now my third sister...the one that's gone to Ecorse, just wrote me and I haven't written her back because she, this is about the first time she's really asked, she wants to be closer. In all the, she was only in that school maybe a year before I left. I wasn't as close to her as I was to the other brother. Her mother didn't have the same father either. He was white. And, anyway, she wants to be closer now." When I asked Rayna what she thought about this, her response seemed to indicate she had done a lot of introspective thinking about it: "Now that I, when you get older in life things change. Things that meant so much when you were younger that you fought about, now" they don't mean anything, have that importance any longer. "Yeah. It's nothing. Yeah. But, uh, I've been thinking about it. I supposed I'd like to. Just like I want to go back to Willow now and keep...um...learned to know my father's family there. He's gone, he's been gone. He was an alcoholic too."

Rayna's experience is indicative of a person who has learned to survive without anyone's help, to be strong and nonemotive, to adapt without being able to, or allowing oneself to, rely on another for any type of help or support. Her story, her experience, is an example of someone who struggles with the relational context of self and others, with wanting a relational connection with others but being unsure, afraid of, and not knowing how to be or live with

self-in-relation.

Sariah (Case #693; Interview 2)

For this interview, I met Sariah at a local Indian organization where she suggested we meet. Sariah had chosen this site because she had not been able to visit this Indian organization in some time and she had missed doing so. At the time of the interview, Sariah was 46 years old and in her second marriage; her first marriage was to an Indian male and now she was married to a white male. She was employed full time in a highly technical job. Both of Sariah's parents are living and she has fairly regular contact with them, as well as with her younger sibling.

Question 1: What is the relationship between ordinal position of the first-born American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?

Thematic Content: Family and parental support, resources and what had the most value or meaning for you.

Sariah is a very articulate and relational type of woman who has a way of putting you at ease when she speaks. While growing up, Sariah recalls that she had a lot of good teaching from both of her parents, especially with regard to the spiritual and philosophical aspects of life. She recalls that: "They [her parents] were always there. I mean even though they—my mother—was working or something, I mean I could call her up if I had to or whatever. They always listened to me. And they didn't always agree with me. Yeah, right, they always

listened to me. And um...I probably came to a lot of my own decisions, but they listened to me. You know, and I listened to them. But...anything that I wanted to do, they were there for me. I...can't ever remember them saying 'No you can't do that' or 'No you can't go here', or...never. Never."

For Sariah, her parent's taught her an invaluable lesson that she holds dear to this day. In a very poignant manner, Sariah revealed what had the most value or meaning for her: "That you believe in yourself. And you know that you did the right thing. Or you try to do the right thing. And, um, that you're independent. That I'm independent, I guess. I think those are the most important things. A strength may be that other people don't have." For Sariah, this means perseverance, that "you persevere and you keep on going. Get knocked down, you get up and" keep forging ahead. Sariah is very proud of the fact that she didn't give up whenever she was knocked down. In her own words, she captures the essence of her parent's teaching to her: "And I'm glad that I, that I didn't. I mean there are times that I could have. Yeah. But I didn't. That's the difference."

Question 3: What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?

Thematic Content: Values and culture; importance of, who instilled; emphasis and change over time.

Sariah vividly recalled the values she was taught growing up. She shared that she was always closer to her father than she was to her mother, although she is at a loss as to why this was. While both parents were always

there for her, Sariah perceives herself as being more like her father than her mother. For Sariah, values she learned and holds dear were instilled by her father.

As she related the type of values she was raised with, Sariah recalled the words of her father: "Um, my dad's favorite saying: 'If you're honest, you'll never go wrong.' I mean from being a little, little kid. That's ah, probably something I remember a lot. I mean that, that stuck. And then integrity and responsibility...and you do things because you should, not because, not because it's the thing to do." For Sariah, dad instilled the values of honesty, integrity, and responsibility—values that she readily admits are the hallmark of how she has tried to live her life.

According to Sariah, values instilled when she was a young child continued to be emphasized as she grew older. She doesn't recall that any new values were added. As she shared: "Responsibility, um, as well as the honesty. That was always there, and um...you should...do for other people what you can. You know, they, they...need, if they need something, if you can do something for them you should." Despite the earlier theme of responsibility and being independent that Sariah recalled being instilled when she was younger, the emphasis appears to have been embedded within the theme of relational connection as the latter statement given by Sariah clearly emphasizes. It appears that she was taught the values of being strong, responsible, and independent but not without regard to helping others where and when you can.

Sariah went on to share that she was taught: "Hard work pays off.

Those, what do you call, Christian ethics. A lot of that. But it was true in my case, it's all true. Um, the respect. You have to have respect for other people. And respect for things. And if you say, like you can't do something, you can't. If you say you can, you can do anything, right." Referring to her father, Sariah shared: "He became really...um, and my mother did to, encouraged me to be independent. I was independent. Very independent, I think. More so than I see young people today. And ah, I learned how to make decisions...young." Again, while emphasis was on being independent, it was not without regard for relationships with other people.

Culture was something that Sariah learned about by asking questions, as she put it: "...I would come home with these questions. I was always a why person. Why this, why that. My mother would always say, 'I don't know.' She'd try to answer my questions. 'I don't know. Ask your father.' And so this went on. And he would literally, you know, tell me these things, explain why, what he thought why." Sariah shared her experience of reading stories about Indians in school: "Okay, and they were really good stories and so forth. But as you're going to school...but when I went to school...what you learned in the history books is not what we believed went on." So Sariah would come home from school and ask her father questions about these stories she had read. On one occasion, she recalled some very poignant words spoken by her father: "And he said to me at one time, he said 'the Indian Nation is a dead Nation, and it will never rise again. And you'll be better off to, you know, don't look back.

Look forward.' Yeah, that was...that was hard."

For Sariah, this was a very difficult answer to hear from her father. She believes that he still thinks this way today. When asked how much the sentiment that her father expressed influenced her in terms of is it something that she believes in today, Sariah emphatically responded: "No! I think it could change. But it's going to take a long time. We, we are our own worst enemy. I think, ah, like the tribes that have the casinos, now they have the right idea. I mean, they finally learned the system to beat the system. That's what it takes. I mean, in my own personal life, that's what I've found. There's no way around it. You have to participate. But I don't think we're a dead Nation." Sariah's response rings of perseverance, a lesson she learned early in her formative years.

As Sariah spoke about her father's sentiment to her at such an early age, she offered to share her perceptions about this experience and the meaning it held for her, as well as for her father. In a very meaningful, emotive fashion, Sariah began her story: "But I know why he said that...later on. In my, in my life I could see why he said that because, because, that it all has merit because my father lost his mother when he was about two and a half. She died of--what you call back then--they called it consumption. I guess TB. She died and he was like almost the youngest, or was the youngest, I think, of six children. So, and his father was a bootlegger on the reservation. They took his father away and they took all the kids and split them up all into different schools in Columbia. So, I mean for a little child, that, that's hurtful. So I can see why he said that

because it was painful. It was painful for him.”

Sariah’s mother did not escape this painful experience either. As Sariah tells it: “And my mother, the same thing. Her mother died when she was 10, and not [sic] of her relatives, she’s from Mural town, none of her relatives wanted to take them in. She had three brothers. So the same thing happened. They were, they were split up and put in different schools. And when they got there they weren’t allowed to speak in their tongues, their Mohawk or Delaware. They were supposed to adopt the English ways or whatever group was running the schools. It was awful. So, you know I could see why they feel that way, it was painful.” An experience that echoes of the personal experience of **Rayna, Case #692**, previously profiled. Even more insightful and powerful is the connection that Sariah would make between her parent’s experiences and the impact it had on her and her sister. Sariah’s words resonate with insight that connects the past with the present: “But the thing about it I found so interesting is that...you know, this happened to them [and] even though it happened to them, it kind of effected us, the kids. And in the way we looked at things for awhile. So it’s terrible.”

This personal story, as told by Sariah, effectively illustrates and accentuates the probable reasoning and emphasis her father placed on respecting other people, and if you can help others out, do so, not because you should but because you can. While emphasizing strength, independence, and responsibility, it is not hard to understand why relational connectedness of concern for others’ well-being was a value instilled and emphasized by Sariah’s

father. As we shall see, given these teachings, it is not hard to understand why Sariah has heeded her father's sentiments and built her life around perseverance, strength, honesty, integrity, and especially responsibility in the form of relational connectedness, vis-a-vis an ethic of care.

In response to specific questions about her culture, Sariah informs that she never learned her native language, despite the fact that both her parents could speak it fluently. Rather, she recalls that she was taught a few words by her parents but not enough to carry on a conversation nor to understand others speaking in their native tongue. However, she did remember that: "um, of course, cooking wise, I learned how to do that. You know, what ah, the things were that they ate, and they liked, I could do that. I was taught that. But it was more of an inside thing. Not anything on the outside that you could see." What Sariah is referring to is native spirituality. When asked if this was something that she remembered being taught very early on in her life, Sariah's response was: "Oh yeah. Very early, yes."

As she discussed attending pow wows and how she came to learn about her native culture, Sariah relayed a very powerful and personal experience she had when she was 23 years old. Her story is worth sharing as it is illustrative of her strong belief system and her own spirituality. According to Sariah

Yeah. I went to pow wows, and then I had my own experiences when I was about 23. I was sick. I was very thin. I weighed like a 106 pounds. And I went to ah, my period had stopped, okay. And at that time there's no reason why that should happen to

me. So I went to a gynecologist and he was trying to help me. But I wasn't getting better, I kept losing weight. Okay, he said if I lost one more pound he was going to have to send me somewhere else. And I didn't ask him where, I didn't want to know. So I was going to school at that time and something just struck me. I got in my car, and this was in the middle of the night. I went to Serious Nations, and I went to a Medicine Man. I'd only been there once ever in my life. And I don't even know how I got there. Really. And so ah, I went to this place and I knocked on the door. And he opened the door and he had water on the his little stove there. And he had two cups on his little table. He said 'I knew somebody was coming to see me from long ways away' and he said 'but I didn't know it was you.' And so he told me that I was half dead and ah, that I had to have a feast. So, I went to my cousins and ah, I think it was not the next day but the following morning, I had to make this bread and I had to take it there and I had to be there at dawn. Had to be dawn. And ah, he and this other man, they burned tobacco and they said things, I don't know what they say cause I don't understand the language. And ah, I had to take this—look like dirty root—and take it home. I had to boil it up to three times and in a great big white pickle jar, great big old pickle jar like that [motioning with her hands the size] and drink it. If it—the

funny thing is, when we boiled it up, it looked like blood. So, I drank it. I did just exactly what I was told, I did that. And all of a sudden I got better. Cause, I mean my hair was falling out, and everything, everything was wrong. I was, it would be like 90 degrees out like now and I would be freezing to death. And he told me when I left, that I would never have to come back unless I see false faces in my dreams. Well, I never have. And that's what, 23 years ago. It is. And so...I got better.

Such a poignant, captivating personal story is not easily forgotten nor dismissed. As the researcher, I found myself deeply moved by Sariah's experience and somehow, very connected to her. As Sariah eloquently states it: "So...I believe these things happen. And I believe, if you believe, it's powerful. Powerful. But yes, that really happened to me. So, I, I guess I feel, you know, protected in a way. I, I, I mean we all have our ups and downs and things, but I mean I, I don't see false faces in my dreams. If I don't see false faces in my dreams, I'm fine." What made Sariah even more of a firm believer in the power of the Medicine Man and native spirituality, is the reaction she got from her parents when she shared her story with them. "My parent's, they, they didn't question it at all. Like...think, oh, you know, that maybe they wouldn't believe it or whatever. But, they did, they believed it. I would recommend it for anybody."

Despite these early and powerful experiences in her life, when asked about the importance of culture in her everyday life for her today, Sariah said:

"It's not real important...in my personal life. But I do see the need for it to become more important. I just don't know what to do about it." Sariah's voice captures the essence of her dilemma: "It'd be like starting as an infant again. I think the spiritual values, those are there. Like, respect for your elders and, and you take care of your own. They are for me anyway. Like the extended family. That's very important. Ah...but to be a good human being I think is the most important. It's like we are our brother's keeper. I believe that we are. So, it, but as for...cultural aspect, I may, I do see that we need to do something. I personally need to do something but I, I just don't know what...at this point, what to do."

While struggling with her own dilemma about how to make her culture more present in her daily life, Sariah has tried to teach her two children "as much as I can." As she acknowledges her efforts, Sariah clarifies what she means by stating: "I try to...again, it's more in the way you live your life...by example. It's not so much something they can touch and feel and see. It's what's inside." Here, again, the emphasis is on a relational context, on the intrinsic worth or matter of people, not something external, on the outside, or tangible for all to see, feel, and touch. Perhaps this is why Sariah finds herself in a dilemma about how to make her native culture more present in her everyday life, how to put words to something that is so spiritual, so intrinsic to your 'self', your being. As she learned early on in her formative years from her parents, she doesn't give up, she perseveres and keeps trying. She believes.

Question 4: Does gender inequality exist in the role development of the firstborn daughter?

Thematic Content: The role gender played in the family; male role; female role.

From Sariah's standpoint, gender inequality did not exist within her family as she was growing up. As she recalls, there were no limitations put on her and she was free to embark on activities associated with either gender. For example, Sariah shared that "there was none of this just because I'm a girl type of thing." She went on to state: "I played baseball. I participated in sports at school just like, you know, boys would do. And I did all of that, and I mean, I did things at home...that, you know, boys would do. Because we had no boys. There were no brothers. So I did all those things. Oh no, there was not that [there was no discrimination between male or female oriented activities]. And I don't, I don't have one today between ah, my daughter and son. I mean, I stand [sic] them as equal...equals."

Given Sariah's upbringing, it is not difficult to understand why she has persevered and become very successful in her current telecommunications job. She is in a position which has traditionally been male dominated and is one female among many men in her division. Despite the fact that she gets along well with her male coworkers, she says: "You know, I mean four years later I still...I still feel a little resentment there. Even though we, we get along and so on, and so forth." Yet, she perseveres, always moving forward and showing her strength, her integrity, and her sense of responsibility.

Question 5: How is the role of the firstborn daughter prescribed?

Thematic Content: Manner in which responsibilities were assigned or given; who gave or assigned these responsibilities.

Sariah recalls that responsibilities were given to her by both of her parents, although she remembers that her father tended to give her more responsibility than her mother. In terms of how these responsibilities were given, Sariah relayed: "It was ah, you should, you should do this, you should do that. It was not like I have to and if I, and I knew that the more I did, the more benefits I reaped from doing that, so, it was never, it was never a structure as to at this time you do this and at that time, I want you to do that. No, it was never like that." She was never ordered or told to do something, rather it was left up to her to decide. However, Sariah says, "But I, if I didn't do something that I should have done, I would hear about that. Okay. But um...it just sort of happened."

The types of responsibilities that Sariah had were rather routine; for example, take out the trash, clean up the table, clean the bathroom, and hang up her clothes. It was the manner in which she was taught responsibility that stands out for Sariah. In her own voice, Sariah's words create an image to go along with her story: "I mean like, like things ah, my father would say, when you take your shoes off, you know how kids have a tendency to just take them off...but if they have ah, ties on them to tie your shoes. I was to untie them and put the laces inside the shoes so that they could rest. I witnessed some strange things like that. And separate them, you know, you just don't throw your shoes around."

As Sariah grew older, the types of responsibilities she had changed. She shared an example: "Like I had to ah, my mother went to work...um, I can't even remember the year or anything, but um, my sister was little then. After my sister started school full time, then my mother went to work full time. And, so then my responsibilities were to look after her [her sister]. I'd get dinner started, um, do my homework, and whatever else needed to be done because she worked in the afternoons." Once mom went to work, then Sariah had primary responsibility for looking after her sister and tending to the house until her dad came home from work.

While Sariah conceded that she reaped benefits if she did as suggested, I wondered what would happen to her if she did not carry out responsibilities as her parents suggested. According to Sariah, "I'd be reminded. They'd remind me. You know, you should take the trash out, and so on and so forth; they were "Did you forget?" or things like that. I was never ah, I never suffered any great penalty if I didn't do it but..." Just a reminder or suggestion from her parents was all it took for Sariah to take care of her responsibilities. She acknowledges that it was her father that did most of the suggesting or reminding. For Sariah, then, responsibilities were assigned or given by suggestion, reminders, or through informal anecdotal teachings she received from her father, such as the story she shared about placing the laces inside of her shoes so that they could rest.

Question 6: Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?

Thematic Content: Shaped the quality of life; influenced life and shaped goals; and any positives to being a firstborn daughter.

For Sariah, being the firstborn daughter is very meaningful and has greatly effected the quality of her life. After a short pause, Sariah responded to this line of inquiry as follows: "I owe everything, my entire life to that. Because I was, I was the one who had to learn to be responsible. I had to learn to be independent, I had to learn to make decisions, and suffered the consequences of my decisions. And...it was a, it was a real important thing in my life that I was the firstborn." She went on to state: "I think if I had been born second...my life would probably be a lot different. Cause [sic] I tell you, my sister, my sister now works for Ameron. She is now becoming a union steward. She is now going back to school. I mean she's 40 years old. But I mean, I said 'you just want to be just like your big sister, don't you?', you know. All these years later, these things, she's doing these things. Because before, it, she didn't need to I guess." Perhaps Sariah's last statement is truer than she herself realizes in that her sister could always depend on her to take care of everything, to "be all, do all". Now things have come full circle and Sariah's sister is trying to emulate Sariah, follow in her footsteps.

Further inquiry about how being the firstborn daughter had effected what she experienced or what she has done, yielded the following response from Sariah: "It gave me...courage to try. Even knowing that there's maybe not going to be anyone there to help me if I need help or, um...I think, I think that's

a good thing. Courage. Like um, so, so mom and dad aren't there, or so somebody's not there, I'm, I'm still going to try. To pick myself up and try again I guess." What stands out in Sariah's voice is independence, self-reliance, strength, and perseverance—qualities she learned early on in life.

Another example of these qualities can be heard in Sariah's voice when she offered the following comment: "It's like, you know, my husband says I don't need him. I don't need him. Really. But I do need him, you know, as the person that he is. But I mean like financially or something like that" she can be independent and handle things. "Yeah self, not self-sufficient, but kind of self-sufficient. Yeah, I got myself."

After some pensive thought, Sariah offered her perspective about whether she saw any negatives to being a firstborn: "Material things were not as abundant as they were later on, okay. Cause [sic] they're young basically, young people starting out and they don't have much. You know, so you hear a lot of arguments, you know, about money, money, money when they were young. Like that, you're the firstborn so that's kind of negative. But, and then the other is that sometimes I did once in awhile resent the extra responsibility. It seemed like my sister had it easy, in a lot of respects, and I didn't. I think I benefited in the long run." Sariah went on to share her insight and perceptions and revealed that, sometimes in looking back, it would have been nice to have a little bit more balance or some slack here and there. She stated: "But it hurt her. That so many things were handed to her. Because she expected that throughout her life. But, so she married somebody that she thought he was

gonna [sic] provide for her. And when the money ran out...she didn't, he wasn't really that important to her anymore. You know what I'm saying? So, her reality was a little screwed up I think."

Barbra (Case #694; Interview 3)

Barbra requested that I meet with her at her place of employment for the interview. At the time of the interview, Barbra was 44 years old, divorced from her first husband who was a white male, and was living with her Indian male partner of several years. She was employed full time in an educational program for Indian children where she had invested over 17 years of her career. Both of Barbra's parents are deceased and she has sporadic contact with her younger siblings.

Question 1: What is the relationship between ordinal position of the first-born American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?

Thematic Content: Family and parental support, resources and what had the most value or meaning for you.

Like Sariah, Case #693, Barbra is a very engaging woman who makes you feel at ease when she speaks. Barbra is rather articulate and gave much thought before responding to my questions. In responding to family and parental support and resources she received while growing up, Barbra was quick to respond with: "No, they weren't very good." She went on to share the following account: "You know, they weren't um, well, for one thing I had too

many things to do at home so I didn't have like, you know, after school, you know, I couldn't join anything cause [sic] I had to come home and make dinner." From Barbra's perspective, all the responsibilities had to be taken care of first before she was allowed to have time for herself. As she says, "You know, everything, you know, so there wasn't much, you know, like sports-wise I couldn't be in because I had this stuff I had to take care of at home, and like even in school, you know, the only attention—like if I did really bad then I got it. And if I did really good it was like [they expected that or whatever], or nothing. You know, it's like oh, okay, and you know, it just was weird."

As Barbra recalled this experience of having all the responsibility, she became rather emotive in verbal and nonverbal means. As she spoke, you could hear the pain and disappointment in her tone. From her perspective, Barbra felt that she had all the responsibility, including caring for her two younger sisters and brother. As she got older, the level of responsibility increased while her sisters and brother had virtually no responsibility. In response to my inquiry as to whether she received much support, encouragement, praise, or acknowledgement while she was growing up, Barbra did not hesitate in answering an emphatic "No!". Since Barbra did not receive this type of support or resource from her family or parents, she felt there was nothing to respond to in terms of what had the most value or meaning for her during this period in her life.

Question 3: What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?

Thematic Content: Values and culture; importance of, who instilled; emphasis and change over time.

Barbra recalled that she was raised with the values of respecting other people's property and people in general. As she put it: "You know, like, you know, telling the truth, you know, being honest, you know, and respecting, you know, always had, you know, respect in our uncles or anybody—any adult really. Your teacher, you know, that kind of thing." However, when it came to knowledge of specific native values, Barbra responded with "Not really" when asked if she grew up knowing about her native values from an early age.

Despite the fact that Barbra's parents did not instill cultural knowledge while she was growing up, she did recall special times she had with her maternal grandfather who occasionally stayed with the family for periods of time. Barbra said "...well, my grandfather tried. You know, because he, he would live with us and different times he would try to teach me, you know, the language. And my mother would just get really angry and she says, you know, 'you have to leave that stuff alone' and 'I don't want her learning that. She doesn't need to know that'." As Barbra reminisced about this, she said how hurt her grandfather would be by her mother's sentiment. She continued with: "You know, but different times when we'd be together, you know, he would tell me this or, you know, tell me different things. But, my mom just never ever wanted that. You know, she just, she just thought it would be better off to leave that alone and we have to live here and [adjust]." It is clear that Barbra's

grandfather wanted to instill cultural knowledge and equally clear, that Barbra had a desire to know and learn about her culture. However, given her mother's sentiment, it appears that Barbra and her grandfather had to share their cultural interests in secret, stealing away moments where they could in a clandestine fashion.

Another illustration of Barbra's struggle to learn about her culture can be captured in her own voice as she recalls a special moment where she was imagining what things might have been like in another time.

You know, cause [sic] I remember one time sitting in the back yard and I was looking out and I thought[t]—I was trying to imagine what it must have looked like without any houses and how it, you know, was as a young native person and not having any white people, or this, and I thought 'God, that would be so neat.' And my mom came out and so she was sitting there when we were talking and I said, 'Just think how this would look' you know and she just looked at me and she goes "well, that's really dumb to think that way."

She said "these people are here, this is what you have to live with and you can't think of things." She said "look at everything that we have because of these people."

You know, but she wasn't thinking about how I was trying to imagine what it might be like, you know. And she just didn't want any of it, you know.

As the reader, it is not hard to imagine how Barbra must have felt during this moment with her mother. Imagine all the enthusiasm and wonderment in Barbra's voice only to have the wind knocked out of her sails, so to speak, by her mother's insensitive, almost angry and discounting remarks. Even as Barbra shared her story with me, there was an air of disbelief and bewilderment in her voice and in her facial expression, as if to say "What was so bad about imagining and wondering what it must have been like?"

What values were instilled in Barbra while she was growing up, she recalled, were instilled equally by mom and dad. "Definitely. Yeah, by both." When asked if there was anything in particular that her grandfather or other family members emphasized, or influenced her, with regard to values, Barbra replied: "This, it's about the same." To Barbra, her grandfather and other family members just reinforced the values her parents had instilled. When it came to the types of values that were shared or made known to her that were important, and change over time, Barbra recalled: "No. No, not really at all." Values remained pretty consistent all the way through her child rearing years.

Although culture was not important in Barbra's family while she was growing up, it did change over time, especially after Barbra married her first husband who happened to be white. For example, Barbra shared a story about what occurred when she was in elementary school: "But, you know what, um... when we lived in, in Diablo you know, and we moved to Decatur—I think I was going in fourth grade. Now, when my mom registered for me in school, she put down I was Italian." Barbra had no knowledge of this at the time, but learned of

it later from a childhood friend who overheard her mother at the time. "She was standing there with her mother and they were filling out papers. Yeah. And this lady's Italian! You know, and, and she's looking at me—now I don't look Italian (gestures to herself, her profile) you know, but my mom, you know, she just thought it would be, we'd be easier accepted if people didn't think we were Indians."

According to Barbra, the lack of importance or emphasis on culture remained throughout her childhood until she got married. As she tells it

See, and then when I married a white guy, oh, that was it-- and she [her mother] disowned me and then all of a sudden, we didn't talk for like about oh, maybe a year and a half, and it was after I had my son, you know, then my mom wanted to see him. You know, things kind of mended and then I came home and, it was, it was a total different atmosphere from when I had left a year and a half before. It was just like I could not believe, you know, they were involved in the Center, they were in ah, the child welfare act, they were—she was going to Lakewood, she was going here meeting the governor. She's talking, oh it was, yeah, honestly I did not fit in at all. I just didn't know, I didn't even know who she was, you know. She said me getting married, and she realized, you know, because she always didn't want me going out with Indians cause [sic] they're all a bunch of drunks. That's what she always told me,

you know. Yeah. But, you know, but then she, you know, wanted me, you know, being white, and I'm not. I mean, that's the way she pretty much raised me to be. You know, and then, then I get married and then that's not right, you know. And then we had a really good talk afterwards, you know, when we got back together. And I said 'well, what was I supposed to do?' I says 'You're the one that didn't want me to be this. Now', I said, 'I come home and now you guys are all Indians', you know. She just, she didn't under[stand]—she goes "I don't know." She goes "I just knew", she said, "I have to do something." She goes "I raised you to be that way and then when, when this happened", she goes, "I realized, you know, we're going to lose , you know, if, if I don't get my, the rest of my kids involved with the community."

With this change in attitude with her mother, Barbra remembers, came a need to get more involved in their culture. She shared that her mother got back into activities like getting back into the longhouse. "She started going there, she started learning the language, she says 'don't want to lose this.' You know, and I really believe it was things in her childhood because my grandfather took them off the reserve and, you know, so they didn't really grow up, you know. They grew up in a white society and it was real, real hard." For Barbra, observing this dramatic change in her mother was like witnessing her mother coming full circle; she had a difficult time understanding why their culture was

not good enough to know about growing up and now, after so many years, it was like her mother had always lived and practiced their culture on a daily basis. It was hard for her to comprehend.

For Barbra, the turning point in her life when culture really started to take on importance for her, and she found that it was something she wanted to immerse herself into and learn more about, came after her divorce from her white husband. As she put it: "I think, I think it was after my divorce. You know, and then I had, you know, I had to move back home and [everybody was Indian all of a sudden]. Yeah. You know, and it was great. It was great to know like, oh okay, great, now we're going to learn all this stuff, you know. It was, it was really, it just felt really right."

Today, however, Barbra struggles to find words to describe the level of importance culture holds for her now. She states: "Um, yeah, it's, it's important and, you know, it's a funny kind of a thing because, well, both of my parents have died. And it was like after my mom died, it kind of, I don't know, something just kind of happened. It was okay for a while and I was really, you know, trying to hang on to that and then, I don't know, it's [sic] just seems to be a little different. Um, it's not as intense as it was and I don't know why. You know, I really, I don't know why it is. But, it just um...the way that I felt."

Perhaps what Barbra is struggling with is lack of relational connection with her culture now that her mother is gone. Given the way in which Barbra was raised and then being witness to her mother coming full circle with regard to valuing their culture, the impetus for Barbra to connect or immerse herself in her culture

is gone, for mom served as the catalyst for learning about their culture. As a result, the relational connection for Barbra—her mother—with her culture is no longer present and available to give her permission to actively learn and practice her culture.

Now that she has children and grandchildren, Barbra tries to be the catalyst for them with their culture. For Barbra, culture is: "I mean, it's important and, you know, and I have two ah, younger daughters, and I have two granddaughters and, you know, it's, it's important that they know, you know, and that it's, ah...But it's, it's just like you say, maybe that's what it was, it was just the newness and it's great, you know." Perhaps part of Barbra's struggle is that her culture is something that she has been wanting all along and has been curious about, and now, well it's finally okay. As she says: "Yeah, and then, you know, and then I got this job which was just really great because you could just learn, and we has [sic] so many people on staff to learn from, you know, everywhere, and you know, they were, it was, it was good for me. It was real good." It may be a real possibility that, for Barbra, her job became a catalyst and legitimate means for her to continue to learn about her culture now that her mother was gone and not available to encourage, reinforce, or somehow give permission to Barbra to continue discovering her culture. Her job served as a replacement catalyst for the role her mother once held.

Question 4: Does gender inequality exist in the role development of the firstborn daughter?

Thematic Content: The role gender played in the family; male role; female role.

From Barbra's standpoint, she does not ever recall that responsibilities given to her were gendered in any way. Most of the responsibilities she had were given to her by her mother, while her father was the primary disciplinarian. Barbra does not recall that there was ever any distinction made by her parents that these are female things you have to do, and these are things that males take care of; gender did not really matter. As she tells it: "I don't think it, no." Whatever needed to be done was done. She gave the following account:

"Like cut the grass or take out the garbage. Well, my brother did get that job. You know, that was the one, yeah, you know, that was the one job he had. But um, no, it was, you just did everything, you know." According to Barbra, doing everything and carrying the bulk of the responsibilities, including the care of her siblings, held pretty constant throughout her entire childhood and young adulthood until she left home when she got married.

Question 5: How is the role of the firstborn daughter prescribed?

Thematic Content: Manner in which responsibilities were assigned or given; who gave or assigned these responsibilities.

While Barbra's mother gave or assigned her primary responsibilities for care of the home and her siblings, her two sisters and one brother were pretty much free of any responsibility. Even though her brother was assigned the tasks of mowing the lawn and taking the garbage out, nothing changed in the

way of additional responsibilities for her brother or sisters over time. Barbra still carried the bulk of the responsibilities as the firstborn daughter. While her sisters and brother were free to engage in after school activities, sports, or various social and recreational things, Barbra was not allowed to do so because of the level of responsibility she had.

In discussing the difference in the amount of responsibility she had in comparison to her siblings, Barbra related that: “well, my one sister is pretty much, was always in trouble. She was always stealing and lying and, and that, and my brother, he was just, he tried sports. Now I guess, but see, I was already gone—moved out. And he tried baseball and hockey and, you know, my parents just kind of—I used to feel bad for him cause [sic] he would go to the games and they wouldn’t go.”

Being the firstborn daughter and carrying the bulk of the responsibility while she lived at home, groomed Barbra to absorb an “ethic of care” (Gilligan, 1993) in her relationships with her siblings once she moved out, due to her marriage. In sharing how she felt bad for her siblings because her parents wouldn’t attend their athletic events, Barbra’s own voice illustrates the ethic of care relational connection she actualized with her siblings.

You know, so I’d tell him cause [sic] I had to sneak,
they’d have to sneak to call me to talk to me because
they weren’t supposed to, and so [because of who she
married at the time]. Right. You know, and so I told
him, I said ‘well let me know when you have a game

and I'll go to your game.' You know, and so I would try to and, and then my youngest sister, she got into, to basketball and they didn't go to that. You know, and I thought, well geez, you know, this is, you know, you should do this. This is your daughter, you know. And, but my sister, my other sister and I, we would go, you know, we would go to the games. But my mom and dad just, I don't know what that was, you know. I don't know if they were uncomfortable or didn't give a shit. I really don't know, you know.

For Barbra, practicing an ethic of care with regard to her siblings once she moved away seemed a natural thing to do. She could not understand why her parents didn't support her siblings in their athletic events, let alone show that they encouraged or were proud of their children, by attending these events. The role of encouraging, taking an interest in, and supporting her siblings in their athletic events by attending these functions, was not a role nor a responsibility assigned to Barbra by her parents. It was a role, an ethic of care, that she assumed herself as a way of demonstrating her interest in, and relational connection with, her siblings. In another vein, perhaps one can draw the inference that this role was in fact prescribed to Barbra by her parents through default on their own behalf. Clearly, one can argue that Barbra assumed this responsibility to demonstrate an ethic of care with her siblings in the absence of her parents display of an ethic of care. It was an important

relational connection for Barbra, and one she could not understand why it wasn't of paramount interest or importance to her parent's--after all, her siblings were her parent's children, not hers.

Question 6: Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?

Thematic Content: Shaped the quality of life; influenced life and shaped goals; and any positives to being a firstborn daughter.

For Barbra, being the firstborn daughter is a positive experience and one that holds a lot of meaning. As she describes it: "Oh, I think it's been really good. I think for me, because I am real, real responsible and I taught that to my children. You know, and, and um, you know, growing up it wasn't so hot. But I'm, I'm really thankful for all that I learned and um, you know, being brought up the way that I was, it's given me a lot."

In another vein, I queried Barbra on how being the firstborn daughter has shaped the quality of her life to where she is at today, in contrast to not being a firstborn daughter and living the life of one of her younger siblings instead. Without hesitation, Barbra responded: "Oh God, it stinks." Barbra describes what she sees as the positive aspect of growing up as the firstborn daughter in words that exude strength and self-confidence. "Oh yeah. Because there's nothing I can't do. I mean, you know, I know how to paint, I can cut the grass, I can, I can just do whatever. [Pretty self-sufficient]. Yeah. You know, you know like I don't need to sit there 'well, move the furniture for me', you know, like and I think I've raised my daughters the same, they're the same." Given the fact that

Barbra has only one son (her other three children are daughters), she went on to share that: "You know, and I made sure that I did not do that cause [sic] I only have one son, but, you know, hey, you know, everybody does everything and, you know, that's, and, and I think it's been good, you know." As was done with her, Barbra has taught her children that there is no gender discrimination when it comes to learning how to do different tasks or chores.

Barbra shared other aspects of being a firstborn daughter and how it effected her, as well as what she would change about her role as a firstborn daughter in her family, if she could. With regard to positive aspects, Barbra shared, "Oh yeah. I, I do, like I said now, you know, you don't realize it [at the time when you're younger]. You know, and I've, I've always been real thankful that my parents were really strict, you know. I know um, I mean we, I just was not allowed to do a whole lot of, you know, a lot of things." Given the responsibilities that Barbra had as a firstborn daughter, she didn't really have any time available to engage in any type of after school activities, much less social or recreational things. Barbra continued her thoughts regarding lack of time with: "No, I didn't. No, you know, and if, you know, and, you know, it was really hard. I think sometimes they could have let up like, you know, if all my friends were going to the beach. Well, I had to do the laundry, I had to iron, I had to get all this done if I was going to go at 10:00. You know, and I just thought 'well, why can't my sister do this?' And, oh well, she might burn herself and oh, she doesn't like hanging up clothes, you know, and I just thought sometimes I think they could have been a little bit better." Then again, despite

the apparent lack of fairness, Barbra states: "You know, but overall, you know, I'm glad. Really, because I see the difference in myself and the rest of them."

In response to what she would change about her role as a firstborn daughter, if she could make any changes, Barbra offered the following

I think it would be not to take care of my brother and sisters. You know, I um, because mainly I think, because that carried on into my adulthood, you know, um, my sister's been in and out of treatment centers and so, you know, my having, you know, three kids, and then hav[ing] taking [sic] her three kids for six months at a time, you know, but I did that to myself. You know, um...you know, I just thought, 'oh, I'll help her and take these kids.' And then I'm driving myself crazy. You know, and I think I came to that realization one day, I was just doing dishes and I just started to cry. I said 'this is it. These kids are going home and I'm not doing this anymore', you know. My husband just kind of looked a[t] me and he says, "what?" I said 'I'm not taking care of these kids.' I said 'I have my own children' that, you know, I'm getting angry [and short with]. Right. You know, and pushing them away and it's driving me crazy, and I said 'and that's not fair. These are my children. Nobody is going to come in if I go nuts and take care of my kids.' And when I did that,

it was just like such a relief.

As if thinking out loud and realizing the possibility for the first time, Barbra said: "Why didn't I do this 10, 20 years ago? Instead of always, and, you know, and my parents really instilled that." Barbra shared that she realizes the one thing that she would like to have changed in her role is as a result of how hard it is to let go of being the firstborn daughter with all of the responsibility for her family as she got older. In her voice, she expounds on this by sharing the following: "Oh yeah, because you're used to it. You know, it's comfortable actually, you know, to be like that. You know, and then, ah, then it's, it's good to find out you don't have to be, you know. That was good to find out."

In hearing about Barbra's discovery or revelation, I was moved to ask her if there was anything else she would change about her role that comes to mind. Barbra, in a very poignant and straight forward fashion, replied: "Um...I don't know. I really don't think so. I don't know because so much has just made me who I am, you know. And for a long time I didn't really like myself. You know, it was just, I guess I never really had the time to really look at myself. You know, I was so busy doing [for everybody else]. Yeah. You know, so I think that's about the biggest thing that I can think of that I would change."

Barbra's personal story is not unlike the experiences of so many other women—especially firstborn daughters—who are so relationally connected, yet differentiated from their family of origin, rather than being totally autonomous and independent as conventional developmental theories have asserted the need for. Barbra's story, as told through her own voice, epitomizes women's

ways of knowing as well as psychological theory and women's development that contemporary women authors have written about (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1997; Gilligan, 1993).

Diane (Case #695; Interview 4)

Diane requested that we meet at her home in the middle of a Sunday afternoon for the interview. At the time of the interview, Diane was 52 years old, although she would turn 53 years old the following day. Diane had been married and divorced twice to American Indian males; however, she was single on the day of the interview. She was employed full time for the state in a professional position that has her dealing with the judicial system and various community resources. Diane's father is deceased while her mother is still living. She has a younger sister and brother who reside out of state and with whom she recently visited for the first time in four years.

Question 1: What is the relationship between ordinal position of the first-born American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?

Thematic Content: Family and parental support, resources and what had the most value or meaning for you.

Diane is a very engaging and relational type of woman who was very contemplative before responding to my inquiries. She presented as being very composed, maintained good eye contact as she spoke, often engaged in laughter, and had a unique way of making you feel at ease—as if you knew her

all along. Diane recalls receiving a lot of encouragement and guidance from both of her parents while she was growing up, and in particular, after she was divorced and had decided to go to college. As she tells it

Oh yeah, lots of, always ah, you know, my mother was constantly ah, encouraging us, motivating us to try to finish whatever, you know, and ah, ah, I know even when I was at my *lowest* [emphasis given by Diane], when I was, had gone through a divorce and was going to Webber State and ah, financially on, was on the brink of total disaster and I had three little kids to raise and didn't know if I was going, you know, be making, making it to a class, you know. Every time she would say, 'You're half way through now'. You know, all you got to, how many more weeks you got to go, and so I always remembered that and then I'd say oh yeah, she's right, you know. But that would be enough to get me over that little hump. And then I would continue, you know, and ah, but, and then, just knowing she was there, to, always there if I really needed, you know, her, her for, you know, watch the kids or whatever.

Diane also recalled with fondness how her mother would give her little pep talks when she was waning or in need of encouragement. As for her father, she stated: "And my father too, I mean, so basically they both ah, didn't believe in quitters. You know, and I think, and that, that was important." The level of

encouragement and support Diane received from her parents has become more meaningful to her over the years, especially now that she has grown children herself. She has tried to provide her children with the same type of encouragement and guidance that her parents gave to her as she was growing up.

Question 3: What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?

Thematic Content: Values and culture; importance of, who instilled; emphasis and change over time.

Diane easily recalled what values she was raised with and what stood out for her of all her parent's teachings. As Diane recalls, she was taught "the importance of always, you know, being truthful about things, ah...trying to ah, you know, do ah, say, do the right thing, but that's basically it." With a great deal of facial expression, Diane went on to say: "You know, ah, right away I was thinking the Girl Scout pledge, you know. It was ingrained in our memories, you know, and so ah, that was, that was pretty much what I know was expected." These basic values were equally stressed by both Diane's mother and father.

As for change in types of values emphasized over time while she was growing up, Diane took a fair amount of time to contemplate before responding. According to her memory, Diane stated: "Well, I think the emphasis, you know, has always been on, on trying to, ah, get a good education. And so that was, ah, more stressed, you know, as we got older, ah, and trying—I don't really recall

there being any, any ah, stress toward any particular type of job, you know. It was more of, ah, working with the Indian community, you know, those types of values, ah, sharing, you know, all of that.”

Involvement in the Indian community was something that was stressed as very important to Diane and her siblings. Diane’s parents were instrumental in founding the first American Indian Association in the greater metropolitan area of the central, southeastern section of the state. Diane shared that culture was very much a part of her upbringing and remembers with fondness all the ways in which culture was a part of her formative years. In her own words, Diane’s voice tells the story of what meaning and significance her culture holds for her.

Since we’d been raised in that type of ah, you know, environment, both parents being active in the Indian community and ah, I mean we were always, you know, all the different events and things that were going on and so I think I, I experienced more of, of ah, that type of generosity I guess of, of Indian people as opposed to, you know, if I had just been raised in an all regular community, you know. That I hadn’t been exposed to all the emphasis so ah, trying to maintain our traditions. Yeah, that was, that was definitely stressed, you know.

As Diane continued to reflect on her early childhood years, she recalled how she learned to recognize the difference between the Indian world and non-Indian world. With a great deal of passion and facial expression, Diane talked

about the different experiences she had visiting with her paternal and maternal extended family members. For Diane, these experiences with extended family members were in stark contrast to one another with regard to living and experiencing culture on a daily basis. As Diane remembers

Well ah, actually again, thinking of both my parent's ah, cause [sic] we would go up to San Lu Rae and visit my grandfather twice a year usually, in the winter and again in the summer time. You know, for at least a week, maybe two, and ah, so, but because he lived more of a normal life like everybody else, you know, there was nothing really traditional ah, as far as native that I would say I picked, would pick up from that experience. Ah, whereas, when we would go with my mother to visit her family and her, her relatives, ah, we would take part in the longhouse ceremonies and ah, got to see what some of the, you know, ah, go to the, on the reservation there some of the big holidays that they'd have and, and um, so it was, you know, and then being exposed to all the Indian people to, you know. In, in that environment, um, learning about, you know, cooking corn soup, things like that, you know. Um, so that's probably, you know, how I would, would first ah, exposed to some of the other traditions, you know, that um, non-native people would never see.

In another vein, Diane spoke about experiences she had while in elementary school that have an affinity to those experienced by **Rayna, Case #692**, and **Barbra, Case #694**, previously profiled. Diane was reflecting on how early she remembers being told about her culture and knowing that she was American Indian, and disclosed the following story

Ah, as far as actually just, you know, knowing that who we were and what we were, I mean that was evident the very—I would say by first grade anyway—because of our skin color, ah, especially second grade, you know. I mean when I moved out to this area or to the Overly Pass area—Federoff—where it was, you know, basically Indian in an all white environment, ah well, then you know, there was some people who would make wise remarks, you know, ah, about Indian things and, and or about, you know, of course the usual [motions with hand to mouth] woo, you know, wooo, wooo, wooo, and all of that, you know. So, you were, ah, aware of it all the time and so it was, ah, you know, my mother explaining well that's, you know, they don't know better or things like that, you know.

For Diane, this experience early in life made her very cognizant of the potential for the same thing to happen with her own children. As a result, Diane shared that: "And so I had to do the same thing to my children when they were growing up. My little ones...ah, when, when the first three, the next two that I had they, they seemed to, they didn't have that kind of problem in school. You know,

because times have changed.” Like her mother had done for her in elementary school, Diane carried on the same tradition with her first three children in explaining that the children who were making fun of them didn’t know any better. With regard to the lack of problems her youngest two children experienced in school, Diane reasoned that the difference is because times have changed. With a great deal of spontaneity and laughter, Diane explained the difference this way: “And um, so now it’s like ah, you know, the, it seems like more people want to be, you know [among American Indians, “wanna be’s” is the label attributed to non-natives who want to be, or act like, native]. Yes. They all think it’s so fantastic, you know.”

Given that Diane recalled that her native culture was stressed while she was growing up, I inquired as to whether either or both of her parent’s taught her any of the native language. Diane’s response was not unlike that of the other women profiled thus far in that language was not emphasized nor spoken in the home while she was growing up. She attributes this to the fact that her father’s father was sent away to a boarding school at the age of five or six and never learned the dialect. In addition, when her father’s mother died and his father remarried, Diane believes that her father’s stepmother was not native and so no language was learned, let alone maintained. This portion of Diane’s family history has similarities to that of two of the women previously profiled—**Rayna, Case #692**, and **Sariah, Case #693**—in that either the parents or grandparents of these women also experienced life in boarding schools where anything pertaining to native cultural practices was forbidden in order to enhance

assimilation efforts. For Diane, her paternal grandfather was placed in a boarding school at an early age so that the family's native dialect was never learned in order to be transmitted generationally some day.

On the other hand, Diane's mother did speak her native dialect. According to Diane: "Ah, my mother, though, spoke her language. Ah, but not with us, and so it wasn't ah, you know, when she'd go back to, back home, well then, sometimes she might. You know, although again English was, was more, more commonly conversed." Diane remembered times growing up when she would attend longhouse ceremonies with her mother wherein the ceremonies were all spoken in native dialect and she was oblivious to what was being said, yet her mother understood perfectly. For example, Diane recounted a longhouse ceremony experience during her childhood: "But like when we would go into a longhouse ceremony, you know, she'd know what they were saying and we'd just be sitting there totally in the dark, you know. But she would explain, you know, so we would know what was going on and all that."

Despite the fact that her mother could understand, interpret, and speak her native dialect, Diane's mother never attempted to teach her children their native language. It was only when Diane married her second native husband that she began to take an earnest interest in learning her native language. Interestingly, the impetus for her interest in learning the language came as a result of her second husband who decided to teach himself his own native dialect and pass it on to their children. This is a theme that Diane holds in common with another native woman previously profiled—**Barbra, Case #694**.

Neither woman was raised with the knowledge of her native dialect and both women became interested in learning what they could of their native dialect later in life as a result of their relationship with a native male partner at the time.

Diane's interest in learning her native dialect led her to take a class at a local university and to listen to language tapes to learn what she could on her own.

She also acknowledged that she has picked up a few words informally over the years by attending pow wows. Of these experiences, Diane shared: "And so it was pretty difficult, and ah, I, I've considered it other times but I just haven't bothered to take the time to learn."

In response to how important culture is to her in her life today, Diane's own voice speaks to a sense of self-identity that she wouldn't otherwise have.

Um, I think it's pretty important. Ah, I wouldn't say, you know, of a rating of one to ten...it's, it's not a nine or a ten. Ah, it [sic] maybe a seven now. I guess ah, I've been over exposed...ah, pow wows bore me now. And ah, my kids, my youngest two, they used to say that, you know, ah, years ago. And ah, you know, they'd be okay, you know, for like a half hour, from their perspective. So, ah... valuable because it has given me, ah, a sense of knowing who I am. And ah, whereas, I see so many people who have absolutely no idea, you know, and ah, also feeling more that I am, ah, you know, part of everything around us, you know. And so knowing the, the ah, I guess the

native beliefs, you know, has really been helpful to. Ah, not having to run from religion to religion, you know, and in search of the answers more or less, you know. So, it's ah, it, it has made me feel very comfortable, you know, with who I am. And ah, whereas, you know, again, I'm thinking back to when I was very--like that second grader--you know, I, I, I was embarrassed because I had a darker skin color and didn't really feel comfortable at the time. But, ah, you know, I have a, mostly because I've done a lot of speaking on it to and, and um, I, when my kids were, my older three were, were very young, we would go to schools to and do presentations and, and so, you know, I'm kind of over that too.

Today, Diane maintains a fairly high level of involvement with the Indian community and Indian organizations. In the past, she has been on one American Indian association board for two years and currently is a board member of an American Indian women's organization that helps promote American Indian women in small businesses. Diane's tone changes to one of frustration when she talks about the association that her parent's founded, and of which she was a past board member.

It sees [sic] like the organization [American Indian Association] for sure, you know, I mean they haven't grown at all. They, they keep floundering, you know, and so it's very frustrating,

you know, for me, ah, having seen over the years, you know, what, what it had been. And, and ah, all the possibilities or dreams I guess that my parent's had as founders, you know, to, to the reasons why they established that organization and then now, it's basically, you know, it's, it's ah, very poorly used, you know, and ah, the majority of people in the area probably are, are unaware even that it's still in existence. Anymore, you know, ah, and I think to, part of the difficulty is the ah, the funding sources you know, having to be so dependent on the federal government. So anyway, that is ah, you know, it, it tends to be more frustrating but, but I still ah, you know, I hear about things that are going on. Occasionally, I'll talk to Rose and get some gossip then. But not that often actually. [That ol' moccasin telephone still works.] Yeah, so... It's kind of amazing, you know, for ah, like I haven't been to one single board meeting in, in over, you know, maybe a year or so, ah, and yet I still, basically there's been very little change in what's been going on, you know.

In a pattern that is not unlike the other firstborn women previously profiled, Diane's immersion in learning her own culture has ebbed and flowed throughout her lifespan thus far. While she acknowledges that culture is very important to her in her life today and has given her a real sense of her own self, Diane also is frustrated with what she perceives to be as a lack of concerted

effort with ensuring the purpose and ideals of the association that her parent's founded by the current members of the American Indian community. For Diane, her sense of self stems from the relational connection she has with her American Indian culture—a culture which is practiced and lived in her everyday life through knowing who she is—and how she connects this sense of self contextually as she relationally connects with those around her.

Question 4: Does gender inequality exist in the role development of the firstborn daughter?

Thematic Content: The role gender played in the family; male role; female role.

From Diane's standpoint, gender inequality did not exist within her family as she was growing up. As she recalls, there was no limitations put on her and she was free to embark on activities associated with either gender. For example, there was no distinction made by her parents in the assignment of household tasks or chores, or even in roles within the family members, based on gender. As Diane tells it: "It didn't really matter that I can recall. Ah, I don't remember, ah, we had to shovel snow. I really don't remember that—my sister might. Ah...seems to me though, there really wasn't that much of a difference." Even though education was highly valued and stressed as important by her parent's, Diane does not recall that her parent's ever emphasized that she and her sister should pursue female dominated areas of study and her brother more traditional male dominated fields of study. Diane and her two younger siblings were free to pursue any field of study or line of work that they desired; emphasis

on gender specific roles in any realm never existed.

Question 5: How is the role of the firstborn daughter prescribed?

Thematic Content: Manner in which responsibilities were assigned or given; who gave or assigned these responsibilities.

Diane recalls that responsibilities were given to her by her mother more so than by her father because he was not around as much due to work. In terms of how these responsibilities were given, Diane relayed: "We were told." According to Diane, the types of responsibilities given were rather routine: "Ah, you know, we would take turns setting the table, doing dishes, and ah, of course, we were always complaining. And, oh, one thing that, you know, the main responsibility—I guess that, as we got older or whatever—was cooking potatoes for my dad every night. He had to have his potatoes. So I was always peeling the potatoes, getting the potatoes boiling and so it got so that I kind of hated potatoes, you know."

Although Diane couldn't recall having to do the laundry, she believed that she and her siblings probably did. She went on to state that "I remember helping to hang, hang out the clothes because she didn't, my mom didn't have a dryer for a while, you know." With some fondness, Diane recalled that she was a member of the Brownies when she was in second grade, and later, the Girl Scouts" and so we learned all those things to through, you know, like cooking and all kinds of other things, you know, and, and ah, so there was just something that, you know, kind of just naturally developed to." As for her

brother, Diane recalled that he was in the Cub Scouts and later, in the Boy Scouts, “and ah, so it’s pretty much, ah, you know, if it was put down on the schedule, that’s kind of what we did. You know, there wasn’t any major rebellions.”

As the firstborn daughter and oldest child of three, Diane relayed that her ordinal position in the family entailed additional responsibilities. “I was expected to always kind of watch out for them and, you know, if there were ah, any problems, like I remember one time ah, there was a neighbor boy—shortly after we moved in the area—you know, who was picking on my brother so I got, got involved and ah..[You’re the mediator.] Yes. Actually, I think I hit the kid.” In general, however, Diane shared that “we were all pretty well, ah, watched out for each other.” The types of responsibilities for Diane’s two younger siblings never changed as they got older, but they did for Diane in that she became responsible for looking out for the welfare of her two younger siblings.

Question 6: Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?

Thematic Content: Shaped the quality of life; influenced life and shaped goals; and any positives to being a firstborn daughter.

Being the firstborn daughter not only entailed having more responsibilities, but as Diane perceived it, it also meant having a lot of pressure and high expectations placed upon her. In her own poignant voice, Diane shared what effect being the firstborn daughter had upon shaping the quality of her life.

Ah, well as, I know I had ah, I think having more responsibilities, you know, ah, also made me a little more, ah, leery to, to take some of those other steps—like I was afraid to go to college. Even though I was nearly the top of my class—I was like second—in fact, I could, I was up for like valedictorian or whatever, you know, and people had all these expectations that, oh yeah, you'll have no problem. I had a scholarship waiting for me to go to U of M. I didn't think I could do it. And so I had no idea what it would be like at college. Ah, and so I really just didn't want to try and, ah, even though everyone told me—you know, counselors and whoever, you know—that 'oh yeah, you'll be great, I'm sure you'll do fine', you know, 'wherever you want. If you don't want to go to U of M, there is Webber State', you know. But I just um, I didn't, didn't really feel comfortable that, you know, that I, I was afraid that I would flunk out and disappoint everybody. And so when my sister went, she did good. She didn't flunk out, you know, and ah, she was [sic] write back to my parent's—but she went to the University of New Haven—about what a great time she was having, and ah, you know, then my brother went away also to the same school. And so then the two of them were gone, and meantime by then I, I think I had two kids, you know, and I was [sic] had

my own house I was having to take care of and all that. That extra step, I don't know.

For Diane, the relational connection she held with others also placed her in a position of not wanting to disappoint others, those that she cared about.

Despite being successful throughout high school and having everyone tell her that she would have no problem succeeding in college, Diane lacked the self-confidence to take "that extra step" as she calls it. She became frozen by her own fear of flunking out, disappointing those she cared about, and failing to succeed—perhaps brought on by, or at least attributable to in part—to live up to the tremendous pressure and high expectations she felt everyone had for her. Instead, she went on to get married, establish a home and have three children, all the while watching how her sister and brother did when they went off to college. It's as if Diane was so ridden with the fear of not living up to everyone's expectations of her that she had to learn from watching her siblings go to college first, if she could succeed herself, based on the success or failure that her siblings had with the college experience.

Diane did go on to college herself, many years later, and took on the added responsibility of college study while she raised three children on her own at the same time. She began at Webber State by studying education and sociology; her passion was really for social anthropology at the time but Webber State did not have this area of study back then. By her third year of college, Diane became more interested in studying law and was thinking about law school. However, she got talked into trying to attend business school at a

prestigious east coast ivy league school. As Diane recalled: "And, ah, discovered I didn't really like that either. You know, and actually it didn't like me. I'd had no accounting, no accounting background at all. And I was recruited to go in and so I ended up kind of almost flunking out." Rather than flunk out, Diane transferred into their masters program in education administration. As she put it, "So I did a combination, used some of my business background along with the educational background, and so I got my masters in education administration."

In reflecting upon her experience at such a prestigious ivy league school, Diane relayed: "You know, that was something that, you know, ah, I really, you know, did have, did have the opportunity to take and went ahead and tried it, you know. Rather than, ah, again, just stay home..." For Diane, this was a tremendous accomplishment and a risk she took to overcome the fear of failing she felt so strongly when she first avoided college after high school. Despite the fact that she nearly flunked out of the business program, Diane didn't quit. Instead, she transferred into another field of study where she could combine some of her background and be more successful. In doing so, she overcame her earlier fears and anxieties and successfully completed her college education—not only several years later, but at a prestigious ivy league school far away from her childhood roots and relational connections.

When asked how being the firstborn had shaped the quality of her life in terms of influencing her life or shaping the goals she ended up forming for herself, Diane was uncertain and tenuous in her response. In this initial mode

of inquiry, Diane shared the following

I don't know. Ah, I'm not sure if it really...if that really made much of a difference because of, my goals were ah, more based on, you know, other people that I met. And, ah, plus my work experiences that I, I got and so my goals kept, you know, changing a little bit. For instance, the job I have now, you know, I had no idea I would. I never even considered this job. It just kind of happened, you know. So again, I don't see how, you know, ah, my particular, you know, place in the family and all that would have made any difference. Ah...I guess ah, maybe, you know, I think there's, there is having been more responsible, you know, ah, so I've always had, ah, I guess that would be a major difference.

In discussing the difference between herself and her sister, Diane pointed out how her sister held the type of jobs that were not permanent in the sense that they were time-limited by contract. Also, her sister didn't have kids to be concerned about so she frequently moved to different places each time a contract ended and she took on a new one. As Diane depicts it: "Whereas, I really, I've, I've been more ah, very much aware of, of having to always, you know, it's not just me that I'm, I'm watching out for. It's my children or whoever, you know."

The relational connection, or self-in-relation, is what guided Diane's life.

The decisions she made for herself, her goals, were not based on her own self-interests, but rather, on the relational connection she had with others and how she had a felt or perceived responsibility to others, not just to herself. In her own words, Diane's voice echoes the importance of the self-in-relation mode of development, ethic of care: "Ah, so I guess, yeah, you know, that idea of being responsible has been pretty much, ah, infused in me FOREVER (emphasis given by Diane)."

Upon further inquiry, Diane was able to be much more deliberate and responsive when asked to compare how being the firstborn, as opposed to second or third, has directly impacted what she's experienced or what she has done. After a period of quiet contemplation, Diane shared that: "I think I have ah...probably a lot more insight than ah, my brother and sister. Ah...there are a lot of other, other things that I have, you know, learned over the years that ah, ah...I guess they, they may not have really completely considered either."

Another difference that Diane perceived contributed to her experience as a firstborn compared to being a later born child, was the health of her sister and brother. She described how her sister was very sickly as a child and nearly died, while her brother—the baby in the family—was sickly as well, but not as seriously as her sister. "And so ah, I mean, they physically needed more care and ah, so, and also required more of my mother's time. And so ah, ah, I tended to become more introspective I guess."

In addition, Diane perceives that her sister and brother are both focused on making and having a lot of money. Unlike her siblings, Diane shared that

money has never been real important to her. She has always been very conscientious and has lived on a budget most of her life, whereas, she perceives that her sister and brother are just now learning how to live on a budget and do without for the first time in their lives. As Diane depicts it: "All my life, it seems like it, you know. I know when she was in high school even, you know, she would ask for ah, expensive things, you know, and she would get it. And, whereas, I, I would never consider that. And so that's been a difference between us." With a sense of humor, Diane added: "I, I know, if from, I think for once we are all struggling, you know, so it's kind of unique. But its taken all this time, you know."

For Diane, a positive to being a firstborn daughter is that she learned to be conscientious and budget-minded early on in her life, whereas, she regards her sister and brother as having to learn this now, much later in life. More importantly for Diane, as she tells it, is that: "I guess a positive would be, at least for me, is that I did, did become more observant, ah, I think more sensitive to other people's needs, ah...you know, and ah, also more aware of the community as well." In her own voice, Diane's words epitomize and capture the essence of self-in-relation, the ethic of care.

Chyanne (Case #691; Interview 5)

Chyanne was originally scheduled to be interviewed in June, 1996 as my first participant. However, due to unforeseen medical circumstances, Chyanne was hospitalized on an emergency basis and subsequently, required several

months of recuperation at home before she was able to actively participate in this study. When I interviewed Chyanne in November, 1996, she was on medical leave from her full time employment with the state and was recuperating at home.

Chyanne requested that we meet at her home in the middle of a Sunday morning for the interview. At the time of the interview, Chyanne was 54 years old and lived with two of her seven children. Chyanne had been married to a white male but was presently separated from him. She has only been married once and as of the date of the interview, had been separated from her husband for several months. Both of Chyanne's parents are deceased and she has seven siblings; she is fourth in ordinal position behind three brothers, and has two younger brothers and two younger sisters. Chyanne is the firstborn of three daughters.

Question 1: What is the relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn American Indian daughter and family of origin responsibility?

Thematic Content: Family and parental support, resources and what had the most value or meaning for you.

As was the case with three of the last four women profiled, Chyanne is a very engaging and relational type of woman who is very dynamic and emotive as she speaks. You are drawn in to listen intently as she speaks and you are made to feel at ease almost instantaneously. Chyanne spoke with a great deal of passion and emotional expression, often with spurts of humor and gracious

laughter as she shared her experiences. As the researcher, I found myself drawn in by Chyanne—eagerly awaiting to hear the next words and stories of her life. Her relational style and connection is very compelling.

Chyanne recalled that she received a great deal of support from her extended family as well as from her family of origin. She did not hesitate to share how meaningful it was to her to have this consistent display of support and the invaluable resource of both her family of origin and extended family. As Chyanne describes it, this kinship network provided her with all the support she needed.

Oh, I, I received a lot. I received a lot. I had um, a couple of aunts and ah, several uncles, and um, of course, the people that they married and ah, you know, they were like all part of the family. Um, it was good when, you know, when they were around. And um, as far as like ah, support, I think um, for me the support was more like an emotional type thing. I, I did get a lot from, from my family, more so than, you know, outside. So um, and then from my brothers and sisters, we supported each other. We enjoyed being with each other. We um, all learned how to dance. We taught each other how to dance, or you know, we would do plays together. We would um, have school, pretend school. We would do just all sorts of things that, you know, every now and then we might let a neighbor in, you know. A friend. One, one of the other kids but we never

had a lot of kids over. Cause [sic] we were just, you know, just our own friends.

Chyanne shared that she always felt she had emotional support from her family which served as a source of encouragement for her while she was growing up. In very poignant and eloquent words, Chyanne captures the essence of this support and encouragement from her family: "I always felt that I had the supportive warmth and cover of my family." Again, Chyanne's own words further illustrate the strength of these women's voices, the relational connection and ethic of care that each woman espoused in her everyday life.

In response to my inquiry about what had the most value or meaning for her as she looks back on the nature of the family support she received, Chyanne's response was indicative of the self-in-relation mode of being. She was rather expressive--nonverbally as well as verbally--as she gave her response and this only heightened the sense of meaning and importance Chyanne's network of family support held for her. The strength of her own voice rings loud with the words she chooses to convey her experience.

Had the most meaning...well, um, let's see, if I wrote...well, I'll tell you, now this may sound silly, but I, I loved winter. I loved winter cause [sic] I loved all the interactions that we used to have. So, um, that's why, that's why I like winter time. It's always like, oh yeah, winter's here. I mean, I still do that mentally. Winter is here. We can, you know, get things together and start inviting people over and things like

that. Like we've already started that, you know. And in our little meager place here. But, ah, yeah, it's um, that I think is what I enjoy, what ah, winter means and the context of the contact. [The closeness of your family and interaction.] Yeah. We'll go to each people's houses now, you know, and start visiting, um, that way. And we talk on the phone and stuff. We do try to have a family gathering in the, in the summer where we can all get together. Either go to a picnic or camping or something like that. So we do get a summer family gathering, but in the winter time, it's just all the time.

Question 3: What is the relationship between ordinal position and the role of the firstborn daughter as keeper of the culture?

Thematic Content: Values and culture; importance of, who instilled; emphasis and change over time.

Chyanne easily recalled what values she was raised with and what meaning these values came to have for her as she got older. In what struck me as a very poignant and insightful statement, Chyanne shared what values she was raised with as follows

Well, you never know you have any values when you're a kid until you're older. And then you realize, well, that's not right. You know, when you have something else to judge it by other than what's in your family. Then I um, I realized

that um, people thought I was like hokey or, you know, they, they thought 'oh this girl was like, you know, square or whatever'. Which it didn't bother me because I was comfortable already with how I was raised cause [sic] I really, really um, associated with my family. For support and for things like that, so when I went out to do whatever I had to do, it didn't matter that much to me because I always had home to come back to. Where I got that love and that support from the family so it didn't matter. Like I didn't miss school when school, when school was over. So, basically, ah, the things that I know um, ah, that I didn't know then was that I respect, I respect people. And it's very important to be honest with how you deal with another person. It's ah, very important if you have responsibilities to follow through because if you didn't follow through with them, somewhere along the line what, whatever the scheme of things were, you were messing up the scheme of things...to make things flow.

Here, again, in Chyanne's own voice we hear the all-too-familiar theme that has come to encompass these women's lives: that is, the self-in-relation mode of being where one is concerned with the well-being of others, and the ethic of care, which is based on relational connectedness and responsibility for others via the exercise of care and concern in the self's relation with others.

Chyanne's personal account of important values she was raised with center around the love and support of her family, honesty and respect for others, and a keen sense of responsibility in whatever it is you have to do.

Additional values Chyanne recalled being raised with were sharing and doing things for other people. Encompassed in this domain is honesty and responsibility in terms of giving an employer an honest days work for an honest days pay. This emphasis on honesty, responsibility, and work ethic was primarily instilled by her father, according to Chyanne. As Chyanne tells it: "I learned that from my dad. He was really a stickler for that. Do, whatever you got, you earned it, whether it was respect, whether it was your job, the money you received from that or a person's friendship. That all came, that all came from my mom and dad."

When it came to emphasis on the types of values that her parent's were trying to teach her, impart as she was growing up, Chyanne acknowledged that the types of values emphasized did change over time.

Yeah, that's ah, like when you're um, first growing up, and I guess the only way I know how to do that is because how I raise my children is how I myself was raised. So I know that the first thing that you instill that's very important is like property. What's yours and what's someone elses. If it's someone elses, you don't pick it up, you don't play with it. That kind of thing. So it was, ah, just learning the value of what's yours and what's someone elses. And that instills

the respect to for that, for whatever it is that isn't yours, you know. Like how would you like to come home and find something of yours broken, you know. That kind of thing. So, but as, as we got older, um, it was, ah, it was a lot of work ethic was involved in what we did. And that of course instilled responsibility. The work ethic was even with the stuff around the house. Now we never did, like now everything, ah, you know um, there's like this 'oh if you do that I'll give you this' or whatever, you know. The responsi [sic] yeah. And those kind of things. So that made things flow so we knew, ah, we were part of something which in the larger thing was like part of a community type thing. And so when we, when we started ah, you know, ah, when you're little, it's ah, things you're taught help you when you take the next step, you know. And then the next step, then the next step so it all comes together. But the bases comes, you know, like with the respect. That was the biggest thing, the respect, and there was a lot of that love and, you know, like not saying I love you but, you know, the holding, the making sure you had clothes on your back, food in your belly, that kind of stuff. That, that um, was the unsaid part of love and I knew my dad really loved us cause [sic] he was hardly ever home, with ten mouths to feed he was, he had, he held down

two jobs.

One thing that really stands out for Chyanne as she looks back on her childhood days is that education was really emphasized, stressed more so as she got older. She recalls that school was very stressful for her and that “there was a whole nother [sic] system out there that was like totally foreign to me and um, it was like, oh God I, when I was 13 I couldn’t even take it anymore.” In her own words, Chyanne’s voice best tells the story of what happened to her one day when she decided she wasn’t going to go to school any longer.

And so one day, I decided that’s it, I’m just going to stay home. I’m not going to school anymore and I’m just going to stay with my mom. And, ah, that’s what I wanted to do when I was 13. So, she gets up in the morning—cause [sic] we’re all old enough we got ourselves off to school and stuff—and, she said: “What are you doing here?” I said, ‘Oh mom,’ I said I’m not going to go to school anymore. I’m going to stay home with you. I’m going to help you.’ And she said, “Oh no you’re not.” And she hit me. It was the first time she ever did that to me so it was like, oh she hit me and she said no. She said, um, “No matter what you are,” she goes, “you are what you are. There’s no way you can change that. You have to go out and live in that world. You have too go to school. Otherwise the government is going to come and take you away from me.” Yeah, cause [sic] that’s what

happened to her, when she was five.

As was the case in the profiles of **Rayna, Case #692, Sariah, Case #693; and Diane, Case #695**, Chyanne's family of origin history has the common experience of members being sent off to boarding school. This factor alone is one element that contributed to how culture was, or was not, emphasized and practiced in these women's family's of origin. Chyanne described how her mother, and all of her mother's siblings before her, were taken away from their mother (Chyanne's maternal grandmother) and sent off to a boarding school in the central region of the state. Again, as we learned in the other profiles previously mentioned, Chyanne's mother had the common experience of not being able to learn, let alone practice, anything having to do with her native culture. As Chyanne described it: "And she [her mother] hated that experience altogether because they were punished, ah, she of course, couldn't speak any English when she went so she was punished. They didn't even given her any space in her time to learn the language [English]. Yeah, they started right out and punished them for speaking the language [Indian]." According to Chyanne, her mother returned home at the age of 14, but to a stranger instead of her father because her father spoke to her in Indian and "she didn't even know who he was."

The experience that Chyanne's mother had while in the boarding school greatly effected how culture was addressed in the family while Chyanne and her siblings were growing up. As Chyanne recalls

They, ah, well, I'm not exactly sure what the culture part of

the values were because in my mom, she was afraid to show those things to us because she didn't want us to go through what she went through. Like being backward and, you know, whenever ah, we did, we did know about our moons though. Our menses and times and how, how ah, strong we were. I did learn those things and that's part of our culture too. You realize that, ah, you know, how strong women really are. And ah, the important roles that we played. The, ah, thing that always struck her, ah, about the Mohawk culture was the fact that um, ah, the women, when they, ah, when they marry, the men come into their homes. They don't speak to the mother-in-law, and they don't speak to the mother-in-law not out of disrespect, but out of respect, because of, you know, that mother-in-law thing they always talk about. The mother, MY MOTHER-IN-LAW [emphasis given by Chyanne]. Well, the respect was if he never speaks to her they have nothing ever to argue about. He has no reason to look down upon her or to speak bad toward her because he will never speak to her again.

Chyanne shared how her mother told her that it was common for the male husband to speak, or communicate, through someone else who was then responsible for transmitting the message to the mother-in-law. In this manner, all direct communication with the mother-in-law was avoided and respect was

maintained.

Cultural practices such as always looking for the positive aspects in things or people also was emphasized as Chyanne was growing up. According to Chyanne, you were taught not to look for or dwell on the negative side “because you want the, ah, good spirits to be with you. Whenever you have [strengths based kind of approach] yeah [in looking at things].” Chyanne also recalls with fondness the nature walks that she would take with her mother. Her mother used what little space was in front of their house and planted food such as tomatoes and beans in the dirt. In doing this, Chyanne said that her mother “talked about our link with the earth”, you know. “That, ah, if you have good hands and ah, and a good heart and a good mind, you’re going to get good beans.” Yet, in all of this, there is an aura of sadness in Chyanne’s voice as she summed up her mother’s teachings: “Yeah, you know, um, but you never know if it’s culture or not, you know. It’s just what she, what she could remember what she grew up with. She really resented not having her mom around and there was ah, a few times that she used to say ‘I wish that, that my mother was here. I wish my mother could see this.’”

Further inquiry as to how important culture was in her family yielded a mixed response from Chyanne. She spoke at length about her mother’s early childhood years when she first came to this country from Canada. There was a major flu epidemic at the time and people were dying everywhere. Chyanne’s mother had told her of how people would sleep with other people during the winter time in order to keep warm. According to Chyanne, her mother had told

her of how she was sleeping in the middle [among other people] of her grandfather and when she woke up on her grandfather, he was like a stone. Her mother remembers that her grandfather felt and looked like a stone; he had died in his sleep. Chyanne said that this description was all that her mother remembered about her grandfather.

For Chyanne, what cultural information she received from her mother came in the form of stories that her mother passed down about things that she did remember. Recalling that her mother was taken and sent away to a boarding school at the age of five and did not return to live with her family until the age of 14, much of what her mother remembered occurred prior to, or after, the time she spent in boarding school. As Chyanne reflected back, she said: "And as far as the culture, I guess I [sic] was the stories that she was telling us, ah, um, like how, how you treat people—it was always done like in a story kind of a thing."

Chyanne's mother often used metaphors to teach her children about culture, people, and life. For example, Chyanne remembers her mother telling stories that involved animals: "So, and it was always like with animals, certain animals ah, had different characteristics. Oh, she's like a snake. Oh, look at this, she thinks she's a fox. But people know her, people can see through her, you know, that kind of thing where she would be just...And I do that now too. I do that now too. And I was talking, when I talk to my kids I tell them the, the same things, you know."

In terms of native language, Chyanne shared that her mother would

teach her children things that she remembered, “some of the words that she remembered, that’s what ah, she would give us.” However, according to Chyanne, it was really important to her mother that they didn’t appear to be backward type people—meaning, that they were considered backward if they couldn’t speak English. As Chyanne tells it: “Or punished if, if we couldn’t speak English. She wanted us to speak English and to relate to the other world so it wouldn’t be a stranger to us.” The personal story about language that Chyanne shared really illuminates the effect that the boarding school had on Chyanne’s mother, where she was forbidden to learn, speak, or practice anything to do with her culture.

Chyanne talked about how she did learn to cook certain native foods. She said that her mother taught her how to make corn soup and a bread that you either cooked on top of the stove or baked in the oven; Chyanne referred to the bread in native dialect as dahnabaagooay [unsure of spelling]. Often, when her mother was preparing stew, she would tell Chyanne that it would taste so much better if it were made with deer meat instead of scraps of beef or chicken. As for her father, Chyanne could not recall any specific cultural teachings that she received from him. According to her, “my dad, my dad he was ah, it was like you learned from my father, not by what he said but by what he was doing. He was so strong, he was such a strong man.”

In response to how important culture is to her in her everyday life today, Chyanne contemplated for some time before she gave the following response.

I think, ah, if I look at what I, what I know, what I learned

from when I was little, I would say it's important. It's, it's in my everyday life. To be, to be honest, to always put the, the best part of me forward. Um, that's important to me. That's important because of one of the things I remember my mom saying—I don't know if this is culture or not—but, um, when you go out there and how you behave, it's not a reflection on you. It's a reflection on who raised you. And so that's what I used to think about, yeah. I, I would never want my mother and father to be ashamed of me. When my, ah, dad ah, passed away, and many people went to the funeral, and they would say, 'gee Chyanne, you know you never talked about your dad and your mom.' And I looked at them and I said, 'I am my mother and my father.' So, however you see me, that's, that's how my mom and dad were. So if you like me, then you LOVE [emphasis given by Chyanne] my mom and dad.

In her own words, Chyanne provides a very poignant and eloquent tribute to her mother and father. For embedded in her voice are the teachings given by her mother, and to some extent, by her father through acts rather than through words. Chyanne has tried to teach her children cultural practices and instill in them a sense of pride about their culture. She shared that culture was important to her to instill in her children as she was raising them. The manner in which she passed on cultural practices and knowledge to her children was by

replicating what her mother had taught her, and the manner in which she was taught by her mother.

Question 4: Does gender inequality exist in the role development of the firstborn daughter?

Thematic Content: The role gender played in the family; male role; female role.

From Chyanne's standpoint, gender inequality did not exist within her family as she was growing up. As she recalls, "in certain things there, there were gender things," but she also was free to engage in activities traditionally associated with either gender. In terms of certain things that she felt were gendered, Chyanne relayed these tasks as follows

Um, ah, the responsibilities that, ah, women had to make a family go. The um, how you take charge of certain things so it keeps the even flow, so that the father or the husband in the home is able to do the support. His of course was the materialistic side of the, he brought the money in and the wife [of] course was responsible on how the children behaved. And how they were in school. And um, how their roles to be responsible person, people, and um, you know, that whatever was ah, asked of them that ah, she was to make sure that they, that they followed through. So, ah, the mother, the female head of household had a big responsibility and as long as the man was doing his job, then ah, the woman

should be doing her job.

Chyanne also remembered that one of the things that was instilled in her by her mother while she was growing up, was that she was meant to have babies. Although she did not receive the traditional programming that many women of majority culture received in terms of finding a man and getting married, Chyanne's mother did let her know that her mission in life was to have babies. Chyanne remembers being told this by her mother during elementary school when she expressed a desire to become a nun. At the time, Chyanne was attending Catholic school that was governed by nuns. Chyanne came home and told her mother of her desire to become a nun and she vividly recalls that her mother said, "Oh, no, you're not going to go. You were meant to have babies."

As for her brothers—of which Chyanne had five—they were given specific gendered tasks, but they were also taught how to cook. For example, Chyanne recalled that her mother taught all the children how to cook, and specifically told the boys "well, not all of you are going to have wives when you get older so you got to learn how to take care of yourself." The boys did not have tasks like housework to do, but they were responsible for outside chores like cutting wood and bringing up the coal. When it came to fixing things around the house, Chyanne's father showed her brothers how to do these things. According to Chyanne, "So [her brothers] they had that look at the male role, was like being the protector of the house and all the people in it."

Despite some things being gender specific in her family while she was

growing up, Chyanne does not perceive that gender inequality existed. For instance, she spoke about how her brothers “did the fishing and all that kind of stuff.” However, Chyanne recalled—and with much laughter—that “I was one of those kind of people, I want to go fishing. But, um, so, I mean I did eventually. I was, you know, I was 14—I think it was—when I went off fishing by myself. I got up at 4:00 in the morning and walked down to the foot of the river and went fishing. My mom was a little upset with me, but, needless to say.” Other instances Chyanne gave that, to her, were nongendered examples included her mother teaching all the children—brothers included—how to sew and crochet, in addition to the various types of cooking—for the family, when company was over, and desserts—that was previously mentioned. As well, Chyanne and her siblings were all free to pursue any line of work or sphere of educational study that they desired.

Question 5: How is the role of the firstborn daughter prescribed?

Thematic Content: Manner in which responsibilities were assigned or given; who gave or assigned these responsibilities.

Chyanne recalls that responsibilities were assigned or given by her mother, almost exclusively, due to the fact that her father worked two jobs to support the family and was not around as much. Her mother set up a system where all the children took turns with various tasks, like doing the dishes. Chyanne’s mother assigned the task of doing dishes to her children in that every month, a different child would be responsible for doing the dishes for an

entire month. Other tasks were accomplished by all the children; someone would clear the table, another would sweep the floor, and another did the dishes. All the children learned how to cook and were given the responsibility of assisting mom in preparing a meal on an alternate basis.

Although Chyanne's mother was responsible for assigning responsibilities to the children, when she was not around, Chyanne's oldest brother—the firstborn child of a sibship of eight—was the one who enforced what you were supposed to be doing. Chyanne remembered that her oldest brother, Lyle, would remind each of them that it was their particular time to do whatever task or chore mom had assigned them. So, Lyle was the one who would guide things and be the enforcer “of my mother's if she wasn't there.” At all other times, Chyanne's mother would serve as the enforcer.

Question 6: Is there a relationship between ordinal position of the firstborn daughter and quality of life?

Thematic Content: Shaped the quality of life; influenced life and shaped goals; and any positives to being a firstborn daughter.

Chyanne is one of eight children. She is fourth in ordinal position, having three brothers ahead of her and two brothers and two sisters after her. She is the oldest and firstborn daughter of three girls in her family of origin. Without any hesitation or need for contemplation, Chyanne readily offered how being a firstborn daughter has shaped the quality of her life.

Oh, I, I, I ah, like it. I mean, I like being the, um, the firstborn NOW [emphasis given by Chyanne]. I mean,

I like it more than I did when I was littler because of the responsibility part of, ah, you know. Well, you were supposed to watch your brother, or, you know it's like geez, you know, I don't have time for myself. When you're a kid, that's, you know, like you always want to play or do those kinds of things that kids do. But as I got older, ah, looking at some things that have gone on, like being an advisor. I mean, I never looked at my brothers and sisters as being stupid. That they couldn't handle their affairs. But they did call me and would let, ask me something. They'd want to find out something. And, ah, just to get my opinion. So I thought, well, I must have a good, ah, good opinion. It's not something that I'm just, you know, wildly ah, say things off the top of my head.

With as much zest and eagerness as she had responded to my first line of inquiry, Chyanne shared her thoughts on how being the firstborn daughter has influenced her life and shaped her goals. In words that resonate with strength and validation, Chyanne's voice illuminates her lived experience

Oh my gosh. I'll tell ya. Yeah. It's, I think what I'm doing goes right along with how I was raised. Working within the community, helping people. Caring about him, about them. Not making, um, not feeling that I'm above em [sic] but that I'm right with them. And that's the only way you can

really work with someone. Not looking down at em [sic], but looking [On a level plane.] at them, being with them. Yes. On on the same level. And I, I've got that back many times from people saying that they, um, looked at me like a sister. They looked upon me like a mother. There was many of them that looked on me like a mother. And whenever they had family gatherings, they would ask me to come to them. And that kind of thing. So that, ah, that always made me feel good, you know. And I would try to get to as many as I could. But let me tell you, wooh! After a while it was like, oh gee, I have this I got to do or, or my kids are complaining they never see me. In fact they were. At one point they would say, 'mom we have to call and and make an appointment to, to meet with you.' I said NO YOU DON'T! [emphasis given by Chyanne]. 'Oh yes we do mom.'

Today, Chyanne says that she misses the types of questions her own children would ask her as they were growing up, now that they are older. She eventually got into a job where she could work full time with the community, with families and children, and fill the void that her once young children held. As Chyanne expressed it, this outreach position was something she thought she would really enjoy.

To work with the families, to make sure that the children

have a healthy, um, under the roots are healthy so when they grow up they'll have healthy kids and they'll have healthy attitudes and ideas. And that's, that's what I wanted to do. And Kurt upstairs [her son], he always brings me to reality sometimes, a little cruelly. He says, 'ah, you know, you're not going to save the whole world.' And I said, I'm not trying to save the whole world. 'Yes you are.' I said no I'm not. I said just the people I work with. I just want to show them other ways. It's up to them to take that and make the choice. And that's kind of the way my mother did. Oh, if, you know, if you do this or you know, think about what you're going to do. So you have to think about it or just, well, if you do that, think about what's going to happen after that, you know.

In recalling her mother's way of teaching her and making her think, Chyanne acknowledged that her mother never did this in a nice way. As she remembers, "it was always that way of, it was like knocking right into your head. So, well she's telling me this and she's saying it that way because she wants me to learn. Which I didn't realize until afterwards that, that was, you know, she said that to get my attention." In doing so, Chyanne's mother was successful in getting her daughter's attention. Chyanne remembers how impactful it was and how much meaning this has for her as she remembers her mother's way vividly. To illustrate the influence and shaping effects this had on

Chyanne, one only needs to listen to the words Chyanne uses in describing how she works with people today.

It does. Cause [sic] ah, and that's the way I work with the people that I work with. Cause [sic] I work on em [sic] like they're family. Isn't that, I think, oh God. I, I can't help it though. That's the, that's the only way I can work with them. And at times I guess it's done really well, really well. It has done well.

Chyanne perceives that being a firstborn daughter has greatly effected what she has experienced in life and what she has done, as opposed to being one of her brothers or sisters who occupy a different ordinal position.

According to Chyanne, being a firstborn has done

A lot. A lot. You know, and I'll, I'll tell you what this, what's about this one. [It] is because I knew that I was an example. I was raised knowing that I was an example how I, how I am, how, how I react to things. I have brothers and sisters that are going to be looking at me and that's how they're going to react to things. They're going to be watching you and that's what they're going to take, they're, and that's what I used to think about. And I do that same thing now. It's like if I go into a bar and if I behave like that, and somebody sees me, no, I can't do that. So if I went [sic] to drink and party down,

I do IT AT HOME [emphasis given by Chyanne]. No,
just kidding.

For Chyanne, being a firstborn daughter means learning when you are very young that you set an example. In her own voice, Chyanne depicts this process as: "We set the examples for the people that are coming behind us." As she continued to ponder and reflect on this matter, Chyanne shared that there also was a negative side to being the oldest, firstborn girl.

Yeah, that's ah, I, I think that ah, being the um, oldest girl—
and there's ah, there's ah, negative side to that as well.
Because of the ah, sometimes the pressure that was on me
was like when do I get to be myself. When do I get to be
myself, and when I was 25, 25 was a very remarkable
year for me. And that was only because I realized when
I was 25, that I was doing things that I wanted to do. So,
why was I being upset or stressed about em [sic]? I was
proud to be who I was. Um, you know, it took me 12 years
to get to that point because when I didn't want to leave
out of the house and my mom told me that's what I had
to do, that ah, I am what, that, that, I am who I am—there's
no way I could change that. And so I thought, well, you
know, I was like going to show her. You know, I had that
attitude, not realizing that's probably what she wanted me
to do in the first place. I HAD TO HAVE AN ATTITUDE IN

ORDER TO DO IT [emphasis given by Chyanne].

In regard to there being any positives to being a firstborn daughter, Chyanne was able to respond rather immediately and directly to this line of inquiry. As she described it

Yeah, I think it was um, like I got all the new clothes.

My sisters got the hand-me-downs. If there were going to be any new toys to be gotten, I would get them. And then my sisters got the, got them as, you know, they just went on down the line. Yeah. And then um, other positive things I think, ah, yes, when I was 13 years old I went to, ah, my cousin Liz' house. At 13, and I was able to sit with them and have my cup of tea with the women. When I was 13. So that meant a lot to me because we were always regaled off into one room, and the women went off into another room and there my sister and I would sit for hours and hours. Nobody would give us a glass of water even.

When asked if this was a rite of passage type of thing, Chyanne emphatically said, "Yes!" She added that this was a very momentous time for her, to be able to sit with the women and not be excluded.

After a bit of contemplation, Chyanne continued to expound on what she saw as additional positives to being the firstborn daughter. For Chyanne, "The things um...I don't know, I just think it has to do with um, um, just being the

oldest one, being there, ah, you know, first to do whatever it was to be gotten done." She went on to temper this statement by saying: "I mean, there's not a lot of, there's not good memories too. There's some not good memories, but the majority of em [sic] I um, I think because ah, basically, my inner self is a showoff. And ah, say that I'm the first here or the first there, that I, I, I like that now. And I know I like it. So I can, I can deal with that, you know that part good." With a combination of sadness and appreciation, Chyanne culminated her response with: "So, yeah, there was a lot of things that my, my mom taught me that I know she didn't have time to teach my other sisters. So, um, my sisters, ah, learn some of it now like when we talk. There's no more women's circles like that though when I was little. No more of those women getting together like that."

As the researcher in this study, I was so moved and captivated by Chyanne's lived experience and the manner in which she articulated the meaning her life experiences held for her, that I gave her the opportunity to add anything that she felt would be helpful or important that I did not inquire about during the more formal lines of inquiry. Chyanne's response is so poignant and full of insight that I chose to conclude this chapter with her own words, words that resonate the strength in the voices of all five women heretofore profiled.

I think the firstborn child or--whether it's a boy or a girl--
needs um, I, all--maybe it's not the right word, but like extra
understanding, extra um, time so that everything that they're
instructed to do that there's an explanation that goes with it.

So you know, so you don't have to, well, like with, when Rob [her son] was growing up, ah, he's the oldest boy. Well, he had a lot of responsibility in regards to the brothers and sisters and things, ah, that went on. He was supposed to see certain things were done. It's like my brother Lyle, now that I think about it. But I never, um, I never thought about explaining those things to him. To let him know why that those were important. For him to, for him to do, or him to know about. And that's the same thing when I--well, you're, you're the oldest, you're the oldest girl so if anything bad went down it's because I was not given an explanation for things...cause [sic] it's a big responsibility.

Thematic Summary

The profiles of each of the five women participants' illuminate the depth and breadth of their subjective perceptions of how being a firstborn American Indian daughter shaped, influenced, and effected their individual role development within the context of their American Indian family of origin. Taken individually, as well as collectively, the womens' voices resonate with struggle, resiliency, and strength as they share their lived, everyday experiences as a firstborn daughter. In the collective responses to the various research questions explored during the ethnographic interviews, these women shared their inner voices and exposed their many trials and tribulations as they

willingly sought to contribute to this study. These women had hopes of affording a keen sense of meaning and understanding about their role development, as a firstborn American Indian daughter, by telling their stories through the lens of environmental and familial influences that shaped their experiences as firstborn daughters.

From the women's perspective, their American Indian culture played a prominent part in their role development. They indicated that the experiences of their parents' greatly effected how they were raised as children. Forced assimilation was a shared experience among the parents' of these five women, either through forced removal from their families of origin and placement into boarding schools, or through everyday experiences of life in their particular generation and temporal sphere. The end result was that the parents' of these women did not know much about their native culture, or what little they knew they didn't want to share or teach to their daughters. The parents' experience of cultural oppression during their generation served to replicate itself in many ways as they raised their own firstborn daughters. These women were raised by their parents' under the guise of protection when it came to their native culture; that is, protection from going through what they as parents had gone through by teaching their firstborn daughters that they must adapt to the white or dominant ways, that they did not need to know about their native culture as it would only hurt them. For these women, their parents' espoused a very powerful, yet confusing, message to them: on the one hand, you are American Indian, but on the other hand, you must forget about your culture and adopt the

white man's way of living in order to survive.

All of the women shared that their native culture was important to them, while at the same time, acknowledged that the intensity in level of importance ebbed and flowed over their lifespan. The women in this study reported that the impetus for immersing themselves in their native culture came about as a result of a relational connection—relationship—with an American Indian male. As each of the women grew up ostensibly in a white society, they had little exposure to other groups until later in childhood. When they became involved with an American Indian man, they began to immerse themselves in learning all they could about their culture as an integral part of developing and building their new relationship. Prior to these newfound relationships and connections, the various environmental and familial systems had not encouraged the women in this study to seek out—nor did they value—their needs for cultural connection.

For these women, becoming culturally connected when all the external forces—namely, environmental and familial systems—were urging them to negate their culture took a great deal of effort. Not unlike the findings in a study done by Rosander in 1993, “This experience of being [culturally] disconnected and shorn from self and others” who are culturally affiliated or connected was repeatedly illustrated in the poignant stories and examples of everyday lived experiences shared by the women (p. 160). Most of these women were very moving in their descriptions of the inner turmoil and struggle involved in their cultural disconnection, making cultural disconnection an important theme in their role development as a firstborn American Indian daughter.

When it came to values emphasized and instilled by their parent's, nearly all of the women had the value of responsibility, or an ethic of care, infused in them. Common values amongst the women consisted of self-reliance, independence, honesty, respect for others and their property, sharing, and a work ethic. What is striking about these particular values is that they have a relational connection in common; that is, the theme is built around the individual woman in relation to other people, not on self to the exclusion of all else. The values of self-reliance and independence are not regarded as separating from or being autonomous in relation to others. Rather, these values were instilled within the context of being responsible and caring for others. As such, each of the women were enmeshed in an ethic of care where the focus was on the self-in-relation to others.

For these women, being strong meant that they could maintain relational connections with others, their family of origin, while being differentiated from their family at the same time. They were all immersed in relational connections within their family of origin wherein they were focused on being responsible for the care and nurturing of others while maintaining a differentiated self. In other words, by being responsible for the care of others, they were actively participating in the development of others' whom they were relationally connected to while at the same time caring for the self.

These women valued the self-in-relation mode of development; they could actively participate in the development of others in the context of their family of origin, while actively taking care of their own needs for self-

development. This conceptualization and actualization of an ethic of care required a great deal of effort and strength on the part of these firstborn daughters. It also involved an ever-present struggle and periods of turmoil for each woman, as their individual stories and examples of everyday lived experiences connote—a struggle that has continued throughout the lifespan for each of these women.

Spirituality was another theme that factored into each of the womens' lives: These women spoke about their spirituality as a way of life, a philosophy that guided how they lived their everyday lives. For example, **Sariah (Case #693)** described her spirituality as "not anything you can see" but "more inside, not from outside." In **Sariah's** case, spirituality represented her inner being, her inner voice that guided her in living her daily life: "And I believe, if you believe, it's powerful, powerful." **Diane (Case #695)** revealed that her native spirituality meant that she "didn't have to bounce from religion to religion looking for answers," whereas, **Chyanne (Case #691)** tried to live her life as her parents had taught her by keeping in mind that she was setting an example in whatever she did for the younger one's coming along behind her. For **Chyanne**, being ever mindful that she was an example for others was paramount "because you want the ah, good spirits to be with you."

Another theme that surfaced in the profiles of all five of these women was that of emotions, being emotive or emotional beings. In their collective stories, these women shared how they constantly struggled with being able to differentiate from their family of origin while maintaining relational connections.

Most of the women made reference to the years it took them to realize, to learn, to put their selves first. As **Barbra (Case #694)** described it: "I mean to care is okay but, you know, try to keep your life to."

Again, an ethic of care is predominant in these womens' lives. They were always taking responsibility to help out in some way, or what is commonly referred to as the be all, do all syndrome. For these women, their development evolved through connections via relationships with others. In some cases, the women paid a lofty price emotionally for their mode of development in that they felt extreme pressure and high expectations from others within the context of their family of origin. As **Diane's** profile illustrated, she was "leery to take some of those other steps, like I was afraid to go to college....and people had all these expectations that, oh yeah, you'll have no problem. I, I was afraid that I would flunk out and disappoint everybody."

Additional examples of the emotional price paid for espousing an ethic of care can be gleaned from the stories of **Rayna (Case #692)** and **Sariah (Case #693)**. In **Rayna's** case, she learned early on that she was to refrain from displaying her emotions, her emotive being, from her experiences in the boarding schools. By silencing her inner voice—her emotive being—**Rayna** found it extremely difficult to acknowledge her feelings and expose her emotions. Through living her life on the basis of an ethic of care, **Rayna** came to the realization one day that "I discovered I was carrying the whole load. I didn't think that was fair." As a middle aged firstborn daughter, **Rayna** confided in me that she still has a difficult time showing her emotions, such as crying, to

this day.

On the other hand, **Sariah** recalled that she dealt with her emotions and sense of responsibility for others by engaging in the be all, do all syndrome. In her own voice, **Sariah's** experience epitomizes this be all, do all syndrome. "I became obsessed with getting things done, make sure that everything was done. Everything was taken care of. I was, I was ah, driven to that. Daily, daily, daily." The price **Sariah** paid was in channeling her emotional energy into obsessive behavior in terms of being totally focused on making sure that everything was taken care of and getting done. Her inner voice, which dealt with her emotive being, was only allowed expression by channeling her emotional energy into obsessive behavior--"...I was ah, driven to that."

Financial management was another theme that surfaced throughout the stories of all five interviewees. For these women, financial management constituted learning to make do with what you had. They all shared that money was rather scarce as they were growing up; however, the way that their parents' managed to provide all the basic necessities of life made the women feel secure. As **Chyanne** revealed in her story: "We never knew we were poor." Another way of saying this for these women is that they never missed what they did not know or have.

Each of these firstborn daughters learned all about the work ethic early on in their lives. They all worked and espoused a strong work ethic themselves. It is interesting to note that each of these women struggled to provide for their children, by working at whatever jobs they had to, as single parents during their

later young adult lives and into the early years of middle age. They all shared how they were solely responsible for the payment of their bills, even if it included bills incurred by their ex-husbands or former partners, and how they saw to it that the needs of their children came first.

Of further interest in this regard is how each of these women spoke with disbelief and disfavor about their siblings lack of financial responsibility. For example, **Barbra** spoke about how her younger sister would spend inordinate amounts of money on tangible goods for herself without giving any consideration to meeting her children's needs first. In a different realm, **Diane** shared the fact that her younger brother and sister were just now having to learn how to live on a budget during their middle years, whereas, she has lived her whole life on a budget and took her children's needs into account first whenever she looked at taking a job, or changing jobs. Despite their disbelief and disfavor toward their siblings' lack of financial management, each of these firstborn daughters would assist their siblings in time of need when they were sought out for money or other forms of tangible, in-kind help. Many times these women would state that they would help their siblings out for the sake of their nieces or nephews, and only peripherally for the sake of their siblings.

The nature of material resources provided within the context of their family of origin was another common theme in the lives of these women. As previously mentioned, these women spoke about how they all grew up with and learned the idea of making the best with what resources they had. While they acknowledged a lack of material items during their own child rearing days, they

all expressed how their siblings benefited more than they did as material items were more readily available to them as they were growing up.

Other types of material resources provided by their parents' or family's of origin consisted of education, both formally and informally. These women were taught that education was a means to survive and critical thinking skills were prevalent informal teachings provided by their fictive and nonfictive kin networks. Despite their parents' lack of money and material things, each woman readily shared that their parents' provided whatever they could. A sentiment shared in the stories of each of these women aptly depicts their sentiment towards material and monetary resources: They never missed what they did not have or did not know; they never felt poor and were content with what their parents' were able to provide.

Informal education consisted of learning to critically think via storytelling discussions given by either their mother or father. In fact, a primary emphasis of the informal teaching these women received was through the use of anecdotes. For example, **Sariah** and **Chyanne** both talked about how their parents instilled certain values or ethics by using anecdotes or metaphors in their teachings. For each of these women, the informal teachings they received were as important, if not more so, than the formal education they received. There was a high emphasis placed on learning and making do with what you had. Formal education was geared towards self-development, making connections with other people who were of a diverse background than yourself, and being exposed to other people of color, for many, the first time

was in secondary schooling. Collectively, each of these women told stories of how they experienced being the only one or one of a few minorities in school, work, and in their childhood neighborhoods. This factor of difference remains true today for all of the women with the exception of **Barbra** and **Rayna**, the latter of whom work in American Indian programs within, or for, other organizations.

A seventh theme that emerged in the stories of these women relates to the type or level of either family and parental support given to them, in the form of resources, has to do with physical attributes and skills. In their individual stories, each of the women spoke of the ability to play various sports or to engage in various types of physical labor around the house. Another type of physical resource that surfaced in the data analysis was the role these middle aged firstborn daughters played in taking protective measures on behalf of their younger siblings. For example, **Rayna** told stories of how she looked out for the younger girls, and later her younger sister once she arrived, during the time she was in the boarding school. She told stories about how she would physically intervene on behalf of younger children who were being preyed upon by the older children, or bullies in the school. In addition, she also shared how she saw herself as a tomboy and how she would teach the other children how to sled, dance, or defend themselves whether they wanted to learn or not. Further discussion of other roles or functions will be discussed in Chapter V.

Chyanne shared a few instances of how she would look after her younger siblings and area neighborhood children in the inner city area where

she grew up. In particular, she spoke about protecting the children from men who preyed on the neighborhood looking for sexual favors. Sariah also shared instances where she had intervened on behalf of her sibling, or younger area children, by physically hitting the perpetrator or physically intervening to stop a bully from causing harm. For many of these women, fist fights to protect their siblings or other children during the course of their own childhoods was a natural phenomenon in their role development as a firstborn daughter.

A very meaningful, yet unexpected, benefit emanating from this study was the womens' sense of being empowered as a result of their participation in the exploratory research. During the course of the interview process, most of these women remarked about the discovery of new insights and meaning they were experiencing by giving voice to their inner-most feelings about their everyday lived experiences as a firstborn American Indian daughter. It's as if one could see the light bulb going on and an internal "ah ha" or "eureka" being experienced as the interviewer and interviewee engaged in a relational connection. Collectively, these women described feelings of affirmation in being asked to participate and were happy to contribute to this research where women's issues, particularly that of American Indian firstborn daughters, were considered of worthy importance. In addition, they also discovered through their struggles, how much resiliency and strength they had in persevering throughout their role development as firstborn American Indian daughters, especially in times of very arduous circumstances. Through these guided imageries of self-exposure and revelation, their discovery about themselves

felt very positive.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

I will never know the experience of others, but I can know my own, and I can approximate theirs by entering their world. This approximation marks the tragic, perpetually inadequate aspect of social research. (Reinharz, 1984 as cited in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986/1997, p. 113)

Introduction

It is important to reflect upon the findings reported in Chapter IV in order to come to a clear understanding of what these qualitative results mean for family studies scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines. However, in order to reflect back upon these findings, there are a couple of areas that need to be addressed. The first area that begs attention is the lack of literature which specifically addresses the role development of firstborn American Indian daughters within the family of origin, let alone the sparse literature in existence which speaks to the development of American Indian women in general. The second area which demands attention is the issue of contextualizing the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within a historical perspective. In other words, it is important to discuss the findings presented in Chapter IV in terms of a broader context which encompasses the time period in which these firstborn daughters were growing

up, as well as the period of time in which their parents' lived; the latter directly effects how these firstborn daughters were raised.

In order to set the stage for fuller explanation and interpretation of the findings reported in Chapter IV, the relationship between the historical perspective, or timeline, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecology of human development model and chronosystem model requires explanation and elucidation as it pertains to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin. It is important to keep in mind that Bronfenbrenner sees development as the goal of the active organism (in this case, the firstborn daughter) who seeks progressive and mutually accommodating transactional relationships with the environment (the family of origin). Viewed in this context, the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter occurs as a process that is gradual, evolving, and incremental over time. Embedded within this developmental process is the broader context of a historical timeline marked by events in the larger environmental system--the macrosystem--that directly effect, influence, and shape the development of the firstborn daughter within her family of origin vis-a-vis her parent's. In other words, the effects of forced assimilation and historical events that the first-born's parents lived through influenced the manner in which these parents raised their firstborn daughters.

Given that the age range of the five participants in this study was 44 to 54 years, these firstborn American Indian daughters were born during the decade of 1942 to 1952. It also is known that four out of the five participants graduated from high school and one firstborn daughter obtained her GED. Factoring in an average age of 18 years at the time of graduation would place four of the five women as having graduated from high school during the

decade of 1960 to 1970. Moreover, the data reveal that the parents of these five firstborn American Indian daughters would most likely have been born in the early 1900s. As a result, from approximating the time of birth of the parents of these five firstborn daughters and combining this information with the known period of time in which these five participants were themselves born, we can demarcate the historical timeline in which the role development of the firstborn daughters' evolved.

During the decade of 1942 to 1952 when these five participants were born, two major events in history were transpiring: WW II (1939-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1954). It is of interest to note that "during WW II, it has been estimated that 25,000 American Indians served in the armed forces of the U.S. (Fixico, 1986)" (Silvey, 1996). In the decade of 1960 to 1970 when these women graduated from high school, we discover several major historical events during this period; namely, the U.S. build up of troops in Vietnam in 1965, the Civil Rights movement and passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the passage of the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968.

More importantly, and specific to American Indians, was the period of time marked by the "Red Power" events; the Red Power Movement occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Gross, 1996). Three events occurred that are considered by many as prominent symbols of nationness for American Indians. The first of these watershed events occurred on November 9, 1969 with the occupation of Alcatraz ("the Rock"), an island situated in the bay waters between San Francisco and Sausalito. American Indian activists were frustrated by the slow pace of bureaucratic change in federal Indian policy, especially after the passage of the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968. These

activists decided that reform had to come from within and took possession of Alcatraz to get the government's undivided attention. The occupation lasted 19 months before it ended. The publicity generated by the occupation served American Indians well as it dramatized the injustices perpetrated on American Indian peoples by Anglos throughout history (Silvey, 1996).

The second unifying event occurred in 1972. Members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) took over and occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office, in the Department of the Interior, Washington, DC. This event became known as the "Trail of Broken Treaties" demonstration (Powers, 1986).

Finally, perhaps a more widely known symbolic event occurred on February 27, 1973 when armed members of the American Indian Movement and Oglala Sioux Tribe invaded the village of Wounded Knee, South Dakota—site of the 1890 massacre (Powers, 1986). The purpose of this invasion was to dramatize the poverty, corruption, and oppression at Pine Ridge (the reservation) and call national attention to the situation. The occupation lasted a total of seventy days. The Sioux demanded that the government agree to honor the Treaty of 1868 before they would withdraw. When all was said and done, the U.S. Marshals had killed two people, paralyzed one for life, and none of the political issues that set the occupation in motion were ever resolved by the U.S. government.

Added to this historical timeline that covers the development process of these five participants is the mix of historical events that effected the parents' of these firstborn American Indian daughters. The parents of these firstborn daughters lived through a very remarkable time in history. From the early 1900s until the birth of these women in the early 1940s through 1952, these parents endured a tumultuous period of history wherein the U.S. government

vacillated in its federal Indian policy; from a policy position of forced removal, relocation, and termination by the federal government towards the American Indians, to a policy position interspersed with attempts to rescue or “save the red man” (Silvey, 1996).

In addition, American Indians were not granted citizenship status until 1924 with the passage of the General Citizenship Act (Fixico, 1986). Then, in 1934, the U.S. government passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) which provided for the conservation and development of American Indian lands and resources by and for American Indian communities. One of the requirements brought about by the IRA was a policy established by the government which required that each tribe issue “pedigree papers”—formal tribal enrollment cards or documents—for those American Indians who can demonstrate tribal lineage that meets the tribe’s membership requirements, vis-a-vis the U.S. government definition. As such, American Indians have become the only group of people in the U.S. who have “pedigree papers” to prove who they are; self-identification was no longer accepted under the provisions of the IRA.

Other major events of significance during the early 1900s that the parents of these firstborn daughters endured included WW I (from 1914-1919), the stock market crash of 1929, and the Great Depression. From the perspective of the ecology of human development model, all of these historical events—from the early 1900s to the early 1970s—combined to shape the environments in which these firstborn daughters’ parents were evolving and living, and thus, effected and shaped the manner in which these parents raised their firstborn daughters. As has been previously stated, the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter does not occur in isolation from her family of origin anymore than it occurs in isolation from the broader

environmental systems, such as those in the aforementioned discussion.

A significant finding of this study is the effect that the boarding school experiences of these women's grandparents and parents had in terms of how they were raised. Four out of the five firstborn daughters had grandparents or parents who were separated from their families of origin and sent to boarding schools. In fact, one of the firstborn participants not only had a family history of her mother having been put in a boarding school, but this firstborn participant herself had been put in a boarding school at the age of four and spent the majority of her formative years being reared in the boarding school environment.

The effects of the boarding school experiences for these women's family members, as well as for the lone firstborn participant who directly experienced life in the boarding school environment, are imbued throughout these women's family histories. All one needs to do is to return to the voices of the women themselves, as they shared their life experiences growing up as a firstborn daughter (Chapter IV), to get a sense of the pain, struggle, and heartache that each has come to know as a result of the legacy left behind in their family histories from the boarding school experiences. As they shared their life stories, the women's voices resonate with pain, loss, hopelessness, struggle, and identity issues—a fact that these women continue to struggle with today.

The manner in which most of these women were raised by their parents can be associated with the experiences that their parents had as they themselves were growing up. Three of the firstborn participants had mothers who were separated from their families of origin and placed in boarding schools by government agents; **Sariah, Rayna, and Chyanne**. **Sariah's** father also had been forcefully removed from his family and placed in a

boarding school. In the case of **Diane**, her maternal grandfather had been put in a boarding school, whereas, **Rayna** and a younger sister had actually spent time in boarding schools. The significance of these family histories on the women's evolving and gradual processes of development demands critical attention and elucidation, as the following discussion will reflect.

From the women's own voices, we learn that their parents' placed a great deal of emphasis on learning to adapt and live in the dominant white culture. In large part, the parents' of these women raised them in a protective and restrictive realm, ensuring that the women would learn and practice the dominant culture's way of life. These women recalled that they were not taught their native language, nor were they encouraged to learn and speak any language aside from English. They also recalled that their native culture was not central in their lives as they were growing up. Each woman was aware that she was American Indian, yet there was no emphasis placed on learning to speak their native dialect nor to overtly practice their native customs. If anything, these women were consistently discouraged from actively pursuing their native customs and traditions.

For these firstborn women, their parents' raised them with the notion of protecting them from the pain and struggles they had endured as children growing up, having been forcefully removed from their families of origin. In the case of **Diane**, while her parent's were not in boarding school, her maternal grandfather had been placed in a boarding school. Given this data, we can infer that **Diane's** maternal grandfather did not have the ability to learn his native dialect, nor practice his native traditions in an overt fashion as such were staunchly forbidden in the boarding schools. The whole purpose of the

boarding school environment for native children was to force assimilation and adoption of the dominant white culture's way of life. The historical literature is replete with accounts of the government's efforts to force assimilation and terminate the practice of native culture and tradition by forcefully removing native children from their families of origin (Fixico, 1986; Myers, 1981).

In addition, evidence from the data supports the inference that these firstborn daughters' were raised under the cloak of protection and restriction from knowing and practicing their native culture on a daily basis. Returning to the women's voices, we can establish that **Chyanne's** mother was very concerned about the potential of losing her to the boarding school environment. The data indicate that **Chyanne's** mother was adamant about her daughter staying in school out of fear that the government agents would take her away and put her in a boarding school. Support for this protective role enacted by **Chyanne's** mother can be found in the data where **Chyanne** is trying to convince her mother to allow her to stay home from school permanently, at the tender age of 13. Also, another example of **Chyanne's** mother trying to be protective of her is found in the data where **Chyanne's** mother is instructing her to never sign her name to any papers and in that way, the government cannot find her and take her away.

There are a number of examples in the data which support the contention that parents' were raising these firstborn daughters under a protective shroud and how they consistently discouraged the women from revealing too much about themselves, or from making concerted efforts to learn their native dialect and overtly practicing their culture. The point is, these parents' were extremely fearful that their own firstborn daughters could

be taken from them, as either they themselves or their own parent's had been when they were younger. Given the history of boarding school experiences in these women's families, it is not hard to draw conclusions about why these firstborn daughters were raised in the manner that they were. One conclusion that can be made from the data is that parents who spent time in boarding schools were made to relinquish any native dialect they knew at the time, as well as forced to give up any cultural practices that they held. Because they were forced to give up any overt means of American Indian identification, these parents were incapable of passing on any native practices or dialect to their firstborn daughters. Moreover, based on the aforementioned discussion, another conclusion supported by the data is that these parents learned it was not safe to practice, and thereby teach their firstborn daughters their native dialect or customs for fear that history would repeat itself.

From a historical standpoint, these parents were reacting to the potential of having their firstborn daughters forcefully removed from them and placed in boarding schools. There were sufficient reasons to raise their daughters under a restricted and protected familial environment. It was not until 1978 that the U.S. government passed legislation that protected children from being forcefully removed from their families of origin without providing good cause to the contrary. This legislation is known as the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, or P. L. 95-608 (Myers, 1981). The women participants in this study did not have the rights and protection afforded by the passage of this federal law, and as such, the women's parents had every reason to be concerned and protective of their firstborn daughters.

Undoubtedly, nowhere is the issue of loss, pain, struggle, and confusion over these women's development as American Indian firstborn daughters more

profound than in the women's own voices as they shared their life stories as participants in this study. We can glean a sense of what this struggle is about from the literature, even though it cannot compare to the actual voices of these women participants. Joseph Myers (1981), Associate Director of the American Indian Lawyer Training Program, Inc., captured the essence of what these firstborn daughters' parents feared when he wrote the following,

I can recall childhood moments when separation from my family, whether for a day, a week, or a month, seemed like eternity heaped upon eternity. The concept of time is so important to us as children. As adulthood consumes our innocence, our perception of time changes dramatically. We learn to manipulate time for gain or deception, use time as a defense mechanism, or lose time and chase after it forever. No longer does the passage of time have the ability to arbitrarily choke life from our minds as it can from the minds of children separated from their families. In the formative years of youth, separation from family is intensely terrifying for children. The longer the separation, the more profound the scars. In adulthood, even if you can't overcome them, you learn to exist with your struggles. (p. 15).

These firstborn participants have certainly learned to live with their struggles as they have evolved and developed over time. As we have learned from the data, the additional theme of assimilation on the parents of these firstborn daughters effected how the firstborn daughters were raised. A significant

element of the parent's child rearing practices was teaching these women to adopt and adapt to the dominant culture's way of life. It was not prudent to be American Indian during the period of time that these women and their parents, much less their grandparents generation, were growing up.

Clearly an element of shame attached to being identified as an American Indian has transcended the generations of these women's families. In analyzing the data from the women's interviews, another theme was uncovered that was not anticipated at the outset of this study: the theme of family secrets that directly ties in to the effects of assimilation during the firstborn parents' generation, and ultimately, to the manner in which firstborn women were raised. For example, there is no history of boarding school experience in **Barbra's** family that she knew of. However, she was raised with the attitude that it was better to adopt the dominant culture's way of life. In **Barbra's** own voice, the data shows that after she had married a white man, she confronted her mother about what she was supposed to do because her mother raised her to be white. It wasn't until later in her development that **Barbra** learned why her mother had raised her to live and act like she was white as opposed to American Indian. After her mother's death, **Barbra** learned that the man she had regarded as her biological father all the time she was being raised was in fact her stepfather, and further, that her stepfather had formally adopted her. This was a family secret that **Barbra's** mother went to great lengths to keep from **Barbra's** knowledge.

Barbra came to learn that her biological father was American Indian. Her mother did not want her to know about him so to safeguard this secret, **Barbra's** mother discouraged **Barbra** from actively pursuing any knowledge

about her American Indian heritage, practices, or traditions. What **Barbra** came to realize is that her mother feared if she knew about her native culture and became involved in actualizing her native customs, that **Barbra** would come in contact with the Indian community and therefore, she might learn who her biological father was. So, in **Barbra's** case, we learn that she was reared in the ways of the dominant white culture so that she would not find out about her adoption by her stepfather, or that her biological father was in fact American Indian. For in the end, reared in the denial of her American Indian heritage and identity meant that **Barbra's** mother's secret could be maintained.

In a different vein, **Rayna's** life story holds a family secret that she did not uncover until she was in early adulthood. **Rayna** recalled that when she was sent off to boarding school, her mother registered her with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agent under the name of Jane. All the while she was living in the boarding school, she thought her real name was Jane, as this was what her mother had called her while she was growing up. **Rayna** found out years later, when she came across her birth certificate and other legal documents, that her real name was **Rayna** and not Jane; Jane was her middle name. Given the fact that **Rayna's** mother had been forcefully removed and sent off to a boarding school, one can only speculate or surmise that somehow, by registering her daughter with the BIA agent under the name of Jane that **Rayna's** time in the boarding school would be easier for her to endure. After all, Jane is more of an Anglo name than **Rayna** is and the mode of operation in the boarding school for Indian children was to relinquish their American Indian identity and assimilate to the dominant white culture. However, one can only

make inferences from the data available and **Rayna** herself acknowledges that she has never learned from her mother why she was registered under her middle name as opposed to her first name.

The life story shared by **Chyanne** contains a family secret that still exists today. Since both of **Chyanne's** parents are deceased, the odds are very unlikely that she will find out the truth of the matter. At any rate, the data from **Chyanne's** interview reveals a time during **Chyanne's** childhood when night time visitors would come after all the children were in bed. **Chyanne** recalled that men would come in a black car, wearing big hats and big necklaces, and dressed in black, to see her mother. She also recalled that older women would accompany the men during these night time visits. All **Chyanne** can remember is that these night time visitors would come and sit and talk with her mom and that her mother would never tell her who these people were or why they would come. Rather, **Chyanne** recalled that her mother would dismiss the visitors as just a lady friend.

From the data, we know that **Chyanne's** mother instilled in **Chyanne** that she should never sign her name to any papers, commit to buying anything on paper but pay cash instead, and that she should never be too smart or super bad in school; rather, she was just supposed to get through school. **Chyanne** recalled that her mother reasoned that **Chyanne** couldn't be too smart or too bad in school because then her name would be written down somewhere and the government could find them. In addition, **Chyanne** was taught by her mother that she was never to let the government know where the family was so that they wouldn't come and take the children away. She also was instructed not to let people know where she was, or the family was,

or sign her name to anything because then the family couldn't be traced.

Chyanne recalled that she was always fearful that somehow she would slip and they would find out where she and her family were at.

From historical accounts, it is known that BIA agents and missionaries from religious denominations—primarily Catholic—would be involved in the removal of Indian children from their families. Although **Chyanne** was never able to garner the truth of the matter from her mother, given the teachings instilled by her mother and what is known from historical accounts, one can make the inference that these night time visitors were representatives of the government boarding schools. Given the data, it is not a great leap in reasoning to infer that these night time visitors were somehow associated with the government and were visiting to check up on the status of **Chyanne's** family. It certainly would be one plausible explanation for the manner in which **Chyanne** was raised during this temporal sphere.

From an ecological perspective of human development, it is readily clear to the author why these firstborn daughters' were raised in the manner that they were. When you combine the two additional themes the data reveal, as discussed in the aforementioned section, in addition to the findings reported in Chapter IV, the factors and influences that shaped the role development of these firstborn American Indian daughters becomes evident. It also explains the pain and struggles these women have experienced in their own individual development as firstborn American Indian daughters. Critical in these women's development are issues of self-identity. In spite of being women, firstborn daughters, and American Indian in a society whose majority culture is white and whose history of treatment of American Indians is less than

trustworthy, these women have clearly demonstrated a resiliency throughout their lifespan.

Role Development and Relational Considerations

As discussed in Chapter II, the study of women's lives produces different developmental constructs which informs a different description of development based on women's conceptions of self and morality. This study has given the women participants a voice to their life stories as firstborn American Indian daughters. In doing so, this study has provided a forum for presenting a unique testimony for an ethic of care; the connection between relationship and responsibility. The women in this study demonstrated that their conception of morality is concerned with the activity of care, centered around themes of responsibility and relationships.

Traditional theories of human development have long held that development is a monolithic process, that development occurs in a series of stages, and that development progresses from infantile dependency to self-sufficiency and autonomy in adulthood. These traditional theories regard the process of development as being the same for women and men. In other words, maturity implies self-sufficiency and autonomy, whereas, connection implies an unhealthy dependency. However, a relational view, which was supported by the women in this study, considers cultivation and attainment of a sense of basic human connection to be the fruit of ongoing development.

This study attempted to explore the role development of five middle aged firstborn American Indian daughters within the context of their family of origin, by presenting their perceptions of their experiences in their own words and stories directly. In giving voice to these women's experiences, their words

and stories comprise the data which support the findings reported on in Chapter IV. Moreover, the data arising from these firstborn daughters support the self-in-relation theory, as discussed in Chapter II. A woman's self develops in the context of relationships or human bonding. This mode of development is in contrast to development as an isolated or separated autonomous individual, a traditional view posited by such developmental psychologists as Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson among others.

As a developmental perspective of women's development, the self-in-relation theory has been elaborated on by Surrey (1991) in that it is inclusive of a "two-way interactional model, where it becomes as important to understand as to be understood, to empower as well as to be empowered" (p. 59). The participants' in this study epitomized the importance of the need for this "two-way interactional model" as they shared their experiences of development as firstborn American Indian daughters within the context of their family of origin. The nature and quality of the participants' relational connections were important to their development, despite the pain, loss, and struggle they endured in the process of attempting to establish and maintain their role as firstborn daughters. The developmental ethos of women's role, and ultimately their identity, is poignantly demonstrated in the vignettes of their own life stories.

The role development of the women participants' in this study, as firstborn American Indian daughters, exemplifies the self-in-relation theory of women's development as women's growth in connection, not in isolation or individuation. Inherent in this view of women's development are some of the principle values of American Indian culture; namely, a collectivist approach which centers around doing for the collective good of all rather than an

individualistic approach, and an interdependent relationship with animate and inanimate alike as compared to a self-sufficient, individual and autonomous mode of development. The life stories, as told and shared by the women participants' in this study, resonate with the self-in-relation theory of development within the context of their American Indian culture, identity, and philosophy of life.

Essentially, the findings of this study support the bases of these women's development, as firstborn American Indian daughters, in what can be characterized as a "relationship-differentiation" pathway to development as compared to one of separation-individuation (Surrey, 1991). According to Surrey (1991), this relationship-differentiation pathway to development is

. . . a process that encompasses increasing levels of complexity, choice, fluidity, and articulation within the context of human relationship. What this new model emphasizes is that the direction of growth is not toward greater degrees of autonomy or individuation and the breaking of early emotional ties, but toward a process of growth within relationship, where both or all people involved are encouraged and challenged to maintain connection and to foster, adapt to, and change with the growth of the other. (p. 60)

Here again, the findings of this study support the role development from two developmental perspectives: the ecology of human development model and the self-in-relation theory. The self-in-relation theory definition of relationship "implies a sense of knowing oneself and others through a process of mutual

relational interaction and continuity of 'emotional-cognitive dialogue' over time and space' (Surrey, 1991, p. 62).

Role Development and Ordinal Position

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of research discussed in Chapter II (Monson & Gorman, 1976; Newman, Pettinger, & Evan, 1995; Travis & Kohli, 1995; Sulloway, 1996; and Leman, 1985). From the demographic data obtained from the women participants', we know that four of the five firstborn daughters were first in ordinal position within the context of their family of origin. The fifth woman participant, **Chyanne**, was born fourth in ordinal position, having three older brothers before her in birth order. However, **Chyanne's** role development as a firstborn daughter is very consistent with the literature reviewed on ordinal position; she may have been born fourth out of eight children, but she is the firstborn daughter out of three female children in her family of origin.

Research on ordinal position describes a host of characteristics associated with firstborn children. Among the more commonly cited characteristics are: dependable, leadership, achievement orientation, conservative or preserver of the status quo, ambition, organized, dutiful, responsible, perfectionist, analytical, contemplative, and self-starter. Returning to the collective voices of the women's life stories as told to the researcher in this study, there are numerous examples of the commonly cited characteristics of firstborn children. **Chyanne**, who was born fourth in ordinal position but is the firstborn daughter of three females in her family of origin, talked about how she was raised knowing that she set the example for the siblings coming up

behind her. In addition, her mother instilled in her how important it was to think before she did anything and that her behavior was not a reflection of herself, but of how she was raised and by whom. **Chyanne** carried her leadership and contemplative nature with her in her job working with families. As she described it, "I can't help it. I have to work with them like they are family. That's what was instilled in me and that's the only way I can work with them."

In the case of **Sariah**, she is the oldest of two, having a sister seven years younger. The data from **Sariah's** life story is consistent with research findings of being dutiful and responsible. From her own voice, we learned that **Sariah** described herself as being "driven on a daily, daily, daily" basis to be responsible for tending to whatever needs existed in basic daily living as she was growing up. As a middle aged firstborn daughter, **Sariah** is experiencing what **Leman (1989)** describes as "the lion's share of the burden usually falls on 'ole dependable'—the firstborn", caring for aging parents (p. 132). **Sariah** described how she has the sole responsibility for providing special care for her aging parents and how they always look to her for their needs. For example, she is called if one of them has a doctors appointment and she is the one who takes her father to a professional baseball game. In her own voice, **Sariah** tells of the frustration she has felt because her parent's automatically expect and assume she will meet their needs; and rightly so, because she always has and always will. **Sariah** commented to this researcher that her sister wouldn't even think of taking their dad to a ball game, much less offer to help with the responsibility for caring for their parent's. **Sariah** reasons, and the data supports her, that her sister never will offer to help with their parent's because

Sariah has always taken the responsibility, can be depended on to do the right thing, and both her parent's and her younger sister know this.

Other examples from the findings of this study that are consistent with the research discussed in Chapter II can readily be gleaned from the life stories that these firstborn women told to the researcher. **Diane** talked about how responsibility was "infused" in her as she was growing up. She is also a self-starter and a scholar; the latter can be found in the data as the firstborn who graduated with a masters degree from an ivy league school. **Barbra** described how she never had time for social and recreational activities as she was growing up because of all the responsibility she had with household chores and watching over her two younger siblings. In her story, the data are consistent with findings by Leman (1989) in that "a great number of firstborns are never allowed to have an adolescence" (p. 123). **Barbra's** life story is an example of a firstborn who never really had an opportunity to experience and enjoy adolescence during her formative years.

An example of a firstborn who was always looking out for the little ones can be found in **Rayna's** life story. Although she spent a great deal of her formative years in boarding school, **Rayna** made it her mission to be the protector of younger children and those of small stature. **Rayna** also occupies a position at work that is centered on organization, self-initiative, and leadership abilities in that she is an office manager.

In the women's voices we learn a great deal about what it means to be a firstborn daughter and have responsibility instilled in you that can never seem to be shaken, for it is always there. As Leman (1989) aptly describes

If you are a firstborn, chances are that life has

bruised you and battered you a little. You've been picked at, put down, and told to grow up. Sometimes, even as a kid, you may have felt as if you were in boot camp. It wasn't always easy, but you have become a stronger, more capable person because of all you've gone through. (p. 271)

The findings of this study are consistent and on point with Leman's description of growing up as a firstborn. These firstborn American Indian daughters exemplify the pain, loss, struggle, and boot camp sentiment in the aforementioned quote. More importantly, these women also exemplify resiliency, strength in character and heart, and determination to succeed no matter what obstacles they may encounter along their developmental pathway.

Practice Implications

This study was successful in exploring and elaborating upon the relationship between ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within the context of her family of origin. By using a descriptive illustrative case study approach, new insights were uncovered which enabled a broader and deeper understanding of the role development experience of firstborn American Indian daughters from the woman's perspective. Indeed, the use of ethnographic interviews as a means of giving voice to the women's perceptions and subjective experiences about their role development had the unexpected benefit of the women's sense of being empowered as a result of their participation in this exploratory research.

By using qualitative methodologies which were suited to the particular

participant's styles, their individual contexts, and the unfolding of research questions in the course of this investigation, the researcher was able to put theory into action. Specifically, the tenets of the ecological perspective of human development—including the chronosystem model—and the self-in-relation perspective of women's development enabled the participants' to uncover and reveal past experiences in the context of this exploratory study. The qualitative methodologies were chosen for their capacity to reflect the multiplicity of views and the contextual and interactive components of meaning, all of which are embedded in the developmental perspectives that framed the theoretical parameters in this study.

This study has a number of significant implications and applications for family studies scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines who provide services to individuals and families of American Indian descent. For example, an exploration and examination of ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin, from personal and social contexts, or environmental referents was begun in this research to add to the body of literature of, by, and for, American Indian women. Unlike traditional research methods which have examined human development on the basis of a set or series of stage-based criterion which considers individual development in isolation, the current study explored and examined perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors in relation to a whole person and her complex environment (more like a phenomenological study).

The efforts of this research have uncovered insights, meanings, and conceivably, new information about the relationship between ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter and: a) family of origin responsibility; b) her role as keeper of the culture; c) the cultural

expectation or rite of passage that evolves wherein she becomes keeper of the family; d) how her role is prescribed; e) the finding of no gender inequality in her role development; and f) her quality of life. For instance, this research found that one cannot explore the relationship between ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter without examining the interplay among and between family members, American Indian cultural values, characteristics inherent in birth order positions, and specific consideration of women's development as self-in-relation. There is no existing evidence in the literature to support a study of this type, by focusing on the relationship between the firstborn American Indian daughter and her role development to the exclusion of all social and environmental systems or referents, that would replicate the findings of this particular study.

The findings of this research effort provide practitioners with invaluable insights and meanings to incorporate in therapeutic relationships as well as in the provision of services to individuals and families of American Indian descent. A practitioner would need to gain a much broader and fuller understanding of the historical treatment of American Indians and the effects of forced assimilation in order to effectively evaluate, understand, and work with firstborn American Indian daughters and their families of origin. Incorporating the findings of this study will assist practitioners from a variety of disciplines in understanding and working with firstborn American Indian daughters who are struggling with issues of identity as it relates to being a woman, a firstborn, and an American Indian. Given the various contextual perspectives that this exploratory study incorporates, the level of insight and meanings gained, as well as the findings produced by this study, collectively would enhance cross-cultural practice and educational efforts across multiple systems and

disciplines.

Methodological Implications

As the foregoing discussion has suggested, a post positivist mix that shares some of the characteristics of both the interpretive and emancipatory paradigms has been a useful approach to ground scientific explanations in the life experiences of the research participants. In addition, this type of approach is effective at encouraging truth (or knowledge) to emerge in a less-structured, naturalistic fashion as participants are given the opportunity to tell their own stories to a co-participant, the researcher. Incorporating ethnographic interviews into this exploratory study made it possible to give voice to the women participants' as they participated in a study that found their life stories and pathway to development of worthy research. Moreover, the incorporation of ethnographic interviews into this study provided convincing support for the two developmental perspectives which framed this effort; namely, the self-in-relation theory of women's development and the ecological perspective of human development with its supplemental chronosystem model. Likewise, these features provided convincing support for the findings of this study in that it also brought these results to life via the women's voices.

Inherent in any research undertaking is the question of bias on the part of the researcher. Admittedly, there were potential sources of bias in the design and investigation incorporated in this exploratory study. The qualitative, ethnographic interviewing portion of the research inevitably incorporated biases; principally among them were the insider status of the researcher who is an American Indian and a firstborn daughter. It must be recognized that the researcher was the primary instrument used to gather the data, and as such,

the semistructured nature of the interview which focused on specific topics, to the inevitable exclusion of others, as well as the final interpretation of the data are reflections of the researcher's biases.

At the same token, however, it is questionable as to whether a nonAmerican Indian researcher would have been able to solicit the depth and breadth of information provided by these women participants', given the nature of historical accounts and treatment of American Indians by non-native or dominant culture peoples'. There is an issue of trustworthiness that cannot be overlooked, as it manifests itself in the ability to establish rapport and free up the wealth of information that resides within the firstborn American Indian daughter. Despite the potential for biases, the researcher in this exploratory study views her insider status as a definite benefit in being able to conduct this exploratory study. The insider status attaches a degree of credibility to the research and more importantly, in the eyes of the women participants'.

Issues of trustworthiness were planned for at the outset of this study. They involved utilization of various triangulation methods previously discussed in Chapter III, along with a concerted effort to secure the most comprehensive answers possible to the research questions. The women participants' in this study were eager to share their life stories and assist in the research process. The findings in this study are based on the actual information these women participants' provided directly to the researcher during the course of the ethnographic interviews. The richness of description came as the women were encouraged to speak in their own voices. Treated with respect and as equals in the research process, these five firstborn participants' provided example after example, and detail after detail, filled with significant implications for family studies scholars and practitioners alike, across a wide range of

disciplines.

From virtually every evaluative standpoint, a valuable and unique understanding of ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin was gained utilizing a naturalistic approach open to generating subjective, unstructured information. In the end, perhaps this study best demonstrates that in research where participant characteristics (in this case, the firstborn American Indian daughter) are the subject of study, the best informant is the participant and the best researcher is an experienced firstborn American Indian woman with the ability to establish rapport, trustworthiness, and with the unmitigated interest in uncovering insights, meanings, and subjective experiences of other firstborn women participants'.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and implications, the following recommendations can be made.

First, family studies scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines can find it more illuminating to study the development of American Indian women generally, and firstborns in particular, by utilizing a mix of qualitative methodologies that directly gives voice to the women's life stories. It seems readily apparent that employing the self-in-relation and ecological perspectives of human development, along with Bronfenbrenner's (1986) chronosystem model, provide an invaluable means of studying women's development—as firstborn daughters, as women of culturally specific backgrounds, and as women in general. This study has shown that there appears to be a relationship between ordinal position and role development of firstborn American Indian middle aged daughters, as well as keeper of the family and keeper of the culture. Further studies of this nature can only enhance our understanding of women's development, from a broad spectrum of contexts and across a range of disciplines.

A second recommendation can be made that those interested in studying ordinal position and role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her family of origin, embark on studies of such among the elderly firstborn American Indian women daughters' to capture their voices before they are lost in perpetuity. As keepers of the culture, this population of American Indian women have invaluable life stories to be told, and a wealth of critical information to share with scholars and practitioners alike. Capturing this population of women's voices through ethnographic interviews would allow further research in the future for comparison purposes with elderly firstborn

American Indian daughters during the next century.

Additionally, it would be helpful to have research findings along the continuum of the lifespan of firstborn American Indian daughters, as was originally designed by the author when this research was first proposed. In other words, to have research findings on the lifespan periods of young adulthood, middle aged, and elderly firstborn American Indian daughters. This timeline of research would allow for richer study and understanding across the lifespan, as well as provide a basis to design a longitudinal study of firstborn American Indian daughters as we enter the next century.

Finally, it should be recognized and recommended that the design and implementation of this particular exploratory study is not limited to women of American Indian descent. It can, and should, be replicated among other populations of women and children, of color or of recent immigrant status, as examples. This research project can be replicated with virtually any population of women and within different environmental contexts.

EPILOGUE

My interest in conducting this exploratory study arose out of my own personal experiences as a firstborn American Indian daughter, and this experience fueled a curiosity and interest in learning what were other women's experiences. I know what my experiences have been and I was curious to explore whether my own experiences were unique to me or if other firstborn daughters had similar experiences. In particular, I had a keen sense—intuition if you will—that the role development of firstborn American Indian daughters was predetermined, in large part by our ordinal position, but also immeasurably influenced by our culture, values instilled by our parents, and all the history and experiences our parents brought into our environment in their own right as they raised us. As a result, this exploratory study was borne out of my own personal experiences and an interest (or passionate need) in learning from the voices of other firstborn daughters about their experiences.

As the researcher in this effort, I was driven to explore these five women's lives with as much breadth and depth as a single ethnographic interview would avail. I had no idea that the journey I commenced to undertake would have such a moving, insightful, and profound effect on me from several perspectives: as a woman, a firstborn daughter, an American Indian, and as a researcher-practitioner-educator. The voices of these five firstborn daughters resonate with profound emotions; from the years of pain and struggle to the more recent temporal sphere of their lives wherein they each have discovered

how much strength, resiliency, and internal fortitude they have as firstborn American Indian women. It was a riveting experience to interview these women and gain access to their worlds as fellow firstborn American Indian daughters. The nature and style of the ethnographic interviews I conducted enabled each of the women and I to transcend one another's experiences and connect in a mutually empowering manner. I dare say that there is no question in my mind that use of a very structured, self-contained and bounded interview guide would not have allowed for the mutually empowering relationship, the unencumbered flow of transference and counter transference between the women and myself in such a positive regard, nor the depth and richness of these women's collective stories, and thus, the ethos evident in this study.

The experiences I shared with each of the women participants' in this study touched me deeply, as well as left an invaluable imprint on me that I shall cherish into perpetuity. I came to discover that not only was I giving voice to these women's experiences as firstborn American Indian daughters, but I was simultaneously weaving and telling my own personal story as I told theirs. In the end, these very special firstborn American Indian women taught this fellow firstborn woman as much, if not more, than I had hoped exploring and telling their life stories would teach family studies scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines. Not only is it true that these firstborn American Indian women are "young once but Indian forever", but they will always carry the role of firstborn daughters' with them in the context of their everyday lives.

For it is in the end that we return to the beginning: without my parent's, Rose and Lee Silvey, as well as my two sisters, Karyn Lynn and Mary Jene, my research as, of, and for the firstborn American Indian daughter would not have been conceived. As in the Circle of Life, there are no beginnings nor

endings, only a whole interdependent with all.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

June 14, 1996

TO: Le Anne E. Silvey
1268 Kreiser Terrace, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

RE: IRB#: 96-330
TITLE: ORDINAL POSITIONS AND ROLE DEVELOPMENT OF
FIRSTBORN AMERICAN INDIAN DAUGHTER WITHIN THE
FAMILY OF ORIGIN
REVISION REQUESTED: N/A
CATEGORY: 1-C
APPROVAL DATE: 06/14/96

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project and any revisions listed above.

RENEWAL: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Investigators planning to continue a project beyond one year must use the green renewal form (enclosed with the original approval letter or when a project is renewed) to seek updated certification. There is a maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB # and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects
(UCRIHS)

Michigan State University
232 Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046

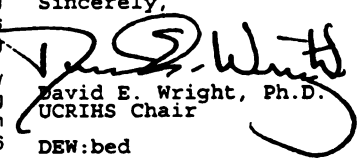
517/355-2180
FAX: 517/432-1171

**PROBLEMS/
CHANGES:**

Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, investigators must notify UCRIHS promptly: (1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or (2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to contact us at (517) 355-2180 or FAX (517) 432-1171.

Sincerely,


David E. Wright, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

DEW:bed

cc: Lillian Phenice

The Michigan State University
IDEA is Institutional Diversity.
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APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

UCRIHS APPROVAL FOR
THIS project EXPIRES:

APPENDIX A

JUN 14 1997

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

SUBMIT RENEWAL APPLICATION
ONE MONTH PRIOR TO
ABOVE DATE TO CONTINUE

This research study will specifically explore the variables that influence and contribute to the role development of the firstborn American Indian daughter within her American Indian family of origin. The exploration will involve a search for patterns, themes, relationships, and meanings amongst and between the firstborn daughter, her family of origin, and what are identified as family and/or parental support resources (values, emotional, financial, spiritual, cultural, physical, and material), specific to the lifespan period of middle age. It is believed that an exploratory study on the role development of the firstborn daughter, conducted by an American Indian female researcher for, and on behalf of, American Indian women will help to illuminate the process by which the role is developed and thereby, further the understanding of the firstborn American Indian daughter.

I, _____, give my consent to participate in the research study of Ms. Le Anne E. Silvey. I understand that:

1. This participation is voluntary and without force, and I am free to withdraw from this agreement at any time.
2. This research is for purposes of completing a requirement toward Ms. Silvey's attainment of a doctoral degree.
3. My participation involves a personal audiotaped interview which will last approximately two (2) to (3) three hours.
4. I am free to refuse to answer any questions that I choose to, and I am free to discontinue the interview at any time.
5. I am free to ask questions of Ms. Silvey and receive explanations about the research study, and my rights as a subject. I may contact Ms. Silvey at (616) 243-1617.
6. I recognize that the information I provide will be known only to Ms. Silvey.

7. I will not be identified by name in this project and all information that might lead to my identification will be disguised.
8. I will receive a copy of the composite summary findings of this study as a way of acknowledging my role as a participant and subject of this research.

Ms. Silvey has explained all of the above to me and has informed me that this consent form will remain in a confidential file.

Name of Subject in Print/Signature

Date

Name of Witness in Print/Signature

Date

Le Anne E. Silvey/Signature

Date

UCRIHS APPROVAL FOR
THIS project EXPIRES:

JUN 14 1997

SUBMIT RENEWAL APPLICATION
ONE MONTH PRIOR TO
ABOVE DATE TO CONTINUE

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1) Describe your family of origin -- composition. What was your household composition while growing up?
- 2) How were responsibilities assigned/given to you while you were growing up?
 - * Were these responsibilities assigned/given to you primarily by your parents or by others?
 - * How were they made known? (spoken, unspoken, demonstrated)
- 3) What values were you raised with?
 - * Who instilled these values?
 - * Did emphasis on values change over time?
- 4) Who were your mentors/role models while you were growing up?
- 5) How important was culture in your family?
 - * What were you taught? by whom?
 - * When were you taught -- what age did you begin to know?
 - * How important is culture to you in your everyday life?
- 6) What kinds of support/resources did you receive from your family?
 - * What had the most value or meaning for you?
- 7) What role did gender play in your family?
 - * Male role? Female role?
- 8) How has being the firstborn daughter shaped the quality of your life?
 - * Influenced your life and shaped your goals?
- 9) Are there any positives to being a firstborn daughter?

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