A Male Elementary School Principal’s Experience of Gender and Leadership

Joanne Eileen Chatlos

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A MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL’S EXPERIENCE OF GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in School of Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT


Schools are a site for the reproduction and transformation of masculinities, impacting both children and adults. For principals, both gender and leadership are roles that they perform in social relation. In this case study, focused on an elementary school in the Western United States, I explored the ways constructions of gender impact a male public elementary school teacher’s leadership experience and the ways local gender norms relate to faculty perceptions of his leadership. Utilizing a methodological bricolage, I sought to examine the ways in which gender and leadership are enacted and understood through discourses such as speech, gestures, dress, or emotion. The staff and the principal generally had alternate perspectives on his gendered leadership. However, given the impact of gender stereotypes on all participants, I suggest a need for educational practitioners to evaluate the cultural perspectives reflected in their own schools, particularly with regard to the discipline of students and the career development of future administrators.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Historically, public education in the United States has been shaped by social processes and structures that have reinforced a gendered division of labor in both home and school environments (Strober & Tyack, 1980). Like many organizations, the American school system was developed according to societal norms that include the expectation that males would be the breadwinners for their families and assuming men would be naturally suited to an administrative career (Billing, 2011). Tyack (1974) referred to the original framework of the American public school system as a “pedagogical harem,” in which cisgender male administrators typically managed a cisgender female faculty (p. 45). As an increasing number of women became teachers at the turn of the 20th century, men’s ability to validate their masculinity in the role of teacher diminished, with administration becoming a more viable option with regard to status, authority, and income (Blount, 1999). Traditional heterosexist ideals further influenced educational administration in the 1940s and 1950s as marital status became a popular criterion in selecting an effective superintendent (Blount, 1999). Systematic role segregation remains in place today as evidenced by the overwhelming proportion of female teachers, particularly in elementary schools where over 89.3% of teachers are female and 10.7% are male (Drudy, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2013b). This
feminization of teaching is often scapegoated as an explanation for the underachievement of boys in school and as a reason for men choosing not to enter the profession (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Drudy, 2008).

In United States culture, masculinity is commonly described in terms of rationality, strength, aggression, competition, and independence; while femininity is described as emotional, cooperative, caring, and passive (Skelton & Francis, 2011). The opposition in these descriptors became important to the arguments of second-wave feminists who challenged the patriarchal influence throughout society, in the family, and in the workplace. Noddings (2003), for example, maintained the essentialist principle that women are more in touch with their emotions and are inherently maternal, suggesting that this femininity could form the basis for a moral approach “rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness” (p. 2), opposing “the language of the father: in principles and propositions, in terms such as justification, fairness, justice” (p. 1). Noddings (2005, 2006), challenged the organizational framework of education and what constituted the best form of educational leadership, proposing the feminine concept of care as the foundation for education. While intending to empower women and challenge traditional societal expectations, this type of feminist approach led to the categorization of experience narrowly and the reinforcement of polar distinctions drawn largely from stereotypical White, middle-class femininity. These theoretical debates about the role of women preceded an actual shift in the gendered balance of educational leadership. From 1990-1991, approximately 70% of principals were male; however, by 2003-2004, the percentage of female principals had grown from 30% to 47.6% (U.S. Department of Education, 1994, 2005). At the elementary school level, females hold a clear majority of

Despite the changes in the composition of the leadership force, the discursive context for education in the early 21st century can be described as masculinist, emphasizing testing, accountability and results. Reforms like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top have re-inscribed, or re-established, traditional authoritarian leadership styles and the need for teachers to be either compliant or complicit in response (Blackmore, 2010). Similarly, Fullan (2014) has explored how principals have found their roles narrowed with a focus on accountability, individualism, and technology, rather than collaboration and pedagogy. Within educational discourse, power relations and gendered performance norms have not shifted much despite increasing availability of roles or the expansion of traits people may classify as masculine. Francis and Skelton (2005) asserted that although there has been change within existing structures, there has not really been a disruption of the status quo in social norms. Within elementary schools, from 2003-2004 to 2011-2012, the number of male elementary teachers has decreased approximately 5%, while the number of male principals has increased 5% (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, 2013a, 2013b). When these trends are examined along with the recent increase in opportunities for female leadership, particularly in elementary schools, questions emerge as to how traditional gender constructs may shape the thoughts and actions of both principals and faculty.

Men working in female-dominated work environments tend to find “masculine” areas of specialization, where possible (Bloksgaard, 2011). Moreover, men in occupations gendered as feminine typically encounter advantages in terms of status,
mentoring, and career advancement, a phenomenon Williams (2013, p. 609) termed “The Glass Escalator,” intended to highlight the binary opposition to “The Glass Ceiling” women find in male-dominated fields. Rather than a process of integration within a profession, when a man enters a traditionally feminine occupation, men are often faced with negative stereotypes as well as a consistent, almost invisible, set of practices supporting their rise to a more “legitimate” role with more status (Williams, 1992). Men who are hired as teachers are often targeted early on to move into administrative roles. Within education, while the percentage of female administrators has risen, the percentage of male teachers who move into administration remains significantly disproportionate. That is, while approximately 1 of 4 teachers is male, nearly 5 of 10 administrators are male (U.S. Department of Education, 2013a 2013b).

Christman and McClellan (2008) have likened the challenge of being a female leader to being “fenced in” by both feminine and masculine constructs, while carefully moving between them to avoid the barbs on the wire. There remains a need to explore the nuances of male leaders’ negotiation of leadership, particularly within a female-dominated workplace, with consideration of how gendered constructs may produce social constraints or privileges as they perform their roles.

As more women have risen to the role of principal, research on how they fulfill that role has increased accordingly. In the 2000s, researchers like Skelton (2003), Haase (2008), and Martino (2008) who were interested in masculinities documented how men in traditionally feminine occupations, like teaching young children, negotiate their identities in a feminized context. Therefore, I sought to advance this idea with an explanation of how the constructs of gender and leadership interact when the elementary principal role,
which is now predominantly staffed by women, is held by a male who also then works with a faculty that is almost exclusively female (Blackmore, 2010; Chard, 2013).

The relationship between masculinity and authority can make visible actual practices to consider the ways gender is “done” or “undone” (Butler, 2004; Deutsch, 2007; West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). Coming from a poststructural perspective, which focuses on the interaction of the individuals and the larger social context as well and the deconstruction of certain “essential” social truths, Fuller (2010) concluded that the idea of masculine and feminine forms of leadership as dichotomous might be less helpful than looking at the construct itself as fluid, with the possibility of attributes being both masculine and feminine or neither, or slightly more masculine than feminine. Further exploration of the ways in which male elementary school principal experiences leadership as gendered, in terms of this continuum, will support a more comprehensive understanding of how the social constructs of gender and leadership are responding to cultural shifts, such as the prevalence of women in elementary educational administration roles.

**Explanation of Terms**

**Subjectivities and Identity**

People demonstrate their affiliation with a particular social group through a variety of discourses such as their language, dress, and actions (Gee, 2015). The process of creating identity occurs by continually enacting the multiple discourses that they choose to participate in or that may be culturally iterated upon them. However, identity is best understood not as singular or static, as each individual has multiple cultural perspectives or subjectivities developing over time.
In its place, postmodernism posits a self that is not an autonomous and continuing entity, but rather is perpetually connected and in flux; the self is constituted and reconstituted in ever-changing social contexts, especially in the discourses that are the vehicle of social exchange. (Bohan, 2002, p. 80)

Since the self is discursively produced, both context and interchange are vital to understanding experience. Moreover, power is also conveyed discursively, related to subjectivity, creating scenarios of privilege and opportunity as well as those of limitation and circumscription.

Gender

Gender is often confused with biological sex, but it is better understood as a lived social relation (McNay, 2004). In fact, whether speaking of sex or gender, real options extend beyond the binary linked to male and female. Popular culture includes stories of those who transgress the binary increase, such as a recent transgender principal in Massachusetts (Mazziotta, 2017). Current research on educational leadership often relies on the binary interpretation; however, androgynous is a term used increasingly to define a blend of stereotypically masculine and feminine traits. In this inquiry, terms like male and female are used to describe an individual’s gender identity.

Paechter’s definition of gender as “an internal understanding of oneself, a claimed identity, rather than focused around how one is recognized by others” (Paechter, 2006, p. 259) is limited in as much as any meaning we make, even as we define ourselves internally, and is discursively shaped. Gender is “socially produced and historically changing” (Weedon, 1997, p. 4).

Connell (2005) presented the ways hegemonic masculinity acts as an essentialist authoritative discourse integrated with an ideal of heteronormativity, creating for all men the expectation of performing in ways that demonstrate membership in the dominant
group and preserve male privilege. Gender constructs are commonly presented in
dualistic terms like male/female or heterosexual/homosexual. Within this type of
language, the two terms are conceptualized in opposition. Further development of the
concept of masculinities has sought to subvert these binaries and elaborate on the
complex and varied masculinities that are actually enacted, as well as the ways in which
norms are localized. So, in addition to the hegemonic archetype, researchers have
described positions including complicit, subordinate, and personalized masculinities
(Connell, 2005; Swain, 2006). Variations of masculinity are interpreted hierarchically
and in opposition to femininity.

Even when men may not seek to emulate the heroic imaginary ideal, meaning-
making regarding identity/masculinity is enmeshed with this discourse. Wetherell and
Edley (2014) described how hegemonic masculinity played out with teenage boys at an
all-boys school in England. The rugby players displayed physical strength, authority, and
social cache which the researchers documented as a naturalized macho masculinity. Men
may also make claims to an ordinary masculinity, developed in contrast to the
extraordinary, archetypal traits. For example, many boys positioned themselves in
relation to those hegemonic traits, such as one who is a wimp yet mentally strong. One
participant claimed a complicit masculinity, one that still retained certain elements, while
others’ aspects acted in opposition to the ideal. Ironically, the hegemonic archetype may
seem inescapable, as Wetherell and Edley (2014) pointed out that rejecting the traits
might even be perceived as a form of independence, a trait prized in hegemonic
masculinity. This double-blind study illustrated how individuals’ thoughts and actions
may be circumscribed by a system of status and privilege.
An ideal of heteronormativity often acts in tandem with hegemonic masculinity, reinforcing the socialization of individuals in traditional gender roles. The regulation of these roles may occur by reinforcing the ideal, as in the perpetuation of the idea that men should rise to administration more frequently and more quickly because they have inherent authority and they need higher salaries to provide for their families. The reverse side of that social control is that the opposing discourses, in this case of femininity and homosexuality, is often used to censure children and adults alike. Surveillance of male teachers and administration to eliminate homosexual influences is an extreme example of this regulation (Blount, 1999).

Despite the prevalence of binary terms, the actual ways in which humans act out gender are multiple and fluid. As we use language to describe these complex constructs, then, we must carefully find ways to use existing terms in ways that support a dynamic interpretation of gender. Halberstam (1998) described the concept of “female masculinity” which separates masculinity from maleness. This formulation describes increasing discursive options for “doing gender” and suggests rifts in the construction of gender as binary opposites (West & Zimmerman, 2009). However, Paechter (2006) critiqued the specific grammatical construction of this term, explaining that gender identity should be indicated by the relatively more static part of speech, the noun, while transitory identifiers should be indicated with adjectives. Moreover, while there may be an archetype or ideal of hegemonic masculinity that is singular within a specific context, the actual ways of “doing” man or behaving as a man are plural. Similarly, the ways in which a woman may act masculine are various and cannot be limited to behavior approximating hegemonic masculinity (Halberstam, 1998; Paechter, 2006; West &
Zimmerman, 2009). Through this analysis, the phrase transforms into masculine femininities.

Following this logic, therefore, I use the term masculinity to refer to the hegemonic archetype, both in the United States culture and in the localized context. The plural, masculinities, will reflect the many ways gender is enacted. When referring to an individual’s ways of being and acting, I utilize the adjectives masculine and feminine (Paechter, 2006). This approach supports an understanding of the ways in which gender roles may be further qualified. A focus on adjectives also considers not only what behaviors, but also whose behaviors may be described. Fuller (2014) found a female principal’s physical appearance was characterized as feminine, while her use of her power to control others was termed masculine.

Drawing on the idea of gender as a discourse, Fuller (2014) expanded on the work of Francis (2010, 2012) and Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2012) in the use of Bakhtin’s linguistic and literary terms to discuss concepts of gender. Originally used to refer to the types of language used within a text, monoglossia literally means one tongue. When applied to gender, monoglossia refers to the way in which people perform according to the traditional binary of gender aligned with their sex. For example, female leaders who engage in leadership for learning, social justice, relational leadership, and balanced leadership draw upon women’s ways of knowing. In novels, Bakhtin saw instances of heteroglossia, bringing together the language of the elite and the common, a practice which could lead to the questioning of authority. Heteroglossia was used to discuss ways in which a person did not act according to the traditional binary, transgressing social norms. Polyglossia is a term Bakhtin used to describe use of multiple languages, or
discourses, in operation within a specific cultural system (Francis, 2012; Fuller, 2014). Applied to gender, this meant that an individual of any sex might draw on gendered practices that are masculine and/or feminine, simultaneously and fluidly (Francis, 2012; Fuller, 2014).

**Leadership**

Conceptually, the word leadership may be used to describe a variety of practices that may be enacted by parents, teachers, and administrators in the school context, both formally and informally (Niesche & Keddie, 2011). This study focused on one male elementary principal’s identity as leader in an official capacity. Like gender, leadership is a discursive subjectivity, performed through speech and non-verbal communication. The leadership constructs are also built around dualisms, such as leader/follower or transactional and transformational.

Transactional leadership is a term that encompasses a variety of different leadership styles. The distant, uninvolved leader is largely unaware of employee performance and typically does not take a decisive stand on problems or issues (Burke, 2011). The style of management by exception takes action when things are not working, always moving from a disciplinary or corrective standpoint (Burke, 2011). Contingency models of leadership do include regular feedback and clear expectations, but motivation is gained through extrinsic rewards. These different approaches reflect in varying ways the patriarchal image of leadership as a top-down approach founded on correction and coercion (Burke, 2011).

The transformational model has become the common ideal of leadership emphasizing care, innovation, mission, and influence (Burke, 2011). Leaders are
expected to be involved in the social workings of the organization. Of particular note for this study was the inclusion of “care” which has traditionally aligned with feminine, rather than masculine traits (Noddings, 2003). Researchers debate whether the inclusion of this new element in leadership is truly an expansion of the possibilities for enacting leadership or whether this concept is enacted in ways that largely reinforce paternalistic models (Blackmore, 2013; Niesche & Keddie, 2011).

Authentic leadership builds upon the transformational model by prioritizing moral practice and self-awareness in one’s social relations (Burke, 2011). Positive leadership skills, values, and attributes in educational leaders includes adaptability, responsiveness, commitment, courage, resilience, self-confidence, modesty, integrity, political astuteness, collaboration, decisiveness, and respect (Dimmock, 2003). Dimmock (2003) pointed out that many of the attributes may be presented as dichotomous, as in self-confidence and modesty, making the performance of these traits particularly interesting to understanding the strain within the construct of leadership and exploring the connections to gender.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to describe the ways in which gender norms impact the socially situated performance of leadership by a male principal in a suburban, public elementary school and the perceptions of the faculty at the school. In a similar case study, Fuller (2014) explored how gender shaped a female principal’s understanding of her own leadership and others’ impressions of her leadership within a specific secondary school in England. In this proposed inquiry, I sought to understand the experience of a male educational leader working with faculty in the context of a public, multi-ethnic, low-income elementary school. As Fuller described the gendered
leadership of a woman fulfilling a role more typically fulfilled by men, this study
described the gendered leadership of a man fulfilling a role that is more typically fulfilled
by women. Understanding the ways gender, along with other subjectivities, impacts
intended, enacted, and received leadership of males within specific workplace contexts,
supports the more nuanced description of both gender and leadership constructs, and
potentially challenging dominant assumptions. Whitehead (2001) claimed that
workplaces, particularly managerial sectors that are dominated by men numerically and
culturally, will remain masculinist until men’s reflexivity leads to an awareness of the
world and more discourses become available.

The methodology for this inquiry was a case study, while my selection of methods
most appropriate to the task yet drawn from across disciplines is best described as
bricolage (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2012). I drew on dramaturgical analysis in
order to understand stories and scenes of leadership, as people create or re-create
meaning and identity. Utilizing a feminist poststructural perspective, I focused on
distributed meaning-making, among men and women, principals and teachers. I explored
the ways that the social constructs of gender and leadership emerged at the site, exploring
convergence and divergence, rather than seeking coherence. In this instrumental case
study, I focused on a specific elementary school site as a means to explore the ways in
which a male principal negotiates leadership with a predominantly female faculty
(Creswell, 2013). In this study, the localized social norms were explored through
interview, observation, and additional textual documentation. I utilized Goffman’s
(1959) dramaturgical metaphor in narrative analysis, highlighting the understanding of an
individual’s performance of gender and leadership, in particular, within a hegemonic
social framework. In this way, the study built upon West and Zimmerman’s (1987, 2009) work on “doing gender” and Fuller’s (2014) study of a female principal’s gendered leadership.

Research questions explored in this study were:

Q1 In what ways does the elementary school faculty experience leadership as gendered?

Q2 In what ways does gender shape the experiences of a male elementary school principal?

Through these questions, I explored how individual subjectivities shape the stories we create as well as how they are locally situated. In particular, I considered how the social constructs of gender and leadership shape the multiplicity of realities that exist.

**Subjectivities Statement**

I initially began to contemplate the impact of changing social constructions on the work of male principals during a time when I was reading Noddings’ (2003) second-wave feminist text on care, which clearly elaborates a binary divide between feminine and masculine. While my first questions were not far removed from my current ones, I realized that while Noddings illuminated the possible disconnect between an individual’s performance of educational leadership and the perceptions of those who may receive that performance, the essentialist-gendered leadership she constructed was too narrow to account for the complex, shifting interactions I encounter in my own work. As a feminist, I believe that researchers need to account for how gendered constructs have dynamic, socially-situated costs and benefits for men as well as women. However, having begun to contemplate these questions within an essentialist framework and
working with pervasive binary and hierarchical constructs, I knew that I had to make a
conscious effort to question and problematize that which may be presented as truth.

I had to also be reflexive regarding my own subjectivities. As researcher, I came
to this study with the experience of becoming an administrator. I have struggled with the
concerns of balancing my role as a parent with my leadership. I have recognized
elements of the “glass escalator,” the invisible, rapid advancement of male colleagues in
education (Williams, 2013). I have attempted to find males to hire to teach at the
elementary level, being told that the boys need role models, finding few candidates. I
saw the strains of leadership in schools, the quick-pace of making stressful choices that
may lead to latching onto simplistic answers to complex problems.

While the social construct of gender may place me as subordinate, I must also
acknowledge that many of my subjectivities confer privilege. As a female, I came with
an outsider’s perspective to the experience of doing leadership as a male, but nevertheless
sharing an affiliation. Although my role correspondence as an administrator may have
led to more understanding of the position of the male principal, the same role may have
contributed to distance from the teacher participants and discouraged participation. The
principal had helped me to gain access to the site and introduced me to the community,
and while I was at the school, the majority of my time was spent observing the principal.
Therefore, when in the faculty lunch room or touring the school, I engaged in
conversations about my own elementary teaching experiences, attempting to make
connections and develop rapport with faculty. At least one faculty member seemed more
comfortable divulging information because I was a woman (Mavis).
As a researcher and a doctoral student, I strove to be reflexive regarding my interaction with the participants. Often, researchers are associated with knowledge which is the potential for power. Moreover, assumptions about research tend to be towards the logical and rational, a paternalist value. As I engaged in research, I was cognizant of my role as an intellectual in some interviewing situations, but equally, I found that this role was a compelling reason for three members who were themselves interested in or enrolled in doctoral programs (Elliot, Violet, and Solange).

**Significance of the Study**

The discursive options available to principals in the practice of leadership can impact the overall culture of the school. In a community that has dominant essentialist discourse, male principals may feel pressure to perform a more masculinist, authoritative form of leadership, rather than implement more feminine, democratic approaches. In their study of productive leadership in a culturally diverse Australian high school, Niesche and Keddie (2011) argued that inclusion and equity are fostered by collaborative decision-making and supportive social relations among administration and teachers, whereas more top-down approaches privilege specific perspectives. Because leadership involving collaboration is often deemed feminine, for example, gendered leadership has potential to impact the overall school climate.

This study is important in examining, in detail, the ways in which a male elementary principal and his faculty engaged in discourse around gender and leadership and its effect on the performance of his role. In this way, it built upon a previous case study by Fuller (2014) in which one English female secondary school principal’s gendered leadership was explored through interviews with governors and faculty. The
selection of an elementary school, rather than a secondary school, as the site related to the fact that men are more rarely principals of elementary schools, just as women are less commonly principals in secondary schools. This inquiry was socially and historically situated so as to potentially illuminate the ways in which particular local constructs of gender and leadership impact not only the principal’s enactment of his subjectivities, but also the perception of the faculty based on their interaction with him. In this instrumental case study, I sought to focus in-depth on one individual to highlight the complexity of a male’s performance of leadership and gender with faculty members in a specific elementary school context (Creswell, 2013). Close exploration of the principal’s experiences through observation and written documents as well as interviews with the principal and faculty allowed for the rich analysis of both concurrence and contradiction. The small sample size aligned with my intent to use this case study to question generalized assumptions, following my poststructural framework.

The use of a poststructuralist approach to examine educational leadership is currently limited, with most researchers working in the United Kingdom, Australian, or New Zealand contexts. While many of the national educational trends and Western gender stereotypes are shared between these countries and the United States, this study adds new context to the existing poststructural research on gender, particularly masculinity, and schooling.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Discourse in Schools

The actual production, reproduction, and potential transformation of masculinities occurs through social interaction, as individuals enact a variety of gendered discourses. Here, I considered research relating to masculine discourses that pervade education, impacting students, teachers, and leaders. Masculinity often lies invisible or unexamined. I sought to concentrate my review on the sites of contradiction and strain between the hegemonic masculine ideal and the ways individuals do gender in a specific context (McLean, 1996).

Students

Gendered discourses are socially situated, so they are shaped through interactions with others. Pascoe (2005) studied 36 boys and 13 girls at one California high school for a year and a half to understand how high school students use homophobic epithets to regulate their peers’ behavior. This behavior highlights how heteronormativity and conventional sex roles are often conflated in socialization. In a more subtle example of how external perceptions may shape the way a person enacts gender, Ingrey (2013) documented the ways peers and policy worked together in a secondary school in southwest Ontario to regulate student selection of clothing, typically compelling students to reinscribe the gender binary. This example shows that other people’s words and
actions, including the rules people create for our organizations, are potential sources of constraint on identity. In addition, the study’s focus on clothing recognized that the body acts as a vehicle for expressing gender. Similarly, Swain’s (2006) nine-month ethnographic study of preteen boys in three schools outside London elaborated how younger students’ expressions of masculinity were closely linked to what they did with or to their bodies, such as the clothing they chose or the sports they played.

Masculinities are constructed in specific contexts in relation to the local ideal (Swain, 2006). In any given school, boys may have more or fewer discourses available to them, as socially acceptable or even transgressive dress, gesture, speech, and tone may be dependent on context. Some elementary schools are sites which clearly reinforce heteronormative masculinity. Renold (2006) engaged in a year-long ethnographic study of 60 10- and 11-year-old students in two working and middle-class schools in rural England. She discovered that while elementary school boys could gain status on the playground by being labeled a girl’s boyfriend, spending too much time with girls had the opposite effect, diminishing their masculinity. In a study of 20 California teenagers, Pascoe (2005) found that male high school students typically develop their own personal narratives within the masculine archetype of the “jock,” regardless of their actual role within the social hierarchy. Legitimating their own masculinity through certain traits or behaviors, students may downplay or even excuse parts of their self that do not align with the archetype. “The style of masculinity in a given school often reflects the surrounding community” (Pascoe, 2003, p. 1425). In a later study at a suburban California high school, Pascoe (2005) found that the ideal of masculinity for White students was not identical to that of the Black students, as Black males could increase their social status by
being a good hip hop dancer, whereas an interest in dance would be more likely to diminish a White male’s masculinity. The different cultures within a school may have different social expectations of masculinity.

Some environments may allow for more diverse expression, less aligned with a monoglossic interpretation of masculinity. In a year-long study of 28 students and 12 faculty in an elementary school in northern England, Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2011) found the social norms for elementary school boys were not so rigidly heteronormative. Male students used homoerotic comments, in positive, casual interactions with each other. Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2011) utilized a queer perspective to uncover the way these students transgressed traditional norms and opened up alternative subjectivities. This study revealed how localized masculinity may or may not be shaped by heteronormativity and shows how socially acceptable ways of enacting masculinities can be shaped by the context.

As social constructs are dynamic, the ideal of masculinity may also be changing. In a study of 35 male teenagers and 36 female teenagers drawn from middle- and working-class households across nine schools in England, Skelton and Francis (2011) recognized the emergence of a new social trend in the way male students enact masculinity. Socially, these male students blend traditionally masculine characteristics like athleticism with feminine characteristics such as being highly literate. Unlike Pascoe’s (2003) students who sublimated certain parts of themselves, these students are celebrated because they are “renaissance men,” rather than in spite of it. Skelton and Francis (2011) argued that this is not actually a challenge to hegemonic masculinity, but instead, reflects the way that social construct has changed over time, appropriating and
transforming that which was normatively feminine within a new vision of masculinity. Specifically, these students are working within a culture in which they are guided to become both responsible and economically viable (Skelton & Francis, 2011). Skelton and Francis (2011) asserted that popular culture gives us many examples of men who incorporate emotion or literacy in their image in positive ways, citing Barack Obama and David Beckham. This new option of performing masculinity may be a revision of previous hegemonic models, including specific feminine traits that have currency to create a more powerful masculinity. Skelton and Francis (2011) found that the stereotype of a socially dominant, academically underachieving boy may be shifting to a more balanced model, the “renaissance man.” Conceptually, educational leadership discourse poses the same puzzle: in what ways and for what reasons are feminine, democratic techniques for leadership incorporated in the traditional masculine, autocratic approach (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

**Teachers**

In the workplace, some organizational behaviors may be expected of any employee; however, males and females still often perform in gendered, masculine or feminine, ways (Eagly, 2009). In a study of 25 male and 26 female elementary school teachers from across England, Carrington and McPhee (2008) found that teachers’ beliefs about gender roles more closely matched commonsense “truths,” as opposed to reflecting the results of research or reports of actual practice. For example, teachers supported the recruitment of male teachers as necessary to addressing the male achievement gap and claimed to tailor lessons with gender-specific instructional approaches (Carrington & McPhee, 2008). Peer expectations can also impact the ways teachers perform their roles.
Sargent (2013) explored how 54 men working in early childhood education in the urban and suburban schools in California, Oregon, and Washington perform masculinity in their jobs. Most male early childhood educators opted to enact traditional masculinity within a feminized workplace, and when they did not, the most common response to their behavior was fear of possible homosexuality or pedophilia.

The practice of traditionally gendered roles can, nevertheless, create stress in the female-dominated elementary school. Interaction between male and female teachers within schools demonstrates the tension in power relations. Male elementary school teachers often critique female teachers’ discipline as repressive or ineffective (Haase, 2008; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012). Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2012), who studied 72 elementary school teachers in inner city Toronto, found that one of the critiqued female teachers believed that parents in the school accorded male teachers higher status. Haase (2008), whose study took place in Queensland, Australia, posited that female teachers resent the privilege male teachers are given, while male teachers are largely oblivious to the ways in which their gender is an advantaged subjectivity.

Keddie (2006) conducted a follow-up study on a 12-year-old working-class boy in Tasmania, Australia, interviewing the boy and his teacher. The teacher made clear her disapproval of the boy’s emotionality and tears and normalized the violent conflicts between boys. The boy’s perception of her discipline was as excessive and controlling, which Keddie concluded drew him into further conflict with her. Her behavior shaped the options available to the student as he negotiated his masculinity. Teachers’ behavior, shaped by masculinist modes of individuality,
hypermasculinity, and emotional neutrality can act as a constraint on gender norms in schools (Keddie, 2006).

Leaders

Fuller (2014) conducted a case study of a female head of school and 14 of the faculty and governors at a secondary school in rural England. Her study described the continuum of conclusions regarding the principal’s leadership style and the variety of discourses individuals drew upon in their assessment of her performance of the role. The talk was categorized in three ways: (a) monoglossic, 13 participants, including the principal, conflated the concepts of femininity with female and masculinity with male; (b) heteroglossic, 5 participants, including the principal, used masculinity to describe some part of her leadership, including the principal herself; and (c) polyglossic, 3 participants resisted the binary approach and positioned the principal in alternative constructions that allowed her to be both simultaneously or to “switch” (p. 330). Her conclusion was that within an environment, we draw upon multiple discourses and need to acknowledge that as we examine gendered disparities in educational leadership. The gendered leadership discourses that operate in a specific context are often linked to other cultural discourses about gender.

Cultural contexts. Despite the many changes seen in leadership, some contexts retain traditional patriarchal values and beliefs. Chan (2011) utilized discursive analysis to gain insight into 12 male elementary school principals’ perception of the feminization of schools in Hong Kong. Chan found that male principals typically confirmed essentialist stereotypes as they described the work of faculty and fellow principals. The concept of male teachers as disciplinarians was pervasive, especially in combination with
the ideal trait of physical strength in the physical education teacher. One principal confirmed that men were limited in their ability to be elementary teachers because of the need for a woman’s gentler style of interaction. In their reflection on their career paths, they did not see their gender as a factor in their advancement, but compared their level of commitment to that of the married female teachers, who were characterized as, at best, family-oriented, and, at worst, lazy dependents on wealthy husbands. Similarly, their assessment of female principals categorized women as different and as less effective.

Lin Choi (2011) used a life-history approach to understand middle leaders’ gendered identities and leadership as well as their career aspirations. The participants were two male and two female Hong Kong secondary school faculty who acted as heads of departments or committee in addition to their teaching duties. The gendered roles participants performed in schools mirrored that in the larger culture, where men should be competent and strong, and women should be caring and expressive. Two of the four participants reported feeling occasional constraint when complying with gendered expectations, but one of the males suggested that when he was given a task of carrying things, he felt discomfort when he thought of asking female teachers for help. The gendered roles assumed in workplace dynamics, such as “father-daughter” relationships between principals and faculty, were also cited to demonstrate the way paternalistic constructs pervade all social interaction.

Shah (2006) examined the social construct of educational leadership in Islam and found that there were three underlying models: (a) the prophet-leader, associated with wisdom and values; (b) the teacher-leader, acting as a knowledgeable role model; and (c) the parent, demonstrating commitment and care. Shah asserted that conflicting social
constructs led to concerns about Muslim performance in schools in Britain where the ideal principal would be a manager-leader focused on efficiency and outcomes. Shah (2010) also studied a case of 11 female principals of all-female Islamic schools in Pakistan to theorize about leadership as a cultural construct, specifically examining how religion intersects with leadership and gender. Working within the segregated environments, the women felt they had a space to act as leaders; however, cultural pressures impacted their interaction with men and men’s constructions of what it meant to be a woman. Women successfully positioned school as “family” to leverage women’s power and used the ideal of women as nurturers and their reliance on their own families for support. Working from a poststructuralist perspective, Shah (2010) suggested that this re-framing of women’s leadership could be helpful in developing it within Islamic cultural constructs.

Arar and Oplatka (2014), working in Israel, explored Muslim and Jewish perceptions of the principal’s masculinity to understand the ways the gender and leadership constructs are shaped by cultural context. The first phase of data collection involved an open-ended questionnaire that was completed by 38 Muslim teachers and 31 Jewish teachers who were enrolled in higher education programs for teaching. The second phase involved interviews with two male Muslim teachers, two female Muslim teachers, two male Jewish teachers, and two female Jewish teachers. A successful Muslim principal was described in masculine terms, while Jewish leadership was described through masculine and feminine characteristics. Faculty expectations, based on localized social norms, can influence the leadership style of the principal.
Arar and Oplatka (2011) compared the ways that seven female and seven male elementary school principals in Arab elementary schools in Israel implemented teacher evaluation. Female principals often blended both masculine and feminine characteristics to meet expectations in a society that prized masculine values. However, in evaluation, male principals focused more on achievement, control, and supervision, while female principals used a formative approach to develop teachers’ teaching and students’ learning, taking into account emotions and social relations. This divergence confirms the generalization that feminine leadership focuses on nurturing and listening with a mission of creating social change (Robinson & Shakeshaft, 2012).

Arar and Oplatka (2014) suggested that the particular way gender is constructed in a specific environment is culturally shaped, describing teacher perceptions of male principals’ masculinity in geographically similar, yet religiously divergent contexts. Both Muslim and Jewish principals were expected to display power and authority, trustworthiness and honesty, and task- and goal-oriented foci; however, the Jewish culture formulated a type of masculinity that included some feminine traits like emotional expression, while the Muslim culture expected a more autocratic and distanced approach. Arar and Oplatka (2014) encouraged male principals to reflect on the traits they need to lead well, whether masculine or feminine, and proposed that increasing female mentors for male principals could bring about more balance in gendered characteristics.

Lumby (2014) interviewed 54 South African female principals in both rural and urban schools and found that over half of them characterized their style of leadership as mothering, shaping how they related to faculty, students, and parents. Like Arar and Oplatka’s (2011) Muslim female principals, many of these women considered
humanitarian needs like food, health, and care as part of the responsibility of leadership, and even found their mothering an advantage to the role. These principals are set within a specific post-apartheid social and historical context which has sought to advance equality. However, despite evidence in their own interviews demonstrating their competence, a small number of women suggested that females are lesser principals because men are natural disciplinarians and administrators. Clearly, essentialist ideas of gender still shape the culture, although women diverge as to whether that stereotypical femininity is an asset or a liability.

**The emotional turn.** From the 1980s, educational leadership turned toward a transformational, distributed style of leadership that recognized the need to be aware of one’s own and others’ emotions in order to work well together. Blackmore (2013) claimed that the “emotional turn” in educational leadership posed a challenge to White, male leaders who were confronted with a new ideal of regulating their own emotions and developing an awareness of others’ emotions (p. 143). However, over time, the educational leadership discourse has disconnected identity and emotion from social relation and context, instead reframing emotions in rational terms as individual skills to be acquired and leveraged by management (Blackmore, 2013). In this way, a trait that was previously almost always defined as feminine, even pejoratively, was appropriated in such a way that it aligns with a more traditionally masculinist leadership style. Blackmore’s (2013) explanation of the legitimation of emotions through “brain science” and the consequent exploitation of for the purpose of efficiency suggests a reworking of the masculinist construct of leadership similar to the way in which teenage boys have
incorporated literacy into a revised version of hegemonic masculinity, becoming “renaissance men” (Skelton & Francis, 2011).

Dominant policy discourses emotional intelligence, have the potential to circumscribe feminine strengths as leaders attempt to practice them (Blackmore, 2011; Lárusdóttir, 2007). As part of a larger study, Lárusdóttir (2007) focused on how one female principal in Reykjavik negotiated her role with the impact of gendered educational discourses within the changing context of Icelandic education. Lárusdóttir concluded that it may be difficult for female, or male, principals to use a caring and collaborative leadership approach, traditionally labeled as feminine, if the political context has a managerialist emphasis on competition and efficiency rather than social relations and quality.

In a study of 17 Australian male elementary teachers, Gill and Arnold (2015) explained the dynamic tension between changing gender stereotypes and leadership styles regarding emotion. "While the acknowledgement of emotional responses challenges the stereotypical view of the male manager as impersonal masculine authority, we show that emotional encounters serve to usher in traditional gendered responses in these male school leaders" (p. 19). Gill and Arnold (2015) presented a constructionist view of leadership, historically situated within this “challenging” time. While essentialist feminist approaches assumed that managerialism was an easy discourse for men, in fact, changing gender roles and expectations for leadership caused a sort of fragility in male leaders’ identities. Jones (2008) discussed how 10 male early childhood and elementary school principals in the United Kingdom demonstrated bricolage masculinity, meaning a
construction of multiple available discourses, incorporating elements of the hegemonic ideal, like authority, with more typically feminine traits.

**Reflexivity.** Burton and Weiner (2016) used social role theory to explore the gendered career trajectories of one male and one female in a preparation program to become principals at low-performing schools in a mid-sized state in the U.S. The male perceived himself as a natural leader and his path to leadership as expected, viewing authority as an essentialist male trait. By contrast, the female described her career ascent as a hard-won fight. The researchers surmised that the difference in their experiences related to the way ideal leadership traits align with stereotypical male traits and are often incongruous with societal expectations of women.

Whitehead (2001) concluded that women feel gendered expectations, but often do not disclose them, while male managers typically do not demonstrate any reflexivity regarding the way their gender privileges them in power relations. Because of this, men often do not see gender as an issue relating to their leadership, rendering the structure “invisible” (Braidotti, 1997; Popoviciu, Haywood, & Mac an Ghaill, 2006; Whitehead, 2001). Brinia (2011) used a social constructionist perspective on leadership to conduct a case study of 20 male primary school principals in Greece. Although her analysis allowed her to describe their leadership style as a type—the learned male—she discovered that the men themselves did not recognize gendered leadership practices in their experience. Chan (2011) also found that male principals did not see their gender as an advantage in their social relations. It is important to note, however, that not all principals of one gender will have the same response, even in a specific culture. While Lumby (2014) found that most of the South African female principals embraced femininity as an
aspect of their identity, others wanted to simply claim “principal” as their identity, denying the impact of their gender and race on their careers. Of course, both those who possess privilege and those who seek to hide disadvantage may conceal aspects of their identities (Lumby, 2014).

**Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

Crotty (1998) asserted that we bring particular assumptions to social research and that those act as the justification for the methodologies and methods that we use. Thus, our theory of knowledge, or epistemology, and our philosophical stance, or theoretical perspective, will inform both the planning of the research and the collection of the data in certain ways. Crotty emphasized the need to consider the way in which the frameworks relate, illustrating the way in which epistemology is embedded within one’s theoretical perspective, which forms the basis for one’s methodologies, which finally inform the specific methods.

**Subjectivism**

Subjectivism holds that objects themselves have no intrinsic meaning. All meaning comes from the subject. However, people do not construct meaning from nothing or from interaction with the object (Crotty, 1998). This epistemological framework, or anti-epistemology, holds that there is no objective external reality and our understanding is mediated through subjective experience (Crotty, 1998). What can be known is ultimately limited by one’s experience and perception.

The poststructural denial of absolute truth and traditional epistemology requires that the researcher’s methodology and methods focus, instead, on discovering how power relations and language relate to local knowledge (St. Pierre, 2000). The researcher has no
need for claims to objectivity within this paradigm. Instead, the concept of the constituted self, shaped though experiences over time in a variety of cultural contexts, requires the researcher to be reflexive as to her own complicity as well as to select specific research strategies in light of participants’ multiple subjectivities (St. Pierre, 2000).

**Feminist Poststructuralism**

Poststructuralism develops from the understanding that truth is illusory. In semiotics, a rift exists between the signified and the signifier: a word does not have meaning within itself, rather the meaning is attached through discourse. According to Gee (2015), “language in use” (p. 419) is discourse in the sense of people enacting their identity through thoughts, language, and action. Discourse acts as the basis of identity (Braidotti, 1997). The relational aspect of experience creates and sustains social norms (McNay, 2004). Subjects are not simply passively acted upon, but have the agency to reproduce or transgress existing stereotypes and to be complicit in or to challenge power relations (McNay, 2004).

Poststructuralism seeks to defy essentialism, emphasizing the plurality of experiences and the changeability of the self. The subject is not a unitary and coherent self, but rather, identity is constituted from multiple, fragmented subjectivities which may complement or contradict each other. “The voicing and enactment of a multiplicity of selves” requires the reflexivity of the part of the subject (Hamati-Ataya, 2014, p. 163). This reflexivity allows individuals to examine lived experience, as located within a specific context, and to engage in social and cultural critique.
The feminist approach to poststructuralism challenges historical oppression of women and redefines female subjectivity (Braidotti, 1994). There is not one way of being female or one female subjectivity. The concept of intersectionality acknowledges the ways an individual’s multiple subjectivities, like race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and class as well as gender impact the workings of specific power formations. In this sense, feminist poststructuralism examines the ways the material and the discursive interact (Braidotti, 1994). The structural social construct of patriarchal power relations impacts female, and male, identity as it shapes the subject positions available to us (Weedon, 1997). Poststructural feminism has the goal of disrupting gendered oppression in specific, localized contexts (Gavey, 1989).

**Language and discourse.** Within poststructuralism, words do not directly correspond to an external reality. Language is inherently dynamic as words may change their meaning depending upon the context and the audience. Despite the inherent limitations of this system, language acts as the means of producing power, identity, and meaning. Deconstruction focuses on revealing the instability in communication and critiquing the maintenance of inequity.

Gee (2015) pointed out that language is actually much more than just the words we say, but also relates to what we are doing and who we are being. This language-in-use, or discourse, may include dress, speech, gestures, or emotions, for example. Discourses are created by people, and they also shape the way people think and act. Experience exists within existing discourses, especially the use of language (Gavey, 1989). Bakhtin (1981) asserted that people also “read” each other as texts and in doing so, interpret according to their own purposes (Castanheira, Green, Dixon, & Yeager,
2007). When used to demonstrate membership within a specific community, these discourses are functioning to enact identity.

**Subjectivity.** Identity can be seen as a dynamic process, rather than a static state. Bakhtin (1981) suggested that each individual has a specific perspective and language, and an internally persuasive discourse that allows for agency in resistance or compliance to the larger discourse. However, poststructuralism also considers to what degree the individual’s choices are constrained by limited awareness of and access to various discourses. Francis (2010) suggested that the process of understanding is less about the individual’s thinking than it is about the discursive environment in which the individual acts.

With relation to our identities, Goffman (1959) suggested that we are all actors upon a stage, working from cultural scripts, attempting to create the image of a consistent self. Our true fragmented and dynamic identities are clear, though, as we change our speech and behavior depending upon the specific audience. We may enact a variety of roles, or subjectivities, in our social interaction. Fragmentation occurs at the intersection of the competing discourses of our varied subjectivities. At times, these subjectivities can even be contradictory. Weedon (1997) explained that, for feminist poststructuralism, identity is “the site of the battle for power” (p. 40). Through the dissonance, emerges, darkly, the variety of experience. Gavey (2011) has explored contradictions and complexities of human experience using a poststructural lens, exploring the ways in which women who are victims of abuse accept that position as normal and natural.

Individuals’ stories are illuminating, then, in communicating the meanings we make, although they must be understood contextually. Each individual must negotiate his
or her identity within a specific social and historical location. Specific webs of power relations may constrain the positions that are available to individuals based on specific variables like gender, race, or class. However, individuals may choose to challenge or transgress certain norms. The absence of something may be as meaningful as its presence, so it is important to remain aware that subjectivities are selected from among competing, available subject positions (St. Pierre, 2000). Berggren (2014) has suggested that a feminist poststructural approach to the study of masculinities has the potential to illuminate the ways in which, as practices of masculinity are enacted, they become “sticky” constituting subjectivities.

**Power.** We must recognize discourses in order to be able to deconstruct them. However, privilege is often rendered invisible through the pervasive iterations of social practice (Popoviciu et al., 2006; Whitehead, 2001). Authoritative discourses impact the individual from without, effecting power in social relations. Meta-narratives and dominant discourses artificially restrict our choices for performing identity by obfuscating differences and contradictions. These methods of controlling discourse are covert, hidden as “common sense” or “the way things are done.” Even efforts at resistance can become caught in a “web of power,” confirming stereotypes or creating reform that still rests on unquestioned assumptions. For example, Rickett (2016) has highlighted how dominant discourses regarding natural maternal instinct have normalized certain methods of parenting, largely confirming middle-class practices, and that these stereotypes then act as a way to sanction those who use other approaches, including those more common to working-class families. Feminist poststructuralism closely examines
the ways in which patriarchal values have impacted the conceptual framework for developing subjectivities.

A prime site of critique lies within the use of language to maintain power. Often, these discourses dichotomize experience into artificial and limiting hierarchies and binaries, like male and female, which then create a linguistic and conceptual fallacy that one must act in opposition to or as the negation of the other (Braidotti, 1997). Moreover, this categorization, in its repetition and normalization, acts as a means of limiting access to discursive power (Braidotti, 1997). These formulations then explicitly and implicitly have impacted power relations, creating stereotypical images of authority and subordination. Connell (2005) discussed how hegemonic masculinity acts as an essentialized authoritative discourse creating for all men the task of performing in ways that demonstrate membership in the dominant group. However, there are a multiplicity of ways that masculinities may be performed and status may be accorded.

Organizations are inherently hierarchical (Tyack, 1974). Within the school organization, faculty typically are expected to adapt to the dominant institutional culture and beliefs, including masculinities and notions of gender (Weedon, 1997). These social constructs are changeable, but are created in relation and according to the particular context (Martino & Frank, 2006). Francis (2010) explained that power is not statically controlled. While a person may be powerful in a specific situation, they may not be constructed as such in a different discursive environment.

**Performativity and Performance**

Butler (2010) clearly illuminated the ways in which gender and sexuality operate as part of a “heterosexual matrix” of social norms. Butler situated performativity firmly
within social discourse. Gendering, as a process, would begin by speaking it into existence, and meaning would be further inscribed through repetition of social regulations. Performativity describes a creative process whereby naming produces that which it names; an example would be the doctor declaring, “It’s a boy.” This “boying” would continue throughout the child’s life explicitly through the use of specific pronouns like *he* and *him* and more implicitly in references to being strong or roughhousing (“boys will be boys”). Wetherell and Edley (2014) have asserted that the iterative process is not the result of consistent discourses, but often fragmented practices that, nevertheless, sustain the status quo. Therefore, it is important to note that not all communication to a boy may be rooted in creating a macho product, but the overall message shapes masculinity in relation to social norms.

Spicer, Alvesson, and Kärreman (2016) suggested that organizations can harness the power of language described by Butler as performativity, “working affirmatively with managerial discourses” (p. 546) to explore the ambiguous and negative aspects of communication in an organization, setting the stage for change. The agency of the individual and the behaviors and language they use are set within a specific context. This lens highlights the ways specific behaviors and norms iteratively emerge within an organization, creating opportunities and constraints. Rumens (2010) has described the complex interaction of friendship and masculinity for gay men in the workplace, exploring the ways in which different discourses may conflict and disrupting commonsense truths such as the idea that men do not create intimacy in friendships. Also building on Butler’s (2009) work on performativity, gender, and politics, Spicer et al. (2016) argued that critical management studies should leverage the interpretation of
performativity as an iterative and productive process. Without casting aside the possibility of a consequent improvement of management, they suggested focusing on change through disruption of and innovation in dominant discourses toward empowerment and emancipation (Spicer et al., 2016). The possibilities of emergent discourses changing norms within a contest are borne out by an example from Rumens (2010) study in which a man found that, while when he began working in a department, over time, and with the addition of more gay co-workers, talking about being gay became normalized in the setting.

Performance is the process of “doing gender” rooted in West and Zimmerman (2009) and their understanding of Goffman (1956, 1977). West and Zimmerman (2009) asserted that gender emerged from one’s actions. The practices we engage in are directional and temporal in that they are directed toward an audience and iterative (Bourdieu, 1990). Here, some degree of agency on the part of the subject is clear. Goffman’s notion of self was both socially constructed and able to engage in social action (Brickell, 2005). Goffman (1959) relied on the dramaturgical metaphor to explore the ways in which the self performs and a consistent awareness of interaction with the audience. This approach to social relation highlights the ways in which people may strive to “save face,” to create the image of a consistent narrative of self or manage contradictions (Goffman, 1981, 2003).

Goffman’s (2003) conception of agency still operates within the limits of the possibilities created by social discourse, reacting to rituals within a framework of cultural standards and social norms. Still, gender identity is not essential; it is a dynamic process rooted in social context. Goffman’s (1959) model of understanding performance assumes
the development of the self to be largely the work of the backstage, or the presence or absence of reflexivity.

The Gap

Studies seeking to understand masculinity and leadership in education often focus on the perspective of the principal alone (Gill & Arnold, 2015; Brinia, 2011; Chan, 2011; Jones, 2008) or teachers alone (Arar & Oplatka, 2014). Here, I drew upon the work of Fuller (2014) who utilized a case study of a specific secondary school in England to understand the ways in which gendered leadership is culturally contextualized and socially situated. In this case study, I explored the ways that a principal and faculty’s cultural conceptions of gender affects the performance of a male principal’s leadership in a suburban, public, low-income elementary school in a western state. Importantly, this type of study has not been undertaken with a male principal. Moreover, while poststructural explorations of gender and education have described multiple cultural contexts, a specific site in a western state will add to uniqueness of the context.

In the field of leadership, Peck, Freeman, Six, and Dickinson (2009) explored the theoretical framework of performance, building upon Goffman’s work (1959) in the understanding of the importance of rituals in the organizational setting. In addition, Peck et al. (2009) suggested that leadership can be examined as performance, drawing on the iterative activity that particularly emerges through speech and language creating specific norms. Ultimately, Peck et al. (2009) have determined that literature on leadership has generalized transformational leadership. Thus, there is a need to use the lenses of both literal and metaphorical performance to contextualize the embodiment of leadership in specific settings.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Problem

Within the past 30 years, educational leadership has seen dramatic change in its gender makeup. Women now make up a majority of public school principals, and their numbers coincide with the fact that the greatest opportunity for women to lead is in elementary schools. Men are far less likely to serve as teachers, or even as principals, in elementary schools, a sector associated with care for young children and lower social status. Men who choose to work as teachers in early childhood or elementary education have been shown to have to carefully negotiate their masculinity within the context of a feminized workplace (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Martino, 2008). As the role of elementary school principal itself becomes more feminized, we must consider how discourses are changing. To understand more fully how gendered leadership works in specific contexts, I conducted a case study of one public elementary school site in the western United States and explored the ways gender and leadership informed the interaction between the principal and his faculty. Research questions addressed were:

Q1 In what ways does the elementary school faculty experience leadership as gendered?

Q2 In what ways does gender shape the experiences of a male elementary school principal?
Methods

In this study, I blended case study methodology with multiple methods drawn from various research traditions using an approach known as bricolage. From the case study, I incorporated the use of multiple forms of data collection to build detailed understanding of a bounded case, described in terms of time and place (Creswell, 2013). In this way, I attempted to “crystallize” “local truth,” considering the way each situation has multiple facets and the how the angle of my perspective, or those of the participants, allows for one of many illuminations or reflections of truth (Merriam, 2009, p. 216).

Case Study

Case study methodology focuses on the ways in which issues of human interaction, such as leadership, are embedded in contexts: personal, social, political, and historical. Given the ways in which gender and leadership are created as social constructs and the localized ways people perform these roles, case study approach allows for deep contextualization, particularly in the breadth of sources. Yin (2014) has elaborated that case study is appropriate for real-world settings where a phenomenon, like leadership, is enmeshed in the contextual which requires a need for multiple data sources to understand the particularities of the case.

In this case, the unit of analysis was the site, as I explored how specific cultural constructs shape the performance of and the perception of gendered leadership (Yin, 2014). The site reflected a typical female-dominated public elementary school faculty with a male administrator situated in a suburban area within a western state. Prior literature relating to gender and leadership provided the background for exploration of the case. This study was an instrumental case, seeking to understand a male elementary
school principal’s experience of gendered leadership with the faculty. Since the principal had only recently assumed the role from a female predecessor, the site offered more possible opportunities for understanding gendered differences in leadership.

Stake’s (1995) encouragement to move beyond the simplistic to make clear the more complex interpretation suits the stance of a poststructural researcher. As poststructuralists believe that individuals’ various subjectivities are fluid, rather than static, and may conflict or converge. Stake also posited that research should not strive to appear value-free. The researcher must make the process of reflexivity visible, making clear the advocacy that shapes our observation and analysis. In this study, my intent was not to privilege any interpretation while seeking to remain aware of my own subjectivities.

Bricolage

The term bricolage originated with Levi-Strauss, an anthropologist, who used the French term for handyman, bricoleur, analagical to a researcher’s use of intellectual resources, “a heterogeneous collection of inherited odds and ends” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 25), to create a deliberate, well-reasoned approach to a problem. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) also used the image of the quilt-maker, stitching together various pieces in the composition of a whole.

The use of methodological bricolage is very appropriate to the poststructural feminist philosophy that informs this study. Derrida, a significant figure in poststructural thought contested the original conception of bricolage, arguing that all discourse was drawn from borrowed concepts (Schwandt, 2007). In this sense, then, I cannot avoid acting as a bricoleur in this inquiry. Moreover, the practice of drawing from multiple
methodologies underscores “that the object of qualitative inquiry as well as the practice itself is relational and processual (a network of interlocking discourses) rather than fixed and formal” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 26). Bricolage does not seek to capture an objective reality, but instead, looks through multiple lenses, various tools, and methods based on the context to arrive at both convergent and divergent interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). The complexity of experience cannot be reduced to coherence from a poststructural epistemological perspective, and methodological bricolage offers an appropriate approach to the multiplicity of cultural discourses.

Approaching this inquiry, I actively selected tools like “contrast set sorting,” an ethnographic interviewing technique that allowed for deeper understanding of the similarities and differences in the ways the participants made meaning of gendered leadership terms (Spradley, 1979, p. 168). The use of dramaturgical analysis, focusing on elements of character, allowed for the interpretation of social interaction as a theatrical performance (Saldaña, 2016). In the use of these two methods, I sought to better understand the idea, central to bricolage, that “social structures do not determine individual subjectivity but constrain it in remarkably intricate ways” (Kincheloe et al., 2012, p. 25)

In addition, narrative methods converged with the poststructural philosophical framework with a shared concern for uncovering “the myths that surround us and are embedded in our social interactions” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 7). The deconstructive narrative analysis technique of writing in a rebel voice provided a means for me to reverse the binaries (Boje, 2001). These rewritten stories were presented in the findings as a new voice that challenges dominant hierarchical assumptions. As I stitched
the various methodological elements together, I began to better understand the complexities of gendered leadership in this specific context.

**Participants**

Focusing on how gender and leadership roles are performed in a social context, the central participants in this study were a male elementary school principal and faculty members at the school he leads. According to Goffman (1959), identity is enacted as a role on a stage. Providing multiple perspectives on the performance of the role of principal allowed for a better understanding of the enactment of social identity.

**Participant Contact**

I had a previous relationship with the principal as we both were students in the same doctoral program. We both were enrolled in an online program so we have engaged in classes and completed projects together; however, due to the fact that I reside in a different state, we had limited face-to-face or extracurricular interaction. Based on my knowledge of the principal, the sampling was convenient (Creswell, 2013). However, the case was also critical in that it allowed for a unique perspective on gendered leadership, as a woman occupied the role of principal at the school in the previous year.

Additionally, 10 faculty members volunteered to participate in the research. All of the participants identified as female. Participant roles at the school included the assistant principal, an instructional coach, two special education teachers, a media specialist, and teachers from kindergarten, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Faculty response resulted in variation according to role, but not gender, allowing some insight into the ways various subjectivities impact the faculty’s experience of the principal’s gendered leadership (Creswell, 2013).
Ethical Treatment of Participants

No members of vulnerable populations were involved in this study. All of the participants in this study were asked to create their own pseudonyms. The principal was also asked to provide a pseudonym for the school. In one case, the participant asked that I supply the pseudonym, and in another, the participant opted not to use a pseudonym. All of these names were filed in a password-protected document on my computer.

I contacted the principal by email to explain the study parameters, to gain tacit site approval and invite him to participate. Upon his approval, I applied for permission to conduct research within the school district. Once I received the consent of the district and the approval of the research proposal university institutional review board (Appendix A), I formally asked the principal if he would be willing to participate in the study. I invited all faculty members within the school to participate in the inquiry, and I completed faculty interviews with all willing faculty members. I had no prior experience with the school site nor any of the faculty, other than the principal, as I reside in a different state.

Prior to my arrival, the principal forwarded my email to faculty, informing them of the purpose of my research and how they could participate. At the end of my first day observing the principal at the site, I was introduced at a faculty meeting, which allowed me to explain the purpose of my research. I did not solicit specific candidates selected by the principal, but since my access to the faculty was consistently addressed through the principal, the participants could be considered products of “snowball sampling” (Merriam, 2009). Due to the power relationship between faculty and principal, I
emphasized to faculty participants that any interview transcripts and initial analysis would be seen only by myself and possibly my research adviser.

Semi-structured interviews with faculty and principal which took place at the school occurred during times that would not detract from their necessary school activities, although they did volunteer part of their lunch times or planning periods. The interviews took place face-to-face in offices and classrooms at the school site.

**Context and Setting**

Dominant discourses are contextually situated, so exploring the context and setting is central to understanding the ways in which leadership may be performed. In this case, the setting was a public elementary school of approximately 550 students, kindergarten to fifth grade, in a suburban district in a western state. The city in which the school was situated has seen the population evolve to include more Hispanic residents, although White residents remain in the majority. This city was near 10,000 residents, just one-tenth of the size of the other city in the district.

In the 2016-2017 school year, over 65% of the student population was Hispanic, diverging from typical school demographics in the district and the state. Similarly, the socioeconomic makeup of the population was markedly lower than typical district and state rates in 2016-2017, with over 75% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Increased population had led to the addition of two portable buildings to house the four classrooms of one grade level, alongside another portable building which housed a preschool, operating independently of the school, to provide more access to learning in early childhood.
The school was a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, which involved a curricular shift from direct instruction to student inquiry. It is the only elementary school in the district with this program. In addition to this change, the leadership had just changed, with the male assistant principal moving into the role of principal. The faculty of approximately 40 was predominantly female, with the exception of two male teachers and the principal.

Data Collection

In the process of data collection, I drew on case study methodology using a bricolage of methods drawn from ethnography and narrative inquiry. Appendix B is a table which aligns my research questions with methods of data collection and anticipates possible connections with major concepts. Throughout data collection, I used a researcher’s journal to keep field notes of my formal observations and informal observations and conversations. My goal in pursuing reflexivity was not a true understanding of self or others, as that would not align with my epistemology. Rather, I sought to lean into the “reflexivity of discomfort” in which I could not find a definite answer (Pillow, 2003). Ethically, the researcher must be exceedingly reflexive as even typical research approaches contain societal norms that must be questioned (Popoviciu et al., 2006).

Interviews

In what ways does gender influence the leadership of a male elementary school principal? Relating to my research question on the influence of gender on the leadership of the male elementary school principal, I utilized concepts in the prior literature to create questions that would illuminate key concerns regarding the settings of
his experiences, his mentors, his career trajectory, his work-life balance, and his perception of gender in his experience. Peck et al. (2009) have suggested that setting is an under-researched aspect of leadership, and context has been shown to impact the ways principals enact gendered leadership (Arar & Oplatka, 2014; Shah & Shah, 2012). Therefore, I included questions asking the principal about the community and about his own school experiences to understand to what degree these factors shaped his performance of leadership.

The particular ways in which men work within female-dominated work environments and the impact of those environments have been widely documented in terms of both social isolation (Martino, 2008; Martino & Frank, 2006; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012) and career acceleration (Williams, 2013), precipitating questions about the principal’s path and achievements. In particular, the literature on gender and education struggles with the issue of mentors and role models related to gender: Do students, teachers, or principals need someone of a specific sex to help them become the best they can be? (Arar & Oplatka, 2014; Martino, 2008; Martino & Frank, 2006; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012). To this end, questions about mentoring were intended to draw out this thread in relation to professional development.

Questions about family and work-life balance were drawn from literature that explored the ways in which female leaders and male leaders may or may not struggle with demands in their home life (Lin Choi, 2011). Additional questions sought to elicit to what degree the principal saw himself as gendered in the fulfillment of his role, as males are less likely to recognize the impact of their gender on their leadership (Blackmore, 2013; Whitehead, 2001). His answers to questions relating to leadership and
gender traits, explored below in relation to faculty perceptions, allowed insight into his
reflexivity on his practice, in relation to that of the previous female principal.

**What meaning do faculty make of a male elementary school principal’s leadership?** I began each interview by asking what traits respondents associated with leadership. Next, in order to support the discovery of localized norms for “feminine” and “masculine,” each participant was asked to sort 20 cards with personal and leadership traits (Appendix I) (Fuller, 2014). I employed terms from existing literature on leadership and gender. First, like Fuller (2014), I included relevant skills and attributes drawn from educational leadership analysis: adaptability, responsiveness, commitment, courage, resilience, self-confidence, modesty, integrity, political astuteness, collaboration, decisiveness, and respect (Dimmock, 2003). In addition, to better understand the perception of gender within this setting, I included character traits that Messerschmidt (2012) had found researchers of masculinities had teased out from the larger cultural force of hegemonic masculinity, such as competitiveness, independence, ambition, and physical strength. In addition, I added traits of friendly, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive, which Eagly (2009) identified as prescriptions, and often descriptions of prosocial behavior for women. In this way, I could better describe the local constructions in relation to leadership and gender constructs commonly referred to in current research.

Rather than requiring a dualistic framework, participants were asked to place these cards on a two-dimensional continuum created by a diamond framework, including the labels feminine and masculine on the right and left, respectively, and both feminine
and masculine and neither feminine nor masculine, at the top and bottom, respectively (Fuller, 2014).

Figure 1. Example of positioning labels.

I placed the labels and gave the traits to the participants, in no particular order. I documented each individual’s categorization with photographs, and I took notes on the process of categorization.

The concepts were explored more fully with questions asking for experiences that exemplified both the male and female principals’ demonstration of leadership. Elaboration regarding dress, tone, and gestures allows for the exploration of performance in the enactment of the role (Goffman, 1959). In cases where the faculty member had not been employed at this school in the previous year, I asked them to draw upon their other experiences with female leaders and documented the information in my notes. I drew from the interview questions of Arar and Oplatka (2014) to discover how working for a male differed from working for a female.

Conduct of the interviews. I began by conducting an initial interview with the principal outside of school hours to examine questions relating to his life experiences. In order to conduct this interview prior to the observation, both distance and timing
precluded a face-to-face meeting, due to our residence in separate states. The phone interview lasted 55 minutes and 57 seconds and was audio-recorded for later transcription.

At the school site, I conducted one semi-structured interview with the principal lasting 24 minutes and 20 seconds, which was split into two sections as the interview was interrupted. The interviews with the faculty members were audio-recorded and ranged from 9 minutes and 15 seconds to 25 minutes and 35 seconds in length. I noted my observations and interpretations regarding verbal and non-verbal communication before, during, and after the interview, as many of the conversations seemed to emerge or continue when the participant was not being recorded (Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2001).

“The interview is the main road to multiple realities” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). Stake (1995) explained how interviews function to provide the information that the researcher does not see in observation and to understand the perspectives of the participants. In particular, these interviews provided a space for participants to use the specific lens of gender to reflect on past and current events. The stories which emerged were interpreted in light of the respondent’s preferred subjectivity as well as in recognition of my own role as collaborator in their creation (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

**Transcription.** As people make meaning of personal experiences, with the understanding that, in sharing, the individual acts socially to select language appropriate to the purpose and the audience. Thus, transcription becomes very important in terms of both understanding the participant’s meaning and attempting to share that meaning with a larger audience (Riessman, 2003). The transcription protocol reflects the choice of the researcher in its selection. However, the protocol can also serve to ensure the transcript
more fully reveals the ways a participant appealed to the audience, thereby supporting the analysis of the stories as performative (Riessman, 2003).

I created a particular protocol of transcription conventions for the interviews, selecting the level of analysis appropriate for this study. Names of places and persons that could be identifiable were removed to protect identities. In all other cases, the goal was to use correct spelling. Rarely, the words were inaudible due to fluctuating volume, or I made a plausible guess at a word or phrase based on the context. My own background in education aided in the transcription of jargon.

As I was striving to understand emotions and attitudes, I wanted to indicate pauses and utterances as well as changes in pace, tone or volume. I also needed to document when two individuals were speaking at the same time. In some cases, I bracketed non-lexical phenomenon to describe what was happening or how it was happening. I used correct spelling although I reflected the vernacularization of common contractions like “gonna,” “kinda,” and “‘cause” (Jenks, 2013). I used punctuation as necessary to help with readability, such as with commas in a series or repeated words, while I used pauses and utterances as the dominant punctuation to better understand the natural flow of language and highlight the speaker’s original emphasis. The basic level of rhythm provided by the transcript particularly supported the coding of emotions (EMO), attitudes (ATT), and tactics (TAC) in the dramaturgical analysis.

The protocol used included the following

- [ ] Square brackets indicate the start and end points of overlapping talk
- [phone rings] Non-lexical phenomenon
- (.) Dots denote pauses of less than a second
- (3) Numbers in parentheses mark the number of seconds for the pause
- Now Denotes emphasis in tone or volume
Observation

I directly observed the principal engaged in meetings and other work for four days, beginning at 7 AM and continuing past 5 PM each day. Meetings observed included an all-faculty meeting, a special education group meeting, an after-school wedding shower for four teachers, a Rotary Club meeting, and a meeting of local government officials. In addition, I observed events that ranged from the principal’s conversation with the assistant principal to his participation in a faculty-student basketball game to his chaperoning of a field trip. Observation allowed me to see the participants in real contexts as they interacted with each other. I witnessed both the way that the principal enacted his leadership and the expectations that individuals seemed to have of him in his role. “Because all social systems involve routines, participants in these routines may take them so much for granted that they cease to be aware of important nuances that are apparent only to an observer who has not become fully immersed in those routines” (Patton, 2002, p. 263). My unique perspective as researcher provided another perspective on the ways gendered leadership is enacted and perceived at the site.

In the representation of the data, the In Vivo descriptions of gendered leadership were preferred over my observation notes, with the primary exception of the topic of discipline which only fully revealed its importance through observation.
Document Review

I examined the school webpage prior to and following the period of my observation. In addition, the principal provided me with 51 emails directed from the principal to all faculty. These documents provided additional evidence of the principal’s leadership.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Participant Categorization of Traits

To understand the local norms related to gendered leadership, I created an Excel workbook with individual matrices for each participant’s categorization of the traits. Traits were categorized according to masculine, feminine, both feminine and masculine, or neither feminine nor masculine, as rendered in photographs.
In addition to the general sort, I also documented in the worksheets which traits were used to refer to the male principal’s performance and previous female principals’ performance. I then added two additional sheets to aggregate the overall perception of the traits as gendered by participants and the perception of the principals. The descriptors for the principals were sorted into three categories: those for the current male principal, those for the previous female principal at the site, and those referring to other female principals.

In examining the general categories, I examined how participants used the categories, I considered what the top traits, according to the specific labels, and to what degree the participants’ perceptions aligned with the stereotypes in the literature. Then, I
came up with labels for each trait based on the local constructions of the terms, grouping them with a letter for the category and a number to represent the number of participants who chose that category. For example, modesty was labeled 4123 FMBN (feminine, masculine, both, and neither) and resilience 37 FB (feminine and both). I used these labels to create a layout that synthesized the perceptions, considering the x-axis to be increasingly feminine from the center to the left and increasingly masculine toward the right, and the y-axis to illuminate the degree to which it was considered both masculine and feminine or neither, which correlates with the original matrix proposed. The final layout utilized the net responses along each axis, but the labels used in the analysis of individual traits retained the nuance of individual responses. So, commitment was graphed as (-1, 5), but retains the 2161 FMBN label. Thus, the matrix is intended only to give a cursory overview of local constructs of gendered leadership, whereas the ideas of contradiction and convergence are more evident elsewhere (Figure 3).
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*Figure 3.* Matrix showing synthesis of participants’ categorization of traits, with feminine to masculine represented with the x-axis and both to neither conveyed along the y-axis.
Analysis of Interviews, Observation
Field Notes, and Documents

Memos were based in part on concepts in the literature and initial codes that emerged as I engaged in a preliminary review of recordings, transcripts, documents, and field notes. This process occurred iteratively through data collection. I also noted stories that arose throughout multiple interviews or in interviews and observation, creating polyphonic narratives.

Dramaturgical coding focuses on the performance of social identity (Saldaña, 2016). West and Zimmerman (2009) draw on Goffman’s notion of the actor in their conception of “doing gender,” which balances the notion of the social constraint of discourses and the agency each individual still retains in selecting from among those discourses. Fuller (2014) examined elements of performance in her study of a female principals’ gendered leadership, referring to costume when describing the participant’s manner of dress. Inhabiting a role not only concerns the way in which one displays oneself within existing discourses, but also requires coordination with others’ readings of identities within specific situations (Wetherell & Edley, 2014). Narrative analysis often will include consideration of the three dimensions of interaction, situation, and continuity.

I transcribed all of the participant interviews from mp3 files into Word documents. As I engaged in transcription, I noted various themes that emerged as simple In Vivo phrases. I also transcribed my field notes into Word documents. I identified stories, or vignettes, for further in-depth coding (Boje, 2001; Saldaña, 2016). Once I had completed the transcriptions, I engaged in dramaturgical coding of vignettes in an additional word document for each participant. Here I used the framework of actor’s
objectives (OBJ), conflicts (CON) and tactics (TAC), attitudes (ATT) and emotions (EMO), as well as subtexts (SUB) (Saldaña, 2016). Physical actions, dress, and gesture, as well as verbal aspects of the participants’ voices were coded where enough information was available from recordings and/or field notes.

I then created two conceptually based matrices in order to address the two research questions: one aggregating the coding from faculty participants’ vignettes and one utilizing the coding of the principal’s responses. Each vignette was titled, typically by an In Vivo phrase from the story, and I did include some quotations within the spreadsheet to elaborate certain codes (Creswell, 2013). Reading across the rows I was able to see the coding of each specific vignette (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Meanwhile the columns helped me to compare the vignettes according to participant or specific code type, within Excel (Miles et al., 2014). Within these matrices, I also classified the vignettes according to monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia.

I engaged in peer review of the matrix for the faculty participants. Four days before our meeting, I sent my peer an email attachment of unannotated transcribed vignettes that I had selected from the interviews. In addition, I sent an explanation of the dramaturgical construct that I was using to analyze the data. We met for one hour on Skype in order to discuss our interpretations. We did not address all of the vignettes; however, this additional perspective both confirmed some interpretations and provided alternatives, allowing me to reflect on the role of my own assumptions as a researcher.

Working from a critical, poststructural stance, I also utilized deconstruction analysis to look beyond what is commonly taken for granted to understand the power relations beneath the surface in a specific context. Here, I used the dramaturgical coding
of conflict (CON) to identifying binary opposition, such as men vs. women or principal vs. faculty, in the text. Then I engaged in the technique of reversing the binaries within the stories to find points of instability. I rewrote selected stories in a “rebel voice,” for example, substituting a female character for a male (Boje, 2001). The concept of a rebel voice helped to inspire this study, as when I was reading Fuller’s (2014) study in which the faculty members comfortably described the female principal as both masculine and feminine, and I replaced the female with a male, rereading the comments and wondering if faculty members would be willing to describe a male principal as both masculine and feminine or if social constraints would impact his performance or their perceptions. The purpose of the deconstruction analysis is to resituate the story “beyond its dualisms, excluded voices, or singular viewpoint” (Boje, 2001, p. 21). This type of analysis particularly informed my classification of vignettes as representations of monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia.

Finally, I used thematic analysis to identify the themes that emerged from the participants within these classifications (Riessman, 2003). Pattern-seeking provided the basis for clustering, or creating conceptual groupings for the codes (Miles et al., 2014). Comparison and contrast within these clusters then formed the basis for the findings. Details from the dramaturgical coding provided the basis for the rich interpretation within each vignette even as I used themes from the literature to convey findings.

Throughout the analysis of the data from interviews, I reflected on my own role in the dialogue, highlighting the rhythm of my own speech and its implications for responses. My questions and responses as researcher were included within the scenes as part of the dialogic. One role of the researcher is as an audience member participating in
the drama. Another is as a writer “translating and configuring the presentation and meaning” of the experience (Boje, 2001, p. 83). For these reasons, my reflections on my participation in the interview and observation process are included as a part of the findings of this study.

**Crystallization: Looking for Validity without Truth**

The positivist scientific tradition examines the rigor of research on the basis of the internal validity, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity. Throughout the 20th century, the pursuit of qualitative research increased, facing concerns about the rigor as the established criteria did not adequately evaluate the quality of the approach. In fact, not only is quantitative research suited to measurement and comparison while qualitative research tends to suit exploration, but also the epistemological basis of the two approaches diverge. Lincoln and Guba (1986) attempted to reconcile the transition between the two traditions, developing a set of constructionist analogs to the criteria for rigor in the positivist tradition, deemed criteria for trustworthiness (Figure 4). Poststructural researchers move beyond the constructionist approach, seeking to deconstruct the concept of validity, but debate continues as to how trustworthiness can be established within this approach (Lather, 1993). Here, I propose transgressive analogs for positivist and constructivist criteria in order to facilitate understanding of the ways in which my research may be deemed rigorous.
Figure 4. Standards for good research according to epistemological approach.

Poststructural Analogs

Voice and text. In quantitative research, internal validity refers to the design of the research to support “the researcher’s ability to draw correct inferences from the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 162). To support the truth value of a quantitative study, the researcher may structure the research to attempt to select and sort participants randomly to yield typical results or engage in methods that support equality of experience for the participants during the experiment. Control for differences is essential to quantitative research. Based on positivist epistemology, this approach seeks to determine an objective truth.

Lincoln and Guba’s (1986) constructionist analog of credibility studies requires research to be undertaken contextually and seeks, instead, to represent the truth as it is understood by the diverse perspectives involved in the experience. Poststructural researchers do not seek to present any truth, but they do focus on multivocality and the ways that can be represented in text. According to the standards of qualitative research, engagement in the context is vital to ensure faithfulness to participants’ experiences of a
phenomenon. However, as I work as a poststructural researcher, my understanding of discourse as socially created means that my voice is present in the ways in which I present these interviews as texts. In order to more clearly understand the paradigm in which I have interpreted the voices of the participants, I have described the transcription specifications that provide a representation of non-verbal as well as verbal communication. Like the transcription, the production of the final report was an act of meaning-making. Crafting a final text that evokes the polyphony of voices in a way that evokes both the consonance and the dissonance is a measure of the research itself, an alternative to looking for truth (Schwandt, 2007).

Triangulation as a method involves the use of multiple types of data, multiple theoretical perspectives, multiple methods, or even multiple researchers the constructionist researcher utilizes to check his or her inferences, looking for convergence to confirm validity (Schwandt, 2007). Crystallization is a metaphor that moves beyond the two-dimensional framework, emphasizing a search for patterns and connections that may arise between people, processes, and data. What is seen is highly contingent upon one’s perspective; therefore, there is no static truth. In the process of analysis in this case, multiple types of data collection, including observations, interviews, documents, and my researcher’s journal, provided a basis for multivocality. Although the interviews were brief, the 11 participants represented diverse subjectivities to illuminate the problem. From a poststructural standpoint, the provision of alternative possibilities is important to validity. An additional strategy for “foster[ing] differences and let[ting] contradiction remain in tension (Lather, 1993, p. 679) was the examination of dissonant information, also referred to as negative case analysis. Peer debriefing involved the
researcher asking a peer for feedback on emergent themes or findings (Merriam, 2009). The process adds to credibility as it may lead to revision or confirmation of findings, not increasing the correctness of the inferences, as would be the case in constructionist approach, but certainly illuminating researcher bias and increasing the possibility for counter-interpretations to emerge.

**Contextualism.** Quantitative studies seek to generalize the results to the larger population. The population of the study is selected in order to be representative. Threats to this external validity relate to having too-specific characteristics for a population or having too-specific characteristics for a setting and the inability to generalize from one point in time to another.

Some qualitative researchers suggest using sampling, including maximum variation, to support transfer, where appropriate (Merriam, 1995; Miles et al., 2014). Stake (1995) suggests that the most important criterion in selection is choosing the case which provides the greatest opportunity for learning. In fact, specificity regarding the context and the participants actually can enhance the quality of a quantitative study.

In the design of this research, I selected a specific site to explore concepts of gender and leadership with a male elementary principal beginning his career in a female-dominated workplace, following in the footsteps of a female principal. In this case, the stresses of transition increased the opportunities to see the ways in which the perspectives on gender and leadership informed and contradicted each other. The presentation of the case through thick description in detailed vignettes offers the context and allows the reader the opportunity to see convergence and divergence of experience created from interaction and social relation. The detail provided was essential to render the complexity
of the case and the “endless interplay of different interpretations” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 311). As Stake (1995) explained, case studies are best suited for illuminating the particular, rather than leading to generalization.

**Reflexivity.** In quantitative analysis, researchers detail the methods and procedure to allow others to try to replicate the experiment, testing the validity of the findings. Meanwhile, the constructionist basis of qualitative research holds that multiple perspectives of a phenomenon may co-exist and be equally valid interpretations. Despite this divergence, however, both quantitative and qualitative researchers seek to engage in the research process with care. Qualitative researchers are expected to document their methods and analysis diligently as well, not for purposes of replication, but to demonstrate the integrity of the research process. Miles et al. (2014) included the clarity of the research design and the researcher’s stance as criteria for dependability as well as documentation of the way the plan was followed. In this case, the submission of my proposal to my dissertation committee acted as a form of external peer review in developing the research design, and the commentary led to revision. However, from a poststructural standpoint, my awareness and documentation of the ways in which my thoughts have evolved as I have conversed with peers and participants in relation to this study is essential. To this end, I have documented my stance and kept track of my own thoughts and processes of data analysis in a researcher’s journal, beginning as handwritten and transitioning to digital.

**Reciprocity.** The concept of objectivity, or neutrality, in positivist quantitative research is based on the expectation that there be no external influence or bias involved in the experiment. Researchers should stay removed from the inquiry process (Lincoln,
According to constructionist premises, however, the researcher is “a co-constructor of understanding and interpretation of the meaning of lived experiences” (Lincoln et al., 2013, p.110). Therefore, the qualitative corollary for objectivity, confirmability, determines that the findings are constructed by the researcher based on the experiences of the participants. Where dependability examines the process of research, confirmability demonstrates the trustworthiness of the results.

For the qualitative researcher, reflexivity, the examination and disclosure of the researcher’s own stance and perspective prior to engaging in research and interpretations and assumptions as the study proceeds, supports the integrity of the study (Miles et al., 2014). The logical and explicit presentation of methods, including data collection and analysis, as well as findings can act as confirmation in qualitative studies as in quantitative ones (Miles et al., 2014). Important from a poststructural perspective, the researcher’s consideration of rival explanations can demonstrate the rigor of the explanation, as well as the complexity and questions inherent in the problem (Miles et al., 2014). Peer review also may add alternative perspectives on interpretation (Miles et al., 2014). In addition, my researcher’s journal helped to make my perspective and bias explicit so others can understand my subjectivity in interpretation. I have also documented the ways I interacted with participants in the conduct of this inquiry. Finally, the review of the literature integrated in the report also provides a basis to consider the ways in which this context may align or diverge from other contexts (Figure 5).
Figure 5. Crystallization. The divided circle elements of crystallization referenced in this study. The light blue ring arrows within signify the ways in which each of these aspects informs the others. The methods used to achieve the standards of authenticity are included in the attached boxes.

**Study Limitations**

The use of convenient sampling and snowball sampling techniques may have inhibited the participation of faculty. The faculty may have been reluctant to say things about their supervisor that may be perceived as negative, regardless of assurances regarding anonymity. The value of the interviews that were conducted lies in suggesting alternate perspectives on the principal’s leadership, and the manner in which faculty approach the interviews may potentially provide insight into the social systems at play. Their different perspectives are essential as the performance of leadership takes place in relation, and both aspects of the exchange should be examined. Piloting the interview questions prior to the site visit may have yielded more possible concepts that were
referenced by individuals, but could have been explored more fully, including the faculty’s perceptions of the context and the need for male role models in elementary education. In addition, the interview questions could have been revised and added to increase the amount of time spent with each participant and the opportunities for the participants to provide more in-depth responses.

The focus on one school site clearly limited the breadth of experiences. However, in this instance, the goal of the research was to provide in-depth understanding of one leader’s subjectivities and discourse in his professional role and to consider the ways in which others responded to him.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Context and Setting

In October 2017, actress Alyssa Milano promoted the Hashtag #me too on social media, calling attention to sexual harassment and assault of women in the workplace, and Time magazine named the #Me Too Movement as person of the year (Chappell, 2017). Largely concentrated among Hollywood celebrities at first, the outpouring of stories has underscored the need to understand the ways gender impacts the workplace and to question the behavior that we have taken for granted (Chappell, 2017).

The timing of this research was a few months prior, in May 2017, in a small town, part suburban, part rural, in a western state. On a field trip into the city, we very quickly passed the blocks of small houses interspersed with Wal-Mart and fast food restaurants leaving us an hour of seeing fields and tiny towns. Elliot, the principal, described many of the faculty as belonging to conservative farm families as he described his goals to diversify the teaching faculty as he made new hires.

The agricultural roots of this city and its teachers provide a context then for understanding the ways masculinities are expressed and interpreted. Farm families often have a strict division of labor with women demonstrating care in the domestic sphere and men engaging in physical, even hazardous, outdoor tasks (Haugen & Brandth, 2015). The stereotypical image of masculinity is often romanticized as rugged individualism,
with strong heterosexual and patriarchal overtones (Campbell, Bell, & Finney, 2006). While rural masculinities may truly manifest in a variety of ways and continue to change, research has shown that the idealization of stoicism as a masculine attribute still contributes to depression among males in farming communities (Coen, Oliffe, Johnson, & Kelly, 2013). The background of a farming culture provides a framework for beginning to understand the ways in which the adults at the school consider gendered leadership.

The majority of the participants had grown up nearby, graduated from a local state university, and begun to teach in the area. Over half of the participants had graduate degrees from the same university. The participants’ jobs at the school were diverse: the principal, the assistant principal, an instructional coach, an interventionist, the media and technology specialist, an occupational therapist, teachers at K, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Two of the participants revealed that they had changed careers at one point, indicating that their previous work had been in male-dominated industries, while another participant had worked briefly in a medical setting. The remaining participants had always worked in education.

Three of the participants were in their 20s and had graduated in the past three years with their Bachelors’ degree. Four of the participants were in their 30s, and two were in their 40s. The remaining two participants were over 50. Although stereotypical assumptions would lead one to believe that younger participants might be more open in their approach to gender, the actual perspectives represented did not reflect a correlation of heteroglossic perspectives to participants with younger ages.
Categorization of Traits

In order to understand the ways in which this community saw gendered leadership, I asked each participant to map a set of traits which included terms that had been identified as feminine, masculine, or indicators of good leadership. Participants were encouraged to sort the traits according to their own experience, with at least five participants clarifying, as Kay did, that I was looking for “not what I think society thinks, just me personally.” In order to take into account the norms, all participants’ responses have been included in a code that follows the term in parentheses. The coded response for decisiveness (1143 FMBN) shows that one participant responded feminine, one masculine, one both masculine and feminine, and one neither masculine nor feminine. These codes provided a means to see both convergence and divergence in opinions within the school.

The Sorting Process

The process of laying out the traits varied according to participant, taking up to five minutes. Many participants chose to talk or hum while they laid out the tickets. Veronica Vaughn reflected aloud, “All right (40) that one’s hard ‘cause I’m not (.) emotionally expressive so I don’t,” struggling with the placement of a term that the literature had as stereotypically feminine. After she concluded the placement of the tickets, she said, “Well I just felt like I was putting too many hhhhh in one category.” Here, nervous laughter seemed to indicate her discomfort with this process of reflecting on gendered leadership. Kay also used the idea of humor to explore the difficulty she felt during the process. “This is hard! You didn’t say it was going to be hard! I’m teasing
you, but it made me think though (6) I know some of them I’m kind of predictable on, but
(5).” Ellie reacted to the idea of reflection on the traits immediately:

Ellie: (4) I mean I would just never (.) describe a trait as male or
female,

Joanne: Okay.

Ellie: so I’ll just put them all on the both feminine and masculine.

Joanne: Okay. And that’s great.

Ellie repeatedly expressed her desire to not stereotype women, in particular, and her
stories of her own experience and descriptions of others; behavior proved more helpful in
fleshing out her perspectives on how gendered leadership impacted her in the workplace.

Ten participants chose to use the labels as headings to create lists or clusters.

Elliot expressed a concern about the limitation inherent in the categories.

Elliot: (4) I notice there is not a category like for partially hhhhh
feminine or partially masculine.

Joanne: So you know you can use that space however you’d like.
If you wanna do a continuum, that’s fine.

Elliot: (42) So does both feminine and masculine and neither
feminine nor masculine is going to hold me up so you can make a
note of that if you want.

Joanne: That’s fine.

Elliot: (2) Because I don’t really think that it’s all or nothing. I
think that there is gonna be this gray area to where there are
aspects of one or the other that this may be true for but I don’t
think that’s true (.) for all.

Contrasted with Ellie’s approach of labeling all of the terms with one descriptor, Elliot
attempted to represent fluidity and distributed terms among the categories. Among the
participants, Sarah and Solange divided the terms more evenly across the categories.
Masculine

All but one participant used masculine as a descriptor. However, masculine was the least frequently used by participants, with only one participant using it to describe six terms and all others using it to describe only three or fewer. Participants categorized physical strength (64 MB) and assertiveness (46 MB) as masculine terms, aligning with Messerschmidt’s (2012) identification of those traits as being used in literature as indicators of hegemonic masculinity. Independence (162 MBN), ambition (181 MBN), and competitiveness (118 FMB) were characterized less as masculine in this community, being seen as both masculine and feminine. Within this environment, two other traits emerged as more masculine, adaptability (1333 FMBN) and self-confidence (361 MBN).

Feminine

Eight participants utilized this descriptor. Emotionally expressive (721 FBN) and concerned with others (541 FBN) were both considered feminine within the community, aligning with Lather’s (1993) explanation of a general perception of those traits. By contrast, this community largely felt friendly (172 FBN) to be a more androgynous term. Other terms which multiple individuals categorized as feminine included modesty (4123 FMBN), resilience (37 FB), responsiveness (262 FBN), courage (28 FB), and commitment (2161 FMBN).

Both Masculine and Feminine

Participants considered most terms both masculine and feminine, with seven participants selecting this designation for at least half of the terms. Most participants concurred that collaboration (91 BN), respect (91 BN), and integrity (82 BN) were both masculine and feminine. Over half of the participants characterized traits considered
gendered in the literature as both masculine and feminine, including competitiveness (118 FMB), friendly (172 FBN), independence (162 MBN), ambition (181 MBN), and assertiveness (46 MB). The terms resilience (37 FB), courage (28 FB), and commitment (2161 FMBN), which some perceived as feminine, were still largely considered as both masculine and feminine.

**Neither Masculine nor Feminine**

The top term considered neither masculine nor feminine was political astuteness (145 MBN), which was also the only term in which the number of people considering it neither was larger than the number considering a term both masculine and feminine. Adaptability (1333 FMBN), modesty (4123 FMBN), and decisiveness (1143 FMBN) were the other terms more commonly considered neither masculine nor feminine. Importantly, each of these terms also shows a distribution of perception across all categories indicating a lack of consensus in the interpretation of these traits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Both Masculine and Feminine</th>
<th>Neither Masculine nor Feminine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally Expressive (7)</td>
<td>Physical Strength (6)</td>
<td>Collaboration (9)</td>
<td>Political Astuteness (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned with Others (5)</td>
<td>Assertiveness (4)</td>
<td>Respect (9)</td>
<td>Adaptability (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty (4)</td>
<td>Self-confidence (3)</td>
<td>Ambition (8)</td>
<td>Modesty (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resilience (3)</td>
<td>Adaptability (3)</td>
<td>Competitiveness (8)</td>
<td>Decisiveness (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage (2)</td>
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<td>Courage (8)</td>
<td>Independence (2)</td>
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<td>Responsiveness (2)</td>
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<td>Friendly (7)</td>
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<td>Commitment (6)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 6*. Personal and professional traits sorted in gendered categories according to frequency of participant perception.
Describing Elliot

Once the participants had already sorted the terms according to their perception of them as gendered, participants were asked which of these terms they would use to describe their current principal. Seven of the participants selected only terms that they had categorized as “both masculine and feminine.” Two additional participants also included a term they had categorized as “masculine,” commitment for Kay and modesty for Brandy. The two remaining faculty participants included terms they considered “neither feminine nor masculine” and “feminine” in their assessment of Elliot. In contrast, when attributing characteristics to the previous female principal or another female principal, half of the participants included a “masculine” term as a descriptor.

In Their Own Words

In my inquiry, I found that the participants drew upon the discourses of monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia in the stories they told about gendered leadership in a female-dominated workplace. The findings in the stories elaborated during the interview contrasted with the findings of the labeling activity. In the stories, participants more freely described Elliot’s leadership as not typically masculine, while only two participants chose to use terms they had classified as feminine to describe Elliot in the activity with the labels. I attribute this difference, in part, to the concerns that many had about negative social repercussions and their own feelings of discomfort in reflecting on these ideas. I also think that the participants revealed more with their own words, as well as their pauses and laughter, as they described their experiences in their workplace and with their leaders.
**Monoglossia**

Monoglossia refers to the representation of a traditional femininity for women or a traditional masculinity for men (Fuller, 2014). The faculty interviewed were all women, giving their perspectives on how the gendered leadership of a male principal impacted them working in a female-dominated workplace, an elementary school. Among these types of representation, themes arose for both men and women. Women were characterized as both “nurturing” and “catty,” while stereotypes for men included natural leader, “role model,” and disciplinarians. It is important to note that most of these comments were generalized stereotypes, although some were contextualized to this specific site. The description of monoglossia provides background for the more detailed exploration of perception of the male leader in the discussion of heteroglossia and polyglossia.

**Two-faced.** Violet, Kay, Leslie, and Veronica Vaughn all referred to the fact that women are, by nature, more motherly, caring, and/or nurturing. Sarah said, “I: also think that there’s generally a warmer more family type um work culture when there are a lot of women on faculty and that can be helpful for you know jobs as such and then sharing those the burdens and stressors in the workplace.” More common was the unfavorable stereotype that women are negative in their social encounters with each other, focused on “the things we suffer and endure,” as Sarah suggested, or more directly “cattiness,” as reported by Veronica Vaughn, Kay, and Ellie. Solange explained, “We are all really super sensitive hhhhh about .h um what you know what (..) people are thinking and what they are feeling so it’s both good and bad.” Solange’s laughter followed by a sigh after
referring to a type of female sensitivity seemed to capture the unease that arose from these paradoxical stereotypes held simultaneously.

**Balance.** Many participants independently began to explore tactics for working in a female-dominated workplace. Leslie responded that she finds it more difficult to relate to a male team member,

U:m I think when there are males that are present, like I work on a team that has a male, um I think sometimes it’s harder to relate to them in a some kind of way and I don’t know why but um (.) I don’t know I just feel like (.) they just have different outlooks maybe on things too.

Ellie, Mavis, and Veronica Vaughn expressed a desire to work with men, referring to the idea of balance, or evening out.

Mavis: I think it, it, when women get together, I mean like when girlfriends get together (.) They, you understand, ya know, just start talking about stuff but when there’s a male present, sometimes you are a little more self-monitoring on what comes out. I would say a leader, in general (.) if your principal was here listening, even if it was a female principal, you’d have to tone it down some if you were in a problem-solving type situation. You know?

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Mavis: But I, I don’t think as much of it happens when a male is around. I just feel like you self-monitor a little more.

Mavis made clear that a female leader should have the ability to subdue gossip, but a male simply by sex has natural authority. Ellie also referred to men controlling women’s behavior, “I mean I feel like we would go to a woman and be more gossipy and bring up more catty issues, but I feel like because he is a man like we have a tendency to focus more on serious things hhhhh.” Mavis and Ellie held an attitude that men have the power to balance women out, which contrasted with Veronica Vaughn’s idea of balance in which a man and a woman work together in complementary ways. Overall, it was more
common for participants to simply take for granted that males would act as or be the best leaders. Mary volunteered, “I worked in more of a more of a male dominated environment, and would I rather work for a male, would I rather have a male boss or a female boss? Probably a male boss. I just think (.) I don’t know (.)”

**A lack of control.** Brandy’s discussion of the way her personal and professional experiences informed her own decisions about the 2018 election. She detailed a negative perception of women in leadership roles.

> I changed my mind on voting for a woman president from working for a woman principal (3) ‘cause I thought, once given that much power they don’t know how to (3) not take advantage of the situation, or (.) take total control. I don’t know maybe women are just more control freaks, I don’t know (.) I come from a family where my mom had no control though maybe that changes my vision too.

In this case, while the idea of women in power may seem to move against traditional femininity, her description of female leaders as unable to control their impulses reflects on the weakness that she saw in her own mother’s life. The use of the term “control freak,” while commonly used, still underscores the abnormal and extreme aspect of the behavior. Implicit in this generalization is the subtext that men do know how to regulate their behavior as leaders.

**Role model.** The attitude that boys need men as role models is pervasive, ranging from a culturally responsive sentiment that recommends students see others like themselves in schools to a more reductive stance suggesting identification based on sex alone will provide the basis for relationships with students (Martino, 2008). For the purposes of this study, it is important to understand that the subtext of this concept is that
males are viewed as a “panacea” that can solve many of the problems in public education (Martino, 2008, p. 193).

Three faculty members addressed the need for male role models. Veronica Vaughn contemplated whether elementary-age children needed male role models as much as they needed mothering from female teachers. The other two faculty members intertwined the need for male role models with the specific demographics of the school. In the case of Kay, she saw Elliot’s presentation of himself as potentially aspirational for students. “Many of our boys need that role model and I think they need to see (.) oh, here’s what a professional looks like.” The role model Kay wanted for the students was classed, performing masculinity in suits and sweater vests.

Violet’s concern about role models was connected to the everyday relationships with students.

Um (.) I think that with our male students (. ) it’s more difficult to relate to (. ) um have the students relate to us (. ) as females (. ) and I’m not sure if that’s part of the cultural aspect of our school but (. ) they usually start out the year as quite disrespectful: I um (. ) I see how they speak (. ) the male students speak to their mother and they try to control the situation. I’m not sure if that’s the same with male teachers but um (. ) I see how some of the male students connect more with the male teachers and um (. ) goof around with them more and yet also (. ) like in the elementary setting (. ) the students kind of like I do see female as being more of the caring person in our culture so um like I connect really well with the female students who are having major problems and concerns and they’ll come to me with different things so (. ) um having less males in our field prevents the males from finding someone to connect to (. ) on a daily basis (. )

She expressed a negative attitude about the way her male students, in general, interacted with their mothers, but in addition to not being willing to consider other cultural perspectives, she implicitly absolves herself of trying to relate to the boys and their problems because she identifies with girls based on sex. Violet also brings up the image
that the male teachers can “goof around,” or play with the students in a way that she did not see as accessible to her as a female teacher.

**Discipline.** Another stereotype that men encounter working in elementary schools is the idea that they are natural disciplinarians (Martino, 2008). This concept only arose in my first interview with Mavis. She justified her decision to categorize “physical strength” as masculine in the sorting activity: “It’s nice to have a male around sometimes when there’s a kid that’s out of control (. um especially as a woman wearing heels hhhhh.” Here, Mavis positioned herself as needing help from a man, in particular because her feminine footwear diminished her strength. Her laughter, as in many of the situations I encountered, may have arisen from nervous embarrassment.

**People pleaser.** Leslie and Veronica Vaughn both used the term “people pleaser” to characterize the way that Elliot worked with others. They described him as wanting to make everyone happy, although they did not see that he could always be successful in that. Sarah expanded the idea of the “people pleaser” to male principals in general.

Sarah: so he will say yes to everything and the same is true for the principal that I work for at my other school I work with um there’s an eagerness to please and maybe that’s part of being a principal but I haven’t had that experience with (. um female principals that I’ve worked with um that there seems to be more caution um but (. with women leaders but these guys they just say they wanna say yes to everything and (. sometimes that can be a problem because the answer isn’t always yes

Joanne: Right.

Sarah: and it can cause some problems.

This idea of a “yes man” is most relevant to the monoglossic interpretation of male leadership as Sarah defined it in opposition to the feminine cautiousness.

While the idea of a “people pleaser” or “yes man” certainly can include one who
is easily swayed or cares too much, here there is also the connotation of a risk-taker, which aligns more with a traditional model of masculinity. Elaborating on the ways in which male leaders may try to appease faculty in their decision-making, Brandy contributed to this concept of a political “people pleaser” who listens to the faculty.

Brandy: Male principals always seem to listen more.

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Brandy: And not make a quick decision. I think.

Joanne: That’s interesting.

Brandy: Where females say no exactly, you’re done talking, they’ve already made their decision. (5) Or at least the males pretend to hhhhh listen and think about it.

Joanne: [hhhhh

Brandy: And that may just be it] that they just don’t say right away what they’re saying they say, “I’ll get back to you,” or whatever (.)

Significantly, she considered the possibility that the male principals might be entertaining faculty’s ideas and requests deceptively in the performance of their leadership. Her reaction was to laugh at this idea and then to repeat that that could be a real possibility. She seemed to take the power of the male leader for granted.

My awareness of the role that my gender might play in faculty interviews was heightened in my first interview with Mavis. The above comment, followed by what I perceived in the moment as a girlish giggle jarred me. She had entered into the interview with me as a conversation like “girlfriends,” assuming that my point of view would be the same because of our shared sex. When she was talking about how women would control themselves around men, I felt like her comments “you understand, ya know” were a
collusive tactic making me complicit in the attitude. In fact, most of my remarks were implicit assent, responding “right” and “mmhmm” as I tried to gather more information which was appropriate, given my role as interviewer, but nevertheless, felt constrained as to how I myself perform femininity. In the conversation with Brandy, I joined in the laughter about the idea that male leaders might be manipulating faculty as they seek to remain well-liked. Clearly, in each of these interviews and throughout the observation, I was given many opportunities to reflect on the impact of my gender in my interaction with female faculty members and consideration that they may disclose differently based on the fact that I am a woman.

**Rebel voice.** Rewriting stories with characters of another gender was one method that I used in arriving at an interpretation of monoglossia, as I found the divergence from traditional stereotypes evident. One clear example of the divergence from typical discourse was Mavis’ comment about discipline which can be retold as, “It’s nice to have a female around sometimes when there’s a kid that’s out of control (.). um especially as a male wearing heels hhhhh.” This example troubled me some in that I find myself almost unconsciously inclined to laughter because of the strangeness of the concept of a man in feminine dress in my cultural context. In the case of the following excerpt of Violet’s explanation of students’ gendered interaction with adults, changing the gender of the nouns and pronouns vividly illustrates the way naturalized stereotypes shape our expectations of others’ behavior and interaction.

I see how they speak (.). the female students speak to their father and they try to control the situation. I’m not sure if that’s the same with female teachers but um (.). I see how some of the female students connect more with the female teachers and um (.). goof around them with them more and yet also (.). like in the elementary setting (.). the students kind of like I do see male as being more of the caring person in our culture.
Within the passage, the change genders may result in a feeling that the passage is contradictory to what one knows, or more precisely, what one takes for granted without examination. In these cases, this feeling of opposition demonstrates that the original story concurred with traditional gendered stereotypes and could be categorized as monoglossia. However, sometimes people choose to enact their gender in different ways and can transgress these gendered boundaries in their actual discourse.

**Heteroglossia**

Heteroglossia occurs when an individual contravenes the traditional ways of doing gender (Fuller, 2014). When analyzing the data from field notes, interviews, and documents, I coded a story as heteroglossia when the participant interpreted the characteristics as atypical for a person of a specific sex. Reading the stories in a rebel voice also proved helpful for this step, considering how they aligned to traditional stereotypes when read with a character of the opposite gender.

**The polar opposite.** Many participants added phrases to their stories to indicate that the behavior or traits they were describing did not adhere to traditional social norms. Mavis explained the difference between working for a female principal the previous year and now working for a male, “Hm. In this exact situation, oddly enough, I feel like um it’s a more nurturing environment this year than last year.” By adding “oddly enough,” Mavis conveyed that she felt that typically one would expect a female principal to be more nurturing, but she elaborated what she meant by nurturing by explaining how Elliot was more sensitive to faculty members’ personal needs, where the previous principal had been more punitive and focused on rules when conflicts with personal life arose.
Solange explained that both the previous principal and Elliot seemed to diverge from gendered norms.

Solange: Oh you know again those two are not (. .) they are just not not your kind of your, for me (. .) what would traditionally be like I would say, so and I mentioned that I worked um part time

Joanne: Umhmm.

Solange: at one school and it was a male principal and to me he seemed like your very traditional um male principal which to me meant um (. .) he was decisive but um and he was ambitious um (. .) he wasn’t concerned really with others I mean yeah really wasn’t that concerned with others um he definitely was not emotionally expressive definitely not um swears you know so (Elliot) has kind of turned things

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Solange: my impression of (. .) what a male boss uh um same for feminine uh or [female principal

Joanne: Yes]

Solange: not feminine hhhhh so um you know she again challenged (. .) in some ways you know she challenged that notion of what a (. .) a female principal um (. .) would be so I don’t think she was particularly (. .) uh concerned with others she wasn’t particularly emotionally expressive

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Solange: you know she was self-confident and assertive ambitious and decisive so

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Solange: (3) So I mean I think they’re good case studies (. .) those two hhhhh

Solange chose verbs like “challenge” and “turn” that emphasize the ways in which both leaders were moving against social norms. Solange also laughed twice during this interchange. First, she laughed at the joke implicit as she misspoke, for she was describing the female principal as decidedly unfeminine. The second instance really
seemed to be in appreciation of the contrast between the two and the conclusion that she had drawn. In this case, her laughter did not seem to indicate the nervous embarrassment that was common in these discussions of gendered behavior.

Brandy was also very clear about the fact that Elliot did not act in ways that she considered typically masculine.

Brandy: And there’s a lot of ‘em that weren’t that much different from (the previous principal), where (Elliot) is just like the polar opposite of most males I know. He’s just much more in tune with, emotionally concerned with other, empathetic, um (8) he’s just, he’s just not, uh in-your-face kind of guy.

Joanne: Right.

Brandy: (2) I mean I hope I’m not making him sound bad. Her concern at the end for “making him sound bad” demonstrated that she liked him, but also that she was worried that portraying him as feminine might be viewed unfavorably. This comment suggests that there may be adverse social repercussions for acting in ways that do not align with traditionally gendered norms.

**Setting limits.** For many of the participants, Elliot’s ways of enacting gendered leadership conflicted with notions of traditional masculinity and even traditional leadership. They often referred to him using the term feminine or adjectives that they had classified as such. They reflected occasional discomfort, primarily through laughter or wanting to check that what they were saying was okay. They recognized his manner of leading even if they did not all endorse all of his methods. However, Ellie’s explanation of the more feminine adjectives seemed to establish limits as to what heteroglossic behavior was acceptable.
Ellie: Um I’d say he’s friendly (. ) Emotionally expressive (. ) like more empathy

Joanne: Yeah.

Ellie: Like I would say he, wouldn’t say he would cry (. ) responsive, concerned with others (. ) committed

She briefly departed from the terms provided, choosing to more clearly delineate what she meant by “emotionally expressive.” In doing so, she not only offered an analogous term, but also defined what it is not. This phrase illustrates the fact that the faculty have certain expectations of his behavior, so his transgression of many gender norms are acceptable up to a point.

Veronica Vaughn waited until I had turned off the audio-recording app on the computer to explain to me that Elliot was a “pretty feminine man.” She saw I was still taking notes on our conversation and hastened to add that she meant at school. She continued by explaining that outside of school he’s not; he has a wife, and kids, and hobbies. While her unease with what she was saying seemed clear to me through the nonverbal signal of her timing, her further elaboration developed what seemed to be an implicit heteronormative limit for his behavior. Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2011) have asserted that while the next steps for theorizing include queering masculinity, available masculine discourses in schools are still shaped by heterosexuality and homophobia. Again, the male elementary school principal’s transgression of norms is accepted to a certain degree, but the demarcations of where transgression becomes violation seem to be tacitly understood, rather than explicitly known.
**Taking it too far.** Sarah’s exploration of the ways she had seen women leaders move beyond transgression in their behavior, echoing the sentiments Brandy described regarding women and power.

Sarah: I’m trying to think of positive things to say. I’ve had a few really negative experiences with female (. ) principals. I know that doesn’t always happen [like that

Joanne: Yeah]

Sarah: um but so (. ) .h the ab-so-lutism mm (2) Let’s see (. ) firm

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Sarah: (2) this isn’t a leadership style but she was despised by her staff um (. ) I (. ) think that what happened (. ) and I’m thinking of like two different women I’ve worked with in the past year

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Sarah: um and (. ) it seemed like both of them were trying really hard to like (. ) embody these (. ) traits that I put under masculine that are like thought of typically as being masculine traits

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Sarah: but just taking it too far (. ) almost like, like that’s their uniform (. ) that’s who they are and I felt like they were almost resisting (. ) demonstrating the more (. ) feminine (. ) leadership traits because (. ) they wanted to be respected (. ) and I know that doesn’t always happen [but

Sarah’s use of the terms “embody” and “uniform” highlight the interpretation of gender and leadership as performances manifested through social discourse, including speech and dress. Her judgment of the women’s leadership began as “negative,” and her non-verbal communication underscored that as she paused, then took a breath, and summed up their style with the word “absolutism,” emphasizing each syllable.

Although referencing female principals, this example is salient to the understanding of the how faculty interpreted Elliot’s performance in two ways. First, it
shows an instance in a similar context which heteroglossic performance was recognized as going too far, with at least one woman “despised” by faculty. Second, Sarah’s description of Elliot’s transgressive performance of gendered leadership was consistently positive, which makes the contrast in interpretation more striking. While Sarah was clear that the female leaders had “taken it too far,” she later made it clear that male and female principals are constrained by expectations in disparate ways.

Joanne: And just overall (. ) um in what ways has working with male principals differed from working with female principals

Sarah: U:m They just seem for me it warmer ironically like but like I said I understand how that can happen um (. ) because warmth (. ) from a man isn’t going to be interpreted as weakness and unfortunately (. ) there is a perception sometimes that warmth from a woman is weakness and but so that makes it easier (. ) to work with men um (. )

Although she used the adverb “ironically,” indicating that, perhaps, this behavior should be the opposite according to gendered social expectations, Sarah’s explanation that a man can display warmth without being seen as weak gives a hint that within educational leadership, discourses of traditional masculinity may be evolving through the appropriation of emotion, creating the emergence of a “renaissance” male principal (Blackmore, 2013; Skelton & Francis, 2011). However, in the context of this specific site, the faculty participants generally felt that Elliot’s performance of gendered leadership transgressed monoglossic traditional masculinity, so I have included it as an illustration of heteroglossia.

At the same time. Solange was clear in her admiration of Elliot, with her only critique relating to his relatively slow decision-making. In the process of the interview, she reflected on her interpretation of Elliot’s gendered leadership.
Well interestingly you know as I was doing this I thought oh (Elliot) has really challenged some of those, those you know those uh stereotypes for me (.) as you know what constitutes masculine or feminine because I’d say he is he’s concerned with others he’s emotionally expressive um he’s self-confident at the same time um I would not say he is particularly assertive um he’s friendly um (.) and he’s I’ll say (.) I don’t know he just seems very you know to your original question he has all those traits he is uh fair-minded

As in her other comments, she referred to the fact that he challenged stereotypes and noted the exceptional quality of his behavior with the adverb “interestingly.” However, she then questioned the precision of the terms “masculine” and feminine” and described the simultaneity with which Elliot could demonstrate care and confidence. She later positioned Elliot’s attentive leadership as a discourse she had seen from other male leaders, including her first boss and Bill Clinton, each of whom had the quality of making her feel like “I was the only person in the room for him.” This model of masculinity is reminiscent of the emotional and literate man that Skelton and Francis (2011) have described as on the rise in popular culture. This “renaissance man” could be a revision of hegemonic masculinity, and her comparison of the male principal to a former president, a powerful icon, supports that interpretation. However, her repetition that he was not a typical male throughout the interview makes it less likely that she intended to portray this as a traditional discourse for masculinity.

**Fallen off the pedestal.** As Solange was describing Elliot’s transition to the role of principal, she revealed some of the ways in which the faculty perceptions of Elliot’s gendered leadership changed as he rose to the top position in the school.

Solange: Because this is a new role and I do know like (.) at the beginning of the year or end of last year I mean everybody uh just everybody, everybody in the school thought he just hung the moon
Joanne: Right.

Solange: and then we recently did a kind of a sharing (...) where all of us were in a circle and you would, you would not have guessed it was the same school

Joanne: Wow.

Solange: he’s, he’s kind of like, I felt like it was like he’s, you know he’s fallen off the pedestal

Solange used two metaphors to illustrate her understanding of the changes in the faculty’s reaction to Elliot. First, she used “hung the moon” as a term to describe the way the faculty responded to him uncritically and with admiration. She then said, “he’s fallen off the pedestal” to explain that although the faculty had high expectations of his leadership, they have judged him as lacking in some ways. Throughout the interviews, Elliot’s use of a consensus model of decision-making was often criticized as too empathetic, when faculty felt they wanted quick decisions. The relevance of this view of the transition lies primarily in pointing out that although he had been performing administrative tasks at the school before, the responsibility for accepting the consequences of that leadership now fell on Elliot in a different way and their acceptance of his gendered leadership changed with the increase in authority.

Rebel voice. As in the case of examining monoglossia in the faculty participants’ stories, I found the rebel voice to help confirm my analysis and to unfold alternative interpretations. In the case of Brandy’s description of Elliot, when I rephrased her comments with the inverse for masculine and feminine words, I felt that the passage made less sense because I took for granted the stereotype that women would be more emotionally and interpersonally aware.
Brandy: And there’s a lot of female principals that weren’t that much different from him, where she is just like the polar opposite of most females I know. She’s just much more in tune with, emotionally concerned with other, empathetic, um (8) she’s just, she’s just not, uh in-your-face kind of gal.

Joanne: Right.

Brandy: (2) I mean I hope I’m not making her sound bad.

Similarly, the closing comment seemed absurd as these adjectives and phrases would likely be meant as compliments for women, rather than deemed derogatory.

Meanwhile, when I rewrote Sarah’s critique of the female principals, I was honestly startled. During the interview, I noted her breath and vehemence as she drew out the term “absolutism,” but otherwise nothing about her story seemed inconceivable. However, I could not imagine any situation where people would have the interchange, once I modified it.

Sarah: Um and (.) it seemed like both of the male principals were trying really hard to like (.) embody these (.) traits that I put under feminine that are like thought of typically as being feminine traits

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Sarah: but just taking it too far (.) almost like, like that’s their uniform (.) that’s who they are and I felt like they were almost resisting (.) demonstrating the more (.) masculine (.) leadership traits because (.) they wanted to be respected (.)

In fact, this passage confirmed for me the purpose in undertaking this inquiry as I reflected on the degree to which I assumed that masculine leadership traits would be more likely to garner respect. However, I also think that reading the passage gives a glimpse of possible difficulties male leaders may have if their gendered leadership is classified by their faculty as heteroglossia.
Polyglossia

Polyglossia means that social norms would allow for a principal to draw upon both masculine and feminine characteristics concurrently and without restriction in the performance of gendered leadership. In this context, while labeling a man’s actions or characteristics as feminine was common, it was relatively rare for participants to suggest that that was a normal way for a man to act. However, most participants tended to categorize the labels as “both masculine and feminine” or “neither masculine nor feminine,” with “masculine” or “feminine” used only one-fourth of the time. As an example, Ellie originally categorized all the personality and leadership characteristics as both masculine and feminine, indicating that she did not want to participate in gendered stereotyping. However, she did not sustain that attitude as she began to discuss her leaders and her workplace in her own words. Sarah and Solange were the only faculty participants to use terms they had categorized as feminine to describe Elliot.

Both. The most explicit statement of polyglossia referred to the previous principal in the same school, a woman. For example, Brandy noted, “And she had a lot of masculine and a lot of (.) feminine qualities I thought. She was like I said, both.” She described that the previous principal had hired her and, over the years, she had seen a change in her personality, leading her to develop more feminine traits like concern for others. Brandy’s reference to her more mature relationship with a female leader does not comment directly on faculty perceptions of Elliot, of course, but does provide a precedent of polyglossia as an available gendered discourse in the context.

Fatherly. I first encountered this theme in Lin Choi’s (2011) analysis of how gender impacted middle leaders, who performed some administrative duties in addition to
teaching, in Hong Kong. The findings included a filial relationship between women and their bosses. I personally reflected that that seemed like an odd description for a professional relationship and concluded that it would be unique to that context, so I was surprised when Sarah chose to use the term “fatherly” to describe Elliot.

Sarah: Um he’s very: fatherly (.)

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Sarah: like he’s always very professionally dressed and um I feel like he uses his body to um express body language that indicates that he is (.). listening and that he cares and he really tries to make eye contact with you and he calls people by name um he’s very (.). nurturing

Other participants had similarly used terms like nurture and care to describe Elliot’s behavior, while making it clear that he was not acting in a typically masculine way. Here, the polyglossia is more subtle. “Fatherly,” however, introduced a clear connection to masculinity in the description of Elliot’s use of emotionally expressive communication in his professional relationships.

**In what ways does the elementary school faculty experience leadership as gendered?** Mavis told stories with clear expectations of a man acting as a natural leader and disciplinarian. While she liked Elliot and appreciated his style, a feeling voiced by most participants, she clearly viewed his leadership as a heteroglossic performance. Violet clearly presented the way that Elliot and the previous principal acted as leaders as “the opposite of what you would expect.”

Brandy held a negative stereotype regarding female leaders’ desire for control, which reflected heteroglossia, but she had expanded her particular view of the previous principal to ployglossia as she felt that principal showed more feminine characteristics following her husband’s cancer diagnosis. Regarding Elliot, though, she clearly saw his
performance of masculinity as divergent, and she was worried that I would understand that as a negative. Veronica Vaughn reflected on the fact that she wanted to categorize “emotionally expressive” as feminine while she did not see herself as having that characteristic. She was also clear in her concern about presenting Elliot in feminine terms, affirming that she had seen him act masculine outside of the workplace. Similarly, Ellie’s clarification that Elliot was empathetic, but would not cry, meant that she was not conceiving him of freely choosing from masculine and feminine characteristics, as there were implicit limits. In these cases, the participants’ worries about the perception of Elliot acting in feminine ways or their acknowledgement of social limits for Elliot acting in feminine ways suggest that he is acting against the norms of traditional masculinity.

Sarah really showed appreciation for Elliot’s feminine characteristics and incorporated it into a “fatherly” masculinity, which can be classified as polyglossia. Interestingly, however, her description of female principals demonstrating masculine traits was heteroglossic as she saw limits to the ways in which they could draw on these successfully.

Overall, most of the participants enjoyed working with Elliot, but they felt that his gendered leadership was at odds with the social norms, a performance of heteroglossia. They struggled with desire to hear everyone’s input when resolving issues, and they felt that his care and nurturing were not typically male characteristics. While some, like Solange, seemed very comfortable with the fact that he was transgressing norms, others seemed nervous, or embarrassed, or concerned for where the limits for appropriate behavior might be.
His Gendered Leadership

Monoglossia

Outnumbered. Elliot portrayed the experience of the male principal as a lonely one. Talking about his relative isolation, he referenced two major conflicts that echoed the sentiments of the faculty, men vs. women and principal vs. faculty. At times, Elliot labeled himself “outnumbered,” and in these times, he described the situation in terms of monoglossia, as a tactic to highlight these binary divisions that position him against others. In fact, the aggressive style of conflict resolution that he described was completely at odds with his own and others’ description of his style and the behavior I observed. The use of the word “fisticuffs,” a more Victorian term for punching, demonstrates the tension between his own literary inclinations and the stereotypical masculinity he is appealing to.

Elliot: And so there’s, there’s those parts of situations that even thou:gh I’m smart and I’m competent that I really feel out of my element sometimes um (.) just because you know 99 % of the time when I’m in a room with teachers (.) um at a meeting I’m the only male in there (.) unless I’m at a meeting with my PE teacher (.) and so since that time we’ve uh we’ve hired one other male teacher um who teaches 5th grade but it’s still (.) you know that’s it’s not answering your question but it’s you know most of the inverse is where

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: I feel like I’m at an advantage except for um (.) when I’m completely surrounded by women and then (.) you know we just (.) approach things differently and I sometimes I’ll (.) have difficulty wrapping my head around you know why is it that um (.) that we’re having a hard time letting things go and move forward when I think that’s kind of in most males’ natures if there’s conflict or something (.) you know you’ll bump chests or go to fisticuffs and uh and move on and you’re okay with things um but women really seem to (.) to hold on to things for a long time and have a hard time letting some things go
At the same time as he was confirming a traditional masculine stereotype as natural, he described himself at a disadvantage at work because of the fact that he was in the minority in terms of gender. He did not seem to consider the possible advantage that his maleness might confer in these situations, rendering his privilege “invisible” (Whitehead, 2001). When talking about leadership, however, he seemed to be cognizant of the authority that he held in making the decisions and saw that that power actually led to the division, and sometimes a consequent feeling of loneliness for him. In both cases, the social privilege of his role seemed to be alienating, and, particularly regarding gender, he attributed that divide to the naturalness of traditional stereotypes.

**Career path.** The “glass escalator” is a metaphor for the social process that allows men to rise in their careers toward administrative positions with an invisible advantage, even as they are underrepresented in typically feminine occupations (Williams, 1992, 2013). This expectation of being a leader was central in Elliot’s intentions as he moved into education.

Elliot: Honestly like when I probably from about 8th or 9th grade I was interested in being a school administrator.

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Elliot: um but you have to teach [in (xxx)]

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: or prior to (.) during that so: um (.) even just teaching for that time (.) I know I was always sort of approaching situations through the lens of (.) uh being more big picture (.) of you know just outside of my classroom how might I handle a situation if uh (.) you know if it weren’t me as a teacher but if it were me in a different role (.) um but and and even when I was working on my undergrad I remember asking questions about now what do I need to do to be prepared uh to (.) administration so really just like as quickly as I could get done teaching I did and pursued a masters to get (3) that leadership role.
In this interaction, I noticed the implicit expectation of moving into leadership. His ambition also illustrates the way his privilege has allowed him to take certain opportunities for granted. Brinia (2011) and Chan (2011) similarly found that male principals do not see the ways in which gender advantaged them in their careers.

Elliot described how his interview for his assistant principal role in this school had been a bit of a whirlwind. He had known the principal as he volunteered at the school for 40 hours as part of a degree program, so when he was accepted into an assistant principal pool, he very quickly was called over for an interview, which lasted about five minutes. He relayed that on the way home from the interview, he got calls from his references letting him know they had just been spoken with the principal. In fact, in his previous positions, Elliot described similar situations of being immediately placed or even summoned into roles. He told about how he was asked to become Athletic Director, for example, and how he assumed the role of assistant principal at a high school on an interim basis along with his role directing an alternative center and then naturally moved into the role full time the following year. While his career trajectory may also reflect on the other leaders he worked with or particular situations, Elliot seemed to take for granted that ascent to the next level of leadership would be easy. When he described the process of interviewing for his current position, Elliot was surprised by the level of difficulty, stating “But that probably went on for about three weeks and uh (.) just seemed to drag on forever.” He added:

Elliot: that it just seemed (.) over the top I know that at one point the staff had questioned the superintendent about how involved it was and she had responded by saying that you know that they don’t want the perception that it’s that I’m just being handed a job um that I (.) need to earn it and that I would want to earn it which, which I did so (.) I don’t want to discount the process
Joanne: Oh yeah.

Elliot: but it was pretty, pretty involved I remember (.)

Based on his retelling, not only Elliot, but also the faculty, seemed to feel that to some degree the hiring process might be perfunctory because of his status as Assistant Principal. However, the Superintendent used the term “earn” the role, suggesting that the position was not simply his “due.”

Two days into the observation, Elliot brought up the idea of his career path that we had discussed in our phone interview. Upon reflection, Elliot expressed that the tracking into leadership positions, while a “gift” that suited his goals, also had some negative implications. He explained that when he looked back on his work, he thought that in each position he would have benefitted from being able to stay in the previous role just a couple of years to feel mastery. The ease of acceleration, often not initiated by him, meant that he did not feel as prepared as he might have liked.

Elliot also commented that he felt that employees in the office at his current district had been surprised when he told them he wanted to take an assistant principal role in an elementary school, rather than continuing to work at the secondary level. Williams (1992, 2013) had noted that a man’s move into what might be perceived as a feminine workplace might also be perceived as a loss in status. For Elliot, that choice was part of his own strategy to have experience at all levels to support a possible career move in the future.

Joanne: And then what are your future goals for leadership? And why?

Elliot: For the longest time (.) it’s been to get into a superintendency (.) um and some of that I think may have to do with prestige, some of that may have to do with how the (xxx) retirement system is set up where um
we’ve talked about having a doctorate isn’t going to pay me any more in this position it might if I’m given a different role um and they take the average of the top three years of salary and that’s what determines your retirement so there’s some things like that that I think are appealing but then there’s the other end of the superintendency I think is being able to see a system and the big picture.

While others may perceive working in a feminine workplace with younger children as a decrease in status, Elliot saw the potential for the experience to lead to greater leadership status later. Here, while others’ perceptions might classify his performance as monoglossia, his own motivation actually aligned with becoming a stronger, more powerful leader.

**Rebel voice.** Much of Elliot’s use of monoglossia related to the way that the imbalance of genders in the educational profession impact leadership and career aspirations. Using the rebel voice on one of Elliot’s description of the setting illustrated the remarkable disparity in the context, as no one would conceive of an elementary school with only three female faculty.

I really feel out of my element sometimes um (. ) just because you know 99% of the time when I’m in a room with teachers (. ) um at a meeting I’m the only female in there (. ) unless I’m at a meeting with my PE teacher (. ) and so since that time we’ve uh we’ve hired one other female teacher um who teaches 5th grade.

Even if we acknowledge that elementary schools are female-dominated, that fact is so common that we also accept it to some degree as natural. While most of Elliot’s attitudes and interaction were not classified as monoglossia, it is perhaps not surprising that at least some of his perspective remains framed by the stereotypical assumptions.

**Heteroglossia**

While Elliot showed that he may have some expectations of advantage based on his experience as a straight, White male and he certainly had an awareness of gendered
stereotypes, he more commonly described himself in ways that diverged from traditionally masculine stereotypes.

Elliot: I uh (.) I don’t know. I’m definitely not your stereotypical (.) male (.) I couldn’t care less (.) about football um and that’s hard sometimes to have a conversation with other males because they may want to lead with (.) you know what happened at the most recent (.) uh sporting event

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: and I enjoy sports but I (2) I don’t know just more of the like the musician-artist than I am (.) an athlete (.) and so I think that there’s you know that that aspect of uh maleness that I don’t know if I’ve ever really related to so (.) being male maybe I just haven’t identified with that as much I’ve never really related to that as, as much I think that part of that too is (.) um (.) as I was being raised and I’m really trying to think either six or seven my parents split up and got divorced a couple years later and my dad just completely took off um so I had a lot of male (.) mentors growing up uh but really it was my mom who helped me become who I am there’s a lot of things () that I’m like oh what she was doing you know now that I’m a parent and raising my own boys

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: um but I think that’s probably influenced me in different ways (.) um if nothing else maybe to make to help me to be more empathetic (.) and understanding and uh (.) of what other people go through

Elliot reflected on that ways his own personal experiences shaped the way he performs masculinity. He contrasted his interests in the arts with sports, explaining his non-traditional maleness. He further identified his own practice with the feminine, as his mother, a female, influenced him even more than males in his life.

**Theme.** Elliot talked about the way that he had proposed a theme to his new assistant principal in the summer. He said that other male principals don’t care about themes, but he had seen the principal at the school where his wife worked using themes well. He used the metaphor of “flight” to bring together his ideas about his vision for the school. For teachers, he wanted them to reflect on the challenge of the work they do and
the benefits of using a shared leadership model, “Let’s Fly Together.” In professional development, he emphasized Southwest Airlines’ more horizontal structure and featured a video on building planes in the air. For the beginning of school, the principal and faculty dressed up as pilots, baggage handlers, and others to share the idea with the students. His office featured a small stuffed aviator bear that someone had given him, and his nametag was a pair of wings. Elliot was excited by what they had done, and even discussed the ways they tied it with their new pursuit of IB and the idea of world travel. He also articulated that the new superintendent wanted principals to move forward with the consensus model, and he realized that the transition would take planning and collaboration. Even though Elliot had a detailed strategy to implement the superintendent’s vision in his school, he also was compelled to clarify that his selection of the strategy was not typical for a male leader, but aligned with female leaders.

**Mentor.** Many of the faculty participants believed that male leaders were better at managing a female-dominated work place. Elliot, however, conveyed a different perspective on the experience in his stories about a co-worker who had moved into administration and in his description of his relationships with his mentors.

Elliot: Now that she’s in a building working for a female principal it really bothers her and she’s called me throughout the year to kind of debrief on things (.). um where being like a subordinate to a, a female is very difficult for her (.). in that AP principal role where I think it would be easier (.). for her (.). if a male you know if a male or myself were, were in that role um I mean it’s just to me it seems like it’s that perception that uh males make good leaders when I hhhhh (.). the opposite but there’s a lot of hard decisions that I have difficulty making sometimes that as I look around I see a lot of very competent female leaders in our district

Joanne: Mhm.

Elliot: It’s seems to me like they’re outperforming (.). uh their male counterparts so I just always found that (.). interesting with this other
colleague that just um you know she doesn’t see it that way (.) but I you
know if the tables were turned like I’d have no problem working for a
female administrator and feel like in the last few years when I did (.) that I
learned far more (.) than I did when I when I worked for a male
administrator for six years prior to that (.)

As he spoke about those who were mentoring him currently, he considered that he
felt more trusting when he interacted with the female who he selected, rather than with
the male who the superintendent had assigned him. Elliot’s reasoning focused less on the
difference in the two mentors’ different genders, however, and more on the expression of
his own gendered leadership.

But I think that I just feel more comfortable (.) sharing some of the more
challenging aspects of the job (.) with her and it may be um (.) like she’s
in some ways she’s tied into the district she knows everybody in our
school district um she’s very well-known um (.) but she’s not employed
by our district and so I think that might be some of the hesitation
sometimes is I don’t want (.) this other mentor to see me as being
incompetent if I have questions for him that uh maybe might reveal me as
being a little more vulnerable (.) um and so most and I and I haven’t really
reflected on that much before but most of the questions I ask him are like I
already know the answer to I’m just looking for a second opinion.

With his assigned male mentor, Elliot wanted to demonstrate competence in his
leadership in the relationship that might impact his career trajectory. As in the previous
example considering career, Elliot demonstrated a concern for monoglossia. He felt
limited in being able to express weakness with the male mentor, as if it would be a
liability, given his role. However, he felt that he had more latitude in his other
relationship to be able to express doubts and discuss challenges without judgment. Elliot
perceived that being vulnerable could be negatively perceived and even result in punitive
measures, although he sees that as dependent upon the social context.

Elliot also described how his reflection on the treatment of one of his mentors
classified
Elliot: Um in a lot of ways he and I are probably very similar um and that been interesting for some things that I see in him as being strengths uh I routinely hear him being criticized by others for and then they’re things that I can relate to (.) and so it’s just interesting ‘cause I, I don’t always hear that about myself ‘cause you know things like that are you know probably told probably talked about behind closed doors (.) but, but my perception is is that if they’re saying things about him (.) for things that I feel like I relate to that you know odds are that people are probably saying similar things (.) uh about me or about those (.) you know traits that I may have

Joanne: What types of traits do you feel they criticize him for

Elliot: .h well it’s uh it’s that stereotypical like not being the um you know (. ) jock (. ) white male.

Elliot was aware that negative social judgment could result from enacting gendered leadership in ways that others felt diverged from the norm. He elaborated that he admired the elementary director for his ability to perform his role in the way he wanted, with an easy-going manner and funny ties. Elliot felt that he, too, went against the norms in terms of his personality, as he did not align with a traditional stereotype of masculinity. However, in order to avoid others speaking about him in adverse ways, Elliot said he consciously selected conservative ties most of the time. The faculty who commented on his dress referred to it as professional, and during the time of my observation, faculty and students expressed great surprise that he wore jeans one day on a field trip and shorts for a basketball game. It was clear that the clothing he wore was usually very consistent and uniform: dark dress slacks, long-sleeved button-down dress shirt, tie, tie pin, matching belt and dress shoes, dress socks--with sweater, vest, or blazer added in cooler weather. The implicit limits of social regulation impacted the way in which Elliot chose to enact gendered leadership.
**Rebel voice.** Elliot essentially chose to utilize the rebel voice himself as a tactic to confront his co-workers’ stereotypical attitude toward male leadership.

Elliot: Now that she’s in a building working for a female principal it really bothers her and she’s called me throughout the year to kind of debrief on things (.) um where being like a subordinate to a, a female is very difficult for her (.) in that AP principal role where I think it would be easier (.) for her (.) if a male you know if a male or myself were, were in that role um I mean it’s just to me it seems like it’s that perception that uh males make good leaders when I hhhhh () the opposite but there’s a lot of hard decisions that I have difficulty making sometimes that as I look around I see a lot of very competent female leaders in our district

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Elliot: It’s seems to me like they’re outperforming (.) uh their male counterparts so I just always found that (.) interesting with this other colleague that just um you know she doesn’t see it that way (.) but I you know if the tables were turned like I’d have no problem working for a female administrator and feel like in the last few years when I did (.) that I learned far more (.) than I did when I when I worked for a male administrator for six years prior to that (.)

He described her perspective, laughing when he explained the stereotype did not fit.

Then, he juxtaposed his experience with hers, providing the opposite interpretation. Considering “if the tables were turned” as a reflective approach which has implications for his leadership, as he does not take gendered stereotypes for granted.

**Polyglossia**

Many times, Elliot instinctively thought and acted in ways he understood as neither masculine nor feminine or both masculine and feminine. However, contextually, faculty did not always perceive his actions in alignment with his own motivation.

Elliot: Um like it’s maybe one of those subtle differences um I know when I first started I: uh would sign up for the teacher lounge rotation and part of it was just to (.) to be a bit of a brown-noser where I want to work hard and and serve others (.) and let the teachers know that I’m not out to to get anybody but I’m part of the team um and that really blew people away and partly I think it was two things and one that it was an administrator that
was helping with what typically is like a teacher (,.) duty but two there’s a lot of uh (.) perhaps like sexist comments about uh and they’re positive but [um

Joanne: Right].

Elliot: you know, there’s uh, it’s a great day when there’s a male washing dishes

Joanne: Hhhhh.

Elliot: you know, something like that.

In this case, he thought that he would be currying the favor of the faculty, but the reaction was that as both a male and a leader, he was transgressing norms by engaging in the task. His utterance before he said the phrase the faculty member used seemed to indicate some reluctance or embarrassment, but the response had not constrained his behavior.

**Researcher reflexivity.** Here, the transcript shows my laughter in response to the faculty member’s comment. I regret the way in which my own communication here played into stereotypical norms, and my own critical reflection only emerged after the interaction. I am fully aware that I laughed because, socially, it is taken for granted that a man doing housework is funny. The automaticity of our responses in many cases does not negate our possibility of choice, but does suggest that we are conditioned with many repeated tropes and conventions through our social interaction.

**Finding a pattern.** During his second interview with me, Elliot had sorted certain leadership and personality traits according to his perception of them as feminine, masculine, both feminine and masculine, or neither feminine nor masculine. A later question asked him to look back at the traits and consider which ones he would use to describe himself.
Elliot: (5) I’m overthinking the question as I’m looking through the pattern (5) I would say emotionally expressive

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: (8) it’s interesting that adaptability and resilience that are almost on like opposite ends here and I don’t know if that was my intention but (.) I would list both of those. Oh, it’s upside down somehow.

Joanne: Yeah, it’s not on screen lock.

Elliot: (20) and I’m gonna say commitment and concern with others. That’s interesting there really is a trend there.

Based on his own categorization of the terms on a gendered continuum, Elliot found most of the terms he would use to describe himself to be on the feminine side. Conversely, when describing his associate principal, he suggested that their leadership styles were complementary, referring to the traits and particularly to the line of traits he arranged with masculine that refer to her.

Elliot: And the same as with like my AP and myself

Joanne: Mmhmm.

Elliot: work very well together because we’re so different. She’s very ambitious, competitive, uh decisive (. ) assertive you know I’m like [cutting an edge

Joanne: Right].

Elliot: right down that line (. ) um a lot of confidence (3) and I love her I mean she’s great

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: but I mean I know we’re two very different people.

He verbally articulated that there was a pattern within his gendered categorization of the traits, but did not explicitly articulate that her behavior aligned more closely with his perception of masculine and his own with feminine. It is possible that he did not name
these trends because he felt that I understood the pattern. Regardless, his labeling of himself in some feminine terms is notable. Only 2 of the 10 faculty participants included feminine traits as they described Elliot. His own selection of traits revealed a performance of polyglossia.

**Role model.** The need for boys to have role models in school is often repeated in popular culture, but the generalization often minimizes the fact that there are many different types of men and many ways in which they enact their masculinity. Martino (2008) has articulated the ways in which the attitudes about role models perpetuate traditional masculinity and heteronormativity. However, Elliot’s conception of a role model was distinct from the more typical call for a strong, more traditionally masculine figure as he wants to exhibit care and compassion in his relationships with students to make them understand that men have that discourse available to them. Elliot described that he valued having male role models, as his personal experience included his growing up with a single mother, citing his admiration of one English teacher who had been friends with his father and could talk about memories he had with him as an inspiration for his own teaching career. He also spoke about one assistant principal who he admired, saying he had spoken in job interviews about his behavior as an example for Elliot’s own leadership style.

Elliot: So his kids were maybe four or five years younger than I am but I could see him kind of in that dual role of (2) you know school leader as well being a dad so I think that, not that I’m trying to be everyone’s dad

Joanne: Right.

Elliot: but I think it’s important for a lot of kids who don’t have a positive male role model might be living just with mom or might be living with grandparents (.) to see that a father-like figure can be someone who cares and is compassionate (2)
He related this type of masculinity in ordinary terms, even describing it as “positive.” Whereas Violet described role models in terms of identification based on sex and gendered characteristics like feminine caring, Elliot incorporated that same characteristic into a vision of what it is to be male and saw the importance of being a role model for all students. These subtle changes convey that, rather than a vision of monoglossia, he has transformed the concept of role model as one that conveys polyglossia. In this conception of gendered leadership, Elliot sees a male principal’s role as father united with leader, combining masculinity and care. Later, when discussing what experiences inform his work, Elliot again brought up the importance of the idea of parenting as a model for being an elementary principal, stating “I would take (.) experiences um from you know from being a dad or from being a teacher in the classroom uh I was working on you know situations (.) from my children or interaction with others and my mother.” While he continued to elaborate regarding his previous leadership experiences, it is significant that he led with his experiences of being a caregiver and of being cared for.

**Emotional turn.** Elliot confirmed the ways in which educational leadership is emotional work. He viewed the transition to principal as a great increase in responsibility, one that impacted many others’ welfare and, consequently, his own social and emotional well-being.

You know a lot of time we might make some decisions (.) that are pretty lonely decisions and you know that might have other consequences for us in terms of isolating us from staff for a temporary (.) period of time and uh it’s sort of hard that it is hard that emotional piece I yeah (.) I will say coming into this position this fall (.) um it’s a much different (.) shift in responsibility and uh just (.) different components of the job than what I’ve been used to the last eight years as assistant principal where you’d always have someone else you could go to help make the decision or make the decision for you (.) um and now that’s me and so (.) I know early on
this semester we like got off to a great start and then mid-September, October I really felt overwhelmed (.) and uh I needed to be that person you know I felt the stress of you know 60 other people who were looking to me for answers and you know needing me to lead them which hhhhh is my job but I think that um (.) but I think that you know that there was a bit of stress or anxiety for you know six to eight weeks in the fall that (. ) I really didn’t expect and it’s taken me (. ) um just in getting used to you know shifting how I respond to things a little differently so that (. ) you know depending on how you define that (. ) emotion.

His laughter illustrated that he found his reluctance to lead in his role as leader ironic, and it likely indicated the pressure that came through in his emphasis on the word “stress.” Not only was he honest about the tension the role added, but he also was clear about how his empathy for his faculty played out in his leadership style.

Faculty. While most principals find stress in their jobs, Elliot also positively leveraged his emotions in his work with others. He did this not as a means to effect efficiency (Blackmore, 2013), but as out of a true desire to nurture others. Elliot showed a deep understanding of his faculty. In the course of the week, he answered a few calls for references and was easily and spontaneously able to provide a nuanced description of each as a unique individual. He was very aware of health and family situations and how they affected each faculty member. Elliot described how his own acclimation to the role helped him to empathize with a new mother who was struggling with her return to work and his efforts to find a compromise to help her be successful. He spoke of a close relationship with a teacher who was retiring, saying “anytime that comes up she gets emotional and then almost immediately it really triggers that, in me.”

He also talked about how the emotion impacted his problem-solving, as he worked with a teaching team that had interpersonal problems. He had asked everyone to take a personality test so that everyone could understand each other’s perspective, and he
found that his type was defined in terms of “compassion, empathy, emotion.” He could see both sides of the issue, stating he empathized with the teachers whose type was the rule-follower as he knew they were feeling like they were having to do someone else’s work, and he felt for the “outside-the-box” thinker who he was working to develop. In another meeting, I noted he asked how the teachers felt about a change, rather than what they thought.

The apology. One of Elliot’s passions was finding ways to bring the international-mindedness of the IB to this school. He was a veteran of the Peace Corps and really wanted to make connections around the world. He talked of two trips that were scheduled for the summer, one to a Latin American country to complete community service in coordination with the local Rotary club and another trip to China to build a relationship with another school so students could communicate and potentially visit each other. In his announcement of the opportunity to go to China, Elliot had explained that the exchange that summer was for teachers to teach English, specifying that they wanted native speakers. He had then pointed out the two who were not native speakers.

He received an email asking for a meeting about cultural stereotypes, which he thought related to what he had said. In the first two days of my observation, he brought it up, once to me and once to his assistant principal. When he noticed the teacher in the office, her asked her to come in and apologized. He explained that he had been ignorant, not thinking of her perspective, and that he would do better now that he knew better. He demonstrated concern for her feelings after the incident and then vulnerability in admitting his own error.
Hand on his heart. As the principal, one of the tasks Elliot was faced with was discipline. However, unlike most adult males in elementary schools who react to these situations with a traditional authoritative masculinity (Haase, 2008; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012), Elliot met all of the demands of acting as disciplinarian, but he gave consequences in mind of the context of the situation and the growth of the student. Notably, one of the faculty participants had mentioned that she felt more equipped to handle the girls’ major problems, and, in fact, all of the students that Elliot disciplined during the time of my observation were male.

Elliot’s caring approach to student discipline was clear in his language and nonverbal communication. He repeatedly used phrases like “that’s going to break my heart” and “bless his heart.” At one point, he explained that a situation weighed on him, placing his hand on his heart to emphasize his feeling. Elliot sought to give students attention and time when they needed it, demonstrating flexibility and concern. He greeted a young student in the office for his behavior, bending down to his level and began by saying, “I bet we could make this a good day. I bet you can do that.” He talked about how he had supervised a student for a break and played tetherball with him to give him some positive interaction. In one interaction with a student who had been sent to the office, Elliot asked the student how he was feeling and asked the student for possible solutions. In all of his interactions, his body language was focused on the student, listening and respectful.

He was not just focused on the short-term punishment, but strove to understand causes and promote positive behavior. As he spoke to two boys, Elliot discovered that their frustration had begun, in part, in the classroom as they had just gotten back bad
grades on a test right before recess. Elliot acknowledged how their disappointment had led to the conflict, “You both want to be awesome, so it hurts in the core when not successful.” Later, after one student mentioned that he wanted to be a police officer, Elliot told him he would make sure he could meet one of the local officers.

He referred to his thinking as “grey,” not “black and white,” when considering suspension vs. alternatives. In one case, he selected the lesser of possible consequences, an in-school suspension, for a student, noting his growth and explaining that in previous years, the student had been in the office daily. In another situation, he moderated the response of the coaches, choosing to just suspend the student for one game, rather than kicking him off of the team.

Elliot explained that social and emotional learning was hard for the faculty. At one point, between handling two disciplinary situations, Elliot said, “I think half the staff is at the end of their rope,” nodding as he added, “including AP.” In the case of one first-grade student, he wanted the teachers to be more empathetic to the situation the student was in. Elliot talked about thinking about why a student might be having a harder time and showing “open and loving” attitudes. In terms of leadership, Elliot’s style was a shift for faculty, as he mentioned that the previous principal had advocated suspension, saying she did not want to be an expensive babysitter.

**More emotional.** Elliot identified that his more emotional expression and responses seemed to be related to his personal life.

Elliot: And I’ve also noticed like, separate from that, the more time that goes on the older I get the more emotional like and that’s interesting too. So my mom’s been gone for about 13 years

Joanne: Mhmhm.
Elliot: and that was really hard for me um and so that might influence some of that too, you know

Joanne: Yeah.

Elliot: That distance from when she’s been gone I’ve had two boys (.) neither one had the opportunity to be able to (.) know her. That’s been hard but definitely the older I get it seems the more emotional I get.

Again, Elliot was quite honest about the impact of emotion on his leadership. He also reflected on the connections between his personal experience and professional approach.

**Family first.** Elliot felt his commitment to his professional life and to his personal life sometimes seemed to be in competition with each other.

Joanne: So how do you balance (.) personal and professional life?

Elliot: Not very well hhhhh and I, I don’t know if that’s true for most people my (.) my biggest challenge I think is that my wife and I (.) are just completely consumed (.) by our jobs um and so even when we get home um you know from the time we get home to the time we get the boys put to bed and sometimes afterwards (.) we really just like decompress about our day, we both work in the same school district we know a lot of the same people or families (.) um and so it’s really hard for us some times to (. ) you know not perseverate on (. ) education or (. ) our work um and you know so I it is a tough, tough balance and I think the other challenge with that is that then when (.) um I’m so engaged with our doctoral work through (xxx) (.) that like that’s one more layer and I feel like (.) I have my hand in you know four different areas where it’s (.) schoolwork, and then I’ve got school at (xxx)

Joanne: Yeah.

Elliot: and then I have you know the times that I (.) value and need to devote to (.) uh my wife and that I’m raising two boys and um and so I think those in those four areas like I really am working hard to keep more balance (.) um because when I do get so consumed (.) with one of those four things (.) then I pay for it with the other three hhhhh um and so I know I’m getting better at it but um.

His selection of the words “consume” and “perseverate” indicate his continuous investment of thought and effort into his work. At the same time, he very clearly gave
attention to his family as he described the areas of importance in his life and balanced it equally into four parts: wife and children, which make up family, and school and work, which relate to career. Still, the strain of balancing these areas is manifest in the hesitation, “but um,” as he finishes his explanation.

One of the most difficult elements to manage in the work-life balance was time. He spoke to his assistant principal often about the time needed to complete the work. Once, he joked that he would respond to an email at 3 a.m. However, the subtext was that he would need to be up all night to finish what he needed to do. In fact, another day, he relayed to her how he had gotten home from work, taken care of his family, and then caught up on email from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. His care for his faculty had led him to volunteer the previous Saturday to clean up after an activity, because he felt “obligated” to let the custodian “off the hook.”

Not only time, but money, was a resource that work draws away from his family. He talked about balancing the school budget and balancing his own. He spent out of pocket to pay for some school resources and, most recently, had purchased gifts for faculty appreciation. He explained that they were a little smaller than he might have wanted them to be. He compared his own ability to give his all to his school unfavorably with another female principal, the leader of his wife’s school. He admired her leadership, but commented that she is single, so she is able to give more freely of both her time and money. The idea that a single person can devote all of their energy to being principal echoed the sentiments of one of the faculty participants, Leslie, as she described a female principal she had once worked for.
Having a spouse was, again, portrayed as a complication to a career in educational leadership when Elliot was speaking to his assistant principal, as he brought up the worry that her career advancement would mean that she would not be his partner for more than two years. She mentioned that her husband wanted to become a principal, so she would not be moving on. They concurred that both spouses could not be principals. If the draw on resources seems to preclude both spouses in these families with young children becoming administrators, then it is worth noting that both families made the decision that the male would become principal.

While Elliot aimed for higher administrative positions in the future, his ambition was tempered by the importance of being active in his own children’s lives.

But at the same time I see numerous superintendents (who have?) a 24 hour a day job and so it’s something that I don’t know at what point that I might be ready to do that (.) but it definitely won’t be when I kids I have to let them get through school first (.) and so then like I, it’s this game that I play with balancing retirement with like professional aspiration and giving back to others is that by the time my younger son gets through (.) high school uh we’ll have 30 years in (.) to the system so we’ll be at the point where we could retire so I don’t know if I’ll ever get to that point (.) I’d like to but my family comes first, make sure that I have time.

He prioritized his time with family over the potential prestige and financial rewards he acknowledged make the career ladder appealing.

**In what ways does the elementary school faculty experience leadership as gendered?** The faculty participants generally felt that feminine traits included emotional expressiveness and being concerned with others and that physical strength and assertiveness were masculine characteristics. At this specific site, they diverged from the stereotypes in the literature by characterizing friendly as both feminine and masculine, rather than as feminine and competitiveness and independence as both feminine and masculine rather than masculine. In addition, some interpreted responsiveness,
resilience, courage, modesty and commitment in feminine terms and self-confidence as a masculine concept. Most terms were viewed as both feminine and masculine. In their application of the words to their current male principal and previous female principals, only two participants chose to apply feminine terms to the male principal, while five chose to use masculine terms to describe female principals.

When telling about their own experiences in their own words, faculty described the ways they saw gendered stereotypes playing out in the workplace. At least half of the participants voiced that Elliot’s leadership style as transgressing masculine norms, however, using words like “not typical,” “oddly,” “polar opposite,” “ironically,” and “nontraditional.” They also made clear that there were limits to how much transgression would be socially appropriate, taking care with establishing the degree to which he was emotionally expressive or checking that they were not “making him look bad.” His style was mostly viewed as heteroglossia. Nevertheless, two participants offered views that suggested a leader could successfully blend on both masculine and feminine characteristics. Regarding Elliot, Sarah’s use of the word “fatherly” summed up her acceptance of him acting nurturing and masculine at the same time.

In what ways does gender shape the experiences of a male elementary school principal? Elliot used terms that he categorized as feminine and masculine terms to describe himself. He used traditional stereotypes to explain the divides between principal and faculty and men and women, and to some degree, that his privilege as a White, straight male impacted his expectations in terms of his career. He was conscious that he did not adhere to a traditional stereotype of masculinity, and social perception sometimes constrained his behavior. More typically, however, his leadership style was characteristic
of polyglossia. Interestingly, he mentioned drawing on his experiences as a dad in his leadership, and he wanted to be a “father-like” figure for students. His behavior with faculty and students was consistently caring, while he also put forth an image of a masculine leader in his dress and manner.

Elliot diverges from the norm, but still operates typically enough that he is able to benefit from the advantages of being a straight, White male. As Sarah had pointed out, some male leaders have the latitude to exhibit warmth without being judged as weak. Elliot noted, “perhaps that [emotion] makes me a little vulnerable but (.) but again I guess that I see it as a strength because I’m confident with who I am and how I feel so .h.” He felt the freedom to act emotionally expressive, a characteristic he deems feminine, in part, because of the protection his maleness affords. Nevertheless, Elliot did not operate with unrestrained privilege. He understood the social norms of his community, and while his own behavior did not always align with the most traditional ideals, he did feel internal pressure to revise some of his own practice to more closely reflect that image at times.

**Conclusion**

In terms of masculinity, Elliot did not completely follow the model of hegemonic masculinity, but he did benefit from the way that power operates, so he would be classified as showing a complicit masculinity. As a straight, White male, he has the power to draw from both feminine and masculine traits in his practice of leadership without negative repercussions. The faculty participants verbalized in some ways that he is practicing a masculinity that is the opposite of a traditional stereotype, but most of them only cast him as “both masculine and feminine” or “masculine” when they were mindful. Faculty participants also seemed to feel the need to distinguish his practice
from subordinate masculinity, a category often used to represent effeminate or homosexual behavior. Faculty participants generally did not want to describe his as feminine, which might lead to concerns that he was truly practicing a subordinate masculinity, and they exhibited knowledge that some of his practices are more feminine and showed concern that he will go too far and be judged negatively. Meanwhile, Elliot was aware of operating with a blend of characteristics which is not wholly masculine, but he nevertheless operates with motivations and aspirations that align with privilege. His gendered leadership overall corresponded, in part, to the “renaissance man” in high school who blends popularity, literary interests, and even athleticism into a “revised” hegemonic masculinity (Skelton & Francis, 2011). However, the implications of dominance in the concept of hegemony do not align with either the faculty participants’ perception or Elliot’s to sublimate some of his behaviors which reflect a subordinate masculinity. Elliot’s affable, nurturing authority is a performance of polyglossia with power of its own, blending the privileges of maleness with feminine care and expressiveness.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter IV, I explored how the themes of monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia wove through the descriptions of gendered leadership at one school. Many faculty participants expressed a preference for male leadership, in part suggesting that a man could constrain the behavior of the largely female faculty. However, as they talked, they revealed that the performance of the current male principal did not align with stereotypical masculine norms. Three faculty members used the word feminine or words they had categorized as feminine to describe him or his behavior. However, other faculty members made comments that illustrated the boundaries of heteroglossic performance that would be considered socially acceptable. Elliot realized that his gendered leadership was generally perceived as against the norms and, based on this perception, he constrained his behaviors to a limited degree, as seen in his selection of ties. Mostly, he drew on both feminine and masculine traits as he enacted his leadership, and he related that in many ways to his personal experience of being raised by a single mother. Nevertheless, his subjectivity as a straight, White male led to some expectation with regard to his career path. In many ways, Elliot demonstrated the ways that his particular context impacted the way he performed gendered leadership. Here, I will further explore the implications for current leaders as well as future research. In addition, I will address the limitations of the study and my reflections on this inquiry.
Stereotypes

The majority of participants wanted more balance in terms of gender among teachers, rather than being in a female-dominated workplace. However, the root of that concern lay in gendered stereotypes. First, there was an assumption that men are innately different than women, including the belief that men make better leaders. Second, there were assumptions that women are caring, on the positive side, and catty, on the negative side. In reality, there were men and women working in the school who did not align with these stereotypes. However, even the “positive” stereotypes held the potential for negative ramifications, as in the case of Violet who was caring, helping girls because she connected with them best. In her allegiance to this stereotypical framework, Violet had conceptually distanced herself from the boys and justified it. Examination of our personal and professional experience is essential to the development of our curriculum and instruction (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Reflection on how gender shapes our own behavior should be part of that work, undertaken individually or with a group. Elliot mentioned the reflection that he had done through cultural proficiency workshops, and additional professional development could support the development of faculty culture so they learn how to question and participate in their assumptions.

Discipline

In this school site, during this week, only male students came to the principal. While a general reflection of gendered attitudes will also support changes in any gendered pattern that may exist in a school, it is also important to identify any trends that may be happening with regard to discipline, in particular, and to critically reflect on if
and how assumptions may perpetuate them. In addition to considering the ways in which the genders of students, teachers, and administrators impact discipline, one can also carefully contemplate the differences between our reactions to aggression often deemed “masculine,” physical acts, or “feminine,” relational acts.

**Constraint**

The way in which teachers see the principal can act as a constraint on his leadership style. One way his leadership is impacted is simply in his selection of what he deals with and when he needs support. In the case of discipline, it shapes his practice to some degree by taking care of all the girls and leaving certain boys for him to handle. In the instance of dress, Elliot reflected on how he wanted to be taken more seriously, so he selected his ties accordingly. Moreover, the faculty twice referred to the implicit limits of appropriate behavior in terms of his masculinity. Principals need to be cognizant of the element of reciprocity inherent in the relationship between leader and staff, particularly as they consider the performance of gender within the culture in order to act in ways that will be effective in motivating them to perform at their best levels (Arar & Oplatka, 2014).

**Career Path**

Individual principals and superintendents need to engage in thoughtful and equitable hiring and promotional practices. Moreover, these practices need to be monitored in order to consider possible advantages in the process, including gender. The interviewing system that Elliot described in the hiring as a principal allowed for many perspectives to consider multiple candidates in more than one context. In this way,
specific criteria and transparent communication about the process can decrease any sense of entitlement on one side and suspicions of jobs being gifted on the other side.

**Outnumbered**

Certainly, Elliot felt outnumbered, as a leader and in terms of gender. Given my poststructural feminist framework, it is worth being critical of those systems that we may take for granted. In the case of leadership, one might consider if education could be disrupted to allow for a more horizontal team-based approach. In fact, Williams (2013) has shown that the organizations that persist in the “glass escalator” model in female-dominated workplaces tend to be those that are more traditional, hierarchical organizations. Of course, the other way to disrupt the “glass escalator” would be to increase the numbers of men teaching younger students in an effort to make the work force more equitable. Unfortunately, to do that requires the disruption of long-held stereotypes that impact social status, pay, and authority. Critical and honest reflection on our thoughts and experiences in education, again, seem to be the start of the path toward change.

**Limitations of the Study**

**Variety of Resources**

In the development of a case study, the researcher needs to have access to a variety of sources (Stake, 1995). I completed interviews that were audio-recorded, and I took notes on my observations. In addition, I collected email correspondence from the principal. In order to protect anonymity, I asked for emails that he sent out to all faculty. This process was, in part, complicated by the fact that he and his assistant principal often composed these general documents together. In addition, the general nature of the style
and topics did not contribute to the themes that developed through the interviews and observations. The inclusion of one-on-one communication between Elliot and the faculty, particularly the addition of the faculty responses, may have served to add to the depth of the study.

Further, I had intended to video record Elliot at one meeting during the course of my observation. I chose not to video record the first meeting we attended because it was the first day of my observation and he introduced me to the faculty. I had the impression that the faculty were still wary of me at that point, and I did not want to risk their trust by videotaping, even if I would not have focused on any of them. I assumed that I would have another opportunity in the course of the week, but I did not. While I do have written records of meetings that refer to his speech and actions, I am aware that these notes do not compare to the richness of a video. The ability to return to the recording for in-depth analysis would not only have added to the data, but also contributed to my own deeper reflection on the data as a researcher.

**Sampling**

In this particular case, the fact that I knew the principal in the capacity as classmate allowed me to know that the school had recently had a female principal. The relationship also supported my gaining access, which was important because people are often sensitive speaking about gender and its impact on behavior. In this way, the convenient and snowball forms of sampling was advantageous for the study.

In the group of faculty participants, there was some diversity in terms of years of experience as a teacher, but all volunteers were White women. None of the Latina or
male faculty members were part of the sample, so the results necessarily lack the
diversity of voices at the site.

**Interview**

Both the sorting activity during the interview and the answers to the interview
questions provided incredibly revealing information. Nevertheless, the process could
have been more refined if I had taken the opportunity to pilot the sorting process and
interview questions prior to my work with the participants. The explanation of the
sorting process could have included more detail regarding the possibility of thinking of
the gendered labels as a framework for a continuum. In this way, faculty participants
would have had the opportunity to present a more nuanced view of their perspective on
the personality and leadership traits. While all of the faculty participants chose to use the
labels as headings to group traits under or around and the principal created a less static
layout, no conclusions can be drawn from that divergence. His questions about the
possibility of a less-rigid framework led me to elaborate, but he had a pre-existing
relationship and a more powerful position that may have contributed to his feeling able to
question me as a researcher. Meanwhile, I could not infer that the faculty participants
would have asked the same question of me if it had occurred to them because I was in a
position of researcher, which may be perceived as expert, and they may simply have
followed my instructions without feeling able to ask for adjustments.

With regard to the interview questions, I had many reflections on the process
following the data collection. For the faculty, my estimate on the timing of the questions
was a hindrance. I would like to have been more accurate with regard to the estimate on
the participant release form and my invitation to potential participants. Given the
extremely limited free time of the teachers that I realized once I arrived at the school site, I believe that suggesting that the interview time frame would be half an hour rather than an hour could have potentially attracted additional participants.

In my interviews with Elliot, I had attempted to make his second interview quite similar to that of the faculty, although, with the exception of the final question about career, there was not a larger purpose for that organization than time management. There were questions about career path and role models in both interviews. The period between the two interviews allowed Elliot to have time to reflect on the issues and, with regard to career, he drew some conclusions on his own in the meantime that he was able to share with me because I brought up the topic again. If I were aware of the potential reflection, I would have staggered some of my other questions between the two interviews.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

**Mentoring and Masculinity in Education Leadership**

Williams (1992) suggested that men create networks of advantage in female-dominated careers and that Larusdottir concludes that it may be difficult for female, or male, principals to use a caring and collaborative leadership approach, traditionally labeled as feminine, if the political context has a managerialist emphasis on competition and efficiency, rather than social relations, and quality types of mentorships support younger men’s accelerated career development. In this instance, while Elliot referred primarily to career role models who were male, he primarily connected with females as a source of advice and mentoring. He described these women as exceedingly competent leaders and, at least with one, suggested that he was able to be more vulnerable in that relationship. Arar and Oplatka (2014) encouraged female mentors for male principals in
order to expose them to more feminine characteristics in leadership, which is problematic in its assumption that women will necessarily demonstrate feminine characteristics, but valuable in the suggestion that feminine traits might be important to mentoring.

Researching mentoring and gender in educational leadership could then be very rich. First, in what ways does gender correlate to the networking systems that young males in educational careers find they create on their own and what is extended to them, and does this look different at elementary and secondary levels? Second, to what degree does the way in which a male principal demonstrates his masculinity impact the formation of his mentoring relationships? In this instance, Elliot preferred mentoring from women, but to what degree is that impacted by his own heteroglossic performance of gendered leadership or his personal experience? Of course, the previous female principal, whose practice was occasionally deemed masculine, diverged from his perspectives, which caused me to consider an additional question. To what degree might male principals find it more difficult to show weakness or vulnerability with other men based on social norms and consider the possible impact of “saving face” in mentoring relationships between men (Goffman, 2003)?

**Male Principals Balancing Family and Work**

Elliot is an example of an involved father and husband who makes time for his family, but then must sacrifice time for sleep in order to complete his day-to-day work requirements, like responding to email. Both he and his assistant principal have young families in which both adults are pursuing education careers. Both concluded that only one of the spouses could become a principal, implying that the other parent would be
taking on some of the additional household duties. In both cases, the decision had been made that the male would become a principal.

One area to explore is the family demands on male leaders. As social norms change, if men are taking on more work in the home in addition to their administrative duties, how do they manage the combination of the two? Also, how does changing family priorities impact males’ career paths? Elliot suggested that he may not pursue the final step in his goals because of the balance with family life. Lin Choi (2011) also briefly mentioned that one of two male participants would not consider a move into the role of principal unless he could balance that with the role he wanted to have in his daughter’s life. Males choosing to emphasize family over promotion would have definite implications for balancing the genders of both teachers and administrators.

In addition, research could include to what degree principals or faculty perceive differences in leadership relative to marital status. Evaluating the actual hours spent with work and family activities would allow for comparison with faculty and principal perception, and the information would be valuable for current and future leaders in reflecting on how to balance demands.

**Reframing Leadership**

Many researchers have seen that women in certain contexts have been able to leverage socially acceptable skills to become educational leaders. Shah (2010) used mothering as a framework to reframe the idea of being a principal empowering Muslim women and, simultaneously, rendering the concept more palatable according to social norms. Lumby (2014) also found that South African female principals referred to the concept of mothering as a means of balancing the masculine elements of leadership. In
this study, the comments of the principal and a faculty member seemed to adopt the social construct of “father” as a way for a male principal to exhibit feminine characteristics in a way that was compatible with masculinity and leadership. Further research into the ways that male principals draw on both feminine and masculine characteristics in their leadership can help to determine if this practice is specific to the context, or if it is being used more frequently like the concept of “mother” has been. In particular, this research has the potential to explore whether the use of the concept “father” really establishes an alternative way for men to do education or if there are ways in which this construct has been appropriated to revise hegemonic masculinity, similar to Skelton and Francis’ (2011) interpretation of a teenaged male student who became a “renaissance man.”

**Intersectionality**

The aim of this study was to understand faculty perceptions and the principal’s own performance of gendered leadership. In this study, there was one occasion where a faculty member hinted that, while Elliot is feminine, he is not gay, which caused me to consider exploring the ways intersectionality impacts gendered leadership. Williams (2013) has noted that men who are gay or Black often do not benefit from the glass escalator in female-dominated workplaces and may even be attributed less status than females. In what ways do faculty perceive the leadership of a gay man and, in particular, where might they establish those implicit limits regarding what behavior is socially appropriate if a man were practicing subordinate masculinity? Again, context would be valuable to a study that explores these concepts; for example, in terms of policy,
California schools are more protective for gay principals and teachers, while Texas schools are less favorable towards employees who are out (Connell, 2012).

**Principals, Faculty, and Students**

In this study, I examined the interrelationship between faculty’s perceptions of gendered leadership and the male principal’s performance of leadership, developing ideas from Fuller’s (2014) study of a community’s understanding of a female principal’s gendered leadership. Other research has examined the ways teachers interact with their students with gendered assumptions (Keddie, 2006) and how male and female teachers perceive each other in gendered ways (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Haase, 2008; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012; Sargent, 2013). A future study could examine the gendered attitudes and interaction of principal, teachers, and students. In this study, Violet’s gendered conclusions about how boys and girls act in specific ways seemed to have clear implications for discipline and school culture overall. Further, the faculty comments about working with women and men demonstrated the gendered attitudes regarding their peers’ performance of gender.

Considering the attitude and behavior of the principal, faculty, and students would give an opportunity to look for convergence and divergence throughout the school. For example, in this case, Elliot was seen as heteroglossic because he performed a complicit form of masculinity, rather than a traditional one. Ellie, too, remarked that she was held to specific standards in her appearance by her faculty peers, conforming to a more traditional monoglossia. But, Violet seemed to resent the more traditional manifestation of masculinity she saw in her male students’ attitude toward women. An inquiry that included all members of the school community could analyze the alignment in behavior
and attitudes among all groups, providing insight into the ways gender norms are perpetuated or revised.

**Researcher’s Reflections**

Throughout the data collection, I felt that I was constantly reflecting, not only on the social relations between principal and faculty, but also on those that emerged between myself and the principal and myself and the faculty participants. My previous research projects had been undertaken at my own school site. As a consequence, I did not actually feel any difference in the social relations that I had with the participants. In this instance, while I did have a previous relationship with the principal as a fellow student, I had no background with the faculty participants. In this context, I reflected differently on the assumptions they brought with them regarding my various subjectivities and my own reaction to their perception.

**Myself and the Principal**

In my interaction with the principal, the main subjectivity on which we found correspondence was that of leader. He talked about budgets, hiring decisions, disciplinary actions, and instructional choices with me as one would with a peer. However, my role as a leader at my school was known to him because we had been in doctoral courses together. For that same reason, he did not seem to be concerned with my role as researcher. His awareness of how to conduct research and the fact that he was the one who gave me access to the site placed him in a position where he could question me about the labels on the sorting process, for example. We spoke at length about gender, of course, but primarily in relation to him, and I was much more aware of my own gendered performance with faculty.
Myself and the Faculty

As a researcher, I encountered some difficulty in that the faculty participants often seemed to want to do well on the interview, to answer the questions, and sort the words correctly. After feedback from the first participant, I clarified in my initial directions that there was no wrong or right way to sort the terms. Solange actually expressed relief when I told her that. I became aware that there was the feeling that my role as researcher was considered similar to that of an inspector when Brandy explained she didn’t want to make Elliot look bad. For me, I did not see the situation as one that could be right or wrong, good or bad, but really, just as one that I wanted to understand more deeply. In some ways, my reactions to these types of comments were confirming that I was, in a poststructural sense, not relying on the convenience of binary compartmentalization.

I had assumed that my subjectivity as a leader would carry with me into this context. In my own school environment, I am considered as an administrator, despite the fact that I am not the principal because in our structure, I have authority and responsibility for decision-making on many issues that are important to faculty. However, for faculty participants, I definitely was not considered a principal, although neither was I considered faculty.

In reaching out to the faculty, both my elementary teaching experience and my femaleness were correspondences that helped to develop trust. I was able to converse in the faculty lounge or with faculty as we entered their classrooms for interviews. I know that the ability to find that common ground made me feel more at ease, and it may have made the teachers feel more willing to participate. My femaleness was something which Mavis most clearly noticed, appealing to a sort of shared feminine feeling. While I am
female, the type of sociability that she was portraying as an essential female trait was not a characteristic I actually did share with her. Nevertheless, I did not disagree, as my role in this case was to elicit her perspective. In this school, as they had minimal background knowledge of me and my personality, I became female in a very monoglossic sense. This perception diverged from my experience in my own school where I am aware that my own gendered leadership is perceived as heteroglossic and that is conveyed to me in both direct and subtle ways. While at my own school I may experience some constraint from social perception that I am transgressing norms, in this instance I felt constraint when I was assumed to perform “female” in a way that feels very unfamiliar to me. However, I feel that these small moments of discomfort were essential in my process of gaining deeper reflexivity.

Conclusion

Previous research found that male principals often resort to traditional masculinity as they engage in the emotional work of educational administration (Gill & Arnold, 2015), but this case includes a male principal who chose an alternate path of complicit masculinity. My purpose in this inquiry was to understand faculty perceptions of gendered leadership and how a male principal performs gendered leadership. The findings showed that the faculty participants used specific gendered stereotypes to inform their understanding of their female-dominated workplace and its leadership. They tended to view the current male principal’s performance as heteroglossia, transgressing traditional masculinity. In the course of interviews, certain participants described the principal in terms of what he was not, establishing some limits as to what might have been socially acceptable performances of masculinity. The male principal was aware of
social perceptions of masculinity from informal situations and, in one instance, he chose to modify his behavior to align more closely with local norms. However, from his perspective, his leadership was generally a performance of polyglossia, drawing from masculine and feminine traits. Notably, the “glass escalator” (Williams, 2013) effect seemed to have impacted his experiences regarding career growth, with an expectation of easy advancement.

Research could build on this study in multiple ways. First, Elliot’s insights with his own practice suggested an alternative to ideas that men create networks of advantage (Williams, 1992), and critical insights into actual practices are warranted. The ways that male principals balance family and work is another area for research to consider how potentially changing expectations for men in terms of home and family impact their work. The exploration of how this particular model of masculinity in educational leadership, “the dad,” could be further examined to consider its prevalence and whether it is an alternative masculinity or a revision of hegemonic masculinity. More studies should also be completed to expand the understanding of faculty and principal perceptions of intersectionality and gendered leadership, in cases where the principal is a Black male or gay male. Finally, looking at the interactions throughout a school community could add to the understanding of how gendered expectations converge or diverge among principals, teachers, and students.

The findings also have implications for current practice. Both principals and teachers would benefit from ongoing reflection on the stereotypes they themselves hold and the ways they see stereotypes impacting their interaction, including social constraint. Moreover, the fairly rapid acceleration of a male administrator in which he questions his
own readiness for various positions suggests that hiring and promotional practices in districts should be examined. Potential disruption of the hierarchical model of administration itself, moving to more horizontal organization could not only have an impact on the binary division of principal and faculty, but potentially lead to more gender equity in the education profession (Williams, 2013).
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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
DATE: April 28, 2017
TO: Joanne Chatlos
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB
PROJECT TITLE: [1045477-4] A MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL’S EXPERIENCE OF GENDER AND LEADERSHIP
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: April 27, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE: April 27, 2018
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that Informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of April 27, 2018.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.
This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNC) IRB’s records.
APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION MATRIX
## Data Collection Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Types of Data</th>
<th>Example Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What meaning do faculty make of a male elementary school principal’s leadership? | Faculty interviews  
Observation  
Meeting minutes | Role model  
Credibility  
Outsider  
Parent/Mentor  
Specific Leadership Traits |
| 2. In what ways does gender influence the leadership of a male elementary school principal? | Interviews with principal  
Faculty interviews  
Observation  
Emails from principal  
Meeting agendas  
Meeting minutes | Isolation/Sexism  
Trajectory  
Status  
Work/Life Balance  
Invisibility of Gender |
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM: PRINCIPAL
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

**Project Title:** A Male Elementary School Principal’s Experience of Gender and Leadership

**Researcher:** Joanne Chatlos, School of Education; College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

**Phone number:** (214) 280-4182; **e-mail:** joanne.chatlos@bears.unco.edu

**Research Advisor:** Valerie Middleton, PhD, Valerie Middleton, PhD, School of Education; College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

**E-mail:** valerie.middleton@unco.edu

As part of my doctoral studies, I will be engaging in a qualitative research project. I am exploring the ways in which gender and leadership constructs interact. Your consent to participate in this research will help other administrators and researchers to understand the ways gender impacts the leadership of male educational administrators. Your experiences are valuable to understanding this process!

As a participant in this research, you are agreeing to:

- participate in an audio-recorded interview by phone prior to my observation (approximately 2 hours, may be divided into 2 sessions)
- allow me to observe you in your public activities on campus
- allow me to video-record your participation in a large meeting of the faculty or of a team of faculty
- audio-recorded interview at a pre-arranged time on campus (approximately one hour),
- provide emails you have written to the entire faculty and meeting agendas drawn from throughout the year.

The interview questions will ask about your life experiences and how you act as a leader in your school context.

Prior to data collection, you will select a pseudonym to protect your anonymity. Only my research advisor and I will have access to your data. All digital data will be kept on a password protected computer, within a password protected file. Any printed documents, including transcriptions of any interviews will be kept in a locked file cabinet within my office. All data collected, including consent forms, will be kept for three years and then erased or destroyed. In reporting these findings, maximum efforts will be taken to protect your identity.

This study presents minimal risk to you. Some of the interview questions relate to your identity, including your gender and your leadership, so it is possible that you may feel discomfort or embarrassment at certain points. While observation is typical in an educational setting, the prolonged length of observation throughout a variety of situations, may also feel uncomfortable at certain points. If, at any moment, you wish to have a break from an interview or observation, you may.
The benefits of participation include engaging in the process of reflection for professional development and adding your insights to the knowledge about how gender impacts educational leadership. The cost of the study will include two hours of your personal time and

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

_____________________________                                           ____________________
Participant’s Signature                                                                      Date
APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM: FACULTY
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

**Project Title:** A Male Elementary School Principal’s Experience of Gender and Leadership  
**Researcher:** Joanne Chatlos, School of Education; College of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
**Phone number:** (214) 280-4182; **e-mail:** joanne.chatlos@bears.unco.edu  
**Research Advisor:** Valerie Middleton, PhD, School of Education; College of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
**E-mail:** valerie.middleton@unco.edu

As part of my doctoral studies, I will be engaging in a qualitative research project. I am exploring the ways in which gender and leadership constructs interact. Your consent to participate in this research will help administrators and researchers to understand the ways gender impacts the leadership of male educational administrators. Your experiences are valuable to understanding this process!

As a participant in this research, you are agreeing to:

- sort cards to classify certain leadership terms and allow the final layout to be digitally photographed  
- participate in an audio-recorded interview at a pre-arranged time on campus during one of your planning periods (approximately one hour)

The interview will include questions about your experiences with educational leaders and how leadership has been enacted within your school community.

Prior to data collection, you will select a pseudonym to protect your anonymity. Only my research advisor and I will have access to your individual responses. Please note that although your supervisor provided me with access to the site for research purposes, he will not have any access to the data I collect from you. Only my research advisor and I will have access to your data. All data will be kept on a password protected computer, within a password protected file. Any printed material will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s office. All data collected will be retained for three years, at which point it will be erased or destroyed. In reporting these findings, maximum efforts will be taken to protect your identity.

This study presents minimal risk to you. Some of the interview questions involve your supervisor or previous supervisor and some will relate to gender so it is possible that you may feel discomfort or embarrassment at certain points. If at any point, you wish to have a break from the interview, you may.

This study presents minimal risk to you. The benefits of participation include engaging in the process of reflection for professional development and adding your insights to the knowledge about how gender impacts educational leadership.
Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

_____________________________                                           ____________________
Participant’s Signature                                                                      Date
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTION MATRIX
## Interview Question Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Concepts in Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What meaning do faculty make of a male elementary school principal’s leadership?</td>
<td>What traits do you associate with leadership?</td>
<td>Specific Leadership Traits (Dimmock, 2003; Fuller, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about experience of current principal.</td>
<td>Specific Gendered Traits (Eagly, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about experience of previous female principal.</td>
<td>In/visibility of Gender Reflexivity (Blackmore, 2013; Whithead, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the advantages/disadvantages of working in a predominantly female work environment?</td>
<td>In/visibility of Gender Reflexivity (Blackmore, 2013; Whithead, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dress, gestures, tone?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In what ways does gender influence the leadership of a male elementary school principal?</td>
<td>What was your own educational background?</td>
<td>Role Model/Mentor Isolation/Sexism (Martino &amp; Frank, 2006; Martino, 2008; Martino &amp; Rezai-Rashti, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about the school community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you feel about being a white man leading a fairly diverse community?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have any mentors or examples you have used for your leadership?</td>
<td>Trajectory Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Blackmore, 2010; Arar and Oplatka, 2014)</td>
<td>“Glass Escalator” (Williams, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about how your career path led to becoming a principal. (Williams, 2013).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about an achievement you are most proud of. (Williams, 2013).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a time when being a male felt like an advantage? A disadvantage? (Williams, 2013).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you feel you can reach out to for support?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes educational leadership is referred to as emotional work…</td>
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<td>... (Blackmore, 2013; Eagly 2009).</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are your goals for future leadership? (Williams, 2013).</td>
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<td>Tell me about your family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you balance personal and professional life?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the advantages/disadvantages of working in a predominantly female work environment? (Carrington &amp; McPhee, 2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think your gender identity is more important to your leadership than your racial/ethnic identity?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Work/Life Balance (Lin Choi, 2011)

In/visibility of Gender (Blackmore, 2010; Whitehead, 2001).
APPENDIX F

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW GUIDE: PRIOR TO VISIT
1. What was your own educational background? What was the school like? Urban/rural? Large/small? Were the other students similar in background to you or different? Are there any educational experiences that really influenced your life? (Setting, characters…)

2. Tell me about how your career path led to becoming a principal. As you look back on your career are there any moments that stand out in your mind
   a. Preparation/appointment/competition – possible further exploration
   b. How would you describe the person you were at that point

3. Tell me about an achievement that you are most proud of.

4. Is there a time in your career when being a male felt like an advantage? Like a disadvantage?

5. Who do you feel you can reach out to for support? Can you tell me about a time when you felt alone as a leader?

6. Tell me about your family.

7. How do you balance personal and professional life?

8. Tell me a little about the school community.
   a. How many teachers are at this school? How many are male and female? What roles do they play?

9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the differences of working in a predominantly female work environment?

10. How do you feel about being a white man leading a fairly diverse community?

11. Do you think your gender identity is more important to you[ leadership] than your racial/ethnic identity or vice versa or is it difficult to think of these as separate identities? (Blackmore, 2013).

12. Sometimes educational leadership is referred to as emotional work, can you describe a situation that you would use to show how this is true in your work?
APPENDIX G

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW GUIDE: ON-SITE
Principal Interview Guide: On-site

1. What traits do you associate with “leadership”?
2. Word sort activity – leadership and gender
   a. Which characteristics do you feel most reflect your own personality?
      Why?
   b. Can you think of a moment, experience, or interaction that would help me understand your leadership style?
3. Do you have any mentors or examples you have used for your own leadership?
4. Tell me about an experience you had with your previous principal that would help me understand her leadership style.
   a. How did she present herself? Dress? Gestures? Tone?
5. What are your future goals for leadership? Why?
APPENDIX H

FACULTY INTERVIEW GUIDE: ON-SITE
Faculty Interview Guide: On-Site

1. What traits do you associate with “leadership”?
2. Word sort activity – leadership and gender?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the differences of working in a predominantly female work environment?
4. Tell me about an experience you had with your previous principal that would help me understand her leadership style.
   a. How did she present herself? Dress? Gestures? Tone?
5. Tell me about an experience you have had with your new principal that would help me understand his leadership style.
   a. How does he present herself? Dress? Gestures? Tone?
6. In what ways has working with a male principal differed from working with a female principal?
APPENDIX I

TERMS FOR CARD SORT
Terms for Card Sort

1. Adaptability
2. Responsiveness
3. Commitment
4. Courage
5. Resilience
6. Self-confidence
7. Modesty
8. Integrity
9. Political astuteness
10. Collaboration
11. Decisiveness
12. Respect (Dimmock, 2003, pp.16-19)
13. Assertiveness
14. Competitiveness
15. Independence
16. Ambition
17. Physical strength (Messerschmidt, 2012, p.62)
18. Friendly
19. Concerned with others
This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB’s records.