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A Case Study of Student Leadership and Service in a Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

A Case Study of Student Leadership and Service in a

Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Jill Patricia Bickett

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Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

The dissertation written by Jill Bickett, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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To my parents, whose belief in me never wavered.

To my three daughters, Jennifer, Jacqueline, and Julia, whose love has made all the difference.

To my husband, Robert, every day, every step of the way I knew you believed in me. Thank you for being my reminder that "the best is yet to be…"

DEDICATION

To my husband, Robert Hubbell

And my daughters

Jenny, Jackie, and Julia Bickett Hubbell

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ABSTRACT

A Case Study of Leadership and Service in a Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

By

Jill Patricia Bickett

The purpose of this study was to research student perspectives about, and participation in, leadership and service at Catholic female single-sex high schools. This study draws data from a Catholic female single-sex high school in a metropolitan area of the United States. Data collection included school document review, site observation, and interviews of current students (n=10), young alumnae (n=5), mature alumnae (n=5), and current faculty and staff (n=6). The data was analyzed using an adapted theoretical framework of Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning, informed by Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice. This study addresses how the situated experience of the Catholic female single-sex high school affects students' expectations, values, and behaviors regarding leadership and service. The data show that the situated experience of a Catholic female single-sex high school encouraged engagement and interest in leadership and service. Students were empowered to believe that gender should not be an obstacle in seeking positions of leadership or service. However, although the environment was successful in advocating for participation in leadership and service, the social structure, social practices, identity formation, and situated environment tended to reinforce traditional gender-based notions of leadership and service. The culture of the

school did not encourage the use of a critical lens to view the inequity that women experience, resulting in student expectations, behaviors, and values that were reproduced from the dominant culture in society. Student relationship to community and Catholicity is also discussed. In order to achieve the benefits of female empowerment advocated by the school, greater emphasis should be placed on identifying and addressing the obstacles to female leadership and service in society at large. There should be continued research to identify effective strategies for empowering female students to participate in leadership and service opportunities in high school, while providing them with a clearer sense of the challenges they will face in leadership and service positions later in life. In this way, the mission of Catholic female single-sex high schools can be more fully realized, which will hasten the day when true gender equity is achieved in the broader social context.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

This case study analyzes the impact that the Catholic female single-sex high school community has on students and their dispositions about leadership and service roles in high school and beyond. Using observations, a review of relevant documents, and interviews of current students, alumnae, and faculty and staff, I examine the perspectives and activities relative to leadership and service at a Catholic female single-sex high school in a large metropolitan area of the western United States.

This research contributes to the literature in several areas. First, with the October 2006 loosening of Title IX restrictions in the United States allowing public school districts to more readily implement single-sex classes and schools, ongoing research in this area is critical. With more schools and classrooms being proposed, researchers must continue to probe the effects of this type of education and its relationship to the success of all students. Second, much of the research on single-sex schooling has primarily focused on quantitative measures that do not address the affective parts of the student experience (Lee & Bryk, 1986; Lee & Marks, 1990; LePore & Warren, 1997; Mael, 1998; Marsh, 1989; Riordan, 1994). Two of these areas, leadership and service, are critical educational components that are necessary aspects of building responsible citizens and compassionate people. Further, though studies have been done at Catholic female single-sex high schools, most have researched fairly narrow student outcomes, primarily academic (Marsh, 1989; Riordan, 1990; Watson, Quatman, & Edler, 2002). Few have taken a look at the larger picture, and none have attempted to develop a theoretical framework for the Catholic female single-sex high school that may explain the various

influences at play and the relationship of these influences to student life, leadership, and service. My research develops a theoretical framework for the Catholic female single-sex high school that may be used for an understanding of this particular community, and it may provide insight for future researchers of this educational experience. Lastly, the issue of gender equity cannot be ignored in a discussion of the Catholic female single-sex high school. Since Sadker & Sadker's (1994) landmark study, *Failing at Fairness,* the education system has been put on notice that females are not receiving equal access or equal treatment in the coeducational classroom. Can the single-sex school or classroom provide a more gender equitable environment? Only through in-depth studies of the actual experience of young women, both present and past, can answers begin to emerge about the impact of the single-sex educational experience on females in the 21st century. This case study research is exactly that kind of study.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Association of American University Women (AAUW, 2007), "equity is still an issue." Interestingly, "equity" is not the word that was historically associated with the women's movement in the 1970s. During that period, women advocated for "equal rights" and unsuccessfully lobbied for passage of the "Equal Rights Amendment." How do equality and equity differ?

> Gender equality… [means that] all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their own personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, and prejudices…It does not mean that men and women have to become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and

opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender

equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their

respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different

but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and

opportunities. (ABC's of Women's Worker's Rights and Gender Equality as cited

in UNESCO, 2000, pp. 35-36)

Equity is now a part of the AAUW motto because it has become clear that equal

treatment is sometimes not equitable. Women and ethnic minorities who have been

historically excluded from public discourse may lack the expertise or experience to

overcome the obstacles to access that will ensure fairness. "Fairness demands remedies to

redress historic injustices that have diminished or prevented access in the first place

(Kranich, 2005, p. 1). Therefore, equity is still an issue because women continue to

struggle under the glass ceiling due to historical injustices that, even today, lock them out

of access and opportunity in political, business, leadership, and educational arenas.

Equitable treatment of women continues to stir controversy in academic circles

and in popular discourse in our society. A recent headline in the *New York Times* reads,

"At colleges, women are leaving men in the dust" (Lewin, 2006), and studies bear this

out. Girls are outperforming boys on standardized testing (Posnick-Goodwin, 2005), and

women, who account for 57% of college graduates (National Center for Educational

Statistics, 2004), are studying more and are getting better grades (Lewin, 2006). Yet,

despite the dominance of female students on college campuses and the statistics revealing

high achieving women, females continue to lag behind males in earning power and job

status. In a survey of young adults with bachelors' degrees or higher, women earn only 78% of what men earn with the same degree attainment (NCES, 2004). Mead (as cited in Lewin, 2006, p. 2) inquires, "Boys right out of college make more money than girls, so is it grades and honors that matter, or something else the boys may be doing?" Or perhaps it is not what boys are doing—but simply their gender that matters. This is when questions of equity begin to arise.

Thus, though the gender gap may be narrowing in academic access, opportunity, and achievement, inequity still exists in society. For example, in today's business world and in education, women have yet to recover from decades of marginalization and discrimination. Success in the classroom has not translated into success in the professional arena. Therefore, although females in the United States have overcome one barrier to equality in their access to education, there may be another kind of education that women are still unable to access. What is the "something else" to which Mead refers that allows men to succeed in ways that women cannot?

When corporations are surveyed about qualities most desired for new employees, academic records are not the sole criteria on the list. Employer organizations want employees who anticipate and lead change, transform organizations, exhibit confidence, and who successfully engage in teamwork (Harvey, Moon, & Geall, 1997). If success in society, then, depends not only on academic achievements but also on acquisition of leadership skills and confident engagement in community and workplace culture, the education process should encourage these important experiences and make them equally accessible for women.

There are various ways that women may augment their academic credentials and gain the experience that is necessary for success in the work world. This study will focus on two specific endeavors: leadership and service. Participation in leadership and service opportunities during the high school experience calls forth from individuals the characteristics and qualities that build confidence, produce team players, and require the ability to persuade others to follow.

Leadership, as defined by Gardner (1990), is "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers" (p. 5). This definition is appropriate because of its consideration of "shared" leadership, which studies show is a preferable mode for many women (Crampton & Mishra, 1999; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992), and it is also appropriate because its emphasis on persuasion rather than force is also an important distinction for women leaders. Service is defined as "any activity in which time is given to benefit another person, group, or organization" (Stukas & Dunlap, 2002, p. 412). These two concepts, leadership and service, are important areas for study in relation to the position of women in society because they can be key components in the educational process that may help women achieve equity outside of the area of academic achievement.

In light of the findings of Sadker and Sadker (1994), which reveal a gender bias in the classroom where girls voices are marginalized and boys voices are dominant, and in light of the research about the "chilly climate" for women in university settings (Hall & Sandler, 1982), it seems possible that girls and women are not being encouraged to be

active participants in their coed communities but rather are being overshadowed by the dominant voices of the males they compete with both in and out of the classroom. Single-sex schooling, because of the nature of the single-gender student body, may allow young women greater access to leadership opportunities, reducing the competition by excluding males from the population (Streitmatter, 1999; Watson et al., 2002). Further, the supportive climate at female single-sex secondary schools may also provide encouragement for risk taking (Streitmatter, 1997; Watson et al., 2002), which may impact participation in extra-curricular activities including participation in leadership and service activities. Because of their mission and philosophy, Catholic high schools in particular may be predisposed to advocate for community leaders, volunteers, and, more specifically, "servant-leaders," a term coined by Robert Greenleaf in 1970 and used by many Catholic schools to describe their commitment to service. Servant-leadership describes individuals who serve first, reject hierarchical modes of leadership, embrace collaboration, and view leadership, not as a method of taking charge, but as a process of helping others through ethical and caring behavior (Greenleaf, 1970). This is much like Sergiovanni's (1992) approach to educational leadership that advocates the promotion of collegiality, where teachers are not subordinates to an administrative structure but are valued professionals who share common values and beliefs. However, servant-leadership, and its relationship to the Catholic female single-sex school, can be a controversial philosophy and will be addressed more fully in the literature review.

It is imperative that research address leadership and service in the education of young women so that they may take their place in society ready to be active contributors.

As a matter of social justice, scholars must search for ways to support and nurture gender equity in all areas of education. This study will contribute to the support of this research by answering the following question: *How does the situated experience of a student in a Catholic female single-sex high school affect her perspective and participation relative to leadership and service?*

<div align="center">Relevant Terms</div>

Community of Practice: As humans engage in pursuits of all kinds, they form communities to which they feel a belonging. As humans interact with one another, and with the world in each of the pursuits, Wenger (1998) asserts that they participate in communities of practice.

Gender: Gender and sex are not interchangeable terms. Gender is used to describe all the socially driven aspects of our lives, a product not of biology, but of social practice (Leach, 2003).

Gender Equality: Gender equality…[means that] all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their own personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, and prejudices…It does not mean that men and women have to become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female (ABC's of Women's Worker's Rights and Gender Equality as cited in UNESCO, 2000).

Gender Equity: Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and

opportunities (ABC's of Women's Worker's Rights and Gender Equality as cited in UNESCO, 2000).

Feminism: A doctrine that advocates or demands for women the same rights granted men, as in political or economic status (Morris, 1978).

Identity: The social positioning of self and other (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 2).

Leadership: The process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers (Gardner, 1990).

Legitimate Peripheral Participation: The theory of legitimate peripheral participation developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) suggests that as humans engage in community they learn as "they increase their access to participating roles in expert performances" (Hanks, 1991, p. 17).

Servant Leader: The servant leader is servant first and begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first, someone who is attracted to power or material possessions. Servant leaders strive first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served (Greenleaf, 1970; Sergiovanni, 1992).

Service: "Any activity in which time is given to benefit another person, group, or organization" (Stukas & Dunlap, 2002, p. 412).

Sex: The biological difference between men and women.

Situated Experience: Instead of the individual acquiring knowledge by "'receiving' a body of factual knowledge about the world" (Lave & Wenger, 1990, p. 33), he or she

learns through the experience of everyday situations. In practice, one gains knowledge about one's self and the world.

Social Theory of Learning: A social theory of learning is a broader term for Wenger's (1998) notions about communities of practice, but it essentially posits the same thing: that knowledge is a construction of beliefs derived from the learner's active participation in a social community. Both observation and participation in communities of practice are essential to the learning process. A social theory of learning suggests that learning is continuous.

<center>Limitations</center>

Mael, Alonso, Gibson, Rogers, and Smith (2005) note that single-sex literature has been criticized because the single-sex effect is confounded with other effects of religious values, demographics, or other advantages associated with the single-sex school being studied. Thus, outcomes from a Catholic female single-sex high school may not be absolutely generalizable because the nature of the school, the small classes, the socioeconomic status, and the involvement of the community and parents may have nothing to do with sex, but rather may have to do with resources for education. However, this study is not about pulling out one of these factors for analysis, rather it is about paying attention to the whole, the Catholic female single-sex nature of the school in its complexity. Generalizabilty beyond the secondary institution, i.e., elementary schools or post secondary institutions, may also be possible as some characteristics of the Catholic female learner, especially the religious perspective, may be similar across the spectrum.

Furthermore, the subjectivity of the researcher may also be considered a limitation, as researcher bias is inevitable.

The Situated Experience

It is important to ground my research at the outset in my chosen theoretical base. The *situated experience* as developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) means more than locating a person's thoughts and actions in space and time. Lave and Wenger suggest that all activity is situated, which implies "comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than 'receiving' a body of factual knowledge about the world" (p. 33). Learning activity is not solely about sitting in a classroom having the brain absorb the content of the lesson. Learning is about activity "in and with the world" (p. 33); it is a relational process where meaning is negotiated through participation in activity—every kind of activity and every kind of situation. For example, in geometry class students learn not only geometry, but they also learn how to be a student in the particular geometry class. Thus, learning is dependent on the situated experience, and "there is no activity that is not situated" (p. 33). In fact, Lave and Wenger's theory suggests that situations "co-produce" knowledge. In a Catholic female single-sex high school, the situated experience of each student will tell the story of her engagement in her world, her perspective about leadership and service, and its relationship to her past, present, and future. Without exploring the daily life of the student and probing deeply into the experiences of the Catholic female single-sex high school, one cannot truly know how this unique environment shapes its students.

Lave and Wenger (1991) describe learning as "an integral part of generative social practice in the lived world" (p. 35), and, when translated into theoretical terms, they call this approach *legitimate peripheral participation* (p. 35). This theory of learning focuses on the significance of participation in the social world where "changing locations, developing identities, and forms of membership" (p. 36) are integral parts of negotiating meaning in the world. Identity is shaped by the learning experience. "Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information but a process of becoming—to become a certain person or conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person" (Wenger, 1998, p. 215). Student identity formation in a Catholic female single-sex high school, as in any school, depends on the situated experience: what she participates in, who she communicates with, and how she becomes integrated into the community in which she lives and works. My analysis of identity formation in this particular context will bring to the fore particular aspects of identity, such as gender and Catholicity, to fully explore how these explicit elements affect the student at a Catholic female single-sex high school.

In addition, legitimate peripheral participation is a theory that is "implicated in social structures involving relations of power" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 36). Lave and Wenger suggest that, "as a place in which one moves toward more-intensive participation, peripherality is an empowering position. As a place in which one is kept from participating more fully…it is a disempowering position" (p. 36). This is a very important concept for the Catholic female single-sex high school, as women have historically been disempowered through lack of access to structures of power. By using

the lens of legitimate peripheral participation, this study intends to uncover the multitude of ways in which students participate in their school culture, how the society at large imposes its structures on the school culture, and how the relationship of the Catholic Church to the female single-sex high school shapes the identity of the students who attend. Exactly where and from whom are young women in Catholic female single-sex high schools receiving information about empowerment or disempowerment? A situated inquiry may perhaps put a face and a name to those influences that shape this part of the young woman's perspective. The underlying notion of empowerment is particularly apt for a study about young women and their relationship to leadership and service.

Proposal for Theoretical Framework

As part of this dissertation research, I propose a theoretical framework to use as a tool for understanding the Catholic female single-sex high school and its culture. To date, there is no specific integrated theoretical model in educational research that attempts to explain the multitude of cultural influences at the Catholic female single-sex high school. My proposed theory is an adaptation of Wenger's (1998) four-pronged model of the social theory of learning. While Wenger's model situates the four main elements of social learning theory based on intellectual traditions, I have adapted his theory, using the same intellectual traditions but specifically drawing out how each of these four prongs is practiced in a Catholic female single-sex high school. Thus, for example, on the vertical axis Wenger places the theories of social structure. In my model, I address the specific social structure present in the Catholic female singe-sex high school, namely the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and its doctrine. A fully developed model appears later

in this discussion. The purpose of my study is linked to this proposed theoretical

framework in a significant way, which is addressed directly following the introduction of

the purpose of my study below.

<center>The Purpose of the Study</center>

My dissertation research draws together two separate but interrelated endeavors in

order to examine the Catholic female single-sex high school. First, through use of the

ethnographic method, I immersed myself in the situated experience of students in a

Catholic female single-sex high school, thus exploring student perspectives about

leadership and service and they way these perspectives informed female identity and

choice in relationship to culture, activity, and society. My study answers the question,

how does the situated experience of a student in a Catholic female single-sex high school

affect her perspective and participation relative to leadership and service?

Answering this question provides the means to explore emergent themes that

corroborate or contradict my proposed theoretical framework for the Catholic female

single-sex high school. At the conclusion of my research I intend to produce a useful

theoretical framework relevant to leadership and service for use in the Catholic female

single-sex high school. A discussion of the proposed framework now follows.

<center>Discussion of Theoretical Framework</center>

The discussion of the framework is divided into discrete sections. The first section

sets the roadmap for analysis and introduces the sequence of analytic development for the

framework. The second section is an introduction to the context of the framework with

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the use of hypothetical examples to aid in illustration of the high school experience. The third section explains Wenger's (1998) model; his theories of communities of practice embedded in the social theory of learning that I will adapt to explain the framework for my study. Further, I will explore his concept of negotiated identity and Lave and Wenger's (1991) legitimate peripheral participation, as it relates to the experiences of the Catholic female single-sex high school. The following sections explain in detail the four prongs of the social learning theory as related to my study: theories of social structure, theories of situated experience, theories of practice, and theories of identity. The last section concludes the framework and draws together the previous analysis.

Introduction to the Theoretical Framework

A Catholic female single-sex high school is a unique blend of integrated components that serve to provide an educational experience that addresses the whole person. One theoretical lens is not sufficient to properly describe the multitude of variables that combine to facilitate the experience at such a school. Let us consider a hypothetical example.

Jennifer, a student at the Catholic high school St. Marian's, is a senior, the vice president of the student government, Eucharistic minister, campus ministry team leader, "A" student, and cheerleader for St. Martin's all boys high school across town. On a typical Friday she may attend three Advanced Placement classes and a theology class, participate in First Friday Mass with her school community, attend a student government meeting at lunch, visit the nearby soup kitchen after school to fulfill her community service hours, and then cheer the next day at a St. Martin's football game. Clearly, she

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has a packed schedule, and one that requires a sophisticated ability to transition between different communities and different situations throughout the day. Cheerleader, student, minister, volunteer, leader—Jennifer is all of these. However, she is more. Jennifer is a woman and a Catholic school student. The question of my study—*how does the situated experience of a student in a Catholic female single-sex high school affect her perspective and participation relative to leadership and service?*—allows me to explore the issue of gender and Catholicity, and how these two particular variables, as they are situated in the complexity of everyday life, affect student perspective on leadership and service.

These are two simple, yet inextricably interwoven, commonalities of students at Catholic female single-sex high schools. First, that students are all female is an observation so obvious that it may seem trivial to consider further. But the complicated nature of a gender-segregated school, a community that is comprised of and dedicated to serving only females, requires careful analysis in order to capture the underlying constructs into which students enter as they participate in the Catholic female-single-sex community. Second, the age grouping of students in high school is also an important variable to consider. Adolescent psychology has volumes to say about teenage development (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). Female adolescent development is particularly unique in the way it affects student behavior and student attitude. Third, the fact that there is a faith-based belief system as part of the institutional identity of the school is a significant factor in determining the theoretical framework for this study. Though Jennifer, in the hypothetical example, may be Catholic, as evidenced by her participation in the Eucharist, it is a fact that in today's Catholic schools there is a wide variation in the

percentage of Catholic students who attend. Non-Catholic student enrollment has risen from 2.7% in 1970 to 11.2% in 1980 and 13.8% in 2006-2007 (National Catholic Education Association [NCEA], 2008). Years ago, one could assume that attendance at a Catholic school meant that one fit the traditional profile of a Catholic school student—a believer in Jesus Christ and the tenets of the Catholic Church. Today, as the statistics cited show, this is not the case. However, all students in Catholic schools, Catholic or not, agree to participate in an environment that is explicit about its values. In a broad sense, their attendance at a Catholic high school affirms their willingness to embrace and be guided by the philosophy and mission of the Catholic faith and the Catholic Church. Let us consider another hypothetical example.

Sarah is a practicing Jew, attends services at her synagogue, and is also a senior at St. Marian's high school. Her daily schedule is the same as Jennifer's: going to classes, attending Mass, serving in the community, and cheering at St. Martin's on Saturday night. Though she cannot be a Eucharistic minister, she actively participates by doing the first reading at Mass, and, during Passover, she leads a Seder for the school community. Her participation at St. Marian's is one where she shares her faith tradition while participating where she can in the Catholic traditions. Her belief in "Tikun Olam," which translated means "healing the world," an action of promoting social justice (Jewish Virtual Library), is a good fit with the Catholic tradition of social justice.

Sarah's attendance at St. Marian's is an example of her belief in a values-based, faith-driven community. Though she may not embrace the particulars of the Catholic religious commitment or the tenets of the Catholic faith, she is able to actively and

successfully participate in the community because, at its core, the Catholic high school

fits with her world-view and her personal identity. She feels comfortable in relationship

to her definition of self and in others' understanding of her. This environment supports

the person she believes that she is. It is a community that lives in faith, guided by

principles and people that honor that foundation, while including others who are willing

to live within its framework of values.

<center>*Communities of Practice*</center>

This variety of practices and identities embraced by students in Catholic female

single-sex high schools requires a theoretical framework that can be adapted to include

the multiplicity of communities in which they engage, because membership in each of

these will influence their notion of leadership and service. Thus, I turn to the theories of

situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that

inform the conceptual perspective of *community of practice*, as developed by Wenger

(1998). These will be the theoretical underpinnings of my research that will assist me in

attempting to capture the integrated and fluid nature of the theoretical framework in a

Catholic female single-sex high school.

Wenger (1998) suggests that as students go to school and attempt to negotiate the

difficult terrain of adolescence, academics, and the school institution, "communities of

practice sprout everywhere" (p. 6). Communities of practice, as defined by Wenger,

include ways in which humans interact with each other as they participate in the eternal

task of learning about life. This learning can take many forms, from participating in a pep

rally to volunteering at the school open house. Each of these interactions essentially tunes

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our relations with one another and allows us to learn more about each other and about ourselves. In other words, the fundamental human enterprise of learning is facilitated by participating in communities of diverse kinds, where humans engaged in shared experiences practice belonging and learn as a consequence of this belonging. In addition, Wenger suggests that, while this concept of practice "connotes doing," doing is not an end in itself. "It is doing in an historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. In this sense, practice is always social practice" (p. 47).

Thus, the many communities that students engage in at a Catholic female single-sex high school all converge in the student as part of her lived experience, creating for her a place to belong, a place in which to become a part of the historical and social context of the institution, and, ultimately, a place to learn. As Wenger (1998) suggests, "In spite of curriculum, discipline, and exhortation [at schools], the learning that is most personally transformative turns out to be learning that involves membership in [these] communities of practice" (p. 6).

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

As part of a particular community (for example, the cheer team or campus ministry), students as participants in any given activity take on particular identities, such as cheerleader or Eucharistic minister, dependent on the communities of practice in which they engage at any given moment. Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral participation suggests that, as humans engage in community they learn as "they increase their access to participating roles in expert performances" (Hanks, 1991, p. 17). In some communities, students will be very involved and full participants of the

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community. In other communities, students will be less involved and exist at the periphery of the community. On a broad scale, the progression from freshman status to senior status in high school would likely move a student from peripheral to full participation in the high school community in a variety of ways, though not all ways. Movement may occur in the opposite direction as well, as students tend to move fluidly in and out of participation in discrete school communities.

Identity

Learning as a function of community, however, leads to another important element of Wenger's (1998) theory, that of identity. Identity, according to Wenger, is profoundly connected to participation in communities of practice, and thus it is also a significant factor in a framework for Catholic female single-sex high schools. When communities form, they coalesce around a particular interest, activity, or idea. Members of these communities interact with one another and acknowledge one another as participants. As a result, members must negotiate the "ways of being a person in that context" (p. 149). Different communities will require different ways of being, thus resulting in different identities as situated within each context. "In practice, we know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive" (p. 153). This is how it is possible, as I described earlier, for a student to transition in and out of different identities. As the context changes (cheer team, campus ministry), so does the identity (cheerleader, Eucharistic minister). Acknowledging each of these communities of practice and

resultant identities is key to understanding the nature of a Catholic female single-sex high school.

Identity and gender are also intimately intertwined. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) suggest, all cultures sort people at birth into two groups on the basis of anatomical distinctions. However, using Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet believe that gender cannot be isolated from other aspects of social identity and relations and that it cannot have the same meaning across communities. That is why it is important to engage in ethnographic study, to "look locally" (p. 461), and to closely observe the social practices, including linguistic and gender practices in the context of the community of practice. Gilligan (1982), and later Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997), claimed that women's interactions with others emphasize connection, collaboration, nurture, and a preference for small groups rather than large ones. Listening closely and carefully to conversations and activities at the Catholic female single-sex high school will be an important piece to understanding the students' negotiated identity. In fact, my research will heed Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's advice to "focus on gender in its full complexity" (p. 472):

> Rather than try to abstract gender from social practice, we need to focus on
> gender in its full complexity: how gender is constructed in social practice, and
> how this construction intertwines with that of other components of identity and
> difference, and of language. This requires studying how people negotiate
> meanings in and among the specific communities of practice to which they
> belong. (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 472)

The various forms of participation in which students engage, and the communities that result, also require a notion of identity that includes an understanding of multi-membership (Wenger, 1998). For example, students who get "A" grades do not just define themselves as "A" students. They may likely also have membership in a team, a club, and a circle of friends. They simultaneously participate in each of these communities but do not turn off each of these identities as they move from one practice to the next. Identities are neither discrete nor are they sequential. Because a student is leading a cheerleading practice does not mean that she is not also a volunteer or a soccer player. Humans engage in concurrent community memberships and simultaneous identities, though, again, situational context determines which variable is consequential. Wenger describes this type of multi-membership as, "pieces of a puzzle rather than sharp boundaries between disconnected parts of ourselves" (Wenger, 1998, p. 159). And this is exactly how I view the theoretical framework necessary to understand the Catholic female single-sex high school. Just as students' identities are pieces of a puzzle that merge to form a whole, so is the institution from which these communities of practice spring. In a school, students will "behave differently in each community of practice, construct different aspects of themselves, and gain different perspectives" (Wenger, 1998, p. 159). Therefore, a proper theoretical framework will acknowledge the diversity of community and identity that exists at a Catholic female single-sex high school.

Social Theory of Learning

For this purpose I will adapt Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning, the starting point for his theories about communities of practice (see Figure 1). A social

theory of learning is a broader term for Wenger's notions about communities of practice, yet it essentially posits the same thing: that knowledge is a construction of beliefs derived from the learner's active participation in a social community. Wenger (1998) suggests that we are always learning.

Theories of Social
Structure

Theories of Social
Practice

Social
Theory of
Learning

Theories
of Identity

Theories of Situated
Experience
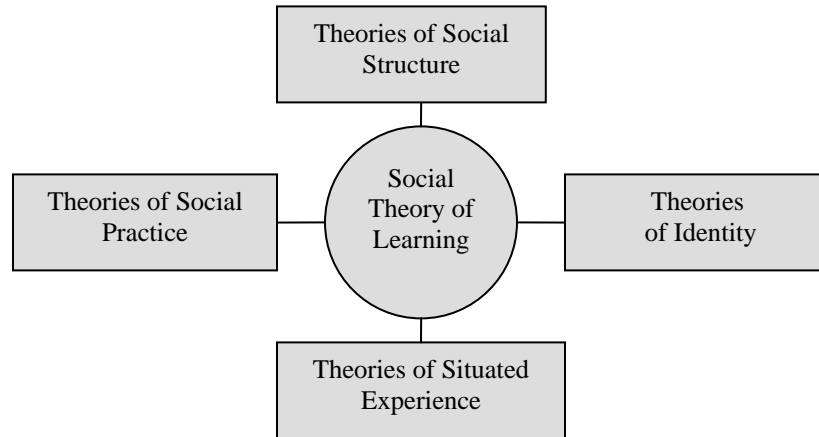
Figure 1. Wenger's (1998) Social Theory of Learning[1]

Wenger's (1998) model of a social theory of learning places four separate but related theories on two separate axes, and it argues that learning exists at the intersection of these four experiences. Theories of social structure and situated experience are placed on the vertical axes, and theories of social practice and identity are placed on the horizontal axis. At the intersection of these theories is the complex framework for

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[1] From *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity* (p. 12), by E. Wenger, 1998, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Copyright 1998 by Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission.

explaining the intersection of philosophy and practice at a Catholic female single-sex high school.

My use of Wenger's (1998) social learning theory will elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of his model as they relate to the Catholic female single-sex high school. I will discuss how the intersection of these four elements, as viewed through the Catholic female single-sex high school lens, provides a theoretical framework for my research. This approach privileges the notion of interaction and grounds my framework in an understanding of the truly integrated and fluid nature of the diverse elements in coexistence at a Catholic female single-sex high school. This is not meant, however, to be an uncontested synthesis of all contexts experienced at a Catholic female single-sex high school; rather, it is one means of integrating the complex social, cultural, and intellectual theories and practices through which this unique institution can be understood, so as to inform the research that may follow.

My adapted model of Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning has at its center the primary object of research: the Catholic female single-sex high school (see Figure 2).
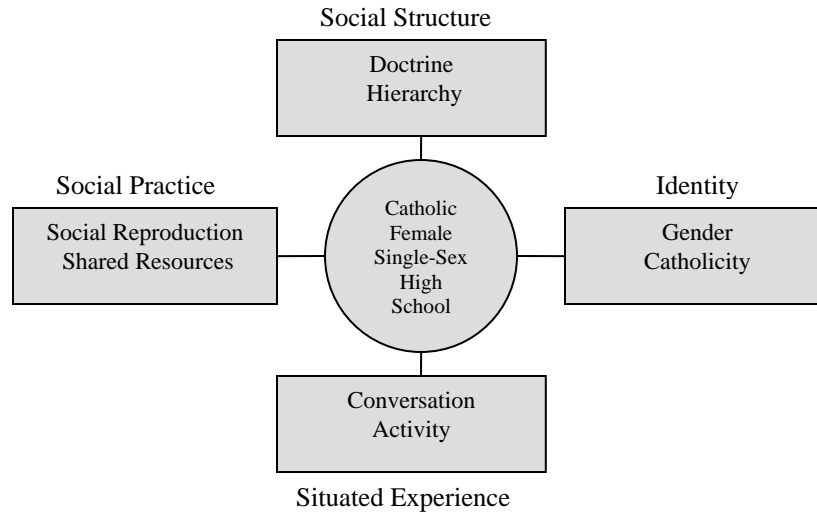
Figure 2. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

As an educational institution, one may confidently infer that the objective of the

school is to foster student learning. College requirements and school expectations feed

into the institutional goal of "taught cognitive learning" (Erickson, 1982); however, my

research will be focused by acknowledging that learning develops, not only as "taught

cognitive learning," but in social situations or communities of practice as well (Wenger,

1998). While this research recognizes all the ways that humans learn through

participation, the primary focus will be a social theory of learning, that which develops

from participation in communities of practice. Thus, the four prongs that radiate from the

center contain elements that are relevant to the social learning at a Catholic female single-

sex high school. The vertical axis is foundational and reflects the tension between

theories of structure and theories of action, or theories that deal with the institution at the

"macro" level; the horizontal axis includes theories that deal with the institution at the

"micro" level, or the daily life of the school (M. Connell, personal communication,

October 19, 2006). However, it is also important to note at the outset that there are other

variables at play in addition to the ones in my proposed framework. The purpose of this

research is to bring the variables suggested by the social theory of learning to the fore in

order to explore their importance in this particular situated experience.

Theories of Social Structure

At the top of the four-sided figure, placed geographically in an area of dominance,

are theories of social structure (see Figure 3). According to Wenger (1998), theories of

social structure "give primacy mostly to institutions, norms, and rules. They emphasize

cultural systems, discourses and history" (p. 12).

Social Structure

```
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │    Doctrine     │
                        │   Hierarchy     │
                        └─────────────────┘
Social Practice                  Identity
┌──────────────────────┐   ╱Catholic╲   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Social Reproduction  │  │ Female    │  │    Gender        │
│ Shared Resources     │──│Single-Sex │──│   Catholicity    │
└──────────────────────┘  │  High     │  └──────────────────┘
                          │ School   ╲╱
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │  Conversation   │
                        │    Activity     │
                        └─────────────────┘
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Situated Experience
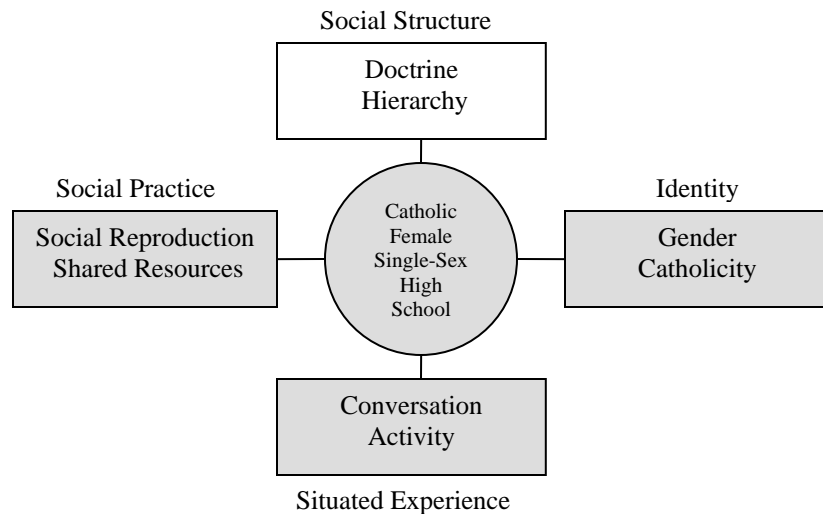
Figure 3. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School:
Social Structure

In my adapted model, I treat the particular social structure that is in place at a

Catholic girl's high school, the institution of the Catholic Church. I suggest that while

only Catholic students are *de jure* members of this community of practice, all students at a Catholic school are *de facto* members. Attendance at a Catholic school is a tacit agreement to live under the philosophy and mission of the institution. Therefore, even though students at a Catholic female single-sex high school are taught about Church doctrine and understand the hierarchy of the Church institution, their experience at the Catholic female single-sex high school does not necessarily make that doctrine and hierarchy a relevant part of their lives.

As the breadth of Church doctrine is vast, this analysis does not attempt to treat all parts of Church doctrine in relationship to the Catholic female single-sex high school; however, there are particular issues of doctrine and institutional organization that are very relevant to this study, namely the issues of leadership and service. Both of these elements provide a particular challenge as it relates to a Catholic female single-sex high school.

Leadership

In Pope John Paul II's 1994 Apostolic Letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*: *On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone,* he reasserts the Church's traditional reasoning for excluding women from the priesthood. Citing Christ's choice of male apostles, the traditional practice of the Catholic Church in ordaining exclusively men, and the "living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his Church" (p. 1), Pope John Paul II attempts to "remove all doubt" about the Church's stand on this issue. Although Pope John Paul II affirms the "necessary and irreplaceable" (p.1) presence of women in the life and mission of Catholic Church, nonetheless, its leaders are almost exclusively

priests, and thus, almost exclusively male. I use the term *almost* generously, because

certainly there is no significant female leadership in the Vatican or in the upper echelons

of decision-making bodies attached to the institution of the Church. However, on the

local level, in parishes and CCD programs, in diocesan Catholic parish schools, and

volunteer programs there exists important female leadership. In fact, Pope John Paul II

addresses this issue in his 1988 Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem, On the Dignity*

and Vocation of Women. Here, Pope John Paul II asserts that "the hour has come when

the vocation of women is being acknowledged in its fullness, the hour in which women

acquire in the world an influence, an effect, and a power never hitherto achieved" (p. 3).

So, while women are excluded from decision-making bodies, and from access as

presiders and leaders of Catholic practice in the sacraments, they are also considered

important members of the Church and continue to serve and lead in the Catholic

institution under a doctrine that disallows them full participation in its community.

     The importance and the relevance of this social structure will be a significant part

of my research. The mixed message that students receive from the governing institution

of their school is one that they must negotiate in order to grow into successful leaders,

both inside and outside of the church community. On the one hand, the Church affirms

their worth, recognizing their "dignity and vocation" and embracing them in its fold as

the "representative and archetype of the whole human race" (John Paul II, 1988, p. 13).

However, the Church also affirms the dominance of male leadership and the exclusion of

women from its hierarchy. Jabbra (2003) describes this as the "overlapping of three

hierarchies" (p. 6). She sees in the Catholic Church a "gender hierarchy of men over

women, a hierarchy of clergy over lay, and a hierarchy of Church over university" (p. 6) (or in this case Church over high school). What do young women make of this? It is a significant consideration when studying leadership and service at a Catholic female single-sex high school.

Service

Another aspect of leadership is service. The Church willingly accepts women in positions of service, and encourages all of its members, both men and women, to be engaged in this endeavor. Pope John Paul II, in his 1991 Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*, states that "The social message of the gospel must not be considered a theory but above all else, a basis and motivation for action" (p. 57). Earlier, Pope Paul the VI in his 1965 Encyclical Letter *Gaudium Et Spes* asserted that the best way to "fulfill one's obligations of justice and love is to contribute to the common good according to one's means and the needs of others, and also to promote and help public and private organizations to bettering the conditions of life" (p. 30). Both of these messages exhort members to do service in order to promote justice in the world. The Catholic Church's commitment to service is transferred to all of its schools, and, in many Catholic schools, the *servant leader* (Greenleaf, 1970) has become a popular way to describe individual participation in service. Yet, is there a gendered connotation to this terminology? This issue will be addressed in depth later on in Chapter II.

Young women in a Catholic female single-sex high school are caught in the middle of a culture that espouses a doctrine that both embraces them and holds them at arm's length; this is a consideration for their participation in leadership and service. Their

negotiation of identity is not clearly defined in this context, and it requires either

conscious or unconscious engagement with this conflicting theoretical model.

Theories of Situated Experience

At the lower end of the vertical axis are the theories of situated experience

Wenger (1998) (see Figure 4). Theories of situated experience focus on everyday

existence, emphasizing agency and addressing the interaction of people with their

environment. "They focus on the experience and local construction of individual or

interpersonal events such as activities and conversations" (p. 13).
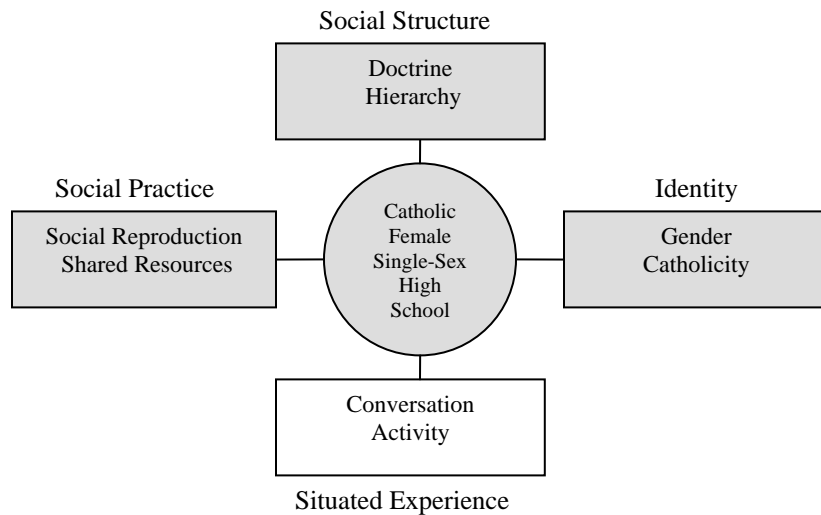
Figure 4. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School:
Situated Experience

On this level of everyday practice in the Catholic school community, the doctrinal

and hierarchical Church structure becomes a part of the local level when it is taken up by

the community and practiced. In prayer, in classroom discussions, in liturgy, in ministry,

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in all of these ways and more, the structure of the Catholic Church becomes a practiced

reality. And, of course, this situated experience takes place in diverse communities of

practice that are an ongoing presence in the daily life of the student. As I suggested

earlier, Wenger (1998) believes that practice connotes doing, but doing in an historical

and social context is what gives structure and meaning to what is done. Thus, the

historical and social context presented previously in the theories of social structure give

structure and meaning to the "activities and conversations" that take place at a Catholic

female single-sex high school.

Activities

The activities that are unique to emerge from the Catholic social structure are

those that intersect with daily life and engage the students in faith formation at the local

level. Activities would include participation in liturgy, community service clubs and

programs, prayer experiences, and retreat programs, including the Kairos retreat, a

Catholic-based faith experience. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that, "learning is not

just situated in practice, but is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in

world" (p. 35). Legitimate peripheral participation describes the social practice that

"entails learning as an integral constituent" (p. 35). Peripherality suggests that there are

more involved and less involved, more intense and less intense ways of participating in

social activities. As a student moves toward more intensive, full participation,

peripherality can be an empowering position. When increased participation is enabled,

perpherality is a way of gaining access "to sources for understanding through growing

involvement" (p. 37). However, peripherality can also be a way of preventing full participation, and in this regard, it can be a disempowering position.

Students at a Catholic female single-sex high school may move at different rates from periphery to fuller participation through the course of their four years, as the earlier example suggests. Students may move from member to officer of clubs and programs, or from participant to leader in retreats and prayer experiences. Some students may also be prevented from moving towards full participation, or may choose peripheral participation depending on their experience.

Another important factor in the theory related to situated experience is the issue of role modeling. At a Catholic female single-sex high school, the majority of adult leaders with whom students interact every day, in the religious, academic, and co-curricular sphere are women. Tidball, Smith, Tidball, and Wolf-Wendell (1999), in *Taking Women Seriously: Lessons and Legacies for Educating the Majority*, assert that providing a critical mass of women role models is a significant benefit of an all female educational institution, an assertion that other studies support (Bailey & Rask, 1996; Noe, 1988). Daily interaction with women who lead in high schools may be a factor in the attitudes and participation in leadership and service of young women after high school. However, once again, the one area where students at a Catholic female single-sex high school are not able to see female role modeling is in the leadership at the Eucharist or other sacraments.

The critical nature of the sacraments in the belief system and culture of the Catholic faith makes them a distinct and significant exclusion beyond a simple rejection

from a club or program. However, how this limitation impacts the Catholic female in a school can only be truly discovered with a careful study of the situated experience. Do young women in the 21st century see this exclusion as a relevant obstacle? Or have the liturgy and other sacraments become irrelevant in their lives?

Conversations

Conversation in the Catholic female single-sex high school, as in every school, most certainly takes place all day, everyday. In the Catholic female single-sex high school these conversations are clearly shaped by the all female communities of practice. Studies show that young women feel more comfortable in single-gender educational environments (Mael, 1998; Miller-Bernal, 1989,1993; Monaco & Gaier, 1992; Streitmatter, 1997; Watson et al., 2002). Further, students at most Catholic female single-sex high schools participate in four years of religious education classes, where intimate subjects related to female spiritual growth, female issues of sexuality and reproduction as dictated by the Catholic Church, and female issues of vocation are discussed. Although classroom conversations are necessarily influenced by the patriarchal social structure previously discussed, there also exists the ability to address and to respond to these subjects in a situated experience that is rooted in the dilemmas of daily living that Catholic female students face. This is truly where, "learning takes place through our engagement in actions and interactions, but it embeds this engagement in culture and history" (Wenger, 1998, p. 13). Thus, the effect of the single-gender environment on the level of intimacy in conversations affects the nature of the community of practice. It is in these "conversations" that the "individual's development of gender identity within a

community of practice is inseparable from the continual construction of gender within

that community of practice" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 472). Intimate daily

interactions with others create the individual self, and the opportunity to negotiate these

sometimes difficult conversations in a single-gender environment is a distinctive resource

that may affect students' views of themselves and their possibilities as they become adult

women.

Theories of Social Practice

On the horizontal axis of Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning are the

elements of social practice and identity (see Figure 5). These are set against the vertical

axis and, as Wenger (1998) describes them, are neither as broad as the theories of social

structure nor as fleeting as the momentary activities and conversations of the theories of

situated experience.

Social Structure

| Doctrine Hierarchy |

Social Practice   Identity

| Social Reproduction Shared Resources | Catholic Female Single-Sex High School | Gender Catholicity |

| Conversation Activity |

Situated Experience
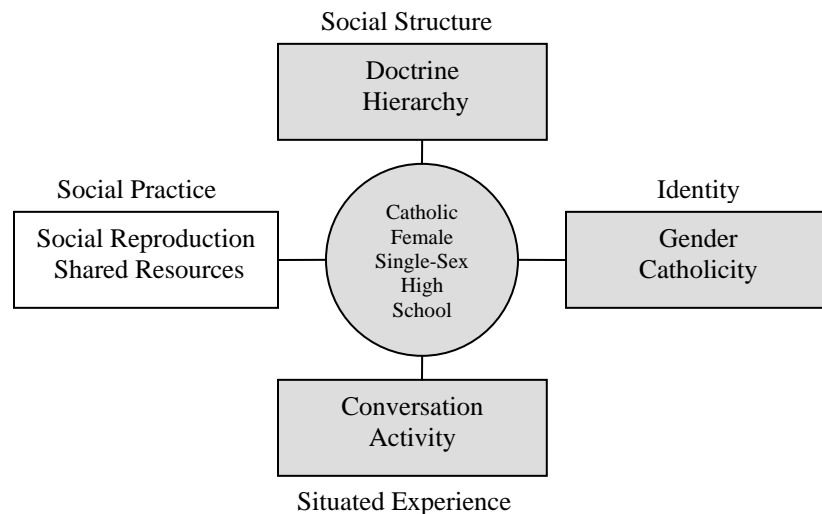
Figure 5. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School:
Social Practice

The theory of social practice "addresses the production and reproduction of specific ways of engaging with the world" (Wenger, 1998, p. 13). It addresses daily life and activities within the context of the "social systems of shared resources by which groups organize their activities and interpretations of the world" (p. 13). Catholic female single-sex high schools deal with the specific activities and engagement of young women, and this distinctly alters their shared resources and interpretations of the world.

Social Reproduction

Ortner (1974), in her influential essay, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" begins her argument with this assertion: "The secondary status of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact" (p. 67). And while she argues that specific cultural conceptions are very diverse, this does not negate the initial thesis. In the 20th, and now the 21st century, women have not reached gender parity in any part of the world. This secondary status affects the lives of all females and the educational institutions that serve them. Critical theorists like Freire (1970), who assert that education is not a neutral activity but, in fact, a political one, explore the inequalities found in education and trace them to the systems or processes by which they are maintained (Gibson, 1986). Bourdieu (1977) suggests that the educational system reproduces "the cultural arbitrary of the dominant or dominated classes" (p. 5). Thus, using this argument and extending it to gender, feminist reproduction theorists (Arnot, 2002; Deem, 1978; Wolpe, 1978) assert that schools function to reproduce gender divisions in the society as a whole, and that schools work ideologically to prepare young women to accept their role as low paid, or unpaid workers in society (Weiler, 2001).

The notion that schools reproduce the patriarchy of the dominant culture is a powerful one. All female high schools are certainly not immune to this reproduction. In fact, in the early days of American education, schooling was a major form of reproduction for gender relations that, at the time, consisted of the traditional family form with a dominant male and a subordinate female (Arnot, 2002). Coeducation was later welcomed as a level playing field for boys and girls, a place where both genders would receive equal educational opportunities. However, equal opportunities still were not available to young women. Because of the nature of the social and cultural reproduction at play at coeducational schools, girls continued to receive unequal access to educational opportunity, where the curriculum either "slavishly copied the education of their brothers" (Newsom, 1948, pp. 158-159) or, conversely, required students to participate in gendered curriculum such as home economics for girls, or shop for boys (Tyack & Hansot, 1992).

Bourdieu (1977), who considers education the apprenticeship for life, asserts that those who achieve the most are those who possess the most prestigious qualifications, those who "have at their disposal an inherited 'cultural capital' of relationships and skills which enable them to obtain such qualifications" (p. 507). In other words, success is not necessarily defined by academic success in the classroom. Rather, success is defined by the society you keep and by the skills you learn while amongst that society. Though Bourdieu's arguments are heavily class-oriented, gender considerations are also embedded. Bordo (1990) asserts that females are an oppressed class, regardless of their cultural or economic identity. For example, young women, having been educated in a

patriarchal institution, and having been considered members of the subordinate class, may not have access to an understanding of a male-gendered business climate or a male business networking system. Thus, success can evade young women unless they can "crack the code" of the dominant culture and create a level playing field for themselves— a formidable task, and one made all the more challenging by the social and cultural reproduction occurring in schools.

I began this section with the social and cultural reproduction theories and their impact on young women because this lens is an important one when school environment caters to one gender. As I stated earlier, there is no immunity for social and cultural reproduction at Catholic female single-sex high schools. In fact, evidence from the vertical axis of this framework, the Catholic institution, might suggest that Catholic schools are particularly egregious sites for systemic patriarchal reproduction. However, though inconclusive, there is evidence that students in Catholic female single-sex high schools have higher educational aspirations, (Watson et al., 2002) and hold less stereotypical views of sex roles (Streitmatter, 1999). Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) characterize Catholic female single-sex high schools as especially conducive to young women's learning, where "young women may be sensitized to their occupational and societal potential in an atmosphere free of some of the social pressures that adolescent females experience in the presence of the opposite sex" (p. 240). My theoretical framework uses my experience and previous single sex research to qualitatively analyze the particular influences in this specific environment. My research attempts to corroborate my experience and previous research through the lens of my theoretical

framework, while remaining open to any modifications or changes necessary to properly illustrate the situated experience of students at Catholic female single-sex high schools.

Are Catholic female single-sex high schools places that can be successful in disrupting some of the negative effects of social reproduction, that is, an acceptance of a subordinate status and lesser educational and occupational aspirations? This is part of my exploration in this research.

Shared Resources

Catholic female single-sex high schools may offer more and better access to leadership opportunities for women (Streitmatter, 1999). Also, the resource of solidarity, as mentioned previously, the ability to network, communicate, and negotiate with one's own gender is an opportunity possible only in single-sex institutions. In addition, curriculum can be organized around themes related to gender equity for women, textbooks can be chosen for themes appropriate for female engagement, and pedagogy can be tailored to meet the needs of the female learner. Though these types of choices may not be true of all Catholic female single-sex high schools, the nature of a single-gender school makes it a more viable possibility.

Thus, the theories of practice focus on the social reproduction of women's ways of engaging with the world and the social systems, namely the school institutions, that support this. Single-sex high schools may provide more leadership opportunities, unique single-gender identification, and may have the opportunity to organize curriculum, pedagogy, and activities specifically to meet the needs of the female population (Streitmatter, 1998).

Wenger (1998) describes theories of identity as concerned with the "social formation of the person, the cultural interpretation of the body, and the creation and use of markers of membership such as rites of passage and social categories" (p. 13). See Figure 6.

Social Structure

Doctrine
Hierarchy

Social Practice

Social Reproduction
Shared Resources

Catholic
Female
Single-Sex
High
School

Identity

Gender
Catholicity

Conversation
Activity

Situated Experience
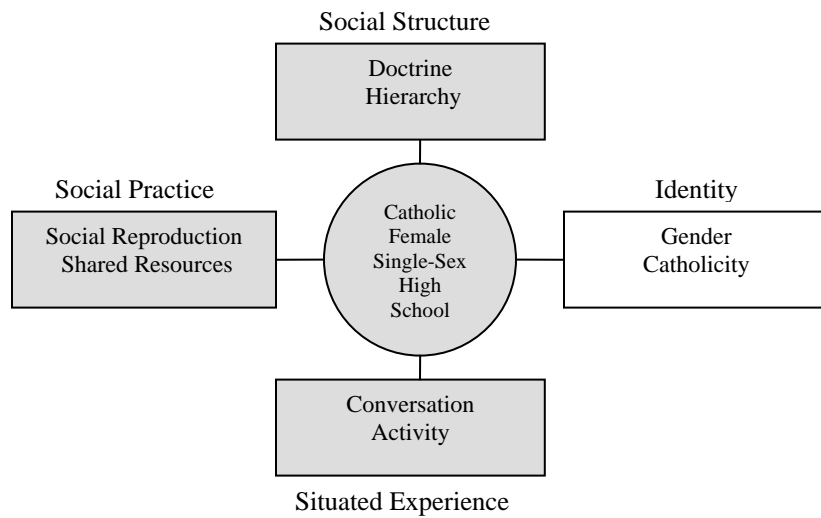
Figure 6. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School: Identity

For my purposes, I will consider how issues of gender and Catholicity shape identity formation of young women at a Catholic female single-sex high school (see Figure 6). Again, I acknowledge that there are, of course, other variables that influence identity formation; however, this study will use these two specific variables to determine agency in the unique environment of the Catholic female single-sex high school.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) define identity as "the social positioning of self and other" (p. 2). They reject identity as a stable structure located in fixed social categories. Rather, they argue for identity as a relational phenomenon that is "in part intentional, in part habitual, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation, in part a construct of others' perceptions, and in part an outcome of larger ideological processes and structures" (p. 2). These relational phenomena are what I will try to capture in the proposed theoretical framework.

Young women's multi-membership in communities of practice in today's world is a very complex one. Negotiating media images and institutional and societal influences is difficult and treacherous ground. Recent studies on young women in the classroom corroborate this assertion. Sadker and Sadker's (1994) important work, *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls,* finds that "though girls are in the majority of our nation's schoolchildren, they are second class citizens" (p. 1). Sadker and Sadker assert that hidden sexist lessons continue to be part of the nation's curriculum. Many teachers interact with boys more frequently, devote more time and energy to their learning needs, and leave some girls silent and unattended to fend for themselves. They suggest that the consequence of this neglect is a "loss of self-esteem, decline in achievement, and elimination of career options" (p. 1).

In addition, studies show that identity markers such as achievement, leadership potential, self-esteem, and career aspirations are advantaged in single-sex female high schools (Bryk et al., 1993; Carpenter & Hayden, 1987; Lee & Bryk, 1986; Riordan, 1990, 1994, 2002; Watson et al., 2002). Ideally, single-sex female high schools may provide

minimal sex biases from teachers, offer an environment where young women feel

comfortable pursuing traditionally male subjects and roles, diminish the importance of

appearance and dressing for the opposite sex, and permit young women to learn without

fear of sexual harassment (Grossman, 2002; Riordan, 1990). Thus, young women may

have a better chance to form a positive sense of self that can combat the negative forces

that influence them. Tidball et al. (1999) suggest that the institutional ethos of women's

schools, simply put, "takes women seriously." "The influence of classroom contexts,

faculty, peer environments, and general institutional commitment to excellence,

achievement, and women cannot be underestimated" (p. 69). This kind of environment

may help young women to resist their categorization as "second class" citizens and

enable them to redefine themselves through the support of one another, the positive role

modeling of women leaders, and the knowledge that they are worthy of an institution

dedicated to lifting them to excellence and high achievement. Arnot (2002), in

Reproducing Gender, discusses the feminist perspective that suggests that "through the

cultivation of sisterhood [in single-sex schools], girls will be able to grow and develop

their human potential, so they will be in a much stronger position to resist oppression in a

wider society" (p. 97).

Identity, according to Wenger (1998), is the locus of selfhood and a locus of

power. Identity provides the power to belong, but also a vulnerability of belonging to and

identifying with a larger group. Among the multiple identities of daily school life that

students negotiate, Catholic female single-sex high schools foster two particular

identities, both placed on the power and vulnerability continuum. Variables of identity,

such as gender or Catholicity cannot be separated from each other in real life. However, "different aspects get implicated, or brought to the fore at different times" (M. Connell, personal communication, March 10, 2007) and can be addressed separately for analytical purposes. Let us consider each of these in turn.

Gender

Students may identify as women, in part, because the Catholic female single-sex high school fosters the notion of belonging to the gender community of females. There can be power in this identity, power in numbers, and power in "legitimacy of membership" (Wenger, 1998, p. 207). However, as stated earlier, there is the danger that schools can be sites of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977), as suggested in the previous section on theories of social practice. However, proponents of the female single-sex school suggest that young women "will learn to appreciate feminine friendships, and a sense of solidarity with each other" (Arnot, 2002) and with the community at large, which can foster a power and singular identity that is unique to an all female environment.

However, there is also vulnerability in this identity. Having identified as part of a community of women, one may then acknowledge the existent oppression of gender and the ubiquitous reproduction of patriarchal dominance. Identifying as woman can include a recognition, though not acceptance, of this fact. Some researchers suggest that female single-sex high schools can be sites of resistance for this oppression (Lee & Bryk, 1986; Sarah, Scott, & Spender, 1980), while others argue that they are sites for the social reproduction of patriarchal dominance (Lee & Marks, 1990). My research will explore

and attempt to uncover how young women at Catholic female single-sex high schools negotiate these issues.

Catholicity

Though not all are baptized Catholic, or of the Catholic faith, all students in a Catholic school must, while at school, agree in some measure to live by the values of the Catholic faith and participate in activities as manifested in the Catholic school environment. True, some students or families may contest these values, but if their protestations are too profound, or their presence is a disruption to the lived Catholic mission of the school, the school will most often ask them to leave the community.

However, for those living in the Catholic school community and embracing its values, there can be power in this identity. Students may gain strength from their understanding that they have all agreed to the same foundation and philosophy for their high school journey. Further, there can be a kind of power in the Church's admiration of women, and in its declaration of the importance of their dignity and vocation. And there may be, as Bryk et al. (1993) assert, identification with a Catholic community that positively affects students. They suggest that Catholic high schools have four features that provide this positive community identification: "a definition of boundaries, a system of organizational beliefs that structures a shared purpose, social activities that give rise to these beliefs, and the formal organizational roles that make this community organization possible" (p. 127). These features can be considered an access point for a powerful identification and sense of belonging. There is, however, also a great vulnerability for young women who accept a Catholic identity. The exclusion of women from leadership

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positions, as discussed earlier, and the male gendered hierarchy is a subordination that some women may be unwilling to accept. Power derives from "belonging as well as from exercising control over what we belong to" (Wenger, 1998, p. 207). Women have very little control over their position in the Catholic Church, and this may distance them from true belonging and its attendant empowerment. Research at a Catholic female single-sex high school may uncover what kind of control is exercised in this situated environment, what level of control exists, and if belonging to a Catholic community is a relevant issue for young women during the high school experience.

<div align="center">Communities of Practice: Resistance and Reproduction</div>

The power in a theoretical framework that focuses on the integration of theories of social learning and the significance of communities of practice is its ability to embrace both the multiple identities of the human experience and the negotiability of those identities. However, as there are vulnerabilities in identity formation, there are also weaknesses in communities of practice. As Wenger (1998) suggests,

> The local coherence of a community of practice can be both a strength and a
> weakness. The indigenous production of practice makes communities of practice
> the locus of creative achievements and the locus of inbred failures; the locus of
> resistance to oppression and the locus of reproduction of its conditions; the cradle
> of self, but also the potential cage of the soul. (p. 85)

Such is the case with the Catholic female single-sex high school. A theoretical framework must embrace all facets of practice, and it must understand that each exists in a separate space while existing simultaneously in a way that none can exist without the other. The

Catholic female single-sex high school may enable its young women to resist the consequences of oppression while simultaneously being a site of social reproduction (as schools are), which perpetuates those exact same oppressive constructs. This is the substance of my research.

<div align="center">Outline of the Dissertation</div>

This study begins with a brief history of the women's movement and an historical overview of single-sex education in the United States. It is followed by a literature review of the historical implications of Title IX in 1972, the gender controversy in education, gender bias in the coeducational classroom, and a very brief overview of female adolescent development, as this study takes place in a high school setting. It continues with a review of the history and philosophy of women's Catholic schools, and it concludes with an exploration of current research on women in leadership and service in the 21st century, both in the secular and Catholic traditions. Subsequent to this, the proposed methodology will be discussed, including setting, participants, rationale, relevant terminology, data analysis techniques, and limitations for the study. A timeline for the research is also included. Chapter four presents the data and findings of the research, and chapter five presents a summarized analysis of the findings and suggests implications for future research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There is significant history and tradition that has contributed to the Catholic

female single-sex high school. The complex and sometimes litigious history of gender

relations, the history of the Catholic Church and its marginalization of women, and the

research related to the female identity and women's ways of knowing and participating in

society (Belenky et al., 1997; Gilligan, 1993) have all contributed to the unique

institution of the Catholic female single-sex high school. Issues of gender, in particular,

have loomed large, influenced by the growing women's rights movement in the United

States over the past century, the still controversial passage of Title IX, the 1972 education

amendment that mandates equal educational programs for both sexes, and the more

recent 21[st] century controversy of the "boy crisis" in education (Sommers, 2000). The

literature reviewed here will begin with a brief history of the women's movement in the

United States, and then it will move to a history of single-sex schooling, including a legal

briefing of Title IX and its effects on education. Also included will be sections on female

adolescent development, women and Catholic education, and women and the Catholic

Church, plus recent scholarship on women in leadership and service both in the secular

and religious context.

History of The Women's Movement in the United States

Women have long been known for their leadership and service in the private

sphere. As mothers, wives, and caretakers of the family, these two qualities have defined,

or some may say, circumscribed the lives of females in modern society. Meeting the

needs of the family and in charge of its daily welfare, the woman has been the historical

servant and leader of the home. In the early 19[th] century, Tocqueville spoke of the

"women's sphere" and described the tasks of child rearing and household work,

suggesting that "although the American woman never leaves her domestic sphere, and is

in some respects very dependent within it, nowhere does she enjoy a higher station"

(Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996, p. 86). The "higher station" of

which he speaks is derived from the elevated status that the woman is rewarded because

of her superior focus on domestic leadership and service.

However, the public sphere of leadership and service has been closed to the

female. Men's work of serving and leading in both public and private industry has

traditionally led them to work and careers in the business world, the "sphere of men"

(Bellah et al., 1996, p. 87). Thus, while lauded for their work in the private sphere,

woman have been historically denied access to the public sphere, and they have struggled

to break free from the constraints of a patriarchal society that relegates them to "women's

work," performing leadership and service only in their own homes. The women's

movement tells the stories of the struggles, successes, and failures of women breaking

into the public spheres of leadership and service.

The fight for equality in the United States in the public sphere began with

women's attempts at entrance into the political arena, as suffragettes fought for women's

right to vote. The Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention of 1848, which officially

began the fight for equal rights for women, focused much of its energies on gaining

women's right to vote. It was a bitter battle. After a meeting in 1848 attended by

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and members of the Senate to discuss the voting initiative, a

senator publicly discussed his notion of the revolutionary nature of the women's

endeavors to secure a place in the public sphere (LeGates, 2001):

> If there is any revolutionary claim in this country, it is that of woman suffrage.
>
> (Laughter.) It revolutionizes society; it revolutionizes religion; it revolutionizes
>
> the Constitution and laws; and it revolutionizes the opinions of those so old-
>
> fashioned among us as to believe that the legitimate and proper sphere of woman
>
> is the family circle, as wife and mother, not as politician and voter. (LeGates,
>
> 2001, p. 11)

The right to vote allowed women a voice outside the home, and it was the launch of the

female into a society where previously all decisions that were made excluded them. In

this "first wave of feminism," (LeGates, 2001) with the passage of the Nineteenth

Amendment in 1920, women became decision makers in the public sphere for the first

time. However, they had a long way to go before access and equity in this sphere would

begin to become a reality.

Most suffragettes shared an essentialist notion of women, and they campaigned in

solidarity believing that "no nationality, no political creed, no class distinction, no

difference of any sort divides us as women" (Kenney as cited in LeGates, 2001, p. 3). In

addition, some early feminists argued that in order to gather up the strength and develop

the clout to fight the patriarchal notions of society, women were forced to disassociate

from other allegiances of class, race, or family and place themselves exclusively "as part

of a group composed of women" (LeGates, 2001, p. 2).

However, in the intervening years, between the inception of the women's movement and its second flourishing in the 1970s, the movement would undergo significant change. The early term for "first wave" activism was simply "the woman movement" (Freedman, 2002, p. 4), and adherents during the early years considered the term "feminist" a pejorative title. But as the second wave of activism crested in the 1970s, the woman's movement became "women's liberation," and later as the western women's movement diversified and expanded its breadth and focus, the term "feminism" was embraced as appropriate nomenclature to describe the multitude of agendas that existed for women who, collectively, worked for equality and access.

Feminists ask that, "women not be forced to choose between public justice and private happiness" (Faludi, 1992, p. xxiii). Thus, the reemergence of the woman's movement in the 1970s consisted of two theoretical strands that attempted to achieve this goal through different means. Strand one, equal rights feminism, attempted to fight against legal and economic discrimination and create a level playing field for females in both the public and private sphere. Strand two, radical feminism, focused on patriarchy as the root of all discrimination, and it considered all other forms of oppression, including racism and capitalism, as extensions of male dominance (LeGates, 2001). However, because many second wave feminists were white, affluent, and middle class, their experience of oppression was exclusively a gendered one, and placed gender oppression "above all other forms of oppression" (LeGates, 2001, p. 5).

Thus, as the 20[th] century ended, feminism continued to splinter, the result of women's attempts to find their unique experience within the movement. Still shut out of

the public sphere in many ways, "Black feminists, ecofeminists, Christian feminists, Jewish feminists, Islamic feminists and liberal feminists, Marxist feminists, radical feminists, cultural feminists, and others, attest to the malleability of the label and to the seemingly contradictory politics it can embrace" (Freedman, 2002, p. 6). Feminists now look to the woman's movement to meet their needs, and to address multiple oppressions including those of race, class, and sexual orientation. This, the "third wave" of the woman's movement, "promises to go beyond the second wave of feminism by forging a more racially and sexually diverse movement that emphasizes female empowerment rather than male oppression" (Freedman, 2002, p. 6).

Finally, though, as different as the various strands of the woman's movement may be, none are incompatible with one another and each contributes to the energy of the movement as a whole, while collectively pushing closer toward a common goal. Ultimately, feminists of any ilk embrace a belief that women and men are of equal worth, and that social movements were and continue to be necessary to achieve that equality (Freedman, 2002). However, the belief that the women's movement was a battle against men is false:

> The battle was really against waste, the waste of talent, the waste to society, the waste of women who had certain gifts and goals and had to suppress both. The point was not to take over male terrain but to change it because it badly needed changing. (Quindlen, 2006, p. 84)

The changing of this terrain is the true the history of the women's movement. And one critical element has been key in providing women access to this conversation: education.

The history of the female in education is an important piece to understanding women's access to leadership and service in both the public and private sphere.

History of Schooling

The education of young men and women in the United States is, in fact, a gender story. The distinctive roles of the male and female in colonial society became the basis for the initial discourse that would shape the schooling system in the early nation. Schools were to prepare girls and boys for their separate duties in real life: domestic and maternal work for girls and work in public society for the boys. In the early 1700s girls essentially received no formal education at all. They were considered intellectually and morally inferior and not worthy of academic instruction. The only instruction that most girls received was in the domestic arts, apprenticed to their mothers in their own homes (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Some lucky girls, however, did receive limited education in "dame schools" (named after the gender of the teacher), where boys and girls were instructed in basic literacy and manners from about the ages of six and seven, and where the content of the lessons was shaped by religious instruction, that is, learning their catechism or memorizing the psalms. In this way, early girl school education could have been considered a form of Bible study; however, girls were also required to participate in needlework lessons, a practice that decreased the amount of time given to the academic subjects (Streitmatter, 1999; Tyack & Hansot, 1992). Curricular decisions, such as this, were the norm for young women. "Curricular content was designed to reinforce social rather than academic expectations" (Streitmatter, 1999, p. 31).

In the late 1700s, according to Tyack and Hansot (1992), a kind of "back door" philosophy began to emerge, where young women were allowed access to education in the off times when young men were not using the instructors or the resources of the educational system. Girls were essentially smuggled in to classrooms after the regular school day and during the summers when boys were engaged in other tasks. These off hours opportunities for access to education eventually engendered a tacit acceptance of the education of young women, and, as the 19[th] century began, schooling for girls was no longer taboo but still controversial (Tyack & Hansot, 1992).

The controversy during the post revolutionary years was focused on the purpose of a girl's education. If a girl was to be educated for the duties of the private sphere, there was a general consensus that this was an appropriate use of resources and time. However, education for the sake of intellectual pursuit for use in the public sphere was frowned upon. In the late 1700s, when the town of Plymouth Massachusetts considered a proposal to use public funds to offer a grammar school education to girls, tempers flared. Opponents of the measure insisted that "the world was coming to a pretty pass…when wives and daughters would look over the shoulders of their husbands and fathers, and offer to correct such errors in spelling as they might commit" (Tyack & Hansot, 1992, p. 26). Others claimed that educating young women would upset the social order, while proponents, who were mostly well-to-do citizens, wanted a better education for their daughters so that they could "discharge their duties as mothers and companions of their husbands, and that training in arithmetic would benefit widows forced to run a business" (p. 26).

The well-to-do parents of daughters were, in fact, catalysts for the next stage in the education of young women and in the development of education. For those families that could afford the tuition, schools for girls, such as Benjamin Rush's Young Ladies Academy in Philadelphia and other religiously affiliated schools, including some founded by orders of Catholic nuns, developed on the eastern seaboard (Tyack & Hansot, 1992). However, access to education did not yet mean liberation from the societal roles that women were expected to play. Educated primarily for their duties in the private sphere, "the original consequence of schooling was that of isolation, social reproduction, and oppression of women" (Streitmatter, 1999, p. 25).

Schools for young women, called seminaries, were a part of this social reproduction. In the 1800s, some large cities in the United States began to experiment with high school education for girls. Pioneers like Emma Willard, Catherine Beecher, and Mary Lyon were at the forefront of this advocacy. They expected their institutions to professionalize motherhood: "They wanted women to fulfill their feminine destiny but not to move outside their sphere" (Tyack & Hansot, 1992, p. 37). In addition, many activists for women's education at this time merged their advocacy for women with an "evangelical impulse" (p. 36), and clearly expected instruction of women to introduce literacy for the purpose of inculcating religious and civic values in their children. Girls' schools, whose goal was to develop good mothers and educate women for instructing their offspring in Bible study, were unlikely to be controversial in any sphere. Thus, the seminaries thrived and became a powerful force in the development of education for women.

In a newly developing nation, however, most schools were spread far and wide across the country. By the mid 19[th] century, most parents had now concluded that their girl children should be educated, but they wanted schools to be local, under their watchful eye. Thus, a decentralized school system in the United States became the norm. Rural areas, which comprised 80% of the population at this time, had limited resources and small class sizes, both of which made it economically unfeasible to sustain gender segregated schools. Thus, schooling became the exception rather than the norm, as schools across the country admitted both boys and girls out of financial necessity (Tyack & Hansot, 1992). However, as Sadker and Sadker (1994) insist, "Coeducation happened because it was cheaper, but was it better?" (p. 18).

The first coeducational college was Oberlin (1833), which began accepting women in 1833. However, the admission of women was not an act of confidence in the ability of women or a vote for the equality of women in society. Rather, it was expected that including women on the campus of an all male college would "civilize" the men and help them come to a more accurate understanding of the female gender (Stock, 1978). In fact, women were required to complete many domestic chores on the Oberlin campus, including washing the men's clothes, serving them meals, and cleaning their rooms (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

As the 19[th] century closed, state universities followed suit, but the Ivy League colleges in the northeast were set against the admission of women. As a result of this denial, women's colleges were established. Some, such as Vassar (1861) and Wellesley (1870), modified the college curriculum to include instruction in the domestic sciences.

Others, notably Smith (1875) and Bryn Mawr (1885), developed entrance standards and a curriculum similar in rigor to the all male colleges, though they were in the minority (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Streitmatter, 1999). The founder of Bryn Mawr, Carey Thomas, "broke with the Victorian notion of a women's sphere" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 27) and introduced curriculum that was devoid of the "womanly arts," requiring no woman to complete any service oriented chores on campus, and demanding that women wear academic gowns as their male counterparts did.

However, the opposition to admitting women to colleges continued. In 1858 the President of the University of Michigan asserted that if the admission of women to colleges became commonplace, "Men [would] lose as women advance" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 22). Others feared that academic debate would lose its rigor if women took part, and still others believed that women and men studying together would lessen the attraction between the sexes and the institution of marriage would be jeopardized. Women who chose to pursue higher education even risked being disowned by their families. For example, one woman who went to Germany to acquire her doctorate in 1879 learned that while she was away no one spoke of her absence because she was considered to have disgraced her parents (Stock, 1978). Thus, though women's education made great strides in the 19th century, the progress was halting, sometimes painful, and never easy.

In the early 20th century, gender issues continued to drive public discourse on education. While coeducation became the norm for United States public schools, the debate about education raged on fueled by proponents of gender segregated education

who believed in the separation of the sexes because of the "biological basis of female destiny" (Tyack & Hansot, 1992, p. 149). Dr. Edward H. Clarke of Harvard Medical School (1820-1877) believed that females required a different education, less demanding than their male counterparts, because of their distinct biology and their monthly cycles. He asserted that the female reproductive organs would suffer if females were exposed to "identical coeducation" (Tyack & Hansot, 1999). As Sadker and Sadker (1994) suggest, if Clarke's notion were to be a warning label it would say: "Women beware: High School and College may be hazardous to your health" (p. 30). Nonetheless, females continued to pour into the nation's coeducational schools, outnumbering the boys, while 9 out of 10 of public school teachers were female as well. The large proportion of girls in public education, and the preponderance of women instructors, caused some critics of coeducation to be fearful of the feminization of education. They argued that gender segregation was necessary because males needed a more virile environment in which to learn, so as not to become soft. Proponents of education during the early 1900s were more concerned about segregating the sexes for separate but unequal opportunities in education and in life (Tyack & Hansot, 1992). Education was not yet meant to rearrange the preordained spheres established for men and women.

Other single-sex educational opportunities previous to the second half of the 20[th] century included vocational training for boys and girls that directed them to gender stereotyped professions, such as secretarial work for girl, and industrial arts for boys. Further, single-gender programs in the public schools, such as home economics courses, sex education courses, and physical education programs, were rooted in the notion that

men and women should be prepared differently in school because of their naturally different roles in life. Feminists rejected this notion that men and women should be trained for distinctly different and essentially unequal roles in society. They believed that coeducation could eradicate the injustice of the separate but unequal ideology present in the early half of the 20[th] century (Tyack & Hansot, 1992).

Catholic Schools for Females

There was one arena, however, where single-sex education meant more than just an introduction to the preordained and confined sphere of women. This was in the environment of the all girl Catholic secondary academies and colleges. The creation of these Catholic educational institutions for young women was begun by Catholic women's teaching orders from the 1890s to the 1920s. And though, because of the sentiments of the time,

> Catholic women's colleges faced the same contradictions as the rest of America about the purposes of women's education, they offered a counter model to the standard male-headed women's college, as well as to the coeducational institutions in which women were clearly streamed toward less intellectual fields. (Conway, 2002, p. 13)

Catholic women's colleges, according to Conway (2002), should not be seen as a footnote to all male institutions such as Notre Dame and Georgetown. There is little appreciation for the significant influence that these institutions had on society as a whole at the time.

Many of the early Catholic women's colleges grew out of existing academies, or female single-sex high schools (Schier & Russet, 2002). In fact, Catholic nuns, though serving under the patriarchal system of the Catholic Church, may have been "some of the most liberated women in 19[th] century America" (Schier & Russet, 2002, p. 4). Further, these institutions were more successful than other sister Protestant institutions in resisting the requirement that women be taught curriculum suited solely for the private domestic sphere.

Until the 1960s, Catholic women's teaching orders were constantly replenished by the 10% of graduates from Catholic women's colleges that chose to enter religious life (Conway, 2002). However, this was not the sole mission of the colleges. In the late 1800s several large sisterhoods wanted to open up higher education for women to "right an injustice to their sex and to extend, in viable and innovative ways, their traditional focus on female education" (Oates, 2002, p. 162). In these colleges the quest to reconcile faith and knowledge was placed at the center of the collegiate experience. Additionally, role models like St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena, or respected theologians like Hildegard of Bingen were used as historical models of faith and leadership in Catholic women's colleges. This, in conjunction with the first person witness of seeing "Sister President" or "Sister Dean" running the all female institution on a daily basis, was, most probably, a very empowering and very liberating experience (Conway, 2002). The presence of inspiring role models is of vital importance to women and there are studies that show a statistically significant relationship between the presence of women faculty and the lifelong achievement of women students (Tidball, 1980). In addition, in terms of

the influence of Catholic women's colleges by the 1950s, "more than half the institutions founded to educate women in the United States were Catholic colleges for women" (Conway, 2002, p. 12).

In 1968 at the peak of their growth, Catholic women's colleges educated 101,000 students in 142 colleges, touching about 1 in 70 of the 7.5 million students enrolled in higher educational systems at the high point of the system's growth in the 1960s. (Conway, 2002, p. 12-13)

Significant in terms of numbers of women educated, and type of education offered, Catholic women's colleges provided opportunities that, in may cases, allowed women to access an education not only equal to those offered to men, but designed specifically by and for women.

Tidball (1980), a prominent researcher honored for her contributions for furthering the education of women, began in 1970 to look carefully at the women's college phenomenon just when the pendulum began to swing again in favor of coeducational school settings. Her research concluded that women's colleges produced graduates whose career achievement outpaced that of women peers educated in coeducational colleges. And thirty years later, her conclusions, having been tested in many different types of institutions using a variety of methods, still hold up (Conway, 2002). Tidball (1980) asserts that in women's colleges, the education is more than just favorable, it is empowering:

The education of women is the primary purpose of the institution. There is a critical mass of women faculty, women are nurtured and challenged in all realms,

and woman-related issues dominate campus discussions—in short, at these

colleges, the total development of the woman is taken seriously by the entirety of

the community. (Tidball, Smith, Tidball, & Wolf-Wendell, 1999, p. xx)

Further, while single-sex colleges may be empowering for women, researchers found that

accepting equal numbers of men and women in coeducational settings does not guarantee

sameness in the college program or experience. Tidball (1973b) asserts that because the

coeducational institution does not meet the needs of the female student, but rather adheres

to the framework of the dominant male patriarchy, coeducational institutions can cause a

"loss of talent" for women, where the female student is not able achieve at her highest

capability (Tidball, 1973b, p. xx).

Even with student background characteristics and institutional selectivity held

constant, a woman attending an all-women's college, compared with her

coeducational counterpart, is more likely to emerge with higher educational

aspirations, to attain a higher degree, to enter a sex-atypical career, and to achieve

prominence in her field. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, pp. 638-39)

Legislating Educational Equality

However, despite the favorable research on the outcomes of the female college

institutions in the first half of the 20[th] century, feminists remembered too clearly how the

institution of earlier decades had been a tool of oppression rather than liberation. Thus,

the second wave feminists of the 1970s, unconvinced by the equity in the single-sex

option, continued to advocate for a mixed-sex educational experience. As before,

coeducation was thought to provide young women access to an equal place in the

classroom and equal exposure to curricular programs. With this goal in mind, the

women's movement of the late twentieth century attempted to transform all single-sex

institutions into coeducational schools primarily through legislation. Title IX, an initiative

passed in 1972, made sex discrimination illegal in schools.

<div align="center">*Title IX*</div>

Title IX of the Education Amendments (1972) is part of a federal legislative

framework that implements the protections of the Equal Protection Clause of the United

States Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution was enacted during

the post-Civil War era as part of a national effort to prohibit states from denying former

slaves "equal protection of the law" (U.S. Const., Amend. 14). By its terms, the

Fourteenth Amendment restricts only state action, not private actions. Courts have

interpreted the Fourteenth Amendment as prohibiting states from discrimination based on

gender. Accordingly, state-sponsored schools must show "exceedingly persuasive

justification" (*Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan*, 1982) in order to comply with

the Equal Protection Clause. Under the Equal Protection Clause, a test for gender-based

classification is met "only by showing at least that the classification serves important

governmental objectives, and that discriminatory means employed" are "substantially

related to achievement of those objectives" (*Wengler v. Druggists Mutual Ins. Co.*, 1980).

Further, "classifications must be free of fixed notions concerning roles and abilities of

males and females" (*Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan,* 1982). Gender

discrimination was permitted only if it could be justified because it "intentionally and

<div align="center">60</div>

directly assists members of the sex that is disproportionately burdened" (*Schlesinger v. Ballard*, 1975).

There are only two single-sex programs that have come before the Court under the Equal Protection Clause. In the first single-sex education decision, *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan* (1982), a male applicant sued for entrance into an all female nursing university. The court struck down the all female admission policy because it stated that there was no evidence that women had been discriminated against in gaining access to the field of nursing; in fact, nursing had been a stereotypically female field. In the second case, *United States v. Virginia* (1996), the Virginia Military Academy argued that their all male admission policy was necessary to its educational mission, and that female students would not benefit and may be harmed by the pedagogy used at the institution. The Court held that the school had failed to make an "exceedingly persuasive justification for classification" (*Mississippi University for Women V. Hogan*, 1982), and women entered the institution the following year.

In order to extend the reach of the Equal Protection Clause to private schools, Congress used its power under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution to condition the receipt of federal aid on compliance with various federal statutes. Title IX is one such statute. It prohibits state-sponsored schools and private schools that are receiving federal aid from discriminating on the basis of sex. However, public and private schools were subject to different treatment under Title IX. Private schools were permitted to operate single-sex schools, while public schools were restricted in their ability to offer single-sex education. This distinction under Title IX, along with the fact that the Equal Protection

Clause applies only to state-sponsored schools, resulted in a situation in which there were

many more private single-sex schools than public single-sex schools. However, with the

passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which set aside grants for

local educational agencies to establish same-gender schools, changes are on the way. The

President also enacted changes to the federal regulations that implement Title IX (the

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations) to permit public schools with additional

flexibility under Title IX to establish single-sex programs.

The NCLB was controversial for its policies of high accountability and

comprehensive testing for students and teachers. There was, however, a little hailed

provision in the NCLB Act of 2001 that allowed $385 million (Sax, 2002) for grants to

local educational agencies for "programs to provide same gender schools and classrooms

(consistent with applicable law)" (NCLB, 2001). When the Act became Law, President

Bush asked the Secretary of Education to "draft new Title IX regulations that would take

a more 'flexible' approach to Title IX regulations" (Grossman, 2007). The Office of Civil

Rights in the Department of Education drafted new regulations in 2004 and in October of

2006 adopted the final form. There are several changes from the initial Title IX proposal,

but one significantly impacts single-sex education.

Title IX 2006 Regulatory Amendments

The new Title IX regulations permit public school districts to operate under a

three part standard. First, single-sex classes or schools must administer programs "in an

even handed manner," and second, enrollment must require "completely voluntary

student participation" (Education Code Section 66271.5-66281.5). However, the most

notable change is this: If a public school district chooses to operate a single-sex school, it must then provide "a substantially equal coeducational class or activity" (34 CFR § 106.34). This is a significant departure from the previous regulation that permitted elementary or secondary single-sex schools *only if* the school district would operate an identical coeducational school or identical male and female curricular offering. Therefore, under previous Title IX regulations, there could be no single-sex female academy without the exact same single-sex male academy. Under the new regulations, a public single-sex female academy could operate if there were a public coeducational school with comparable courses, services, and facilities. This opens a large window of opportunity for public single-sex programs and their proponents, and it provides further credibility to single-sex research. If the public school system is going to expand the ability of its districts to implement single-sex education, continued research in this area is necessary to determine its risks and benefits for all students in today's society.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and some feminists are opposed to the new regulations and assert that equality of programs and comparability of programs is not the same, and that single-sex education is simply a "sound good" program with no scientific basis (ACLU, 2004). In fact, even the U. S. Department of Education in a recent systematic review of research on single-sex versus coeducational schooling found that in previous research that tested the benefits of education "the results are equivocal" (Mael, et al., 2005, p x). And yet, the report did indicate that single-sex schools can be "helpful, especially for certain outcomes related to academic achievement and more positive academic aspirations" (Mael, et al., 2004, p. x). With the conflicting research

available, and the millions of government dollars at stake, it is important to continue

research into the single-sex school to determine its possible benefit to future generations

of public and private school students. The controversy about equitable treatment of both

genders continues to rage, but the end of the 20[th] century really brought this conflict into

the classroom, and onto the national agenda.

<center>The Gender Controversy in Education</center>

Carol Gilligan's 1982 classic, *In a Different Voice,* opened up an academic

discourse that significantly influenced society's view of the female psyche, and thus

impacted the credibility of single-sex education. With her landmark research, Gilligan

provided a counterpoint to the prevailing notion of male and female moral development

of the time that resided in Lawrence Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral development. In

stages one and two of Kohlberg's hierarchy, human moral behavior was driven either by

fear of punishment or by benefit to self. Those in stage three were driven by a responsible

care for others, while those who were most morally developed, at the top of the hierarchy,

were those who were committed to acting out abstract principles of justice. Based on this

theory, Kohlberg's research determined that women were less moral than men. Women,

according to his hierarchy, operated on the third level, the stage of caring, and thus were

considered morally inferior to men who generally operated at the higher level, acting on

principles of justice. Gilligan took issue with Kohlberg's findings and asserted that

women were not less than men; they were different. Women reasoned differently than

men, using an orientation of care, while men operated from an orientation of justice.

Gilligan's initial studies, however, remain controversial because her participants were in

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the majority white middle class students and adults, her sample was small, and her method has been criticized as unscientific and unavailable for review (Sommers, 2000). Nonetheless, her research can be considered landmark because even Sommers (2000) admits that, "Gilligan revolutionized modern psychology by introducing women's voices into a social science tradition that had systematically ignored them" (p. 110).

Gilligan's (1982) work was about voice, giving women legitimacy on their own terms and disassociating them from the male norms whose expectations relegate the female to inferior positions of moral behavior and status in society. In her preface to the 1993 reprinting of *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan states:

> My questions are about voice and relationship. And my questions are about psychological processes and theory, particularly theories in which men's experience stands for all of human experience—theories which eclipse the lives of women and shut out women's voices. (Gilligan, 1993, p. xiii)

The belief that the female voice had been suppressed, and that females were being held to a male standard, when, in fact, their own needs and orientations were different, revolutionized the way educators and researchers viewed the schooling experience. Researchers who used this lens to critique the successes and failures of the coeducational school setting were alarmed to find that, in fact, women's voices and girl's voices were not being heard, and that school institutions were creating programs and curriculum that conformed to a male standard without regard to the specific needs of 50% of the school population.

A confluence of research in the 1980s and 1990s followed Gilligan's (1982) breakthrough work, and addressed the issue of women's voice. Hall and Sandler's (1982) study, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?,* first used Gilligan's lens to document the indifference to women's voices in the college classroom. Her research documented faculty members calling on men more often, and faculty members and students making stereotyping remarks about female behavior. Sadker and Sadker's (1994) work, *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls*, worked directly from Gilligan's premise that boys and girls are different and require different sets of experiences in the classroom. They asserted that the one size fits all coeducational high school or elementary school classroom fails girls in many ways, and that girls are "second class educational citizens" in our nation's schools. Sadker and Sadker's research showed that girls were marginalized in the classroom, that the majority of teacher time and attention was directed towards boys, and that girls' self-esteem, academic achievement, and career options were compromised because of the gender bias in the coeducational classroom. Orenstein's (1994) *School Girls* and Pipher's (1994) *Reviving Ophelia* became part of popular culture, in-home book clubs and academics alike grappled with stories of the psychological damage and neglect that girls suffered at the hands of the educational institutions. In addition, the AAUW (1992), also concerned about the voice of young women in the classroom, published a study detailing the inequities, both short term and long term, of inattention to girls in the classroom. In *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, the AAUW explores, primarily through quantitative research, how gender bias shortchanges young women such that "girls are not receiving the same

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quality, or even quantity, of education as their brothers" (AAUW, 1992). Standardized

testing and curricular programs are revealed as biased in favor of boys, while

discrimination against pregnant female teens and under-representation of young women

in special education (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001) speak volumes about a system that

simply did not attend to the unique needs of the female gender.

There was much good that resulted from the firestorm generated by Gilligan's

(1982) call to action. The research focus on young women and education provided a

better understanding of the effects of gender on classroom environment, pedagogy,

achievement, and social adjustment. Outcomes of the many gender studies ranged from

pedagogical interventions that mediate the effects of gender in the classroom, to a greater

gender sensitivity in school management and programming (AAUW, 1992; Sadker &

Sadker, 1994).

bell hooks (1989), a prominent black feminist writing in this same period,

advocates for a feminist theory that would raise the critical consciousness of both men

and women in society, so that the workings of sexism and sexist oppression could be

better understood and might lead to the production of strategies for resistance. Further,

she emphasizes the need to challenge sexist oppression not just by "what we teach but by

how we teach" (p. 54). Thus, she asserts that pedagogical method in the classroom must

be a part of the effort to educate against sexist practices in society. Her voice, amongst

others in the feminist movement, "talks back" and invites talking back to the patriarchal

hegemony, especially in the domain of education. Yet, as persuasive as her voice is, there

are still those who believe that a feminist agenda has become passé.

As the 20th century closed, research on gender and schooling shifted and the "boy turn," as coined by Marcus Weaver Hightower (2003), began. Hightower defines the boy turn in two ways: as a turn away from research about girls and a turn towards research about boys. One of the most prominent proponents of the boy turn is Christine Hoff Sommers (2000). Her work, *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men*, is a bold attack on the method and research outcomes of Carol Gilligan (1982), and it asserts that boys are being significantly disadvantaged by our school system and have suffered this setback because of feminist advocacy for girls. While the details of this academic argument are outside the scope of this review, it is important to note the continued evolution and range of gender debate in education for these arguments will insert themselves later in the discussion of single-sex and coeducational schooling.

<center>Female Adolescent Development</center>

Studies in adolescent psychology note the importance of a multitude of variables in the development of the young adult. For the purposes of this research, I will address three of the most salient for the single-sex female Catholic high school: the significance of gender, the influence of the school context, and the importance of the teacher/mentor relationship to adolescent development.

<center>*The Significance of Gender*</center>

The all female environment dictates that all peer relationships during school hours will consist of exclusively female groupings. Research shows that adolescent girl

groupings are characterized by nurturance, empathy, and intimacy (Maccoby, 2002 as cited in Galambos, 2004), an important consideration when exploring identity in adolescence. Lerner and Steinberg's (2004) *Handbook on Adolescent Psychology* further reports that gender-typed behavior may be learned and reproduced in these groupings, suggesting that the roots of learned gendered behaviors are deep and invasive, beyond a simple explanation of parental or media influence. In addition, biological studies of adolescent females find that, due to the nature of hormonal changes and physical growth during puberty, adolescence constitutes a stressful transition in life (Susman & Rogol, 2004), making high school a more difficult school context to negotiate than previous elementary education. Further, a study about gender differences in self reported emotional expression showed a significant increase in emotional expression in girls from Grade 5 through Grade 12 (Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin, 2004 as cited in Galambos, 2004), revealing that emotional expression for females during adolescence is a common place and accepted practice. Lastly, Duru-Bellat's study (as cited in Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006) found that female students are more eager to conform to school expectations and to seek others' approval for their identity in the school sphere.

The Influence of the School Context

Because this research is situated on a single-sex high school campus, it is important to acknowledge the school as context in research literature. Results of a recent study of eighth graders found that adolescents' adaptation to their school community does play a part in the formation of their identity (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006).

However, this same study found that while "identity is an adaptation to the school context…the school system also adapts to its students" (p. 85). Because of the unique single gender context of the Catholic female single sex school, it is significant that students not only develop their identities influenced by the school context, but that they also influence the school context by their presence. This finding is aligned with the identity theories of Wenger (1998) who, as earlier noted, understands identity as produced through social interaction and community as produced through the practices of the individuals within that community.

Adolescence and the Teacher/Mentor

Teachers, the adults on the high school campus, are in the position to be mentors to the young adults in their care. Teachers who care for, trust, and respect their students engender in them motivation, engagement, and high self-esteem. Studies show that adolescents who believe that their teachers do care and support them enhance students' feelings of self-esteem and sense of belonging, thus creating a positive effect in school (Roeser & Eccles, 1998, as cited in Eccles, 2004). Thus, close relationships to the adults in the high school setting can make a significant difference to the students both in and out of the classroom. Noddings' (1984) theories about female orientation to the ethic of care are particularly well corroborated in the female single-sex environment. The fact that teacher and mentor relationships enhance school belonging is also an important factor in this study, which is centered on a theoretical framework about community.

Another important piece to contextualize for the female adolescent in the single-sex Catholic high school is her relationship to the school as a representative of the Catholic Church. What does it mean to be female in a Catholic institution?

<center>Female and Catholic</center>

Though the Catholic Church has supported the single-sex school for females through its women's religious orders, the Church's relationship with the female gender has been a difficult one. Over the course of the last century, as the political and social world was moving toward equal rights for women, the Church has maintained an essentially patriarchal stance. Catholic feminist scholars' understanding "that women's voices were absent through centuries of tradition, as well as in the present, and…that women were envisioned as naturally inferior in Catholic theology" (Carr, 1993, p. 20) made them believe that the male-centered, male-authored perspective needed a significant transformation. Wall (2003), Director of the Women's Studies program at Villanova, asserts the following:

> There is a definite gender ideology within Catholic social thought that is the product of the uncritical acceptance of sexual hierarchy. Predicated on difference and inequality, the ideology needs to be subjected to critical reflection. The acceptance of a sexual hierarchy is the foundation of a gender ideology that speaks of the dignity and sacredness of all people, while at the same time reifying systematic inequality and injustices. (p. 153)

One of the institutional components of the "critical reflection" that Wall advocates is the Women's Studies programs initiated at Catholic colleges and universities in the wake of

the second wave of the women's movement in the 1970s. However, even this component struggles for legitimacy on the Catholic university campus. For the most part, Women's Studies programs at Catholic colleges and universities continue to be marginalized. "Their health and vitality rely heavily upon those women who are emotionally and energetically invested in the program, where few material rewards are to be had" (Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2003, p. 165).

In the Vatican II document on the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* the Church declares that discrimination of any kind is "inimical" to human dignity and encourages the nurturance of both genders so that they may reach their full potential. If however, the full potential of a young woman is to become a spiritual leader in the priesthood, this option is foreclosed to her. Thus, in fact, "full potential" is not interpreted similarly for both genders in Church doctrine. Because women are forbidden access to the most sacred and most powerful association in the church, that of the priesthood, they are consequently disallowed access to decisions of policy and practice that directly affect them and their spiritual life. Documents such as John Paul II's *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis, On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone* (1994) justifies this exclusion, while his 1988 Apostolic letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem, On the Dignity and Vocation of Women,* affirms the importance of "the vocation of women" being acknowledged in its fullness.

Thus, the position of the female in the Catholic tradition is a confused one. Oppressed on the one hand, and affirmed on the other, young females who receive this mixed message must negotiate their Catholic identity in difficult terrain. How they

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receive this message, and to what degree it is relevant to their experience, is part of the subject of my study. "To promote social justice for women within Catholic higher education we must understand their lived experiences" (Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2003). The same must be true for young women in Catholic secondary education, which this research will attempt to address.

Women in Leadership

Women in positions of leadership are not recent phenomena. But they are new enough that many women can remember when times were very different. A professional female colleague of mine remembers when she was one of four women partners in a large corporate law firm in 1978. And yet, today in 2008, though the same law firm registers approximately 20% women partners (imbalanced—but improved), my friend is still the first woman partner to have a corner office (N. Cohen, personal communication, December 4, 2005). Similarly, in education, women comprise only 31% of full time faculty in higher education, and the national tenure rate for women has remained under 50%, whereas the rate for men is 70% (Grogan, 2005). Thus, while women have achieved much in the last three decades, the transition from marginalized to mainstream is still in process.

The history of this journey, however, is very instructive. As women became leaders in various sectors of society, gender studies began to be published and educational researchers have tried to answer the question: Do women lead differently than men? Early on, Carol Gilligan (1982) began the dialogue suggesting that women operated in a more relational, collaborative manner, while Nell Noddings (1984),

suggested that females adhered to an ethic of care to a greater degree than their male

counterparts. Today after approximately three decades of research, we know that it is an

unjust stereotype to assert that all men lead in one way and all women lead in another.

However, studies will show that, in general, women and men approach leadership from

different perspectives. Leadership, as all human interactions, occurs in a situated

experience. My research explores what effects the Catholic female single-sex high school

has on the leadership practices of young women.

Characteristics of Female Leaders

Studies reveal that more women prefer a flatter management structure than men

and a more lateral approach to decision making (Claes, 1999; Crampton & Mishra, 1999).

In schools led by women, relationships are central, communication is frequent, and

administration focuses more on individual differences and the motivation of others.

Further, in women education leaders there is a greater emphasis on teachers' concerns,

and the needs of marginal students (Andrews, Shockley, & James, 2005; Arnold &

Peterson 1998; Rosser, 2001; Shakeshaft, 1987). In addition, women leaders show a

preference for a more democratic style than the traditional autocratic leadership of

historical management theories (Eagly et al., 1992; Williamson & Hudson, 2002), and

they use collaboration as an important decision making tool (Brunner, 2005). Also, a

study of newly graduated female assistant principals in North Carolina (Williamson &

Hudson, 2002) reported that listening was one way female leaders demonstrated their

commitment to an inclusive and collaborative culture. Leadership priorities such as these,

however, can be problematic when "the corporate leader is still modeled on particular

hegemonic male images of being independent, and taking unilateral action" (Blackmore, 2005). Luther Gulick's (1937) acronym to describe the seven functions of management POSDCoRB: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting, are handled differently by the male and female leader. As Andrews, Shockley, and James (2002) suggest that male leaders, in general, do POSDCoRB *to* or *over* people; women leaders do POSDCoRB *with* people. Though, as Acker (2005) suggests, as women work their way up values such as collegiality, democracy, participation, and caring may become the norm rather than the exception.

<p style="text-align:center">*Educating Female Leadership*</p>

Rupp (1981) defines feminism as "a world view that ranks gender as a primary category of analysis or explanatory factor for understanding the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources in society" (p. 283). Using this lens to analyze leadership in society can enable people to better understand women's lack of access to power and resources, and it "allows gender to become a category for analysis for seeing and understanding the skewed nature of how positional leaders are selected and rise to power, and how resources are distributed" (Trigg, 2006, p. 22).

Trigg (2006) suggests that when gender becomes a prioritized category for analysis, leadership development can become a "subversive educational tool" (p. 22). It can enlighten women in social and corporate organizations about ways in which the current system uses gender as a barrier to women's advancement. Trigg also insists that one way to overcome this barrier is to educate women in the context of the women's studies framework, where students are "made aware of the paucity of women as decision

<p style="text-align:center">75</p>

makers in public office, institutions of higher education, business, and other social arenas" (p. 22). A corollary of the women's studies framework at the university level may be the female single-sex high school, where issues of gender are obvious and issues of leadership development are focused exclusively on young women in adolescence in the critical years of identity formation (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004).

<div align="center">*Why Women's Leadership Matters*</div>

According to Trigg (2006), "there are powerful and compelling arguments for why women's leadership makes a difference and why we should care about the dearth of women in leadership positions, both in the United States and globally" (p. 26). The different leadership approach that many women embrace, which is more collaborative, more open, and more consensus building (Eagly & Johnson, 1990 as cited in Indvik, 2004), is needed more than ever today. Women can transform the decision making process, and bring new perspectives to the debate in a globe that is "threatened with self-destruction based on past—predominantly male—leadership" (Institute for Women's Leadership, 2002, p. 17). Furthermore, young women's leadership is an issue of great concern, because these women will be our future leaders, and society needs their vision, their idealism, and their civic engagement (Trigg, 2006).

<div align="center">Linking Leadership and Service</div>

Using Astin and Astin's (2000) definition of a leader as "a change agent, or one who fosters change" (p. 8), Misa, Anderson, and Yamamura (2005) suggest that it is logical to infer that one who leads will also serve. Those who take on the responsibility of

change agents are likely to become involved in their communities, whether it be in their school, university, or neighborhoods. Sergiovanni's (1992) advocacy of moral leadership in education similarly focuses on service-centered leadership where members strive to develop caring communities with common values and beliefs. Sergiovanni's leadership theories are rooted in a democratic approach to leadership, where hierarchical management is loose but community is culturally tight. His theories describe well the connectedness of leadership and service in the school setting.

Community Service and Service Learning

Service learning and community service are considered by some scholars to be slightly different in definition and practice. According to Waldstein and Reiher (2004), "Service learning is a pedagogical approach to education which links community based service with academic goals through critical reflection" (p. 7). Community service is different because as the name suggests, it does focus on service to the community but without the tie in to academic goals or curricular programming. Some scholars, however, suggest that service terms are often used interchangeably because no clear definition exists (Bickford & Reynold, 2002). For the purposes of this research, I will use the term community service because service at my research site did not have a specific tie to academics or curriculum, though participation was mandatory, as in many Catholic schools where "there is a long tradition of promoting community service for altruistic and religious reasons" (Marks & Jones, 2004).

Outcomes of Community Service

In *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2006* (Pryor et al., 2006), by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), the upward trend in student participation in civic activity continues. "Approximately two thirds (66.7%) of all freshmen report that helping others in difficulty is a 'very important' or 'essential personal goal'" (Pryor et al., 2006, p. 10). However, the researchers hypothesize that students may have difficulty in determining how to accomplish these goals because only 11.3% of respondents affirmed the importance of volunteering for organizations like Peace Corps or AmeriCorps. Nonetheless, researchers have found a correlation that suggests that those who do volunteer in college are more likely to have leadership ability, attend graduate school, earn advanced degrees, and volunteer after college (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Motivation for community service may be a factor in outcomes, though. Some students report completing community service for altruistic reasons, "to help others," while others complete service to feel good about themselves (Serow, 1991), and still others are interested in resume building, group norms, or the social benefits they may gain (Marks & Jones, 2004, p. 314). Nonetheless, there is research to suggest that high school participation in community service does predispose students to volunteer in college (Astin et al., 1999). "*Ongoing socialization* into community participation during the high school years may be a function of the *characteristics of the high school* the student attends, or of *the experiences of community service* the student has while in high school" (Marks & Jones, 2004). The situated focus of this research will explore these two variables.

Though there is significant scholarship on volunteerism in college and its impact on long term civic engagement (Astin et al., 1999; Misa, Anderson, & Yamamura, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), there is less research on the impact of community service on the secondary school experience, and there is even less on the Catholic school service experience. The subset of the Catholic female single-sex high school as a unique environment for community service is an almost entirely unexplored territory. However, there are a few important issues related to the quality and the nature of service in secondary schools that recent literature has touched upon.

Required community service is a common practice in Catholic high schools, and several studies have attempted to determine the impact of mandating service during these formative years. The scholarship is inconclusive on this. One study proposed that the lower volunteer rate of Catholic college students might be a result of required community service in high school (Marks, 2001). Another suggested that mandating community service in high school might reduce intrinsic motivation for future service (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999). However, a double cohort study in Canada found just the opposite. In this study, one cohort of high school seniors was required to complete 40 hours of mandated community service, while the other cohort was not required to complete the 40 hours. Later, in the students' freshmen year of college, research showed no difference between the two student cohorts in attitude or perspective about community service. In other words, there was no negative impact on student attitude toward service based on previous mandatory service programs (Henderson, Brown, Pancer, & Ellis-

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Hale, 2007). This study, and others by Metz and Youniss (2003, 2005), suggests that getting students to do community service in high school does not detract from future service aspirations, even if it is mandated, as is the case in many Catholic schools.

Other findings about service in the secondary school are related to the quality of service and the subsequent reflection in which students may engage. One study indicates that the quality of the service is much more important to students' attitudes than whether or not the service is voluntary or mandatory (Taylor & Pancer, 2007). In addition, recent research indicates that the community service site supervisors, who mediate, mentor, and structure the service, have a significant impact on the quality of the volunteer experience of the high school student. According to this research, "it is crucial for schools and teachers to take into consideration the community supervisors' perspectives and interpretations of social justice and invite them into a collaborative partnership throughout the process of structuring service learning experiences (Swaminathan, 2007, abstract).

Lastly, in Gonsiorek's (2003) study of mandatory service at a Catholic female single-sex high school, students were initially resentful and resistant to the service requirement until they had participated in weekly discussions and reflection. Student enthusiasm for service projects increased after they had been provided time to process their service experiences. Previous studies (Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Harrison, 1987) corroborate this finding.

Thus, according to the research, student engagement in service will be increased if reflection and discussion are part of the experience, and the quality of the service may be

enhanced by the structure provided by the site supervisor. Whether or not mandatory high school service impacts attitudes and perspectives about future volunteerism is still unclear.

Women, Religion, and Service

Though there are few, if any, studies about gendered service in Catholic female single-sex high school, there are some statistics about how men and women participate in civic life differently (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). In a study currently underway at HERI, "Women report higher frequencies than do men of volunteering through civic and educational organizations" (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005, p. 6). Further, data from the same study indicates that among the alumnae in the study, "those who attended religious services are more likely than their peers to be engaged in volunteer work" (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005, p. 7), and women are more likely to attend religious services. Thus, a study of female engagement in service at a religious institution may provide important information about the complex interaction of service, religious influence, and community involvement. And though Catholic college graduates reported volunteering less than their public university peers, Catholic college alumnae are more likely to report that their volunteer experience in college "had a strong impact" on preparing them for life after college (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005, p. 7). Researchers suggest that perhaps the lower volunteer rate of Catholic college students is a result of required community service in high school (Marks, 2001).

Catholic institutions often use the term servant leader to describe participation in service-oriented activities. Greenleaf (1970) describes it in this way:

> The servant leader is servant first…It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve…then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established…the difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. (p. 1)

Some scholars assert that servant leadership is a genderless notion (Rhodes, 2001). However, Eicher-Catt's (1996) feminist perspective of servant leadership suggests that no language is value free or apolitical, and she contends that, "servant leadership insidiously perpetuates a longstanding masculine-feminine, master-slave political economy, that in the end, negates its so called revolutionary potential to advance genderless leadership" (p. 17). Thus, while many Catholic schools utilize the concept of the servant leader as an appropriate Christ-like example for agents of change, institutions may need to explore its patriarchal connotation and realize that, perhaps, it is not the innocent speech that it appears to be. This is a significant theme of the work of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) who note the power and domination that can come from everyday, innocent speech, and who analyze the consequent subordination of women at both personal and institutional levels as a result of language and its influence.

Conclusion

     The situated experience of a Catholic female single-sex high school and its relationship to leadership and service requires an integrated understanding of a broad range of literature. This review has provided historical background on the women's movement in the United States and the single-sex schooling system, including female universities and academies. Further, this review has discussed female adolescent development, the gender controversy in education, the complexities of the Title IX legislation and its recent changes, and what it means to be female and Catholic in the 21st century. Lastly, the review covers issues of leadership and service in relationship to women, both in and out of the Catholic high school context.

     There continues to be a paucity of women as decision makers in public office, in education, and in business. Research into the situated experience of young women in a Catholic female single-sex high school is a good place to continue the exploration that may yield positive results for educational theory, pedagogy, and life outcomes for young women in the 21st century.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research design, its rationale, theoretical underpinnings, site selection, and data collection and participants. In addition, I discuss issues of internal validity, study limitations, including researcher bias, and a timeline of completion of research. This research is a case study of student leadership and service in a Catholic female single-sex high school community in a large urban city. It includes observation, document review, and interviews of current students, faculty and staff members, and alumnae.

Research Question

The overarching research question that I will address is as follows:

How does the situated experience of a student in a Catholic female single–sex high school affect her perspective and participation relative to leadership and service? The question is intentionally broad to enable the researcher the flexibility to absorb the situated experience of the high school participants, while allowing the data to tell the story that shaped the findings. The framework I used was proposed by me as a possible tool for understanding the Catholic female single-sex high school. I did not enter this research project in an attempt to prove the accuracy of the proposed theoretical framework. The framework served as a template or prompt that informed my questioning about leadership and service in the same way that previous research has informed the dissertation of many a researcher. Through the use of immersion in the Catholic female

single-sex high school, I construct "an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates concepts through statements of relationship" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 25).

The theoretical framework, adapted from Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning, affords the opportunity to "integrate concepts through statements of relationship" and is the combined result of my own personal experience and previous research. I used analytic induction so that during my research I held the adapted framework up to the data as it was collected. I was open to a reformulation of the adapted framework as I progressed through the research; however, though my findings about the content of the framework were not exactly what I had expected, the framework itself did prove to be an effective tool for exploring the Catholic female single-sex high school.

<center>Rationale of the Qualitative Approach</center>

In a research study that focuses on the situated experience as this one does, the qualitative approach is the most effective. In order to properly mine the culture at the Catholic female single-sex high school, thick, rich descriptions (Geertz, 1973) are required to accurately analyze the inner workings of the institution and its internal and external relationships. Complex narratives of the personal experiences of students are "masked or displaced by quantitative methods" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 53) and disallow the storytelling that is imperative to a study that seeks to determine the interplay of cultures across social, religious, and gender hierarchies. Further, according to Marshall and Rossman (2006), the qualitative study "stresses the importance of context, setting, and participants' frames of reference" (p. 54). My study specifically explored the setting and context of a Catholic female single-sex high school, and it attempted to discover

participants' frames of reference by answering the question: *How does the situated experience of a student in a Catholic female single-sex high school affect her perspective and participation relative to leadership and service?* In addition, qualitative studies are particularly valuable for research on informal processes and relationships in organizations (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The relationships that I was interested in exploring related specifically to the informal and formal, but rarely explored, relationships between the Catholic female single-sex high school, the institution of the Catholic Church, and the construct of gender as it affects the perspectives and participation of students in leadership and service positions across time and place.

<div align="center">Feminism and Qualitative Analysis</div>

Feminist theory was also an important influence in my choice of method. Choosing a site that had as its focus the education of females, I believed that it was important to use methodology that would most accurately and most effectively empower women to speak the whole truth, to contextualize their experience, and allow me as the researcher to share with them in analyzing what may explain the sociological phenomenon of the Catholic female single-sex high school. The qualitative approach is superior because "to feminist researchers, surveys are disempowering because they do not allow the interviewee to explain what he or she feels, and because the pretense of neutrality ignores the cultural assumptions that shape the survey questions" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 26). Feminist research allows women to "talk back" (bell hooks, 1989) giving voice to the historically silenced, and empowering them to "find the words and concepts in which ideas can be expressed and lives described, and by doing so

emphasizes the importance of issues in which women are deeply engaged" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 26). This is exactly the substance of my research, "the issues in which women are deeply engaged." I believe that by humanizing the research, empowering each individual to speak of her whole experience, rather than "stripping away her context" (p. 26) as one might in a quantitative study, I have done justice to the participants of the study and to the research I completed.

Another important aspect of my research was the use of the ethnographic method. According to Fetterman (1989), classical ethnography requires at least six months to two years in the field. Though my study did not span this length of time, and is not a true ethnographic study, I did use ethnographic methods in my research. When in the field, I embraced the notion of "active participation in [the] day to day affairs" of the people at my research site as they encountered and responded to events that occurred (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 2). Also significant in ethnography are the notions that no field researcher can be a completely neutral observer and that all researchers are historically situated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). While I am aware of my bias, which I discuss later in the personal biography section, ethnographic researchers believe that detachment and author objectivity are "barriers to quality, not insurance of having achieved it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002, p. 334). Thus, becoming a part of the community and bringing to that community the individual researcher's personal experience are important to the integrity of the research, because, according to ethnographic principles, one can only know the truth partially, the truth that one knows in relationship to others. Reason and Rowan (1981) assert that, "valid knowledge is a matter of relationship" (p. 241). Thus, the use of

the ethnographic method is particularly well suited for the study of the community of a Catholic female single-sex high school because it honors the notions of community and knowledge as a subjective experience rooted in the situated experience of the individual, a critical piece to the theoretical framework that guided my research and important also to feminist research.

Also critical to ethnographic method is the writing of ethnographic field notes. I actively engaged in the use of field notes, using a variety of techniques that I will detail later in the data gathering and data analysis sections of the dissertation.

Case Study Method

A case study approach was the most sound qualitative design method for my research purposes. The interpretive case study contains thick, rich description, and it is used to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering (Merriam, 1998). Guided by my theoretical framework, utilizing ethnographic methods and committed to exploring its authenticity, I used an interpretive case study to describe the phenomena that I discovered. I was not wedded to proving the validity of my theoretical framework, but I used the data to determine if its use provided an authentic description of the Catholic female single-sex high school. I did, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest, have preferences, but I was not single minded about my outcomes because, as they wisely advise, "you never know what you are going to find" (p. 58). The framework did, in fact, lead me to findings that I did not expect. The various concepts that I addressed, the religious hierarchy, the social reproduction, and the daily life of young women in a Catholic female single-sex high

school are all integrated in a situated relationship in this community and form a unique educational construct. My research was aimed at analyzing the separate influences that participants experience to determine how each of these make up the whole in regards to student attitudes towards leadership and service.

Further, Strauss and Corbin (1998) insist that theorizing is meant to do more than simply describe; it is meant to allow users "to explain and predict events, thereby providing guides to action" (p. 25). It is my hope that my research will add to the literature on Catholic female single-sex schooling through its and impact on leadership and service, especially in light of the new Title IX regulations, and through the continuing search for answers about the best ways to educate young women and make them responsible leaders in the world.

<center>The Case Study and Community</center>

Here I want to focus on the community aspect of the case study. Because of the influence of Wenger's (1998) communities of practice on my theoretical framework, it is important for me to acknowledge the notion of community in my methodology and also important to clearly define my term. Belonging to a community of practice, according to Wenger, is an "encompassing process of being an active participant in the practice of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities" (p. 4). Thus, viewed through this lens, I explored how the participants in my study were part of particular and various communities, and how these communities shaped who they are and how they viewed themselves, especially in relationship to leadership and service. Communities of practice are everywhere in schools. They are the study groups, the

classrooms, the lunch gatherings of students on the lawn, the noontime clubs, and the PE teams. Again, as Wenger suggests, "in spite of curriculum, discipline, and exhortation, the learning that is most personally transformative turns out to be the learning that involves membership in these communities of practice" (p. 4). Wenger defines community as "a way of talking about the social configuration in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing, and our participation is recognizable as competence" (p. 5). My research explored the community of a female single-sex high school, analyzing the social configurations and probing their connections.

But community in my study is not exclusively tied to the contemporary scene of the high school. In addition to using the high school site as a research base, I extended the research to include alumnae of the community at two different points in time. I included them in the term *community* because they did retain ties to their communities of practice, they continued to have identity formation experiences related to this one community, and they were able to shed more light on the contemporary observation of the school. This provided an even richer and deeper description of participant response to the issue of leadership and service. According to Hall (2004), it is important to move away from "place based notions of the field" to explore how people make meaning "across time and space" (p. 109). I explored how current students made meaning out of their situated experience and how alumnae have made meaning from involvement in this community. I will note here, however, that while interviews with current students and young alumnae were very fruitful, interviews with mature alumnae were less so. Their memories of experiences at the school were diminished by time and were very general in nature.

Where relevant, I have included data from these conversations, though they appear less frequently than the current students and young alumnae.

Site Selection

I selected a private Catholic female single-sex high school, St. Marian's, with a student population of approximately 500 in grades 9 through 12 in a large metropolitan area of the United States as the research site for my case study. St. Marian's is a Catholic school with a mission based on the founding sisters of the institution. The name of the school and the names of the participants have been changed to protect confidentiality. The student body is approximately three fourths White and one fourth combined other ethnicities including Hispanic, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian. The socioeconomic status of student families is majority middle class. The average class size is 25, and the student teacher ratio is 12 to 1.

Data Collection and Participants

I began my study by initiating a meeting with the school secretary who was a reliable access point for scheduling interviews and contacting participants. In my first full day on campus, a student was selected by the school secretary to escort me on a grand tour. I carried with me at all times a data notebook for jotting down conversation excerpts and for making observations about future data that I wanted to explore. In this way, participants became comfortable with my note taking and did not feel uneasy when I might casually chat with them and simultaneously take a note. Approximately a week later, I gave a presentation to the faculty-at-large to introduce myself, identify my

purpose, and allow them to ask questions of me. Subsequent to this, I began the

interview, observation, and document collection process in earnest.

<p align="center">*Interviews*</p>

I used the semi-structured interview (Merriam, 1998) that gave me the flexibility

to allow respondents to move off topic if areas of interest or relevance occurred. In

addition, my interviews were primarily "cultural" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), involving

"more active listening than aggressive questioning" (p. 10), a technique compatible with

feminist research that empowers respondents by allowing them to say all of what they

think and feel rather than censoring them with rapid fire questioning. I used as a guide an

interview protocol that I developed for each type of interviewee: current student, young

alumna, mature alumna, and faculty/staff (see Appendixes A, B, C, and D).

Current Students

I interviewed seniors who I believed would have a more mature and seasoned

understanding of the consequences of their all female environment. I asked four

administrators to nominate students that could speak to leadership and service at the

school; however, I also indicated that I did not want to talk exclusively to elected leaders,

or exemplary students. I asked to meet with a diverse group of students, those who were

elected or appointed, and those who were considered leaders but who held no official

position of leadership—perhaps athletes, or club members. I selected 10 students that

were repeat nominations on the four administrators' lists. I distributed participant

instructions and student and parent consent forms prior to the interviews. I did not

interview any student unless these forms were completed. The interviews took place in

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the school conference room, a quiet empty room with a conference table. I used a digital recorder for every interview, and simultaneously took brief notes. Student interview times varied dependent on their class schedules. Some were as long as 45 minutes, others were as short as 15 minutes. Current student interviews took place over the course of three days.

Young Alumnae

Interviews with young alumnae took place after the on-site spring observation and interview process had been completed. I chose the interviewees based on recommendations from the administration and personal acquaintance. I interviewed junior and senior college students who were more removed from the high school experience, who I believed would have more perspective about the influence of the Catholic female single-sex high school on their perspective and participation toward leadership and service. Five recent alumnae spoke with me, each for about one half hour. I procured signed consent forms for each of them, and used a digital recorder for each of these interviews as well. One young alumna interview took place over the phone, as she had moved to attend college.

Mature Alumnae

Interviews with mature alumnae took place simultaneously with the young alumnae interviews. I chose the interviewees based on administration recommendation and my own personal connections with alumnae from this school. I defined mature alumnae as having graduated between the years 1974 and 1994. I chose this participant population believing that their experience with second wave feminism may have been an

influence during their high school years in some way. Five mature alumnae spoke with me, two of which were current administrators at the school. During these particular interviews, I tried to probe for their dual perspective, both the past and present of St. Marian's. I met with each alumna at her convenience, in homes, and at work. I digitally recorded each interview.

Faculty and Staff

I also interviewed teachers and administrators at the site for their perspective about the nature of the Catholic female single-sex high school community. I interviewed the leadership of the school, including six administrators representing various segments of the school: academics, discipline, campus ministry, athletics, and service and student government. I procured consent forms from each, digitally recorded each conversation, and simultaneously took notes during the interview. These interviews lasted from a half hour to 45 minutes.

After I had completed the interviews and transcribed them, I sent them (hand delivered or post) to each participant to check for accuracy. I asked participants to contact me if they wanted to add, delete, or modify any part of their interview (see Appendix E). Two of the 26 participants contacted me with modifications.

Observation

I spent approximately one month in the spring observing (see Table 1) on campus. Specifically, I visited hour-long classes on separate days, plus one "shadow" day where I followed a student and her schedule through a full school day. I also attended student activities, assemblies, and other events. In the fall I returned to observe more service

activities, as these were not available during the spring. I spent two days at offsite service

experiences with St. Marian's students. During each of my observations I took notes, and

later personally transcribed these. After each of the observation days, in both spring and

the fall, I digitally recorded my thoughts, reflecting on what I had experienced and

capturing anything that I was unable to record on paper.

Table 1. *Interview and Observation Data*

Class Sessions Observed	Field Work Observations	Interviews
Total sessions observed: 11	Total observations: 10	Total Interviews: 26
- Christian Lifestyles (12) - Social Justice (11) - English III (11) - English IV AP (12) x 2 - Homeroom (10) - Spanish II (10) - Modern World (10) - Geometry (10) - Chemistry H (10) - Morality (10)	- Grand Tour - Election Speeches - Yearbook Assembly - School Liturgy - School Picnic - Junior/Senior Farewell - President's Dinner - Service @ Elementary School - Service @ Habitat - ASB Team Meeting	- Students, Seniors (n=10) - Faculty/Staff (n=6) - Alumnae, Mature (graduating class 1974-1994) (n = 5) - Alumnae, Young (college juniors or seniors) (n=5)

Documents

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) separate documents into three specific categories:

personal documents, official documents, and popular culture documents. My research

afforded me the opportunity to view two types of documents: personal and official.

Personal documents are those produced by individuals for private purposes; official

documents are produced by the organization for purposes of internal or external communication or record keeping. I collected an extensive amount of official documentation including yearbooks, newspapers, daily bulletins, calendars, and school handbooks, to name a few. I also collected some personal documents including student and faculty letters. I logged in each individual document or set of documents (e.g., campaign speeches) into a table, identifying each document by name and code number (see Appendix F).

Data Management

I approached my data in two distinct phases: data preparation and data manipulation (Reid as cited in Merriam, 1998).

Data Preparation

I transcribed all of the digital data using the online service, www.escriptionist.com. I personally transcribed all of my handwritten data from observations and reflections, and further, I summarized the content of significant documents (74) and transformed this into digital data as well. I did this in preparation for using the research software entitled Nvivo. I uploaded these three sets of data, interviews, observations, and documents into the Nvivo software so as to have a triangulated database from which to begin my coding. This preparation of the data took place over the course of several months and into the fall as I completed interviews and observations. In addition, I printed out hard copies of all the interviews, observations and reflections, and summarized documents and placed them in a three-ring binder separated by category.

Data Manipulation

I began coding the digital documents using the Nvivo software, first using codes that I had anticipated (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). These codes had evolved from my literature review, but they also evolved from participants repeated use of words or phrases themselves. Next, I did a random text search within Nvivo requesting most frequent words or phrases from the collected data and added these to my coding list. Last, I did a close reading of the hard copies of each of the data sets and coded in the margins, making notes as I read. From these three methods of coding, themes began to emerge that I then explored more fully by re-reading the excerpts in which they were found.

Internal Validity

I used three strategies to enhance the internal validity of this study: use of triangulation, member checks, and clarification of researcher bias (Merriam, 1998). Triangulation, the use of multiple sources of data to confirm findings, is a primary source of internal validity. In addition to site observation, I interviewed individuals and reviewed relevant documents available to me at the school. Completing member checks as I proceeded through the research also enhanced the internal validity, as I sent data back to the participants and confirmed its accuracy (Merriam, 1998). Lastly, I am transparent about my assumptions and worldview as I begin the study, which I will now discuss in the personal biography section.

Personal Biography

The topic of Catholic female single-sex high schools is of interest to me because I have spent most of my professional life working in this environment, as teacher and administrator. In addition, I attended a Catholic female single-sex high school, and I have sent my three daughters to the same. I believe they have grown in confidence, benefiting both academically and spiritually. I did, in fact, teach at St. Marian's approximately 20 years ago and my second daughter is a recent alumna of the high school. In addition, as I write this dissertation, my third daughter is a current student at the high school. However, at the time that I completed my research, none of my daughters were currently attending the school. My worldview has been colored by the Catholic female single-sex experience, which I believe to be empowering. Yet, it is also influenced by the Catholic experience, which is rich in its social justice orientation but is decidedly less empowering for the female. My theoretical orientation is feminist in nature and community focused, thus, my affinity for Wenger's communities of practice. My assumption is that the Catholic female single-sex experience is an empowering one for students in the areas of leadership and service.

Timeline

A review of the literature, confirmation of research method and consultation with my dissertation chair began in September 2006. The dissertation defense took place in March of 2007. Interview instruments, permission from the school site, and application to the Internal Review Board occurred in April 2007. Faculty and staff and student interviews took place in spring semester 2007. Alumnae interviews took place in the

spring and summer 2007. Site observation occurred in spring semester 2007 and again in

fall semester 2007. Preparation, coding, and analysis of data took place from October

2007 through January 2008. Implications and recommendations were written in February

2008 and the final defense took place in April 2008.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Through extensive interviews with students, faculty, and alumnae, and substantial field work done at St. Marian's, my data suggest that my adaptation of Wenger's (1998) theoretical framework of the social theory of learning for the Catholic female single-sex high school is a useful tool to assist the researcher in understanding the situated experience of this special culture. Using this lens, and the rich, thick, qualitative descriptions from the Catholic female single-sex high school reveals more clearly the nature of leadership and service within this environment, and may provide an understanding that will aid future researchers in their exploration of this unique educational environment.

In order to adequately answer my research question: *How does the situated experience of a student in a Catholic female single-sex high school affect her perspective and participation relative to leadership and service?,* it is imperative to make explicit that experience. Through my theoretical framework, the situated experience will be made more transparent, and, with this understanding, the student perspective and participation in service and leadership will be drawn to the fore, illustrated in its appropriate context.

The method that I use to illustrate this theoretical framework and its relationship to leadership and service will be an integrated one. I will proceed through each of the prongs of the vertical and horizontal axes, describing my observations and findings and tying them to elements of leadership and service, while simultaneously uncovering the complex relationship of the axes to each other. Students do not experience school in

discrete pieces—classroom, club, or sport. Each of these elements necessarily influences the other. Thus, an accurate and thorough study of any culture must acknowledge the interrelationship of participation in different practices available to members. My adapted theoretical framework attempts to do just that.

Community

It is important to begin the story of St. Marian's with its most clearly articulated value: *community*. Clearly, students, both current and past, and faculty and staff members believe this to be one of the greatest advantages of this high school environment. The admission materials of the school state that:

> Once a freshman enters the gates of St. Marian's, she becomes a member of the
> St. Marian's family for the rest of her life. As a student or a member of the
> Alumnae Association, she is a permanent part of a *community* [italics added],
> which welcomes her and encourages her. (Document Log, # 69)

Community that is supporting and nurturing is widely viewed as a positive force in the lives of the students. Of the 20 current student and alumnae interviews, a majority of students responded that community was the "best thing about St. Marian's." One student summed it up this way:

> I think the best thing about St. Marian's is the sense of community. It's an
> amazing community; like, you may not know everybody, but you still think of
> them as your sisters and the teachers approach you in that same way as if you're
> their own children and it's just this big community that we bond together when

we need to, we bond together when we don't need to and we're just there for each

other the whole time. (Current Student Interview #8, p. 5)

Other students describe St. Marian's as a family, a place that looks after its members who

take care of one another.

I love just how we are a family. When we know someone's hurting, or if anyone

has been hurt, we all stand up for that one person, and we all make cards for them,

or do something for that one person, help raise money; we do anything possible.

(CS Interview #7, p. 6)

In addition, some young alumnae characterize St. Marian's as a home and a

support system. One young alumna, who had attended counseling for personal issues

during her college years, was asked by her counselor to meditate on a "place where you

can feel peaceful."

It took me two minutes—I was like, 'where do I feel peaceful.' Not in my house.

Not in my bedroom. Not at college. And then I thought of St. Marian's and I

imagined sitting on senior lawn. He (the counselor) had me do the imagery in my

head, just sitting there for five minutes and it made me feel so peaceful. Every

time I go back there, I always feel at home there. (Young Alumna Interview #2, p.

10)

Even faculty members consider St. Marian's like a family. When the students dedicated

the 2007 yearbook to a long-time faculty member, she had this to say to the students and

staff at the dedication assembly. "This is so exciting. 24 years. Thank you for being so

caring and loving when my husband passed away. You have been my family" (Field notes #11, p. 2).

Further, many students and alumnae feel that the relationships formed at a Catholic female single-sex high school provide an environment that simulates family and provides the comfort of community, even after the high school years have passed. One student, describing her experiences at St. Marian's began crying when she said, "The relationships that I have here are incomparable to anything I've ever experienced in my life. These people are just—they're a part of my life" (CS Interview #5, p. 12). The student homilist at the graduation baccalaureate Mass, describes herself as "an only child about to leave, having gained 117 sisters" (Document Log, # 40). And a candidate for a leadership position in the Associated Student Body (ASB) answered the question "Why I love St. Marian's" on her election form by saying "because I feel like I have 500 sisters" (Document Log, # 58). And both young and mature alumnae cite the friends that they made in the Catholic female single-sex high school as "part of the community that stays with you" (Mature Alumnae Interview #3 p. 4).

For the current students, the prospect of graduation made many seniors reflective and wistful about what they were soon to leave. Adolescent psychologists (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004) note that females during the teenage years report increased emotional expression as they progress through adolescence. So, the heightened emotion may also be part of the developmental trajectory for this age group. However, because both young alumnae and mature alumnae expressed the same sentiments, albeit without the emotional expression, I believe that this strong connection to community is a significant finding at

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St. Marian's and not simply just an accident of age or interview timing. However, the "feel good" notion that members of Catholic female single-sex high schools form supportive community and uniformly benefit from this sense of belonging is to tell only part of the story.

<center>*Definition of Community*</center>

My analysis of data revealed that students and staff alike hold the community at St. Marian's as a significant influence in the situated environment of the high school. But what exactly do students mean when they speak of community? And more specifically, how does my use of Wenger's (1998) lens, and his community of practice theory, help us to understand the Catholic female single-sex high school?

Students, staff, and alumnae define community using the commonly understood dictionary definition. The dictionary definition (Random House, 2006) of community is as follows: "a social group or class, sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists." Members of St. Marian's consider themselves as a "tight-knit" community, a "family" with common interests—that of educating and being educated in a Catholic female single-sex high school. They also see themselves as a unique entity, different from all others. The 2007 St. Marian's yearbook theme is "I Can Only Imagine," which is the students' way of describing the individuality of the St. Marian community. The preface to the yearbook tells the story:

> When many people hear the words "all girl Catholic high school," their first
> response is often, "I can only imagine…." St. Marian's is an experience **unlike**

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any other [original emphasis]. It is one that cannot be mimicked or duplicated. This is a blessing that we hold deep in our hearts. As a *community* [italics added], we embrace and are unified by our unique characteristics and qualities. Only we truly understand the inner beauties that our school possesses. (Document Log, #18)

Many students, staff and alumnae see their time at the Catholic female single-sex high school of St. Marian's as a positive, supportive experience that makes each member unique, and connects them to one another like family, creating a unified whole—a community with common interests and goals.

In *Habits of the Heart,* Bellah et al. (1996) also define this traditional sense of community:

Community is a term used very loosely by Americans today. We use it in a strong sense: a community is a group of people who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision making, and who share certain practices that both define community and are nurtured by it. (p. 333)

A current student, Carla, talks about the social interdependence of her school friend group and how it is nurtured by practices that she remembers fondly.

The group of friends that I have is so close, and there are times after an assembly or something, and the sound system's still set up, and somebody puts on a CD and we're all go up in the hall and we're just dancing…those will probably be my fondest memories, just playing volleyball on the lawn during a long lunch break

and being able to talk about anything with your friends, and singing in campus

ministry, and stuff like that. (CS Interview #1, p. 8)

Here she discusses the various activities that members share, and the social gratification

that comes from belonging to a community like this. In addition, Jennifer, a young

alumna also discusses the shared practices that she believes enhanced the community

experience at St. Marian's.

It was a great nurturing environment. The Masses were always comfortable. They

were on our level in a way. It built a really strong sense of community and I went

on all the retreats and was a leader for some of them and everything so I was

involved in campus ministry—it was a comfortable part of our growth and

everything. (YA Interview #5, p. 3)

The shared experiences of which Jennifer speaks were part of the Catholic

identity of the school. These religious practices both defined the community she belonged

to and in her own words "nurtured" her during her high school years. Echoes of

Noddings' (1984) theories of feminine care and Gilligan's (1982) notions of the female

ethic of care are present in her language and in her approach to community. The

community, in its social practices and in its religious practices, adopts a gendered

perspective that will be explored further in the following sections.

Communities of Practice: From Periphery to Core

Despite the broad definition of community used by members of St. Marian's, for

the purposes of analysis Wenger's (1998) community of practice theory can provide a

more useful and more in-depth exploration of the essence of the community experienced at the Catholic female single-sex high school.

The assumption of students, staff, and alumnae of St. Marian's is that community is a single and singular entity to which all members are encouraged to belong. The St. Marian's community is the "home" that its members describe, and the "support system" to which they refer. For them this has become a central truth of their school experience. Wenger's (1998) community of practice theory, however, views community through the theoretical lens of learning as social participation in practice, and learning as increased participation relative to these practices. According to Wenger (1998), communities are practice groups that are the foundation of social learning. They are more than places where tasks are performed, they are communities where social interaction takes place around practice (Lave &Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). And because all social interaction is, in fact, a place of learning, communities of practice are the locus where this learning takes place. Thus, learning is an integral part of participation as students engage in multi-membership in these communities of practice, belonging to the music club, the dance club, the sports team, and Period 6 History simultaneously. And all of these take place under the umbrella of the community called St. Marian's. Eckert's (2008) discussion is helpful here.

> A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around
> mutual engagement in some common endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of
> talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, practices—emerge in the
> course of their joint activity around that endeavor. A community of practice is

different as a social construct from the traditional notion of community, primarily

because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in

which that membership engages. (Eckert, 2008, Communities of Practice, ¶ 2)

People are always in the process of becoming in their communities of practice. And the

distinctive community of St. Marian's is constructed through the joint engagement of all

members in their communities of practice.

During my observation time at St. Marian's, I witnessed the ease with which

students moved from one community of practice to the next. Further, students negotiated

the permeable boundaries of these communities of practice, which allowed movement in

and out of different groups, while they simultaneously moved from periphery to core and

back again as their circumstances and response to events dictated. To view St. Marian's

as one, static community to which all members uniformly belong with the same

commitment and experience would be inaccurate. In fact, Wenger (1998) insists that

"shared practice does not in itself imply harmony or collaboration," (p. 85), and unlike

the notion fostered by St. Marian's, communities of practice are not intrinsically

beneficial. Wenger (1998) contrasts the two oppositional forces inherent in these

communities of practice:

A community of practice can be a fortress just as it can be an open door.

Peripherality can be a position where access to a practice is possible, but it can

also be a position where outsiders are kept from moving further inward. (p. 120)

During my fieldwork at St. Marian's, I observed one student's attempt to move from

periphery to core and her method of negotiating meaningfulness from the experience.

Gina's Story: Community in Practice

In late May, students were campaigning for the ASB elections, the top student elected positions in the school. One candidate, a junior named Gina had signed up to run for office but had not submitted a speech to the Dean of Activities, a requirement for candidacy. When prodded, she turned in a speech to be reviewed by the Dean that contained a very political agenda about human rights in Sudan, and she ended the speech by saying that she did not wish to run but simply wanted to have her platform heard. Her intent was that she would refuse to be on the ballot but wanted to use the election assembly to further her agenda. This was unacceptable to the Dean of Activities, and Gina was asked to rewrite her speech and to consider having her name on the election ballot. The class period before the election assembly, she decided, with encouragement from her classmates, to give her speech and become a true candidate by placing her name on the ballot. However, because Gina did not rewrite her speech in a timely manner to include an agreement to be an actual candidate for the election, the Dean of Activities disallowed her from presenting her speech, and from being on the ballot (Faculty/Staff Interview #3, p. 3; CS Interview #9, p. 13).

Gina's response was to rail against the administration to her friends, circulate a petition to the students, and, most significantly, to give her speech impromptu at lunch, without administration approval. Approximately one hundred students gathered around as she used the senior lawn as the venue to give her election speech. Later Gina would write a letter to the Dean of Activities that read:

I don't want to stress you out. I understand that you are a person with a cause, but

please I want you to understand that our generation is different. I believe that my

junior class exhibits that—the people who act 'apathetically' in your perception

are actually those with a potential to change the future. And you don't inspire

them. But you can. You need to understand us. We are different—but we are

aiming for the same goal. I think we need to talk about this whenever you are

ready. (Document Log, # 51)

Here is an example of a student who feels passionately about a social justice cause and in

her unorthodox attempt to run for office, and, because of the manner in which she chose

to use her voice, she was not afforded full access to community practice. She could not be

a part of the student decision-making body that was institutionally sanctioned to lead

change at the school. The administration's belief that students of her group act

"apathetically" clearly irks Gina because she feels that she and her group can be agents of

change.

Frustrated by an institution that she believes fails to address her needs, she strives

to create a learning experience for herself, i.e. becoming a school leader, which would

engage her and afford her ownership in the community where she practices. However, the

only way she felt it was possible to be heard was to move to the periphery and voice her

concerns in an unsanctioned event that caused a rift in the community and an

unharmonious end to the elections. But as Lave and Wenger suggest (1991), "As a place

where one moves toward more intensive participation, peripherality is an empowering

position. As a place in which one is kept from participating more fully…it is a

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disempowering position" (36). Feeling her disempowerment, Gina still strives to gain

access through other means as she writes the letter to administration. She reaches out to

the adult leadership asking them to compromise and assuring them that her goal is similar

to the administration of the school. Working at the periphery, this student hopes yet to

create change, while still remaining engaged in the community. According to Lave and

Wenger, "the periphery is a very fertile area for change" (118) because it is partly inside,

as her run for the practice of the presidency shows, but partly outside, as her access to a

legitimate decision making practice was denied. When members are outside with access

to the inside, "perturbations are likely to propagate" (p. 118), which is exactly what

happened in the scenario with this student.

Yet, despite many discussions, Gina was dissatisfied enough with the final

resolution to write an article in the school newspaper: "Censoring the St. Marian's

Student." In it she writes of the constitutional rights of students and explains the

paradoxical relationship of free speech at a Catholic high school:

> Although St. Marian's encourages us to think and to speak up, sometimes we are
>
> not allowed to do so. The administration may claim that they do allow room for
>
> expression; however, we, as the students, do not perceive this to be
>
> true…Apparently 'courageous self expression' (taken from the philosophy of St.
>
> Marian's), must first undergo approval. It is understandable that the school must
>
> set reasonable limits. What is considered reasonable, however, is defined by the
>
> administration and not by the students. (Document Log, # 49)

Other students, witnessing the ASB election event and its aftermath, believed that the message of this student's campaign became "anti-St. Marian's" instead of "pro-Sudan." After the speech on the lawn, one student said, "They were all kind of riled up in that mob formation again, and all they listened to was her part about being against the system of rules" (CS Interview #9, p. 14). Some students did not see her rebel practice as a legitimate means to gain a voice. Instead they allied themselves with the practice of institutional compliance where students work only within the system and do not question or resist the authority of the administration. This practice, the acceptance of the status quo, a community based on compliance, would be a repeat occurrence throughout my observation at St. Marian's. This was not a practice that Gina had fully learned.

The Tension between Community and Conformity

In order to survive, communities must perpetuate themselves. They do this by reproducing their conditions across space and time. The conformity required by St. Marian's to be a part of its community separated this student from the "peaceful" environment that many students described. Gina stepped outside the lines, and thus she was denied access to the core, under the auspices of ASB leadership. The school did later allow her to publish her objections in the newspaper and asked her if she would like to head up a Sudanese fundraiser and prayer vigil, both of which she did. Thus she was, after the fact, allowed to further her specific social justice agenda in school-sanctioned programs, but it was not under the titular leadership that she had first desired.

Gina's actions are an illustration of Wegner's observation that when members are outside with access to the inside "perturbations are likely to propagate" (Wenger, 1998).

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Gina may have intuited that by creating a perturbation (flouting the ASB election rules), she could inject instability into the community and thereby create other opportunities to achieve her agenda. Thus, perhaps without realizing the theoretical basis for her actions, she was exploiting a fundamental weakness inherent in all communities—the tension between community and conformity.

Community at St. Marian's is established on an agreed upon philosophy and code of behavior. To be embraced by the community, members must act according to the accepted guidelines set forth by the institution. Some of these are obvious. Students must wear a uniform, attend classes, strive for passing grades, and adhere to the virtues required by the "ideal of Christian womanhood" (Document Log, # 29). And according to the Parent Student Handbook, "Students should not apply unless they desire and intend to participate fully in the religious and Christian service program of the school" (Document Log, #29). The issue of student commitment to the religious philosophy will be addressed later in this analysis; however, I use it here to demonstrate the requirements for students who participate in the community of St. Marian's.

Ideally, this enforcement of community standards can create homogenized membership in a group whose members act, believe, and work to achieve the same or similar ambitions and goals. But as the earlier student example illustrates, not everyone at St. Marian's was allowed to participate in this notion of community fostered by the institution.

When asked about the importance of community at St. Marian's, Charlene, a young alumna, replied:

It was embraced a lot at St. Marian's. It was really an important thing to be part of

the St. Marian's community whether people are left out or not…it was important

for the leaders at St. Marian's, the president, the principal, the teachers, that some

sort of community was fostered where everyone can feel accepted. Not saying

that everyone did feel accepted, just that there was an attempt to do that. To keep

people together and like with the activities and—just being understanding of

everyone. It was a very peaceful environment. (YA Interview #1, p. 12)

In this passage, Charlene reveals one of the benefits of community previously addressed.

She clearly understands that the adult leaders of the school fostered community, and for

this student it created a "peaceful environment." However, adult leaders have a vested

interest in maintaining a community based on compliance when it is congruent with right

order because imbedded in this is the de facto acceptance of the philosophy and standards

of behavior that the institution is trying to inculcate. The student also reveals, however,

that "not everyone felt accepted, though there was an attempt to do that." And as she

begins to talk about the community she notes that community "was really

important…whether people are left out or not." This understanding of community as

predicated on acceptance and peacefulness may be a gendered notion. For example,

would a boys' school adopt the same criteria? All male high schools are often bonded by

competitive sports and bragging rights to victories of athletic contests.

Other concerns addressing the issue of conformity within the community came

from both current students and alumnae. It may have been a topical issue because the

ASB incident had just happened when I interviewed the seniors, but when I asked a

current student, Kristin, about the disadvantages of attending St. Marian's, she replied "people feel censored here…censored somewhat by the St. Marian's community" and then explained:

> I think that students feel that, not that they maybe can't talk about it, but that they will be seen in a different light by the administration…I think people feel that it's more conformity, and less individuality, whereas people feel that the uniforms are strict guidelines, strict skirt lengths, strict all these things, strict graduation rules; we have to wear all the same white dresses and be pure and what not. They feel that they can't stray from that and be their own person, but I personally disagree with them. (CS Interview #2, p. 8)

The censorship that students report may be about a desire to create a community whose homogeneity will produce the peaceful environment that supports a philosophical ethic of care. In this passage, Kristin distances herself from the non-conformist attitudes she attributes to her fellow students, but she clearly feels the tension between the community to which she belongs and the opinions of her peers, in which she can see some merit. She asserts that one can conform and still retain individuality. This is the best of both worlds: belonging to a community and being able to act as an individual. This, however, is only possible if the individual agrees to abide by the community standards of behavior, and if the community condones the individual acts in which the student chooses to engage. This was not the case with Gina, the ASB candidate.

And lastly, a young alumna who spoke of St. Marian's as a place where one could feel "safe and empowered" also suggested that "maybe there are certain ways we [St.

Marian's] could be a little more open to change and things that are going on outside, more adaptable maybe in little ways" (YA Interview #7, p.7).

And this point illustrates the double-edged sword of the Catholic female single-sex high community. As Wenger (1998) artfully describes:

> The indigenous production of practice makes communities of practice the locus of creative achievements and the locus of inbred failures; the locus of resistance to oppression and the locus of reproduction of its conditions; the cradle of the self, but also the potential cage of the soul. (85)

Many members of St. Marian's feel an incredibly strong sense of belonging and membership in a community that they consider family, one that shapes their identity and their sense of self. It nurtures them, and it becomes the platform from which they build a life beyond the boundaries of high school. Noddings' (1984) theory that the ethic of care has a basis in women's experience may partially explain the nurture promoted at this female institution. In addition, Gilligan (1984), whose work theorizes that women's approach to life is more relationship and care oriented, may also be a strong explanation for the community definition developed at St. Marian's. Others at St. Marian's, however, may feel that it is an institution that "cages the soul," one that requires strict adherence to "the reproduction of its conditions." De Certeau (1984) suggests that institutions "produce, tabulate, and impose" (p.30) in order to limit the space in which people operate. The imposition of limitations by St. Marian's as a school institution may prevent authentic learning for some, relegate non-conformists to the periphery, and deny access to full membership if membership conditions are not met.

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The emphasis on community at St. Marian's makes Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning an appropriate tool for this site. As communities of practice depend on the interaction of their members for existence, identity building, and shared knowledge, so too does Wenger's social theory of learning give primacy to social interaction as it creates learning.

Social Theory of Learning

As I begin my discussion of findings related to my adaptation of Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning, let me briefly reintroduce the basis for the framework and the nature of the adaptation that I have constructed. Wenger's social theory of learning is a broader term for his notions about communities of practice, and it is grounded in the theory that knowledge is a construction of beliefs derived from the learner's active participation in social community (see Figure 7).
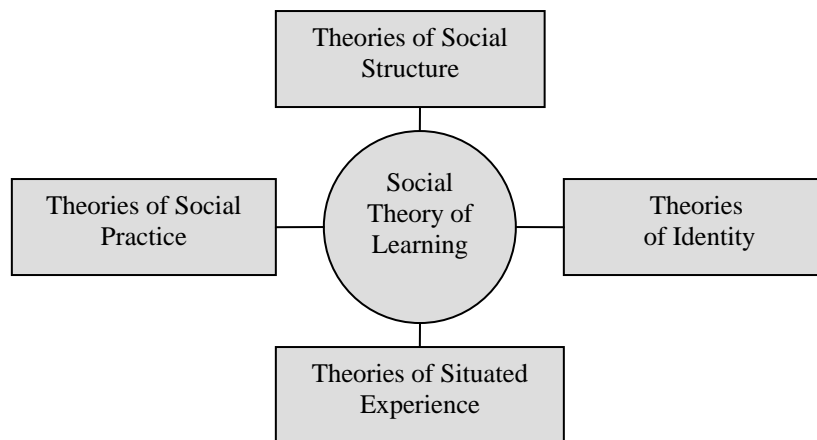
Figure 7. Wenger's (1998) Social Theory of Learning

While the widely understood purpose of formal schooling is the institutional goal of

"taught cognitive learning" (Erickson, 1982), my research will use the lens of Wenger's

social theory of learning to explore how both teaching and learning in communities of

practice affect student perspective and participation in leadership and service.

<center>Theoretical Framework for Catholic Female Single-Sex School</center>

My adaptation of Wenger's (1998) model places the Catholic female single-sex

high school at the center of the two axes, it uses the four prongs emanating from the

center to detail how each of the subsets of his learning theory play a role in the life of the

Catholic female single-sex high school, and it illustrates how each of these elements is

interrelated (see Figure 8).

<center>Social Structure</center>

<center>
Doctrine
Hierarchy
</center>

Social Practice · Identity

Social Reproduction
Shared Resources

Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

Gender
Catholicity

Conversation
Activity

<center>Situated Experience</center>
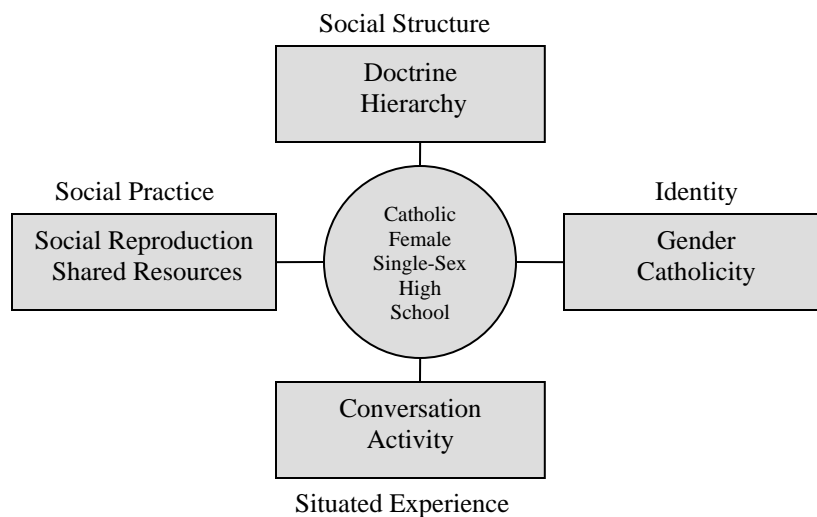
Figure 8. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School

The first element to be addressed is prong one, at the bottom of the vertical axis, the situated experience (see Figure 9). Theories of situated experience focus on the daily actions and interactions of relations of people as they live in their environments. These interactive relations are made manifest in conversation and activity—the things people say and do.

Social Structure

Doctrine
Hierarchy

Social Practice   Identity

Catholic
Female
Social Reproduction   Single-Sex   Gender
Shared Resources   High   Catholicity
School

Conversation
Activity

Prong 1: **Situated Experience**
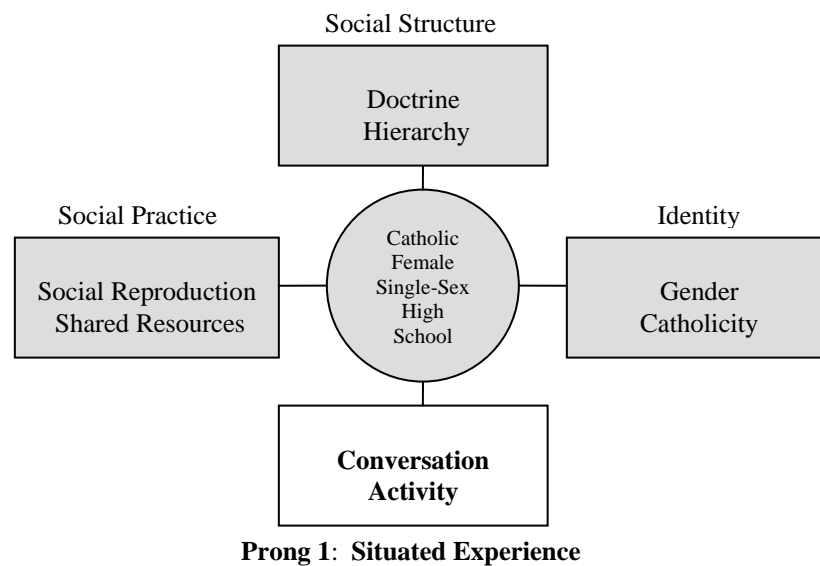
Figure 9. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School:
Situated Experience

Empowerment in Daily Life: Advantages of the All Female Environment

Every student, every alumna, and the majority of faculty and staff members stated that the advantage of the all female environment is that it eliminates distraction. Boys are considered a distraction in all academic endeavors and in school-related extracurricular activities, and their absence reportedly allows young women to know themselves and

focus on their studies. One student offered: "I wanted to be away from boys, because I wanted to be able to focus on just school so that I could go to a good college" (CS Interview #10, p. 1). Another student describes the advantage of the all girl environment this way:

> I guess we're more caring; we're affectionate, we express our emotions, we talk about it and everything, and we can tell each other how we feel. Guys just shut down, they don't really explain how they feel, so girls, we explain our emotions. And then we just get along well because we relate to a lot of female stuff and everything, so we know where one another comes from. (CS Interview #7, p. 2)

Here, the student's perception is that boys don't understand girls, and, because girls have "female stuff" in common, they get along in a harmonious and supportive environment. Echoing this argument, one current student talked about gender as the common denominator.

> I think you become more attached as women; you have something in common. We're young women, and we're going to grow together as women and then when we're done, we're going to be ready to go out and take on—because we have the strong background of finding out what kind of women we are. (CS Interview #3, p. 5)

Another student spoke of an additional advantage of the all female environment—that of not being judged by the opposite sex.

> I think you can develop more your mind here as a person, you can develop more in what you feel about yourself and how you really know yourself. You cannot be

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judged by other people in the classroom as you think that males would judge you

in a school. You can be—like, your true brain, I guess, and not hide behind it. (CS

Interview #2, p. 7)

Again, here the student affirms the all female environment because of the authenticity

that it evokes from the students. She argues that it allows the "true brain" to show, and

that it prevents young women from hiding their worth and being judged by the males in

the classroom.

Faculty members also believe that these same advantages exist in the female

single-sex environment and that young women will act in an inauthentic way when boys

are in the classroom. When asked about the advantages of the all female environment,

one administrator commented, "I think they can be more honest. I think they speak their

hearts more when they don't feel that they're being judged…I believe that they have a

sense of, 'I can be me here and I can say what I think'" (FS Interview #4, p. 2). Inherent

in these arguments, however, is the assumption that girls do hide their true selves when

males are in the classroom and that these males judge them harshly, which are viewpoints

that are not necessarily true but are held by most of the students and faculty members I

interviewed. However, the idea that girls refrain from harsh judgment of each other was

not expressed by the other students that I interviewed. Several current students talked

about the "cattiness" of the all female environment or the "girl drama" that resulted from

conflicts with females accusing each other of gossip.

The absence of male students, according to the members of St. Marian's, also

allows activities and conversations to take place that would not have happened in a mixed

sex environment. One student reports that girls were not afraid to ask questions and be aggressive. Another cites a breast cancer assembly and the personal questions that the young women asked the speaker. Several students talked about the comfort of conversations in the classroom:

> I think because it was an all girls' school I got the chance to just—I don't want to go over the edge with "men hold us back because we don't want to say our opinions around them" but I mean it's hard to argue with men sometimes being a woman. I think that because I was in an all girl environment I was able to nurture my own opinions in a way that I could make them stronger on my own. (YA Interview #1, p. 5)

One alumna described the classroom conversations as being "a lot more open" during the sex education classes at St. Marian's. She compares her experiences:

> I was in 7[th] grade when I had my first sex ed class, which was coed because it was a public school…I felt really kind of violated almost when we were going over the girls part 'cause, I mean, that's essentially you exposed on screen…And I think it was a lot more comfortable in an all female room. (YA Interview #3, p. 4)

Much of this data corroborate previous research on female single-sex schools and classrooms (Bryk et al., 1993; Lee & Bryk, 1986; Streitmatter, 1999), research that supports the positive effect of the all female environment on young women's education. Students feel freer to address and discuss sensitive gender specific issues and academic topics. During my field work at St. Marian's, I observed a class focused on women and social issues; titles such as "The Feminine Face of God," "Hip Hop Impact on Women,"

"Human Papillomavirus," "Post Partum Depression," and "Pill as Sexual Revolution"

were addressed. In these discussions, young women asked probing questions and

researched and discussed issues of race, gender, and sexuality with an open, intellectual

approach, without a giggle or twitter from their peers.

The solidarity these young women feel, the opportunity that they are afforded to

speak openly about their womanhood without fear of ridicule, and the female centered

activities and discussions that they participate in may provide an environment where

empowerment can take place. The young women of St. Marian's do have their

consciousness raised on a daily basis about their individual identities as women and how

their attachments to other women inform their own identity. And yet, despite the

affirmation, the comfort, and the support of a place that functions exclusively for the

advancement of young women, there are limitations in this environment that become

most clear when looking closely at the constructions of identity and gender and how these

two elements play out specifically in relationship to leadership and the students'

definition of it. Thus, we now turn to the second prong of the theoretical framework:

gender and identity in a Catholic female single-sex high school.

Prong Two: Identity—Gender and Catholicity

The identity prong of the theoretical framework (see Figure 10) will address

issues related to the student's social formation, including associations created from

leadership and service groups and the student's ability to create and negotiate the

communities of practice that sprout from these. Gender is a significant factor in identity

formation, as is religious affiliation, and both of these are addressed within this prong.

Social Structure

Doctrine
Hierarchy

Social Practice | **Prong 2: Identity**

Social Reproduction
Shared Resources

Catholic
Female
Single-Sex
High
School

**Gender
Catholicity**

Conversation
Activity

Situated Experience
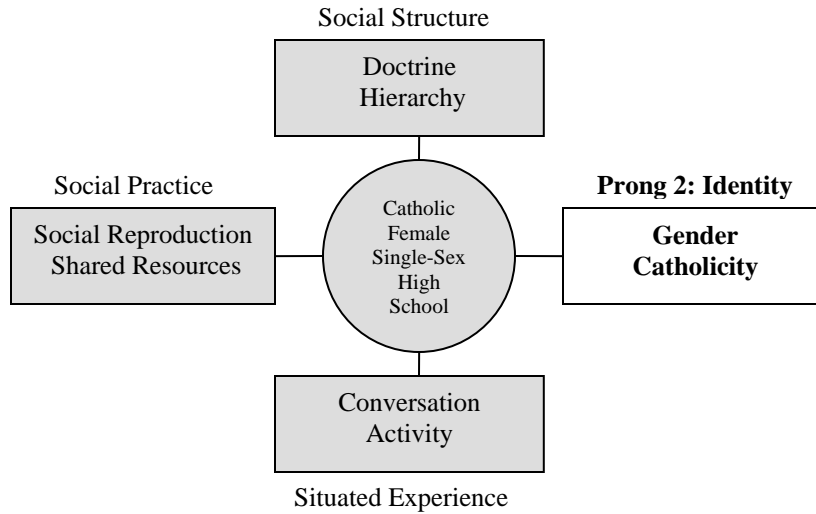
Figure 10. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School:
Identity

Encouraging Empowerment and Discouraging Resistance

Early on in my interviews, I spoke with a student named Carla whose words were

a harbinger of a surprising finding that I would not fully understand until I had long left

the campus of St. Marian's. Each day that I was there, students talked about

empowerment. I observed girls leading and confidently speaking in class, and all of St.

Marian's literature focused on building strong, confident, and empowered young women.

I watched the student body election process and witnessed young women take risks,

speak of their desire to lead, and articulate their position on the importance of women's

contributions to society and to their own institution. Part of me felt that my triangulation

of data was complete. But I continued to have a nagging feeling that I was not seeing the

whole picture. And then it came to me. It was not what I was seeing that was perplexing

me. It was what I was not seeing, what I realized was not happening.

For all of the feminist sentiment about strong women, there was an absence of talk about the barriers that women still face, about who is responsible for those obstacles, and about how they may be overcome. I did not observe a critical approach that allowed reflection about why women may earn less in society and what could be done to remedy this. Catholic school teaching encourages action and the social justice thrust of Catholic institution is evidence of this. However, I did not observe students being encouraged to act on the injustice of women's position in society. Some even asserted that women were "happy under the glass ceiling." In fact, I did not hear the word patriarchy in all of my extensive interviewing and observation. There was a quiet acceptance of the status quo, an avoidance of resistance, and a gendered notion of what it means to lead, to behave, and to negotiate life as a woman. And this is when Carla's words came back to me, illuminating what had thus far eluded me. I asked Carla, "What do you feel is St. Marian's understanding of women in the church? And she responded:

> I guess now that I think about it, we may get kind of mixed signals. But it's not
> like we've ever been told here, 'Don't do what you want wanna do,' but at the
> same time there's kind of an understanding that some things aren't possible, I
> guess. (CS Interview #1, p. 3)

Some things aren't possible. "Mixed signals" is a fitting way to describe the duality of the messages that young women receive, not only about the Catholic Church, but about their position as women in society. Students are presented with two distinct messages, one encourages empowerment and the other discourages resistance. Let us explore further evidence of this phenomenon.

To begin, as I observed at St. Marian's, I was struck by something that I had not expected: the silence. High schools are naturally bustling, chaotic places with raised voices and students jostling for position in the classroom or the lunch benches. And while St. Marian's certainly had its share of chatter and happy laughter, it was a very subdued school atmosphere, which some students and faculty characterized as "peaceful" but what could be characterized as submissive silence. One of my observation days occurred on the very last day of formal classes before spring finals. Seniors were graduated, and underclasswomen had decorated the lawns and reappropriated them as their own, boldly wearing their class colors to show their seniority in the new class structure that shifts each May as the outgoing seniors leave and new freshmen prepare to arrive.

On this day I observed a religion class, the last period of the last day of the school year before summer break. I expected the girls to be talkative and high-spirited, and I would not have been surprised if they had resisted instruction. They did not. They followed the lesson exactly as the teacher had planned. They began with a prayer prepared by a student and were completely silent. They were attentive to the teacher as she talked, and they engaged with her when called upon. And they quietly filed out when the bell rang. One student commented on the silence at St. Marian's in her interview when I asked about the all female environment. "I know that, like here we have a lot of respect for our teachers, and we're completely silent; and there's no problem being quiet for an hour and a half" (CS Interview #10, p. 5). A faculty member who had recently transferred to St. Marian's from a coed Catholic high school also commented: "I know

there are things going on and it's just a different kind of culture but that was surprising to me that it was so really quiet and focused" (FS Interview #6, p. 4).

I understand that interpreting the silence as submission can be dangerous. Students at St. Marian's simply may have a healthy respect for their academics, and they may be more serious achievers than the average high school student. But it may also be what another student expressed in her interview: "I don't wanna criticize the structure that's in place" (CS Interview #1, p. 8). With few exceptions (as noted earlier), students at St. Marian's are willing to submit to authority with little resistance, and the prevalence of silence may be evidence of this. However, one may also note here that the compliance of female adolescents may also be in play. Adolescent development researchers found that female teens were generally more compliant and would conform more to school expectations than male teens (Duru-Bellat, 1990 as cited in Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006). So despite the fact that students believe the "female environment has been so empowering" (CS Interview #5, p. 3), the education of empowerment may end with the consciousness raising of the young women, which helps them to understand their worth and the opportunities available to them—but to question authority is not part of the culture. St. Marian's student body president, Emily, describes the dissolution of her "radical" philosophy of leadership, which ends her flirtation with resistance.

> I thought when I first ran for student government sophomore year, that I would be the most radical thing to ever happen to Catholic school student government. I saw myself revamping and redesigning the whole system. Yet what I've realized

is that sometimes the most radical thing someone can do is just to show up. So I

started showing up and haven't stopped. (Document Log, # 28)

Emily's initial stance, that she would change everything about St. Marian's is

significantly altered as she ends her term of office. She no longer sees herself as an active

agent of change, but rather as a passive role model who by just "showing up" may make a

difference.

In my interview with her she discussed this change of perspective:

Being radical doesn't mean starting a revolution or rising up against something.

Being a radical, like I said, is in the small things, like talking to people who have

been marginalized or showing up…I think there will be a time and a place for

political activism, social activism, and there certainly has been a great deal of

social activism at St. Marian's. But I haven't conformed. I've just come to terms

and I've compromised and realized that there's a greater meaning to being a

revolutionary in thought and in action than just doing something that might seem

obviously radical. (CS Interview #5, p. 4)

Emily began her career at St. Marian's defining leadership as a kind of political and

social activism that was "radical." She ends by eschewing the "active" revolutionary

stance and conforming to the anti-resistance culture of the institution, so that she and

others no longer perceive her as one agitating for change but as one who embraces the

culture of the institution wholeheartedly and who has become a representative of it.

Further, she indicates that, "there may be a time for 'political activism,'" but her

language implies that this has not been the place or the time for that type of activity.

Another student, Lola, voiced a similar sentiment that revealed the mixed message that she was trying to resolve. When asked, "Do you consider yourself a feminist?" Lola responded in this way:

> I do, I guess, and I don't, because I'm really for women's powers so I do think
> that we should be doing stuff. I think we should be working and involved in
> everything, like the Presidency. I think it's great that Hillary Clinton is running. I
> think we should be allowed the same opportunities. But at the same time, we're
> losing so much of the old stuff that we've had—the old tradition, like men don't
> respect us as much anymore. So I like that we want to be strong and everything,
> we want to set ourselves different, but at the same time we still need to go back to
> the old traditions of being women, and being a mother and caring for your
> children. (CS Interview #7, p. 6)

Here Lola struggles with the role of woman in society. She has been taught at St. Marian's that desiring opportunity and power is possible and is her right, but she feels women have paid too heavy of a price for this privilege. She believes that women have had to give up their traditional roles of mother and caretaker to achieve this progress, and perhaps because of this they have lost the respect of the men in society. She is not interested in resistance; in fact she is not aware that it is necessary. In a real way, she takes for granted that women should be "doing stuff," like working and running for the Presidency, and she is neither cognizant of the obstacles that women have faced in gaining this ground nor aware of the battles that still need to be fought. She implies a criticism of the resistance that has achieved this progress in women's rights, and she

yearns for the traditional notion of womanhood, one that can coexist with her desire for leadership and power yet does not cause men to "lose respect" for women. She has not been in an environment, at home, in school, or in her peer group that makes transparent the struggle that women face, and she is not aware of the resources that they must access in order to achieve true empowerment.

Of the 26 people I interviewed, and many others with whom I conversed, only one person openly and definitively identified as a feminist. Most others either redefined the term before accepting it, or they adopted the notion that women should have equal opportunity while rejecting the critical notions that are sometimes attendant with the term feminism. Charlene, a recent alumna, had renegotiated feminism to fit her own needs. She said that the point of feminism was not "charging through the glass ceiling, getting to those high positions and being really aggressive" but rather "living a good life and making a contribution" (YA Interview #1, p. 14). Her use of language here, referring to women's rise in positions of leadership as "charging" and aggressive," reflects a gendered philosophy of women's roles counter to the empowerment that St. Marian's espouses.

One administrator, Mrs. Simon, modeled resistance in her early life when she persevered with a math major in college even though her professor told her that, "women don't belong in mathematics." Mrs. Simon strongly advocates for the single-sex environment at St. Marian's, saying that it offers "not just equal opportunity, but every opportunity" for young women and empowers them to be "free to be themselves" (FS Interview #1, p. 14). She did not, however, consider herself a feminist, and she distanced

herself from the term because she associated it with "women who hate men" (Field notes #34, p. 2). Mrs. Simon went on to say that she understood that women were having louder voices these days, and she thought that was good. But then she said something that brought me back to the mixed messages students might receive at St. Marian's. She said, "We teach our girls to have loud voices, but everything in its place" (Field notes #34, p. 2). In other words, students at St. Marian's have the opportunity to use their voices up to a certain point. Another administrator, Mrs. Gates, talked about how she believes the girls perceive the administration's response to their "voices."

> But I think if there are students that resist we have to listen to hear them. You
> have to at least listen to them and understand why they're resisting, and then
> explain your side and hear their side. But they feel that we're not listening to
> them, that we're only going to shove down our beliefs on them. (FS Interview #2,
> p. 19)

While Mrs. Gates believes that girls' voices must be heard, as did the administrator Mrs. Simon previously, she also believes that students do not feel heard but feel pressed to submit to the constraints placed upon them by administrative decisions. Thus, what the administration says it wants to happen (hearing young women's voices) and what actually happens (students do not feel heard) are two contradictory things. Interestingly, Mrs. Gates experiences the same dichotomy in her personal commitment to women's issues. When asked if she considered herself a feminist she responded:

> I do believe that women definitely should stand up for themselves and be given
> equal—but I am not overboard… I still think that we should—not chivalry, but I

still think that we should be taken care of. I still think that women should stand up

and represent themselves but I also think that we need the male to sort of–not to

balance us out but to guide us and help us and be that support. (FS Interview #2,

p. 5)

Mrs. Gates' mixed feelings about women's place, on the one hand desiring strength and

voice and on the other hand yearning for "chivalry" and guidance from men, is a similar

message that students may be receiving: be assertive—but only to a point.

The St. Marian's community does not encourage an affinity with feminism or an

attitude that accepts talking back, as bell hooks (1989) would advocate. And while

talking back has the negative connotation of being ill mannered and impolite, bell hooks

(1989) suggests that females need to revolutionize their thinking, so that talking back

does not connote being rude. Instead, hooks (1989) suggests that talking back should

have a positive connotation, speaking up for one's truth, speaking out against cultures

and institutions that oppress. This may be a little lofty for a small Catholic female single-

sex institution trying its best to educate young women to be productive members of

society. And, in fact, the culture at St. Marian's and most other school institutions do not

embrace this feminist notion. But the fact that few understand the need to talk back is

exactly why this research is important. And, if this understanding cannot be achieved in

an all female institution, then where might it be?

Let us now turn to the issue of leadership and its definition in the culture of this

Catholic female single-sex high school. Do these mixed messages influence student's

identities as leaders?

Gendered Leadership

The theoretical framework in prong two addresses issues of identity and gender. This next section merges the two as I explore how students see themselves as leaders and how participation in leadership is shaped by their gendered behavior and values. Leadership at St. Marian's takes on many different definitions dependent upon the individual's engagement with distinct communities of practice. Emily, the student body president of St. Marian's, describes being a leader as "one of everyone who can see where things need to go" (CS Interview #8, p. 8). She goes on to say, "I'm just one of everybody who happens to have a desire to know what's going on and to listen to those people who don't usually get heard and try to make their voices heard." And she adds, "It's not so much about being in charge but representing everybody" (CS Interview #8, p. 8). Andrews, Shockley, and James (2002) assert that women leaders focus on the needs of the marginalized, and Williamson and Hudson (2002) suggest that listening is one way female leaders demonstrate their commitment to an inclusive and collaborative culture. Emily exhibits both of these behaviors, simultaneously emphasizing the need to hear from the under-represented and the commitment to being one of many, not adhering to a hierarchical model of leadership. This more democratic view follows Gilligan's (1982) model of women's decision-making behavior, which is more relational and collaborative. Gilligan asserts that women's manner of approaching decision-making is not better or worse than men's, but it is different. And she insists that women should not be penalized for this difference. And yet, being passionate about a cause, wanting to persuade others of the right course takes more than just listening. A young alumna, Jennifer, defines

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leadership in a slightly different way because of her participation in Kairos (a Catholic

retreat program).

> I wasn't on student government per se, there are a lot of ways to be a leader here.
> What I liked too was when I went on Kairos (a Catholic retreat program), I went
> back as a leader and the talk that they asked me to do was called "leaders." Sort of
> the focus of it was that it should not be necessarily a student government person
> who gives that talk. Sort of like encouraging that there's a leader in all of us and
> the people who you might not see as the obvious leader could be a leader. (YA
> Interview # 5, p. 4).

Here again are themes of democratic and non-hierarchical leadership. Jennifer has been

taught that anyone can lead and that leadership qualities exist in everyone. Others

corroborated Jennifer's assertion that leadership need not be "obvious" at St. Martin's.

Another young alumna, Julia, came to the same conclusion through her experience with

Kairos.

> I've gone to Kairos three times, and every time I went, the talk on leadership has
> been given by a girl who hasn't—who has never been on student council, who has
> never done the typical leadership things. And they always talked about how you
> can be a leader in your actions, instead of in an actual position of leadership. So I
> feel that was always really important. (YA Interview #2, p. 4)

Another student body leader, Liz, was also influenced by her Kairos experience.

> And then I was chosen to be a Kairos leader, and I think that experience really
> make me look toward going to ASB—because we had a talk called "leaders" and

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I remember my speaker in it spoke about how she didn't think of herself as a

leader at first, but then she described her daily interactions with other people, and

how she doesn't try to take on a negative position with others, but tries to just be

herself in the midst of maybe, I don't know, girl fights and things like that. (CS

Interview #9, p. 6)

The notion that leadership at St. Marian's is simply being who you are, "being a good

person, being somebody that other people can respect" (YA Interview #5, p. 5) is

empowering and does allow all types of students to attain the title of leader. One student,

in fact, considered herself a leader because she set high academic standards for herself

that she believed others would be inspired to follow, though she had no verifiable

evidence of this (CS Interview #10, p. 3).

Gardner (1990) defines leadership as "the process of persuasion or example by

which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by

the leader and his or her followers" (p. 5). Young women at St. Marian's have adopted

the part of the definition that uses the "process of example," rather than the "process of

persuasion." They do see themselves as possible "change agents" as defined earlier by

Astin and Astin (2000), but they do not embrace an active voice in this change. Theirs is

a passive rather than active approach to leadership. They are encouraged to be leaders,

but they believe that leadership is a passive activity that requires little risk taking or

strong advocacy but rather quiet daily work, similar to, as one student expressed, Mother

Teresa. Young men are unlikely to practice this description of leadership. Its

stereotypically gendered notion of pacifism and follower-ship is perhaps very Christ-like

and understandable for a Catholic school, but not one taken up by male adolescents of the same age who "tend to be overtly hierarchical and competitive" (Thorne, 2002, p. 128).

An administrator and mature alumna, Mrs. Thompson, also corroborates this gendered notion of leadership when she describes how her definition of leadership evolved over the course of her four years at St. Marian's. I asked her how her perspective on leadership had changed from the time that she entered St. Marian's to the time that she graduated, and she answered:

> I think I realized that being a leader meant a lot more—there's a broader definition of what being a leader means. When you are 14 you think being a leader is being a head cheerleader…but I had a lot of friends I really admired for what they did and, again how far they'd come and seeing [that] people really have an opportunity here…leadership means having confidence and conviction in who you are and what you do, and that regardless of your views, political or otherwise, that it has to do with being confident and knowing who you are, what you believe, what you stand for, and not being afraid of putting that out there. (MA Interview #4, p. 7)

This definition of leadership speaks to the individual attributes of young women who may aspire to be leaders, but it also speaks to young women who choose not to be leaders. Being confident, knowing who you are and what you stand for does not necessarily make one a leader, certainly not an "active leader" or a leader who actively persuades in every situation or setting. But knowing "who you are" and "what you stand for" is the beginning of confidence and the seed of leadership. Active leadership,

however, the kind that involves passion and the ability to do more than represent is quite far from this definition.

One important aspect of leadership to consider is its intimate link to the notion of service as has been indicated earlier in the literature review. Many students and staff make this connection in their interviews. As previously discussed, there is scholarship that supports that one who leads will also serve (Misa, Anderson, & Yamamura, 2005). This is the practice taken up by the St. Marian's community.

Thus, we now turn to how students at a Catholic female single-sex high school navigate the terrain between leadership and service, as we also begin to explore the link between the students' Catholic faith and their commitment to serving others. This is another part of a female Catholic student's exploration of her identity and gender, as suggested by prong two (see Figure 10). A student's perspective on service can be a significant influence on her spiritual identity, and her notion of women's roles may be affected by the foundational philosophy of service that she embraces during this formative period.

The Connection between Leadership and Service

Students spoke comfortably of the connection between service and leadership. When asked to address this connection, Emily, the student body president, said "A leader volunteers to serve everyone, and someone who volunteers to serve everyone is a leader." She believes that leaders "lead by example, go to Habitat (for Humanity) every Sunday, and encourage or inspire other people to help at a soup kitchen" (CS Interview #5, p. 9). However, while she identifies service and leadership outside of St. Marian's as working

in social justice situations (Habitat for Humanity, soup kitchens), when talking about her work as ASB President, she describes her leadership differently: "leadership is sometimes doing the grunt work that goes unnoticed or unappreciated, but just knowing that it needs to get done" (CS Interview #8, p. 8). This notion of leadership, as one who does what is necessary however small or distasteful with no recognition, is a common philosophy in Catholic institutions, sometimes called "servant leadership," (Greenleaf, 1970). Yet, though the term is not used at St. Marian's, the concept is definitely in play. Most students have learned to identify service with leadership, and I observed that the service to which the students refer is linked with "helping" activities, where students are assistants in the tasks completed, participating more as servant than leader in many cases.

While I was on site at St. Marian's, the school was preparing for the baccalaureate Mass to take place on campus that week. Freshmen students were excused from religion classes to do the manual labor of setting up the chairs for the event, a huge undertaking. I wondered if they chose religion classes for the student work volunteers because of the connection between Catholic teaching and devotion to service. The choice of freshmen volunteers, however, was not accidental. This learned servant leadership behavior develops over time. It seems that from the very beginning administration, staff, and students encourage participation in helping service. This is the type of "grunt work" of which Emily spoke earlier in her definition of leadership. Using Emily's lens, setting up chairs for graduation might be considered a type of leadership.

In addition, each morning of my fieldwork, I witnessed a type of service that also informed my understanding about the cultural landscape at St. Marian's: the practice of

public prayer. Each day, students write and deliver a prayer to be shared with the student body over the intercom. During the week of elections that I visited, alumnae wrote and delivered prayers that revealed again the leadership and service connection. A former student body officer, Jan, linked community, service, and leadership in her prayer when she said:

> Community is the window through which courage and character shine—to serve a community; to give oneself for the betterment of the group or the promotion of inclusiveness—this is the purpose of being a leader. (Document Log #28)

Here, the student links her definition of leadership with service and, in particular, service to community. Jan has understood that service in community is the preferred method of leadership. She has learned that "inclusion" is the purpose of leadership, and this is the same philosophy of which Emily speaks when she talks of her leadership as being "one of many." There seems to be reluctance on the part of the St. Marian's students to speak of the power or the individual force that a leader can wield. Rather, they couch their definition in terms of service and in terms of community, and they eschew the notion that a leader can be considered to be a singular agent of change.

Emily's prayer, or perhaps more accurately titled "meditation," was consistent with her previous statements about leadership. However, I want to include it here, not for what it does say—but for what it doesn't say.

> Over these past four years I have learned to be a leader.
>
> It means sometimes being willing to follow and compromise.
>
> It means taking time to listen.

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It means letting everyone see your imperfections, yet also your desire to improve.

It means being honest.

It means working tirelessly, and sometimes thanklessly, because you can see what needs to get done even when others don't.

It means sometimes admitting defeat.

It means exhaustion.

But it also means exhilaration.

(Document Log, #20)

Many of the items that define leadership for Emily are either passive acts, acts of service, or acts that require her to humble herself and admit her weakness. And note that she begins her prayer by saying that she has "learned" these behaviors during her time at St. Marian's.

While the comments of other students I listened to or observed were consistent with Emily's learned behaviors of leadership and service, the earlier incident with Gina, the student I wrote of previously who used her voice to actively protest against the student body election, stood in stark contrast to this. Both students received the same cultural messages from the St. Marian's community, yet both seemed to take on the mantle of leadership in a different way.

Gina and Emily: Leadership in Practice

Let me refer again to Gina's letter to the administration, written after her election protest. It began "I want to thank you for what you have indirectly caused" (Document Log, #51). She understood that had the administration not disallowed her bid for the

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presidency, she might not have had the groundswell of support and interest in her cause.

She sees herself as a woman of action. She says she now has "many people helping me

out with a letter writing campaign and vigil to try and do something for the genocide in

Darfur" (Document Log, # 51). However, in her letter she pulls back from her previously

"angry" attitude to which she admits, and she says, "I don't want the movement to make

enemies, I want everyone to make PEACE [original emphasis]" (Document Log, # 51).

And later in the letter, before she asks to "talk" to the administration, she says, "I'm not

trying to agitate, I'm trying to create" (Document Log, # 51). Wenger (1998) would

suggest that from agitation comes creation, so the two are not mutually exclusive, yet

both of her statements carry dual messages. She understands that others may perceive her

as an agitator, and she knows she may possibly be making enemies with her strong,

forceful stand against the status quo at St. Marian's. Yet part of her is unwilling to admit

this. Part of her tries to smooth over her aggressive action-oriented behavior with words

of compromise and conciliation, both advocating for peace, and she characterizes her

resistance as a method of "creating" instead of "agitating." The very fact that she writes a

letter to the administration, asking to open dialogue is an act of compromise.

Yet, there is a kind of pride in her characterization of her cause as a "movement."

She feels the power in the consequences of her actions. This is very different from Emily

who speaks of her leadership in the most humbling terms, taking credit for nothing, and

defining herself by her inaction rather than her action. Further, Gina ends her letter with

these words: "Paz de Mente y Accion" (Document Log, # 51). Peace of Mind and Action.

Gina advocates for "Accion." Her notion of leadership drives her to take steps toward her

cause and not simply be a role model as other leaders at St. Marian's have suggested. Plus, by embracing her Latina roots, by adopting the language of the minority and using Spanish in her closing, she positions herself as an outsider, as one who must fight to gain access and equity. However, action is only half of her final closing. She also advocates for "peace of mind," a more conciliatory and less forceful way to characterize the change she wishes to bring about. Peace of mind suggests a more internalized change, a less external and less action-oriented move towards making a difference.

Additional evidence of this dichotomy appears in Gina's article in the school newspaper entitled "Censoring the St. Marian's Student." In it she writes again about how to negotiate leadership in this environment.

> We are in a privileged structure with a responsibility to speak for those facing injustices outside of the blue gates and even to speak for those facing injustice (however small and insignificant compared to what is occurring out in the world) within the gates. Watch what you say, however. Do not ruin it for the rest of us with silly speech, for St. Marian's has the right to create and enforce rules. There are always loopholes for institutions. Thus I urge you as students to first become educated and then form messages clearly and respectfully while still being powerful. (Document Log, # 49)

First, she views her leadership as a mandate emanating from the privileged structure within which she lives; this is evident in her advocacy for the victims of genocide in Darfur. Second, she sees leadership through a social justice lens, writing of injustice, and implying that this injustice occurs not only outside of the gates of her school but inside as

well, though she humbly admits these injustices pale in comparison to others. One may

infer that the injustices of which she speaks "inside the blue gates" may be directly

related to the injustices she felt she suffered during her most recent encounter with the

administration. This rather bold, but veiled assertion, is the launch pad for her warning to

the students. She now speaks from experience, having recently tangled with the

institutional authority. Gina admonishes students to form messages clearly and

respectfully because she knows that if the two don't go hand in hand the message may

not be heard. There must be certain compliance in the act of leadership or it cannot be

validated. Not agitating but creating, not making enemies but forming messages

respectfully, these are all evidence of a practice that, while understanding the efficacy of

resistance, also comprehends the productiveness of conceding to the opposition. And yet,

Gina's last word is so telling. She speaks of "still being powerful"—and whether she

refers here to her message or her person, the leadership that Gina embraces owns the

power that is attendant to the position. Emily, the student body president, never does this,

and she never uses this word.

There is some wisdom in "conceding to the opposition" as a tactic to gain power.

And it may be that although St. Marian's is not encouraging resistance, it is teaching a

different life skill: working within the system. Some will argue whether change is best

achieved by working inside or outside of the system, but Gina has learned to walk the

line between resistance and compliance, striking out to achieve her objectives but

acquiescing enough to be heard. Full compliance, as in the case of Emily, may result in

more legitimized positions of leadership, such as student body president. However, Gina,

is also able to lead as long as her leadership acknowledges the authority in place. From the administrative perspective, shutting down opposition may be an ineffective way of creating a climate of empowerment, which St. Marian's heavily promotes. Thus, some resistance must be tolerated in order to make credible the assertion that young women at St. Marian's, as one student put it, are "in charge."

Motivation for Service

Clearly Gina had a strong commitment to social justice issues, in particular, to issues outside of St. Marian's. And she felt that her actions could make a difference. Students were given this message on a daily basis. The school newspaper, the alumnae newsletter, the yearbook, the bulletin boards, the guest speakers, and the religion classes, I observed that all of these had a focus on service and social justice. Students at St. Marian's learn that service is an important component of their education. Emily spoke of the educational environment and service:

> I think that the foundation of the school is service, and that it has influenced the
> actions of the whole school community—we're constantly collecting or going out
> and serving out in the community…When you have a school whose whole
> mission was founded on the principles of service in the community, bringing gifts
> of time and love and spirit to the community, then that sort of permeates through
> every aspect. (CS Interview #5, p. 10)

Emily believes that the school has been founded on service to others and that its students are inundated with opportunities for and messages about service for others. She speaks of service as "permeating" every aspect of the culture, and her use of the phrase "bringing

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gifts of time and love and spirit" is evocative of Christian overtones linking service to the faith life of the student.

While I was at St. Marian's, many of the end-of-the-year honors for seniors were being awarded. One award that garnered much publicity, and to which many students referred, was the Archdiocesan Award for Christian Service. A large bulletin board at the school's entrance announced this award with pictures and accolades of the student who had been chosen. This year, Lola, a student that had been selected for me to interview, was the recipient of this award. She had completed over 800 hours of service in hospitals, in church programs, in choirs, in retreat work, and in Habitat for Humanity volunteer experiences. The school's focus on Lola, and their pride in her accomplishment, says much about what values are espoused in this Catholic female single-sex environment.

I asked Lola if she saw a connection between campus ministry, the spiritual leadership of the school, and service. She answered:

> I do, in a way, because it's—I do and I don't. I can see like because it goes—faith and serving, they go together; you have to serve kind of thing. For your faith; you want to spread your faith, so you serve others and everything, so that's how I see a connection. But I can see how other people don't see it as a connection where they just wanna serve just to help other people, but they might not necessarily be spiritual people or anything. (CS Interview #7, p. 3)

Lola sees the act of serving as a propagation of the faith, though her use of the phrase "you have to serve kind of thing" may put into question how voluntary her service

actually is. Yet, she does see a spiritual connection for herself, with which very few other students identified.

Carla said that service was "kinda just part of the school" (CS Interview #1, p. 7), but she essentially characterizes her service experiences as "fun":

I never went on the trips to Tijuana, and I never did Habitat for Humanity, but I have a lot of friends who did, and they just loved it, and it's a great bonding experience. The closest thing I came to was on senior service when I went to One Generation, and that was fun….I wasn't particularly impassioned about service in general…I never really had that spark. (CS Interview #1, p. 7)

Two themes come up in Carla's discussion that are repeated in other students notions of service: fun and community. The fact that service is a fun experience is an oft repeated phrase by most of the students I interviewed. Students take up the notion of service, not by prioritizing its social justice agenda, but rather by viewing it as an opportunity to participate in a social activity that will provide friendship and opportunities for diversion. Talking about service in this way is also an accepted practice that students engage in and use to promote participation. Angela, a current student who has gone to Tijuana and Habitat for Humanity trips corroborates this:

I always have fun when I do it [service]. My friends and I always sign up. It's not that it necessarily makes me feel good about myself, 'cause I don't think that's why I do it. I want to go—when I go to Tijuana I want to go and see what this is like. I was so curious to go to an orphanage and see what it's like, because I think it's important for people to see that. (CS Interview #3, p. 7)

Again the word fun is used in association with service, but also important is the idea that "my friends and I always sign up." Service is a practice around which students assemble and create social networks outside the confines of St. Marian's walls and make for themselves singular communities where they identify with each other in a different, perhaps more intense, way. Further, Angela wants to visit the orphanage because she is "curious," which seems to be more of a travel inspired motivation for going on service trips than a humanitarian one. However, she does note that, "it is important for others to see," perhaps implying that only through raising consciousness about the plight of the marginalized will injustice be eradicated. Yet, the specific connection between faith and service is absent.

Another student, Jan, really focuses on the relationship part of service through which students create communities of practice. Eckert (2008) suggests that as the community is constructed so are the individuals through their participation with one another in the community. Thus, as students participate in these service experiences not only are they constructing communities, they are also constructing identities. And this is part of the reason that students at St. Marian's identify so strongly with service. Jan speaks directly to this issue:

> When I would go on leadership or service experiences, you can't help but get to
> know the people that you're working with. In getting to know those people and
> getting to let your guard down, you realize that it's not just a social relationship
> but the social relationship comes after all that work is being done and you create
> it. It's almost like when you give people a goal, like a uniform goal that they all

have to work towards, they become friendlier than if you just put them in the

room and have nothing for them to do. (CS Interview #4, p. 2)

Jan makes the connection between doing service and creating relationship that constructs

community and identity. The uniform goal that she speaks of, in this case the particular

service experience, helps students to "bond" and to bring that bonding experience back to

the wider community outside of this experience. Eckert (2008) discusses this

phenomenon when she suggests that the character of each community is altered by

individuals' interactions with previous communities; thus, cultures merge and become

influences upon one another.

Students return from service experiences with their newly constructed

communities of practice and these individuals then infiltrate the school as Emily

indicated earlier. However, the notion of service as fun, suggested by Carla and Angela,

is also present in Jan's analysis. Clearly making deep personal connections that create

belonging and purpose are a part of the enjoyment that students experience in service.

One young alumna, Mary, who also considered service as fun, also saw some very

individual benefits from participating in service. I asked her if she gained anything by her

service experience at St. Marian's and this was her reply:

Yeah, I think I gained a lot from it. I organized a trip for myself, and, I think, nine

other girls to go work at a Special Olympics. And it was just a really fun day and

kinda putting together the whole thing is what I enjoyed doing, so I liked that a

lot. Otherwise, I mean, service is just good 'cause now everyone has to do it for

college. It doesn't really matter and it forces you to get it done. (YA Interview #3,

p. 6)

Mary views service as a means to an end. In addition to being fun and providing a

leadership experience that she enjoyed, she also considers service as a "resume builder"

that is good for college. This corroborates the research of Marks and Jones (2004) whose

research findings revealed that community service of college students was used for self-

serving benefits, rather than altruistic ones. Mary alludes to the mandatory service that is

required for students at St. Marian's and admits that doing it for school is a "good" thing

because it then forces students to get it completed for the college brag sheet. Her

suggestion that it "doesn't really matter" may mean that doing service does not impact

Mary's life in a way that detracts from what she considers more significant priorities,

and, because it can be used for her own individual ends, her investment in it is

worthwhile.

The mandatory service that Mary alludes to can be an area for conflict for

students. They know that service is something that should be done for altruistic or

spiritual purposes, but often, because of the mandatory school policy, students rarely

approach service with this intention. Charlene, a young alumna speaks of her service

experience at St. Marian's and the influence that it had upon her:

Actually the service that I did at St. Marian's was very poor. I mean, I just stacked

cans for twenty hours. Sometimes my hours got written off as things that I didn't

even do. (YA Interview #1, p. 7)

Charlene completed service simply because it was required of her and for no other reason. In her participation she felt no passion and did not even experience the fun aspect that other students spoke about. Liz, another current student, also addressed the issue of mandatory service:

> I've always had trouble with it being mandatory, because I always wonder if I would really do it or not, because that's just the way I think. I wonder if I would do it if I wasn't obliged to do it, because every time I do it I know I'm required to do it. (CS Interview #9, p. 9)

Liz, a very serious student, feels a kind of guilt because her participation in service has been in response to a requirement and not derived from internal motivation. And yet, several administrators spoke of the long-term influence social justice activity may have whether or not students believed it to be valuable at the time they completed it. Mrs. Simon says, "Whatever they are doing (service trips or church work) they are looking at the world from a social justice perspective and those memories that they will carry away are the things that are going to await them at some point [in the future]" (FS Interview #1, p. 14). In Eckert's terms, the previous communities of practice will, at some point in the future, influence other practices that students will engage in.

Practicing Service

In my field observation, I spent two days observing the girls participate in service at two off site locations, Habitat for Humanity and St. Patrick's Catholic grade school. At Habitat, they were clearing fields and painting fences in preparation for building houses in an urban community for low income families, and, at St. Patrick's Catholic

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grade school, St. Marian's students were monitoring and playing with young children on the playground and putting up bulletin boards in the grade school classrooms. The service opportunities available for students to choose from on these particular service days included four elementary schools, one food bank, and one construction site. The opportunities provided were mostly in the female-dominated profession of elementary education, however, other options were available. Students at the Catholic elementary site were enthusiastic about their service experience saying they "loved it." The grade school students at St. Patrick's were very responsive to the St. Marian's volunteers, competed for their attention, and seemed to enjoy their presence. Volunteers behaved almost as surrogate big sisters, playing jump rope and tag with the young children. And though students enjoyed this volunteer work, they functioned in the stereotypically female role of nurturer and helper. When in the classroom with the teachers, they complied with all teacher requests, very much like teacher aids.

At the Habitat site, students talked with me before they began their work. I asked them what they believed service was and they responded in various ways. One said, "It is making a difference," another replied that, "It is giving back to the community." And for only the second time in all my interviews with students and alumnae, one student made the connection between service and faith when she said: "Some service projects feel religious; God can disguise himself as the lowest" (Field notes #31, p. 1).

The young women took their jobs of painting, digging, and trimming seriously and completed the tasks that were delegated to them. One student, Colleen, had an interesting story to tell about how she intended to use her service experience. Earlier in

the year, through her religious studies class, Colleen participated in an online donation site that provides loans to individuals in impoverished countries. She created an incentive for her friends and family to donate and earned five hundred dollars for this website and the persons it benefits. She set up a contract that all who donated to this site under her name would be entered into a raffle, and the winner of the raffle would win a family portrait painted by Colleen who is a gifted artist. This worked so well for her that she began to think that an online donation site would be a good way to market her artistic skills. And so, she is currently devising a plan to set up her own donation site, to "get her name out" as an artist and further her career, while simultaneously doing good by continuing to provide donations to a worthy cause. Colleen's philosophy about service evolved from an other-based endeavor to a self-serving endeavor, much like the philosophy of the alumna, Mary, who viewed her service as a resume builder.

Despite the Christian service emphasis at St. Marian's, the service and faith connection is a tenuous one. Few students speak of it, and none seem to feel strongly about the motivation that their faith provides for their volunteer endeavors. In fact, many students use service for alternate purposes, such as self-promotion, socializing or community building, and even entertainment. There is, however, a desire on the part of the administration and staff to forge a tighter bond between these two loosely linked elements and to help students see how the Catholic faith can be the impetus for a life of service.

The area of service lies between prong two, a student's formation of identity and gender, and prong three, her understanding of how service is a part of the mission of the

larger Catholic institution to which the school belongs. Again, each of these elements do not stand alone, but rather, they merge with one another as student's move in and out of communities and identities in their attempts to define themselves as they teach and learn in social interaction. And so, this brings us to the third prong of my adapted framework: the social structure. How does the institution of the Catholic Church, as lived out at St. Marian's, influence the practices of the students at this Catholic female single-sex high school?

Prong Three: Social Structure—Hierarchy and Doctrine

The third prong, social structure, rests at the opposite end of the vertical axis from situated experience. The third prong represents the influence of the Catholic Church's hierarchy and doctrine at St. Marian's (see Figure 11). In many ways, this social structure circumscribes and defines the kinds of activities and conversations that take place.

Prong 3: Social Structure
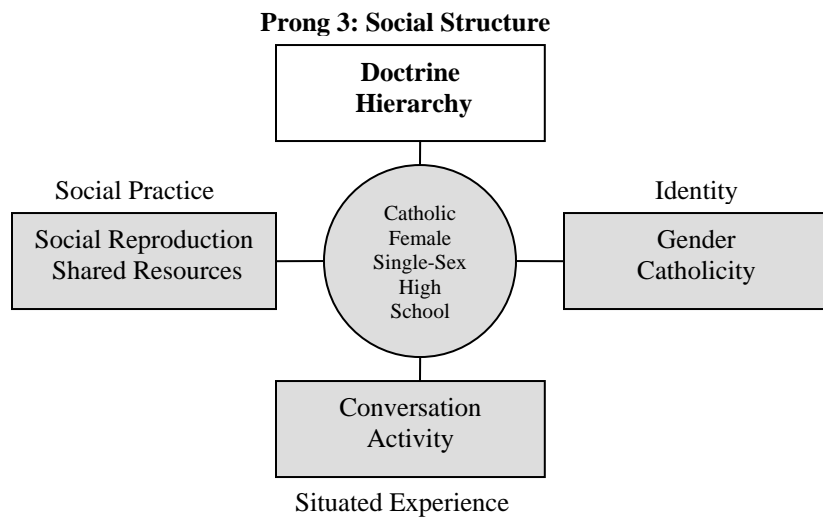
Figure 11. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School: Social Structure

The social structure has a significant impact on how the young women at St. Marian's see themselves, as women, as Catholics, and as leaders and servers, all concerns addressed in prong two. The inter-relatedness of each prong enhances and enriches the researcher's understanding of the experience of a student at a Catholic female single-sex school.

The Catholic School

All the external markers at St. Marian's indicate that it is a Catholic school. School visitors are greeted by a waterfall and a large statue of the Virgin Mary in the front parking entrance. The administration building has another large statue of Mary at the entrance, and the school walls and public places either have religious statues, paintings, or bulletin boards with Christian icons or quotes. The mission of the school, inherited from the founding religious order, is apparent in all the literature and is readily recited by students and faculty alike. All the classrooms have crucifixes in prominent places, and, as mentioned earlier, daily prayer is said over the intercom each day. Masses occur once a month, each themed toward a particular tradition or celebration of the school, for example Heritage Day, Mother/Daughter Mass, and the Lenten Mass. Retreats are a big part of student life, and they increase in length and intensity as students progress through St. Marian's. The Kairos retreat that 90% of senior students voluntarily attend is a specifically Catholic based retreat. So, the fixtures of Catholicism are readily apparent, visually, ritually, and philosophically. But how does Catholicism work in the situated experience of the students? And what is the influence of the doctrine and hierarchy of the Church?

Religion and Spirituality

Most of the students I spoke with made a clear distinction between religion and spirituality and the way they practiced each. Though many identified as Catholics and had attended Catholic grammar schools, few acknowledged a place for the doctrine or the hierarchy of the Church in their daily lives. Caroline, a current student stated that she thought, "there was more of a spiritual ambience at St. Marian's than strictly Catholicism" (CS Interview #10, p. 4). Liz, another current student, responded similarly when I asked, "How do you think that the Catholic part of St. Marian's has impacted you, or impacts the daily life here?" She said:

> I think that most of our religion classes are focused mainly on spirituality. I know
>
> when we came in they talked a lot about Christianity, but then sophomore year it
>
> was morality, and so that kind of brought in the spectrum. It felt less like a
>
> Catholic school than one kind of asking us to be open to faith and to the presence
>
> of the sacred and God, not to just accept it as we've been taught so far, but to find
>
> your own definition of it. (CS Interview #9, p. 3)

Carla corroborates this sentiment when she compares her grammar school and St. Marian's:

> I feel I learned most of my religion at St. John's Grammar School, and most of
>
> my faith at St. Marian's, if you know what I mean…At St. John's I learned about
>
> parts of the Mass, which helped me appreciate the Mass more, knowing about the
>
> Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist…and then an extensive class

on the history of the Church…I think the religion program here is more centered

around spirituality and not the structure of the Church. (CS Interview #1, p. 3)

Carla was also clear about St. Marian's lack of emphasis on the doctrine of the Church.

She did not believe in all of the specific Church doctrine and was worried about what that

meant for her status as a Catholic. She recounted her conversation with her religion

teacher to me, saying:

In class I asked, "If I don't believe necessarily in all the same doctrines as the

Catholic Church. Does that mean that I'm not even a Catholic?" And my teacher

said, "When you die, God isn't going to say, 'were you the best Catholic you

could be? He is going to ask you, 'Were you the best Carla you could be?'" I

think that is how the school approaches it. (CS Interview #1, p. 3)

The teacher's message allowed Carla to feel comfortable in the Catholic fold, even

though Carla could not embrace all of its doctrines. It is possible that without this more

malleable approach to Catholicism, fewer students would identify as Catholics or engage

in spiritual discovery. The message that Carla received at St. Marian's is reminiscent of

Bellah's et al. (1996) research about a woman named Sheila who had created a very

individualized religion, called "Sheliaism." The tenets of Sheilaism included a belief in

God, but it did not include a required attachment to a certain church or its doctrine; it was

a "therapeutic" approach to faith (Bellah et al., 1996). Sheila believed that her faith had

"carried her a long way," and she spoke of some of the tenets of her own faith: "be gentle

with yourself…and take care of each other" (p. 221). Carla's message was much the

same. Her teacher affirmed that the God of the Catholic Church was not as concerned

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about the doctrine of the Catholic faith or Carla's allegiance to the Church but rather was more concerned that she would be the best individual "Carla" she could be. Thus, Carla continued to identify with the Catholic faith and embraced her spirituality.

One young alumna, Charlene, went even further, labeling the religion classes at St. Marian's as "New Age Search for your Soul" classes. The conversation I had with her is instructive about student perception of religion at St. Marian's.

> We were just sort of fluffy with religion…Fluffy like we didn't take it seriously. I found that I've had to study Christianity more on my own. I've learned so much more after leaving St. Marian's than I did while I was taking four years of religion classes there about what it really means to be a Catholic. (YA Interview #1, p. 3)

When asked if she regretted the fact that she missed the doctrine piece while at St. Marian's, she replied, "I think it led to a lot of misunderstanding with the students about what religion is at the school" and cited as an example "the understanding of Jesus' purpose in the Bible." She said, "I don't think the students got a clear understanding of who Jesus is…I don't think people even thought about Jesus in high school. They were thinking about—I heard this great quote from a girl in my class. The religion classes were teaching us how to 'find ourselves'" (YA Interview #1, p. 3). Charlene went on to say, "I think it was valuable for a lot of people. I don't think that the school should have labeled it religion classes though if they were just 'New Age Search for your Soul' classes" (YA Interview #1, p. 3). I told her that other students described this as "spirituality," and I asked if she agreed with that interpretation. She replied, "I agree with that. Spirituality is more personal. Religion is more universal. What I'm talking about when I speak of

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religion is a more systematic universal understanding. And spirituality is more personal and subjective" (YA Interview #1, p. 3).

The distinction between spirituality and religion is one that many St. Marian's students make. Yet, despite what appears to be a disagreement about how the religion classes were conducted at St. Marian's, Charlene does go on to say that when she was in high school, spirituality was all she needed. So though the data she provided is a good example of student perception of religion at St. Marian's, Charlene is not a student who agitated for a different course of action. She felt that her needs were met, and she admits benefit from classes that helped her "find herself," though they did not focus specifically on the doctrine of the Church.

One of the most enlightening conversations that I had at St. Marian's was with the senior religion teacher in charge of Campus Ministry, Mrs. Ross. I realized that her influence on the school was significant when I heard students repeating her philosophy and admitting that they followed her advice. She believes that students rejection of doctrine results from a lack of valuing the Church. She explained this to me:

> They don't feel the need for prayer. They have their own way of praying—they
>
> will tell you that. They don't have a need for Church—for liturgy, for the
>
> transcendence in religion, you know, the mystery. And so they're happy to be
>
> agnostic a lot of the time which is fine. Doubt is hunger, so it's just a good sign.
>
> (FS Interview #4, p. 13)

Mrs. Ross understands that teenagers question. She is comfortable with their doubt. Jan, a current student addresses this:

The difference between St. Marian's and my grammar school is that my grammar

school was very, "This is what God is." That's just how it is, and then St.

Marian's is very into the questioning type of you can question your faith. It's ok

to ask God questions and it's ok not to be sure. (CS Interview #4, p. 3)

Thus, students are able to question, have doubt, and resist the doctrine of a religious

church and still be embraced by the Catholic community at St. Marian's. I asked Mrs.

Ross, "are there any things that students resist at St. Marian's?" and she replied:

Faith. Church—but the question is, you know, 'I'm not religious, I'm spiritual.'

That's just not—I always want to say 'I wish you could be more original!'

Because they are all saying that they don't want to be religious; they want to be

spiritual…religious means church and not being confined and not being able to

think the way they want to think. And it's, of course, not that. So you try to give

them a chance to see that that's not the case. (FS Interview #4, p. 10)

Clearly so many students identify themselves as spiritual and reject the title of "religious"

that Mrs. Ross mocks their unoriginality. In addition, she indicates that she and perhaps

others are trying to help students understand that the Church is not the unbending

institution that students perceive.

Mrs. Ross believes that much of the reason that students reject the Church is

because of the way that they define it.

When you ask them, "what are the central basic beliefs of the Catholic faith?"

they end up turning to the issues. You know, ordination of women, abortion,

contraception. Those are—that's how they define the Church, instead of by the

presence of faith and the sacraments. So that has to be taught or re-taught because

they don't define the Church in that way. (FS Interview #4, p. 10)

According to Mrs. Ross, students' disagreements with the issues that the Church

champions cause them to reject the Catholic religion, though not the spirituality they find

in the faith. In addition, Mr. Carter, the assistant principal for Student Life, spoke to me

about the young women and the student body election process. He said, "if candidates

bring up faith [in their election speeches] they think they won't win" (Field Notes #2, p.

7). Religion and faith are not popular topics of conversation, and students fear an open

alliance to them may create negative consequences for them.

"To Serve is Better than to Sit"

After I spoke with Mrs. Ross I observed a senior religion class taught by her that

focused on a central question: "Should we go to church?" Mrs. Ross showed the students

a painting entitled "Rest from the Flight to Egypt," which showed the Virgin Mary and

the Baby Jesus asleep in the arms of the Sphinx while Joseph watched nearby. The

teacher indicated that this is how she sees the Church, as some place comforting and safe

in a dangerous world. She spoke of author Anne Lamott's description of church "the love

of people at church for her—the safety there" (Field notes #8, p. 4). Another student

earlier in my observation also spoke of church in this way. Angela confessed to me that

she had a problem with going to church at her parish, but that she believed what St.

Marian's was trying to do was totally separate—totally different. When I asked her what

she thought about liturgies at St. Marian's, she replied, "They (St. Marian's) don't make

you go to church, but it's—I could have a St. Marian's liturgy every day and be totally

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fine. Those are my favorites" (CS Interview #3, p. 3). I followed up by asking what was different about St. Marian's liturgies. She replied:

> I think it was from a different voice, like having someone else come and say the Mass and it's not about the priest, they're preaching to you and trying to understand us. Almost every time a priest comes he will say "I've been walking around trying to get to know the school better," and that's important because I think it builds on our community. I believe that our community is so much stronger than I am with my parish community so I think when you have a Mass setting in such a strong community it is impossible not to be inspired. (CS Interview #3, p. 3)

Angela has taken up the description espoused by Mrs. Ross. Church is community. And at St. Marian's, we now know that community is nurturing; community enfolds. Thus, church as a representative of community may be one way that students at St. Marian's are able to access and accept an institution that seems irrelevant to them. Emily, a non-practicing Catholic, who defines her upbringing as "spiritual," speaks to the community of church as well:

> Over four years I have come to my own meaning for religion and spirituality. But I don't feel like the Catholic aspect of St. Marian's has been overpowering or overwhelming, and I really appreciate how St. Marian's has allowed people like myself to interpret religion in our own way. I think the Masses are valuable in their own right, as far as even just the practice of sitting still and doing something as a collective body. (CS Interview # 5, p. 5)

Emily is grateful for the liberating atmosphere at St. Marian's, which allows for personal interpretation of religiosity, and further, she sees Mass, not as a religious or spiritual experience, but as a communal experience where students may experience their part in the "collective body."

After Mrs. Ross discussed the painting of the "Flight into Egypt" in her senior religion class, she then began a discussion about the Church, where students did exactly what she had earlier predicted. They spoke of the Catholic Church in terms of the priest molestation scandal and the uninspiring and irrelevant services and homilies. One student expressed that, "You don't need to go to a special place to get in contact with your God" (Field notes #8, p. 6). Mrs. Ross also earlier spoke of the students' lack of support for the building of a new expensive Catholic church in the area. She said that students are letting go of the traditional church-going Catholic culture and the Catholic liturgy, in part because students say that, "to serve is better than to sit" (FS Interview #4, p. 17). This became a refrain for her students when she discussed with them about why one should attend Mass. This is again similar to Bellah et al.'s (1996) Sheila who believed that being kind to others, rather than attendance at the Church's ritual, was one of the most important aspects of religion. Certainly the Church does hold as its priority a devotion to the poor and marginalized. And so, it is easier for students to argue that a dedication to social justice over an allegiance to attendance at Mass is an appropriate stance for a person of Catholic faith.

Prayer and Doctrine

Prayer was another practice I observed that I felt revealed the students' sense of the spiritual. I witnessed an example of this in the student's practice of morning prayer. Earlier I wrote of Emily's prayer about leadership. Her morning prayer was a reflection on her term as a leader at St. Marian's and her sadness at her departure upon graduation. After four paragraphs of reflection she ended with, "Let us love and appreciate one another, and let us especially remember those who suffer in our world, not only with our words, but with our actions. Have a glorious day" (Document Log, # 28).

In Emily's prayer, though there may be an echo of John's gospel in her words "let us love," and she does ask to "remember" those in need, the prayer avoids invocation of the name of God or Jesus. Other students during my field observation followed a similar pattern. One week when I was on campus, morning prayer was dedicated to women leaders. Each student had written and read a page-long biography of a woman leader: Oprah, Shirley Temple, Mother Teresa and Susan B. Anthony. Students ended these prayers with a two sentences that had been scripted for them by an administrative member. The ending piece for each of these days read as follows:

> Let us pray. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Dear Lord, thank you for the female role models in my life. Help me to be an inspirational role model for others. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Document Log, # 21)

The ending prayer had in one case been hand written on the typed and carefully prepared female biography as an afterthought. This was possibly further evidence of the attitude

that students have toward the more religious practice of prayer. I observed that sanctioned prayer at St. Marian's was practiced more as reflections on topics of self-development, rather than petitions or thanksgivings to the divine. This may be an attempt to make the prayer experience more relevant for the adolescent population; however, in an attempt to make prayer more accessible, God and Christianity have become less prominent elements. Thus, prayer becomes a meditation, albeit a spiritual one. In this way, students may engage more authentically in an exploration of spiritual issues. Recitation of rote Catholic prayers, as Catholic schools have done in the past, may be less likely to have an impact on students' spiritual awareness. During my field observation, I continued to look for examples of Catholic doctrine in practice, and I thought I had found a substantial piece of evidence in Sister Dominique's religion class.

A Class in Morality

Sr. Dominique is one of the few religious sisters still teaching at St. Marian's. As I initially reflected on my memory of the class, I wondered how it fit it in with the more spiritual and less doctrinal approach that students and faculty members had described. I remembered the class content as focusing on the Cardinal Virtues of the Catholic Church, principles considered part of the Church's doctrine. Doctrine is defined as "what the Church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches, and confesses on the basis of the word of God" (Pelikan, 1993 as cited in Collinge, 1997, p. 131). So, I initially remembered this class as a counterpoint to all the spirituality talk, and I expected it to include catechetical instruction focused on Church law and Biblical reference; however, when I reviewed my field notes, I was surprised at what I found.

Sr. Dominique did, in fact, introduce the Cardinal Virtue of Courage. Courage, equivalent to "fortitude," according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) is defined as follows:

> It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations, and to overcome obstacles in moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause. (p. 444)

Class discussion focused on how to be courageous, how to speak in class, how to stand up to one's parents, how to develop good self-esteem, and how to know if low self-esteem is affecting one's life. Students then turned to issues of anorexia, cutting, suicide, and depression, exploring how self-esteem plays a role in moral choices. Discussions about how to stand up for one's beliefs and how to avoid making self destructive decisions may be interpreted as "conquering fear" from the catechetical definition. And insofar as self-destructive behavior may be caused by "trials and persecutions," the discussion seemed to follow the spirit of the definition. However, the notion of courage did not include the justice orientation that requires a Catholic to sacrifice for a cause. The language used was generally more therapeutic in nature and self-help oriented, much like the private faith of Sheila Larson in Bellah et al. (1996).

The class ended with the teacher handing out a self-esteem chart entitled, "I'm OK—You're OK," with four quadrants that the students were to explore as they attempted to better understand their own courage. The sister's last words to her students were: "Name it. Claim it. Tame it. Courage is the ability to do good in the face of threat"

(Field notes #18, p. 10). This advice follows the definition of fortitude that requires

Catholics to make moral decisions in challenging situations, but it couches it in self-help

language that encourages students to think more about their own personal self-

development, rather than socially just causes.

Sr. Dominique has taken up the notion that teaching Church doctrine by attaching

it to students' personal lives is an efficacious way to engage student spirituality. She thus

uses doctrine as a launch pad to open conversation around issues of self-interest for

adolescents. She uses Church doctrine to teach students about the link between faith and

action in their own lives—a way, as Charlene had earlier suggested, to "find themselves."

Sr. Dominique's model of teaching morality has roots in doctrine and adheres to a moral

framework accepted by Catholics. However, her approach to instructing religious

doctrine harkens back to the Sheilaism from Bellah et al.'s (1996) research that is more of

a therapeutic approach, which may, as suggested in the earlier example, help "Carla be

the best Carla she can be."

Sisters of the Religious Order in the Catholic Female High School

The founding order of St. Marian's clearly shapes the community philosophy.

There are currently six religious sisters actively working at St. Marian's. All are teachers

and counselors with the exception of the President, Sr. Beatrice, the previous principal of

the school. She has relinquished daily oversight of the school, which has been delegated

to a lay person, and focuses her efforts externally on fundraising. As I explored the

culture of St. Marian's, I wondered how the sisters affected the student perception of

church, how their leadership impacted the young women, and how students perceived the sisters' relationship to the hierarchy of the Church.

Insofar as the sisters direct the charism of the school, the sisters influence the students on a daily basis. However, in terms of specific one on one influence, their influence has faded as the numbers of religious have diminished on the high school campus. Kristin, a current student spoke of her feeling about the nuns:

> I feel that the nuns, it's kind of harder to connect with them in a way, because it's just like a different generation and their way of living is different than us, but I think we still look up to these women and admire how strong they are and how they've gone through all these things in their lives and come out better people for it. (CS Interview #2, p. 6)

The nuns still provide a kind of role modeling for leadership because of their heritage, the obstacles they have overcome to be successful, and their continued commitment to St. Marian's. However, their ability to be mentors has diminished because their perceived "difference," as Kristin suggests, is too great for the students to overcome.

Students did praise the sisters for their strength, and considered them "amazing women running a school" (YA Interview #4, p. 1). It seems that admiration for the sisters, however, has little to do with their position in the Church or their spiritual life, but instead, it is focused more on their gender and their ability to overcome and press on despite the setbacks their order has experienced. Jennifer, a young alumna addresses this:

> I have always been impressed with the sisters. They are role models because they are strong women and have such great things to offer. They speak their minds and

they encourage us to speak our minds. I mean they're caring, kind people who are there for you if you need them and it was great to have them to look up to. It's like okay, here are some religious leaders that we definitely should look up to but not only in a religious sense, but also just as women. (YA Interview #5, p. 4)

Jennifer's admiration of the sisters is clearly focused on their role modeling as women leaders. Note that when she speaks of their religious role she uses the conditional word "should." I saw no evidence of students expressing admiration for the sisters specifically for their religious role. And neither the current students nor the young alumnae I interviewed ever considered becoming a nun.

When I asked the mature alumnae about the influence of the sisters on their school experience, their reaction was similar. Though none of the mature alumnae had any aspirations to be religious sisters, they did have great admiration for the sisters. One mature alumna, Noreen, attributed her career to a Sister Tricia who introduced her to the world of engineering by encouraging her to attend symposiums and classes at the nearby community college. Noreen tells people that, "St. Marian's changed my life" (MA Interview #1, p. 2). In her career, she has been involved in leadership opportunities that involved women, professional societies for women, and mentoring for women. She feels that, by the support of Sr. Tricia, St. Marian's opened up these activities to her, yet, like the current students, the religious aspect of the Sister's influence did not seem to be a factor for her.

The women religious at St. Marian's, and at other Catholic institutions, have been leaders in education and in ministry. Though their numbers have dwindled and their

presence has diminished, this tradition of leadership still echoes in the schools they inhabit. Alumnae feel this tradition more strongly than current students, but vestiges of it remain today. This may be more true at St. Marian's because the past principal is currently the president, and, though not an active part of the administration of the school, still continues to be a strong presence with an office on campus and appearances at most of the St. Marian admission events, liturgical ceremonies, fundraising endeavors, and student plays and concerts.

I wondered what message students were receiving about women religious leaders in light of the leadership presence of the religious order on campus and of the Catholic Church's message about women's place in the Church. How do they negotiate the Church's view of women—that women are lauded for their leadership, but that they are denied access to the hierarchical structures of power to which the priesthood grants access? And is there any resistance to the Church's stance?

Women Priests: The Faculty Perspective

I began first by talking to the women leaders at the school. The conversation with the president, Sr. Beatrice was revealing. I asked her how she felt about being a member of an institution [the Church] that says women cannot be in the ultimate position of authority because of their gender. This was her reply:

 It has not affected me because I have my own position here. But I understand what you are saying. I get very angry about it sometimes because—for instance, a week ago on the cover of *The Herald* was a man who is married and he was in the Episcopal Church. And so he came in [to the Catholic Church] with his wife and

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his children, and he can be a priest now. So I said to myself, "What does that do to women?" They'll take any male person, but they will not take people who are really qualified. I know Sisters, or lay people, who could absolutely be good priests if they wanted to be. (FS Interview #5, p. 4)

I then asked her, "Did you ever think that you might want to be a priest?" She said, "No, I never thought that. With the way the structure is right now, I would not want that at all" (FS Interview #5, p. 4). Sister Beatrice is angered by the fact that a married man is allowed to be a Catholic priest but women are denied that right. Her words, "they'll take any male person" suggests resentment about the gender preference that the Church enforces. Her suggestion that "it has not affected her" is followed by her declaration that "I have my position here." In other words, because she has found a position of leadership and ministry at St. Marian's, the denial of the priesthood doesn't matter to her as much. Would she feel differently if there were no alternative leadership positions in Church leadership? Her recognition that the Church ultimately does not welcome female leadership may be one of the reasons that she does not want to be a priest—the structure that is in place is such an unwelcoming one that it is something that she does "not want at all." Yet, when I pressed her about how she believes this may affect the young women, shades of the compliance that I had seen earlier crept in. I asked her, "Do you think it affects the students that women cannot be priests?" She replied:

I don't know…I imagine that some have strong feelings because it does not seem just. It does not seem right, and I don't think it is going to change in the near future. But personally it doesn't really affect me. (FS Interview #5, p. 5)

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I followed up by asking her how she was able to reconcile this, and she repeated that, "I don't do anything about it…because it doesn't affect me" (FS #5, p. 5). Here, Sr. Beatrice simply accepts the status quo because "it doesn't affect her," and she admits that she does not advocate for change in this area, though she sees the status quo as unjust. This was to be a pattern that would repeat itself in almost every other student and faculty member with whom I spoke about this issue.

Both top women administrators, Mrs. Simon and Mrs. Gates said to me that they did not believe that the Church's position on women's ordination would change any time soon, but that they believed that this was something they had to accept. When I asked Mrs. Simon how she believed the Church's view of women affected the girls, she replied:

> We're [Catholic women] still dedicated to this [leadership in Catholic schools], and yet women don't have leadership roles in the Church. There must be something in my heart of hearts that says that is going to change someday if the Church is going to survive" (FS Interview #1, p. 12).

There is a resignation in the reaction of Mrs. Simon. She wonders perhaps why she continues to be strongly committed to an institution that does not allow her gender leadership roles, yet she hopes for change. However, her position is not an active one, there is no advocacy for this position in either her response or that of Sr. Beatrice. When I asked Mrs. Gates, another administrator, how she felt about the fact that women cannot be priests, she replied, "I'm okay. But I think that's because that's how I was brought up, and that's just ingrained in me" (FS Interview #2, p. 6). Mrs. Gates admits that her attitudes are a result of her previous experience. She accepts the status quo because that's

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what it was like when she was growing up. This aspect of social reproduction is an interesting element to consider when analyzing the practices at a Catholic female single-sex high school. Though attitudes about women have improved since Mrs. Gates was in school, the attitude of the Church toward this issue has not. Mrs. Gates reproduces both the traditional beliefs of the Church and the regressive attitudes about women's leadership roles from her youth because she feels a comfort with what she was taught.

Mrs. Ross, the Campus Minister, was actually a former nun who said she had "always wanted to be a priest."

> I'm not angry that I'm not a priest because I just knew that God had a plan for me—and that I ended up having my congregation right here. So what I felt called to really happened. So I don't have anger with the Church as far as roles for women. I think they're there. They just have to find them and figure it out…I'm not one who feels that the Church is limiting. I think it's just better them being creative and figuring out what their greatest joy is and how it could fill hunger in some way. (FS Interview #4, p. 6)

Mrs. Ross sees herself in a priest-like function when she says that "she has her congregation right here." She denies having anger because she trusted God's plan and believes that her role as a woman in the Church is one that she "found." She does not feel that women are limited in the Catholic Church but rather that they are asked to be creative to find their place. She does not consider, however, that young men do not necessarily need to be "creative" to find a leadership role in the Church. She asks that young women look harder and be more creative in order to find their place. Mrs. Ross

does not believe that female students feel disenfranchised because, "they don't know what they don't have." In addition, when I asked her if the students react negatively to the Church's position denying women access to the priesthood she responded, "I think here we do such a good job of teaching them how to figure out who they are and what they can do, that I don't know they would ever come to me with that concern" (FS Interview #4, p. 6).

Several things are revealed in Mrs. Ross's words. First, though young women may not feel disenfranchised, to some extent, they are. Second, the fact that Mrs. Ross believes that student disinterest in the priesthood is the result of not knowing "what they don't have" may suggest a kind of resignation or apathy on the part of the young women. According to Mrs. Ross, students do not feel an ownership or investment in the Catholic culture that "we grew up with." Last, Mrs. Ross's assumption that students' needs for personal growth and self-discovery are being met actually corroborates St. Marian's spiritual life instruction that so many students alluded to. However, if students are "figuring out who they are" without being allowed the entire spectrum of options (i.e. leadership in the Church), will the choices they make be authentic ones?

The adults at St. Marian's have clearly negotiated a way to co-exist as members of the Catholic Church and women leaders in an institution whose views on women do not promote full rights and responsibilities equal to men. Whether the faculty members were angry, were resigned, or were able to rationalize their position, there was a clear acknowledgement that the disparity of power existed. But there was no advocacy to

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change the status quo, other than a willingness to wait for change and a recommendation that being creative will allow women to find their place of leadership in the Church.

Interestingly, the Catholic Church does not see the issue of women in the priesthood as a matter of rights. For the Church, it is a matter of vocation; that is, the priesthood is a vocation that men are called to but not a vocation to which women can be called. However, one might argue that the question of whether a person has a vocation or not is a subjective matter. The Church may say that women cannot be called to the priesthood, but does the Church have the right to say this? Can the Church know what women can and cannot be called to? Clearly, there is evidence at St. Marian's that some women did feel that vocation, and for the Church to deny that this is possible does seem a violation of rights.

Women Priests: The Student Perspective

Several students, both current and recent alumnae, knew very well the story of Mrs. Ross's unfulfilled desire to be a priest. One recent alumna reported that "while I was there you do hear about students and teachers who wish they could be nuns or priests" (YA Interview #1, p. 3). This was somewhat contrary to what I heard during my fieldwork because, with the exception of Mrs. Ross, I did not hear of anyone who wanted to be a priest or a nun, but I did hear many of the young women's opinions on this issue.

For most of my student interviews I asked a direct question: What do you think of women's position in the Catholic Church? Some of them had thought about it more than others. Most of the students responded by saying that they thought the role of women in the Church was "pretty okay." Julia, a current alumna spoke to this issue:

I've never really been bothered by the male being in the Church because I've

never wanted to pursue a religious life, so it's never been like, 'it's unfair, I want

to be a priest too.' It was discussed sometimes. I don't think we talked about it in

class. I've always been okay with it. The only thing I ever wonder is if priests are

going to be allowed to get married, but not if women can be priests. (YA

Interview #2, p. 5)

Kristin, a current student echoes Julia's sentiments.

I personally don't have a problem with that [male priesthood]. I feel that that's the

tradition of the Church and I feel that they have done a marvelous job that way;

however, I do feel that women should be able to be deacons because I think that

Mrs. Ross would be great at that…but since I know the Catholic Church is

declining and the amount of priests and deacons entering, I feel there could be a

need for more female involvement in the Church instead of solely the nuns who

don't get a chance to express to the community other than in teaching. (CS

Interview #2, p. 4)

The first student, Julia, takes up the refrain of several of the faculty members, "because I

did not want to be a priest, it doesn't affect me." The second student, Kristin, believes

that tradition is a valid reason for the exclusion of women to the priesthood. However,

Kristin does believe that women should be more involved in the leadership of the Church,

citing the decline of male vocations as her rationale. Further, she believes that the role of

women religious has been narrow and constricting, allowing them few opportunities to

lead. Both of these young women are unwilling to contest the male gender dominance in

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the Catholic Church. They accept it and only consider the issue of women as clergy as a practical matter because vocations are declining, not for any equity or justice rationale. And even when Kristin does assent to the notion of women in leadership, she suggests that they become "deacons" and not "priests," still revealing her belief that women can be leaders—to a point—but should not equal the position of men.

Another current student, Jan, believes that the positions women are offered in Church leadership, such as religious vocations, are sufficient from an equity perspective.

> I'm very wishy washy on that issue [women as priests] because I feel like there is a point where women need to have the same rights and the same livelihood as men. But at the same time, we are offered things if we want to be religious. Like we're offered to be a nun or just lead a religious life…I don't feel like I have much to say on it because it doesn't affect me. (CS Interview #4, p. 5)

Note that Jan also distances herself from the controversy by saying that "it doesn't affect me" as did several of the respondents previously.

Emily, who is not a practicing Catholic, had a much stronger negative reaction to the Church's views on women:

> I've always taken issue with the fact that women are not priests and a priest is the highest level. I guess you could say that I'm a feminist…I have a little less respect for institutions, not just the Catholic Church, but any institution that prevents women from being equal to men, even if it has been so for thousands of years. (CS Interview #5, p. 6)

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Only Emily, the non-practicing Catholic, chose to actively call into question the tradition of male dominance in the Church. She rejected tradition as a credible reason for female exclusion, and she was the one current student who admitted, though with some uncertainty, to being a feminist without qualifying her affiliation. This may reveal that students indoctrinated in the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church are less able to see and feel the gender inequity inherent in the institution of the Church. But let us take this one step further. Whether students agree with it or not, does the male dominated hierarchy of the Church affect their daily practice or their perspective on leadership and service at St. Marian's?

The Priesthood and Practice

My initial assumption when I created the framework for Catholic female single-sex high schools was that the hierarchy, the element related to social structure on the vertical axis, would have a significant affect on the daily life of the students at St. Marian's. Surely, I reasoned, if female students were instructed in an institution whose religious beliefs systemically excluded their access to full participation in leadership and service positions, the young women would chafe under the oppression. I was wrong.

There are several reasons for my erroneous conjecture. First, the young women at St. Marian's did not agree with my principle assertion—that women deserve equal access in the Catholic Church. As the evidence has just shown, the majority of students either did not care or they agreed that women should take on subordinate positions of leadership in the Catholic Church. The influence of the administrators' philosophy at the school, which paralleled the student philosophy; the practices that formed because of the

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ingrained Catholic doctrine that students and adults learned as children; and a reluctance to speak out against the Church to a stranger may be some of the factors that affected student attitude in this area. Second, I was surprised that students had not given much thought to the issue of women in the Church. They were aware it was a controversial topic, particularly because this was a Catholic school, but its existence had no measurable effect on their daily practice. Liz explained one reason why she believed this to be true:

> I think actually most students don't reflect that much about it here, I guess
>
> because St. Marian's is an environment where you can be leaders, and where they
>
> enforce you to gain strength and kind of take your own mantle. (CS Interview #9,
>
> p. 4)

Liz argues that because St. Marian's offers many opportunities to be leaders, in both secular and religious arenas, students do not feel the oppression of the institutional dictates of the Church, and they do not experience the inequity in their daily lives. Lastly, she asserts that student sentiment about the Church's exclusion of women is not felt as acutely at St. Marian's because the culture and curriculum of the school does not focus on the doctrine of the Church, but rather encourages a personal spirituality, as the data has previously revealed. Charlene, an alumna, actually led me to this insight:

> I think there's women who want to be in the leadership position in the Church but
>
> can't, and that's really unfortunate. And so we're all just trying to find our own
>
> way, and I think that's why we turn to the spirituality. (YA Interview #1, p. 4)

Charlene's assertion is that the spirituality approach taken up by faculty members and students at St. Marian's is a result of feeling disenfranchised from the institution of the

Catholic Church. Spirituality is not religion. Religion requires a priest to guide the believer through liturgy and ritual. Spirituality, with its more personal and subjective interpretation, may not require an outside guide. As Charlene stated, "You don't need a priest in your own spiritual world." Bellah et al.'s (1996) Sheila would agree. Thus, the movement away from the doctrine of the faith, in particular the apathy about women's position in the Church, may be an unconscious effort of the females at St. Marian's to negotiate the difficult terrain between desiring to be full partners in the leadership of the Church and the Church's doctrine that ultimately excludes them.

Mass and the Practice of Compliance

During my field observation at St. Marian's, I was able to witness and participate in the annual Mother/Daughter Catholic Mass. The presider, a Catholic priest, was a prominent leader in the community well known to many of the students. The first reading was from the book of Proverbs and spoke of women in superlative terms, "far beyond the price of pearls." The second reading was from St. Paul's letters to the Roman where Paul invoked the God of "steadfastness and courage." And the Gospel told the story of Jesus as a young man in the Temple, where Mary finds him and expresses to him her great anxiety at his absence. The presider, Father Noonan, began the homily by asking the students to share with him adjectives that describe the mothers that were spoken of in the readings. Students began by sharing these adjectives: "admirable, loving compassionate, self-less, understanding, cute, patient, inspiring, amazing, strong, accepting, and creative" (Field notes #13, p. 1). Father Noonan then asked students a rhetorical question: "How can anyone do all this?" Students then continued to describe the women in the readings

using these adjectives: "devoted, courageous, responsible, concerned, dependable, phenomenal, relentless, honest, forgiving, kind, and trustworthy" (Field notes #13, p. 1).

In terms of method, the presider's homily reproduced the classroom setting in the Church. It began with teacher (presider) initiated questions, followed by student response with a follow up evaluation by the presider. Using the initiation, response, evaluation (IRE) method (Mehan, 1979), Father Noonan was able to have the young women know their place, putting them into a student mode as they listened for his cues about when to speak and when to keep silent. However, the nature of the Mass is much the same—where congregants know their place and speak aloud only in turn.

In terms of content, Father Noonan's homily centered on the images of women of God. He spoke of Mary as a virtuous woman whose virtues were being passed on to the students through the modeling of the sisters and the women faculty members at St. Marian's. He closed by saying that Mary's virtues are "helping you to be strong courageous women of the world and helping you to live out your relationship with Christ" (Field notes #13, p. 2).

I observed that the young women were extraordinarily well behaved, quiet, attentive, and essentially undistracted during an hour long ceremony where they were actively involved in a very minimal way, corroborating my earlier analysis about the compliant environment at St. Marian's. Their responses to the presider's questions about women in the readings were also revealing. They described the women of the Old Testament, and Mary in the New Testament, using terms that primarily alluded to the

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nurturing aspect of being a woman—self-less, compassionate, concerned, forgiving, and kind—though they did also use words such as courageous and strong.

While Mary in the Gospel may have been all of the things they described, I believe her words also suggest that she was angry and not a little resentful that Jesus had been insensitive to their worry. Mary says, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." Having once briefly lost track of a child myself, I know that Mary was at this moment not feeling forgiving, kind, patient, or understanding, but the students mentioned none of these things. Instead, they painted the picture of an ideal woman who, though strong, is essentially compliant in her approach toward life. Part of their responses may have been influenced by their desire to please Father Noonan, an attempt to give him answers they felt he desired. And part of their response may have been the conditioning that asks them to view their womanhood in nurturing, self-less terms, following the prime example of women as taught to them through the Catholic lens.

I later thought that it would be a good idea to ask the students how they viewed the homily of the presider. Of the four girls I asked specifically, one of them had little remembrance of it, another discounted his homily because she associated the priesthood with scandal and said that she could have no respect for Catholic clergy, and the other two characterized it as "patronizing." Laura describes her reaction:

I wasn't too fond of his opening part where he was asking questions and asking for adjectives, I just thought it kind of belittled us and that's something that you

do with more of second graders and I felt we were a little more advanced than

that. (CS Interview #8, p. 4)

Another student, Angela, offered a similar perspective. I asked her what she thought of

the presider's talk, and she replied, "I thought it –kind of patronized us a little—kind of

acted like we were young…but I know people were very excited to have him come" (CS

Interview #3, p. 4).

Both students attributed his perceived patronization of them to ageism, and they

did not consider that gender could be part of the equation. The motivation of the priest is

not relevant here; in any case, it cannot be known. It is the reaction of the young women

that is so revealing. Their assumption, that their gender is a neutral variable, suggests

again that their gender lens is very weak, much weaker than their age lens in this

particular case. They are not prepared to think about the ways in which women as a

gender may be treated as less capable and less mature. Further, though these students

were bothered by the perceived attitude of the priest, they had developed a practice of

compliance that did not encourage talking back or in any way seek to redress the

unsatisfactory way they felt they were treated.

On the one hand, this Catholic female single-sex environment "takes women very

seriously" as Tidball et al. (1999) suggest, gearing programs, classes, and extracurriculars

specifically for young women. On the other hand, it is small moments like this that

suggest that the students are not prepared to take themselves very seriously as women

advocates. Their practice does not include a sensitization to the injustices committed

against their gender. They seem unaware of the obstacles that they may face and the discrimination that they may encounter.

I concluded Angela's interview by asking, "Do you think the fact that women can't be priests affects students at St. Marian's?" She replied, "I know that it does bother me…but I don't think people are sitting in our liturgy the whole time saying 'Oh that should be a woman.' I think they are embracing it" (CS Interview #8, p. 4). This is perhaps the best summary of the controversy regarding women and the priesthood that I heard. While the male dominated hierarchy of the Catholic Church "bothers" students, they accept it. They do not actively question the authority of the Church, but rather "embrace it" in practice. They may perhaps wish for change, but in their daily lives they do not give it much, if any, thought at all. Thus, while the male dominated leadership of the Church does not intrude on students' daily lives, it may be instead the Catholic Church's attitude toward women that has a significant influence on shaping student perspective about women's role in leadership and service. The fourth prong of the theoretical framework, social practice, may reveal what other influences are at play that shape student perspective and participation in leadership and service.

Prong Four: Social Practice—Social Reproduction and Shared Resources

Theories of practice (Wenger, 1998) address specific ways of engaging with the world. It is here that social learning theory focuses on production and reproduction of practices in real life settings, bringing to the fore the social systems that individuals participate in and the way they make meaning from a mutual sharing of relationships, resources, activities, and interpretations of the world (see Figure 12).

Social Structure

Doctrine
Hierarchy

Prong 4: Social Practice

**Social
Reproduction
Shared Resources**

Catholic
Female
Single-Sex
High
School

Identity

Gender
Catholicity

Conversation
Activity

Situated Experience
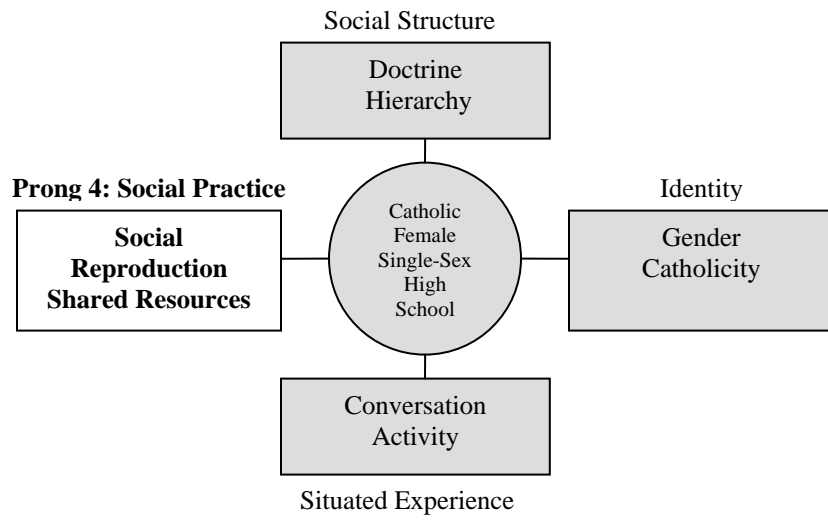
Figure 12. Theoretical Framework for the Catholic Female Single-Sex High School:
Social Practice

Social practices are, of course, an integral part of the social structure of the

institution, addressed in prong three, and are made manifest in the situated experience

and the identity of the student, from prongs one and two. The interrelatedness of each

element continues to inform the students' perspective and participation in leadership and

service.

Social Reproduction

A consideration of social reproduction is particularly important in a Catholic

female single-sex school, especially in light of feminist reproduction theorists (Arnot,

2002; Deem, 1978; Wolpe, 1978) who assert that the education system reproduces gender

divisions in the society as a whole, and that schools work ideologically to prepare girls to

accept their role as low paid or unpaid workers in society (Weiler, 2001). In contrast,

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however, are findings from researchers in female single-sex high schools who assert that the single gender environment empowers young women to reject subordinate status and lesser educational and occupational aspirations (Bryk et al., 1993; Streitmatter, 1998; Watson et al., 2002). In my observation at St. Marian's, I did see young women being empowered, but I also witnessed the effects of social reproduction, particularly in relationship to leadership and service.

Women's Roles

Much of what I have already discussed is relevant here, and for that reason I will briefly review the findings. The young women at St. Marian's, while being told that they can do anything and being offered many leadership and service opportunities, do receive unspoken messages about what women should do and be in society. Several young women that I talked to spoke of their desire to have a career, be married, and have children. One current student said she would want to stay home with the children "but not forever" (Field notes #2, p. 8). Of the five mature alumnae that I interviewed, one did not work outside the home, three were teachers, and one was an engineer. All, but one, were married, and all married women had children. The mature alumnae, with the exception of the engineer, had followed the traditional role of women as nurturers and helpmates. The engineer, as I wrote earlier, believes that St. Marian's changed her life and allowed her opportunities that she would not have received in a different environment.

Several students spoke of a teacher, Mrs. Logan, who was no longer at the school but who expressed strong feminist views in her classroom, in her curriculum choices, and in her conversations with students. Some students responded well to this. Julia, a young

alumna, remembered the teacher's last words to her: "I taught you English but what's more important to me is that you learned who you are as a woman" (YA Interview #2, p. 4). Julia said that she "loved this" and benefited from her lessons. However, other students and young alumnae did not respond as favorably, saying that Mrs. Logan "went too far" and was too radical in her feminist views.

One young alumna, Mary, shared her perception of the climate regarding the learned expectations of womanhood at St. Marian's:

> At graduation there was a prayer that was talking about your marriage to God and religion, and it was really disarming because I just remember listening and being like "What? It sounds like we're getting married to God, and that's our role, and that's what you're supposed to do. I'm sure it's holdover from the 60s that they just haven't changed…I remember when I said in class that I didn't want to have kids everyone kind of turned to me and asked me if I hated babies and if I liked puppies or if I was gay. (YA Interview #3, p. 5)

I then asked her if she thought that all women at St. Marian's were expected to embrace a maternal role, and she responded:

> Yes. I think that they encourage the idea of having them [children] and being a super-mom, and holding a great job and also being a mother. But I think there's definitely an expectation that everyone's straight, and everyone was going to have kids and wanted lots of babies. (YA #3, p. 5)

Part of the message females receive at St. Marian's—and in the larger society— encourages them to be and do whatever they dream, and the other part of the message

asks them to conform to the expectation of society that still subordinates women and relegates them to roles of service and leadership in professions that are traditionally female.

Catholic, Female, and Gay

Mary's perception of attitudes about homosexuality at St. Marian's also reveals a mixed message. At St. Marian's, women are told that they are "free to be themselves," and yet, according to Mary, students may get the message that being gay is not acceptable. The Church's position on homosexuality makes a distinction between homosexuality as an orientation and homosexual sexual acts. "While condemning homosexual acts, the Church affirms the dignity of homosexuals as persons and condemns discrimination and violence against them" (Collinge, 1997, p. 191). This is an argument too complicated to address within the scope of this paper, but it must be noted because it too sends a mixed message to gay young women who are searching for acceptance in a Catholic community. The Church neither condones homosexual acts nor fully embraces women in its leadership ranks, thus, a young gay Catholic woman may feel doubly marginalized in a Catholic high school. Of the 26 people that I interviewed, only Mary addressed the issue of homosexuality at St. Marian's. This may again be a case of listening for what *is* not said, in addition to analyzing what is said. Mary shared a story about a gay friend from St. Marian's:

> One of my friends [from St. Marian's] is gay. At the time she was questioning, but she kind of embraced the position of being a rebel, and they [the administration] just didn't deal with it because the Catholic Church position is so

weird—the idea that it's okay but you can't follow through. So I think she just

had to embrace the idea that she was different…she just had to meet that role, like

being the weird one. Because it would never be like "Oh she's having a normal

lesbian relationship." It was like, "Oh, she's the lesbian one." (YA Interview #3,

p. 6)

The practices that Mary witnessed made her believe that gay students at St. Marian's

were labeled and unable to be considered "normal," and she attributed some of this

attitude to the position of the Catholic Church on homosexuality. The gay student on a

Catholic high school campus is an under-researched phenomenon and requires further

study, but for the purposes of this dissertation it is important to note that the practices at

Catholic schools may reproduce the social stigma found outside the school, despite

administrative assertions that "the girls don't have to feel that they have to be anything

other than themselves" (Document Log # 69).

Social Systems of Shared Resources

The many resources and activities available to St. Marian's students are rich

evidence for an analysis of social practice. Is curriculum content or the events of the daily

schedule influenced by social practices that elevate a patriarchal view of the world? Or,

do they support a worldview that advocates equal portions of equity and access for both

men and women?

I observed, and students and faculty members believed, that what was taught and

offered in the classroom definitely catered to empowering young women. Students cited

the choice of novels in English classes, the topics of discussion in religion classes, and

the feminist views of certain history teachers all as evidence that the curriculum content was tailored toward educating and engaging women. However, neither students nor faculty were able to identify any pedagogical practices that were specifically constructed for young women. One mature alumna who is a current employee did, however, rationalize this:

> I never had the sense that the curriculum was gender specific. I just had the sense that the learning that goes on in the classroom, the teachers without even knowing it, are teaching the way girls learn because that's their whole audience, girls…The learning environment just because it's all girls, people have no choice but to teach how the girls are going to learn. Even if you don't have any education training, you're going to do what works for your audience, and I think teachers by design or instinctively come to that. (MA Interview #4, p. 5)

Here, Mrs. Thompson describes teaching by default—whatever works is what teachers will use. She does not attribute any conscious attempt to use techniques effective for young women.

In the classrooms, I witnessed student projects that were women focused, but they did not always advocate for a changed perspective about women's positions in society. One PowerPoint presentation was entitled, "Are Women Happy Under the Glass Ceiling?" The conclusion the students came to was "Yes." Though the students cited many statistics that showed women earning less and achieving fewer advanced degrees, they concluded:

Although the glass ceiling is indeed present, the majority of women are content

with their professional degrees and the level of business they have achieved.

Many women choose a life outside the workplace in order to have a more

fulfilling life. (Document Log, # 11)

Other English projects that asked students to research literary time periods were heavily

focused on women's issues, and they made students aware of the historical injustices

suffered by women.

A history class asked students to complete a worksheet about icons of the

twentieth century. Students had to fill in the blanks of 15 biographies of people who had

made significant contributions to modern world history. The sheet contained biographies

of ten men and five women (Document Log, # 46). Though a small detail, this is the kind

of data that delving into the situated experience allows. In this classroom, despite the

teacher's beliefs that she was an advocate of women's empowerment, the exercise that

she provided sent the message that women were important cultural icons at only half the

rate that men were. Her expressed enthusiasm at my dissertation topic and her excitement

about empowering her students did not manifest itself in gender equitable instructional

tools. Bevan (2007) explains these phenomena in her discussion of *surface equity* in the

classroom. In her research, she found that teachers who identified as feminists, and who

believed that their classrooms were gender equitable, in fact behaved in ways contrary to

their personal philosophies.

The daily schedule allowed for weekly activities that were primarily developed

for building community: pep rallies, class ceremonies, and liturgies. According to the

students, these types of activities are more spirited, more engaging, and more emotional because they include only women. Daily prayers were woman focused, inspiring the students to take on challenges as other famous women have done. In addition, the library had significant feminist related holdings, approximately 87 books with titles that suggested a feminist stance or a feminist approach to analysis, whether in history, religion, or literature.

In summary, I found that the campus climate, on the whole, did reflect a woman-centered learning environment. Though not everything was consciously crafted to raise the consciousness of the young women or address a gendered culture, at the core of each activity there was recognition that the population of St. Marian's was uniquely female, and the resources and curriculum were developed with this in mind. However, the secondary question—is St. Marian's reproducing society's patriarchal structure or is it teaching a method of resistance?—was less clear. Though students are having their consciousness raised, many of the practices—the continued male dominance of the Catholic Church in the 21st century, the expectation that women will marry and have children, the avoidance of talk about resistance to patriarchy, the acceptance of living under the glass ceiling—all of these suggest a climate that, similar to other school institutions, may reproduce a culture that discourages resistance against these things. In this environment, students may not receive the *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1977) to understand the male gendered business climate, and thus they may not be able to "crack the code" of the dominant culture and create a level playing field for themselves once they leave the Catholic female single-sex high school. Previous to my research, I had

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assumed that because the environment was female centered, the females in that

environment would be advocates for dismantling the patriarchy that has long oppressed

their gender. But, as discussed earlier, it is the critical lens that is not in place here.

Students are not encouraged to question assumptions or unmask inequities that may be

residing below the surface, and thus, though they may be individually empowered, they

do not know how to be advocates for their gender.

Mutual Relationships

Another aspect of practice is the emphasis on mutual relationships, the fiber of a

community. Early in this chapter, I discussed in-depth the importance of the St. Marian's

community to all constituencies. Students feel the support of the mutual relationships

with their peers and do, in fact, understand that they learn and take their identity from one

another. I will not repeat that discussion here. There are, however, two other significant

subsets of mutual relationships that are important to note.

Student/Teacher Relationships

The student/teacher relationship at St. Marian's seems to be unusual in two

respects. First, teachers are extremely nurturing and supportive in practice. Almost every

student I interviewed spoke with great feeling about how important the faculty members

were to student growth and development. One student called several of her teachers

"goddesses," another cried when she spoke of graduating and parting with the faculty.

> Some of my closest friends here are the teachers…I feel like I want to succeed
>
> because I want to make them proud. I want to show them that I care about them. I
>
> came to school the day that the seniors had off, and I just loved being with the

teachers…The skeleton of St. Marian's could change, but the heart of St.

Marian's is the teachers. It's what I live for sometimes. (CS Interview #5, p. 12)

And an alumna is quoted in the St. Marian's admission brochure echoing the previous

sentiment:

At St. Marian's I have always felt academically challenged while still feeling

nurtured by my teachers. They care about my academic growth, but more

importantly they care for the growth and integrity of my character. Knowing that I

am receiving 110% percent from them makes me strive to give them the same in

return. (Document Log, # 69)

Each of the students, both current and young alumnae, spoke very favorably about the

teachers, and each student focused on the reciprocity of the relationship; students felt

respected, challenged, and nurtured by the faculty. Students are clear that they are being

nurtured and the philosophy of the school's founder corroborates this. This philosophy of

care permeates the school. Students feel protected by the teachers, and care becomes an a

priori mission for every instructor. Noddings' (1984) philosophy is at work here.

The second interesting area in the mutual relationship that students share with the

faculty is the role modeling that students experience on a daily basis as they interact with

their teachers. Most of the students agreed that the faculty members were important role

models to them. One student said, "we look up to them and try to emulate them in some

way" (CS Interview #2, p. 6). However, when one looks closely at what is being

modeled, one may see practices being reproduced that hearken back to the educational

system that was responsible for educating the teachers themselves.

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The faculty members with whom I spoke had significant experience in Catholic school education. Several of them had attended all female Catholic high schools and two of them were nuns or former nuns. So, the Catholic frame of reference was a significant part of their education. How do one's previous experiences affect the role modeling that one may participate in later in life? Cole's (1996) notion of *prolepsis* will be helpful in answering this question.

Cole (1996) explains that adults interpret characteristics of their child in terms of their own, sometimes idealized, pasts. He says:

> A typical comment about a newborn girl might be "I shall be worried to death when she is eighteen" or "It can't play rugby." Putting aside the sexism in these remarks, we see that the adults interpret…characteristics of the child in terms of their own past (cultural) experience. In the experience of English men and women living in the 1950s, it could be considered "common knowledge" that girls do not play rugby and that when they enter adolescence they will be the object of boys' sexual attention, putting them at various kinds of risk. Using this information derived from their past and assuming cultural continuity (that the world will be very much for their daughter as it has been for them) parents project a probable future for their child. (Cole, 1996, p. 180)

Thus, the remembered past of the parent affects how the parent views the child's future, and it consequently affects the present treatment of the child. This theory suggests that, "the parents' (purely ideal) recall of their past and imagination of their child's future become a fundamental *materialized constraint* on the child's life experiences in the

present" (Cole, 1996, p. 181). This parent/child model is similar to a teacher/student model that may affect the educational experience of students.

Faculty members bring their own cultural experiences with them to the classroom. They too are influenced by their past and may unknowingly assume a cultural continuity for their students, believing that the future will be very much for their students as it has been for them (Cole, 1996). And thus, their treatment of their students may be modified based on their own experiences. This is a particularly important lens in a Catholic female single-sex high school where forty years ago women's roles were significantly narrower than they are today. For some Catholic single-sex high schools, the historical roots can be found in finishing schools and debutante dressing. In fact, at St. Marian's graduates are required to wear long white gowns with white gloves and heels. So when one faculty member tells me that she accepts the fact that there are no women in the priesthood "because it is ingrained in her," and students question school traditions that they believe were crafted in the 1960s, I wonder how much of this past experience affects faculty interaction and practice with the students at St. Marian's. What messages are the women leaders, the role models at St. Marian's, giving to the students?

Though more research is required to properly answer this question, I feel that using my theoretical framework for Catholic single sex high schools has led me to uncover this. Exploring this question may provide an enhanced understanding of the cultural context and social reproductive elements within a Catholic female single-sex high school.

St. Marian's and St. Martin's

One other important mutual relationship that St. Marian's students experience is the relationship with their "brother school," St. Martin's, an all male Catholic high school across town. Students attend each other's dances and proms. St. Marian's students attend football, basketball, and track competitions at St. Martin's in large numbers, though very few St. Martin's men attend athletic competitions at St. Marian's. St. Marian's women are cheerleaders for the St. Martin's teams (there are no male yell leaders at the all male school), and the St. Marian's track team uses the St. Martin field for practice and competitions. The St. Martin school newspaper is distributed on the St. Marian campus and young men from St. Martin's are cast in the fall and spring plays at St. Marian's each year. Young women from St. Marian's are also a part of the St. Martin's drama program. St. Marian's uses mutuality between the two schools as an admissions inducement for students who are wary of the single-sex environment. However, as the cheerleading example indicates, there are some areas where the mutuality breaks down. And this could be where the social practices may be most revealing.

One of the reasons that administration and faculty encourage the close interaction with St. Martin's is because they know that one of the disadvantages of the environment is the lack of young men for socializing. Literature on single-sex schooling does point this out as a stated disadvantage by students attending single-sex schools (Streitmatter, 1998). And when I asked faculty and students at St. Marian's to identify one disadvantage of single-sex schooling, this is the one that most of them chose. Though I did not witness any young men on campus, and the questions I asked did not elicit any

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discussion about boys, I did have access to the St. Marian's newspaper where an article

about how to "Meet Your St. Martin's Match" appeared prominently. In this article,

young men were asked about their favorite movies, foods, and sports. In addition, they

were asked, "What do you look for in a St. Marian's lady?" These were their responses:

> Dan: She must be cute with a good sense of humor.

> John: She must have a good physique, pretty eyes that I can gaze into, and she
>
> must be easy to get along with because I hate to argue.

> Stan: She must be pretty, fun, and one who doesn't care what others think. I like
>
> an independent, confident girl.

> Bobbie: Tall, dark, and handsome. (Document Log, # 50)

Though perhaps typical teenage responses, these comments contradict to some degree the

message that St. Marian's wants its students to hear. These young men assess the quality

of the women primarily by their looks. Each begins with a statement about wanting to

date an attractive young woman. St. Marian's "values the dignity and potential of each

individual," and wants to develop young women of character and faith—not at all related

to their "physique" or "prettiness" quotient. Though a small piece of evidence, this view

into the male culture of St. Martin's could be an important factor for the female culture at

St. Marian's. Are students receiving enough positive messages at St. Marian's that will

counter the sexist attitudes that may emanate from St. Martin's? Or do they absorb the

messages that they hear from St. Martin's and allow them to affect their daily practice?

More research is needed to make an assessment of this, but again, the question itself is an

important finding because the influence of the brother school on the culture of St. Marian's cannot be ignored.

Interpretations of the World

The last element of my adapted framework of Wenger's social theory of learning takes us back to the beginning of my research. In other words, after four years in a Catholic female single-sex high school, what is it that the faculty members want students to have learned? And how do the students themselves characterize their growth over the period of those four years? *How does the situated experience of a Catholic female single-sex high school affect perspective and participation relative to leadership and service?*

I was fortunate to be able to interview both students and faculty at the end of the school year as graduation approached, so sentiment was high and retrospection was easily engaged and readily welcomed by each of the interviewees.

When asked, "What kind of young woman do you hope to graduate?" one senior administrator, Mrs. Simon said this:

> I think that they need to have a sense of who they area as persons, what their gifts are, and what their limitations are—the things that bring them to a halt, to have some sense of that…Recognize when it's there and know what to do with that, and also that they have a sense of how to treat others out there in the world and how to really give back to the world, and to help the unfortunate. I hope that they walk away knowing that a piece of their responsibility in the world is to care for everyone, that everyone's a piece of this. (FS Interview #1, p. 18)

Another senior administrator, Mrs. Gates responded:

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Someone with a great deal of confidence and self-esteem, that they have that in themselves that they can go out and sit in a room and be able to talk to anyone…I would like that their purpose isn't selfish. They didn't walk out of here, "Okay I've got an education. Now I'm going to go make money for myself." (FS Interview #2, p. 10)

And Sr. Beatrice responded as well:

I hope she is a young woman who is confident, who has a faith life, and somebody who is spiritually, physically, emotionally, and academically ready for the world. (FS Interview #5, p. 14)

Mrs. Ross commented:

I hope that, besides the diploma, they walk away with a commitment to what the school taught them as far as service and justice is concerned. That they walk away realizing that the mission of the Sisters is going to be fulfilled with their efforts too…and that there's still work to be done. (FS Interview #4, p. 9)

The above faculty members spoke clearly about their desire to have the young women graduate with a clear sense of mission for others and a sense of confidence in themselves, and a commitment to service and justice was a priority outcome for each of them. However, none of them specifically addressed the issue of leadership. One may infer that having confidence makes a good leader and being able to speak in a crowd makes a good leader. Being "prepared for the world" may even make a good leader, but none of them directly spoke to a mission of leadership or leadership in service. Their focus was mainly on wanting their graduates to serve others in the world and make a difference in that way.

Students responded to the same question. I interviewed them on either their last day of school on campus. I asked each of the students, "What kind of woman do you think you are now having spent the last four years at St. Marian's High School?" Carla responded in this way:

To be honest I've only thought about it in terms of "Am I prepared for college? Am I a prepared for college woman?" And I think I feel like I am…since freshman year I have definitely come into my own, I'm less self conscious…I am more sure of who I am. I know that some people aren't going to like me, some people are going to do better in school than me. But that's not who I am. I am my reaction to those things and I think St. Marian's is responsible for that because it's here I've had the disappointments, but also the success and the confidence that that builds. (CS Interview #1, p. 10)

Angela said:

I think I'm a woman who could go out and be in any situation—whatever life throws at me and be able to think about it and handle it and be able to talk to people…I think that's one of the most important things I have learned here. Be able to have an intelligent conversation and be nice, be personable, be happy, be a good woman, and go get what I want, because I can get it. (CS Interview #3, p. 9)

I asked Lola for three words that described her after four years at St. Marian's. Lola focused her remarks on her personal growth in relationship to service:

I'm more generous…more accepting of others…not as judgmental…and wanting to be kind to everyone because everyone is fighting a battle… And probably,

community. I've realized that girls can be my friends and I don't just have to be

with my guy friends. (CS Interview #3, p. 7)

Other students who responded to this question talked about their confidence and their

sense of independence.

There is in the voices of these students and faculty two competing, though not

mutually exclusive, ways in which a St. Marian's education has impacted them. Some

students have formed an "interpretation of the world" as Wenger (1998) suggests, around

a belief in service to others. They focus on kindness and being "nice." Certainly these

qualities are ones that are important for the development of a caring, humane individual;

however, they are also qualities that are often stereotypically female that could

corroborate previous findings in this research and others that the all female environment

may, in fact, reproduce the gender divisions found in society (Lee & Marks, 1990).

The other effect of a St. Marian's education is the increase in confidence and

independence. These may be interpreted as leadership qualities, qualities that disrupt the

negative effects of social reproduction where women are relegated to places of service

without the possibility of leadership. In addition, this result of a St. Marian's education

may run counter to the previous finding that suggests young women may absorb

gendered notions of leadership and service in this Catholic all female culture.

Conclusion

And so my research has come full circle. I have explored my adapted framework

of the social theory of learning for Catholic female single-sex high schools, and, within

that framework, I have highlighted aspects of service and leadership that have risen to the

surface. Using my adapted framework as a lens has allowed me to uncover a pattern of

conflicting messages that students send and receive about their perspective and

participation in leadership and service. This will be the topic of discussion for the final

chapter where I will explore the findings and implications of my study.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The broad scope of my adapted theoretical framework has allowed me to explore a number of important aspects of the Catholic female single-sex high school experience as they relate to service and leadership. These issues form the basis for the major findings of my study and are a direct result of the application of my theoretical framework and research methodology. In addition, I uncovered minor findings that are either relevant additions to the literature, or important areas for further research that emerged through the semi-structured interview format, which permitted participants to speak to issues that were important to them. I present these issues as part of the minor findings of my study. Recommendations for each of the major and minor findings follow discussion of the respective findings.

Major Findings

In my case study, leadership and service were explored using the theoretical framework for Catholic female single-sex schools. This framework allowed me to probe deeply into the perspectives and participation of students relative to service and leadership. My findings reveal a distinct difference between student participation and student perspective of leadership and service. I will present a brief overview of this finding before I address each of these elements in greater detail.

Participation in Leadership and Service

Student participation and interest in leadership opportunities was high. Students believed that the single-sex school could be an empowering place for their leadership development, and they understood that the absence of boys created an environment where they would not have to compete with the opposite gender for leadership roles. In the young women that I spoke to, this created in them a confidence to believe in their ability to lead and to seek out or accept leadership positions in the single-sex environment.

Service and leadership were two closely linked activities. Many students believed that to lead was to serve, and that service opportunities, such as helping the poor, were considered leadership activities. Though St. Marian's had a mandatory service requirement, of the students that I spoke to, all had participated in some form of non-mandatory service and all expressed positive feedback regarding their service engagement. Several students expressed dissatisfaction with the mandatory nature of the service requirement, but in my observation of students completing mandatory service I witnessed a willingness and engagement that contradicted these sentiments. Service was clearly a significant part of the culture, and student participation in it was high and, for the most part, it was a positive experience.

Perspectives about Leadership and Service

Students believed that participation in leadership was easily accessible and could be achieved by simply engaging in the normal course of events at school. With one exception, students described leadership as a passive activity. So, while student participation and engagement in leadership and service was high, the student perspective

of leadership was so gendered as to negate what one might believe to be the positive effects of the single-sex environment.

My findings regarding student perspectives of service followed a similar pattern. Service in a Catholic school is part of a mission driven philosophy that links social justice to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholic schools want their students to participate in service as an altruistic endeavor that they will take with them through life. Most students that I observed did not make this connection, and they found ways to complete service that served their own individual needs. In addition, some of the notions of service that students absorbed were explicitly gendered and did little to promote an identity different from that otherwise expected through social reproduction. Thus, while participation in service was high, student attitudes about it may have diminished its effectiveness for student development.

Detailed discussion of more specific findings regarding leadership and service now follow.

Leadership

Leadership was encouraged, supported, and made accessible to all students at St. Marian's. Young women were able to test their leadership skills in formal and informal venues, inside and outside of the classroom. School literature focused on developing women leaders. Alumnae attributed success in achieving leadership roles later in life to the encouragement they received during their high school experience. Yet, it was the nature of leadership that students discussed that provided the most striking finding. Students perceived leadership as a passive rather than an active endeavor. Leadership was

variously described as "showing up," "doing grunt work," "being one of many," or "being a good person." None of these descriptions suggested active leadership, or "take-charge leadership." The definition embraced by many at St. Marian's was a gendered one, where young women do not take charge, but rather lead by showing up or following a good example. Leadership was a quiet, passive activity that required little risk taking or strong advocacy. This surprising finding logically follows from the tension that arises from the message of empowerment existing within the context of social reproduction. The message of empowerment encourages students to lead, yet social reproduction within the community discourages resistance or disruptive behavior (often required of leaders) because such conduct upsets homeostasis within the community and does not conform to the limited gender-based view of women within the Church and society. As a result, students in this environment will lead only within the norms of the status quo, and they are not emboldened to practice outside of those norms. Indeed, in one case, practicing outside of those norms restricted student access to community—highlighting the inherent tension between community, empowerment, and leadership. Here, the highly functioning community imbues the students with a sense of empowerment, but it constrains those same students from exercising the full range of their leadership skills when that exercise would upset the community.

Service

Service and leadership were closely connected in theory and in practice at St. Marian's. Students who considered themselves to be leaders also considered themselves to be servants. And those who served considered the act of service as a position of

leadership by virtue of the example that it set. However, service hours at this site were mandatory, and some students questioned the efficacy of this policy, though others went above and beyond the required minimum hours. The finding that was most surprising, however, was not the connection between service and leadership, but rather the apparent lack of connection between service and faith. In a school that emphasizes social justice as part of its religious mission in every aspect of its daily life—classes, assemblies, curriculum, clubs, and extra-curriculars—most students were not motivated by issues of social justice, but rather by self-serving purposes of resume building, socializing, and a curiosity to experience a life different from their own. These types of motivation may be the result of pressures placed on students in other areas of their life. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the earnest attempts by the Catholic school leaders to inculcate an ethic of faith-based service in their students may be derailed by forces outside of their control, relegating the performance of service to the secular realm and divorcing it from the sphere of faith altogether.

Despite the disconnect between service and faith, however, when given a choice to participate in service or participate in Mass, students chose service. Here, they used the link between faith and service to their advantage. Because they distanced themselves from the doctrine, and in some cases, ritual of the Church, (findings on this follow) they rejected the primacy of the Mass and substituted service as an equal and preferred method of developing their spirituality and experiencing the divine.

In addition, the traditional notions of women's work were reinforced by many of the service opportunities offered at the school, barring students from exploring outside of socially reproduced gender roles.

Theoretical Framework

At the outset of this study I proposed a theoretical framework that was an adaptation of Wenger's (1998) Social Theory of Learning. This adaptation, as applied to the Catholic female single-sex high school environment, uses a practice approach for analyzing the issues at the site of the study. I adhered to this framework throughout my work, focusing on practice at the research site, seeking deep understanding through careful listening in the field, recording events that I observed, and noting what I did not. As I moved through the four prongs of the theoretical framework, I uncovered findings related to service and leadership, but I also widened my scope as the framework dictated, which resulted in ancillary findings. Now at the end of my research, I may ask the question: Is taking a practice approach a helpful method of looking at the issues at a Catholic female single-sex high school? The answer is yes.

My research was conducted at the end of the school year when sentimental emotions were high, reflection was the order of the day, and thoughts of the future were beginning to show in the planning and preparations for the next year. It was a highly favorable time period for assessing the participants' perceptions of the effect of their environment on service and leadership. In addition, the campus was very busy planning for important end of year events, and I was able to observe several of them. Because of my focus on practice, I was able to easily triangulate my data, I was able to match what

participants said with what I observed, and I was able to check what I observed with writings that the community produced. Each of these elements afforded me a window into the real life experience of students and faculty on this campus. Their daily interactions became transparent to me as I talked, listened, and read about how they took up the meanings and philosophies that they said represented their school. For example, the issue of community was a very important one at St. Marian's. I heard from participants, I read both formal and informal documents about this, I watched as students gathered, I took part in student conversations at lunch, and I observed student connections in classrooms and at service sites. This immersion into their culture via the situated experience gave me extraordinary access to their practices, and because of this I feel the research was fruitful and authentic.

The second question I must answer is related to the adaptation of the framework. Wenger's (1998) focus on practice was effective for my research, but was my adaptation of his framework a useful tool for the Catholic female single-sex high school? Here again, the answer is yes. The framework allowed me to shape my queries and my analysis into a cohesive whole and explore issues of leadership and service, but it also allowed me the flexibility to examine other unanticipated areas of research that would not otherwise have been available to me. There are many ways in which social connections manifest themselves in a school. In a Catholic female single-sex high school, these connections become particularized as they relate to the specific cultural implications of the two most unique variables, gender and Catholicity. My adapted framework allowed me to explore

these influences deeply and broadly, and it allowed me to provide a holistic analysis of my research question.

Wenger's (1998) community of practice theory asserts that it is within social interactions that humans learn and that this learning is continuous. Looking carefully at the communities of practice at my research site allowed me to see more clearly and more fully how students at a Catholic female single-sex high school make meaning out of their experience.

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Community

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Use of my adapted theoretical framework for Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning required a primary focus on community. This focus yielded findings that were both expected and unexpected. I anticipated that community would be an important factor in the Catholic female single-sex high school, thus my choice for use of a framework whose theoretical underpinnings were based on social connections and social practices. I did not, however, anticipate the depth of the commitment that I would find. Students, faculty, and alumnae were clear about its importance, its purpose, and its effect on the student body. Every major publication, every major speech, and every faculty member and student spoke of community, always in superlative terms. The sense of belonging created by the strong community bond resulted in a family atmosphere where similar values and attitudes were adopted and reproduced amongst the members. This was advantageous for most students because it created the feeling of a safe, secure place to grow and learn amongst peers and adults who valued the same things. The homogeneity of the culture, despite socio-economic and ethnic differences, could be directly attributed

to this student buy-in of community. However, as the data showed, not everyone felt included or encouraged to be herself in this community. As with all highly functioning communities, the requirements of belonging were clear, set forth by the mission of the founding order, the administrative regulations that guide student behavior, and student acceptance. If an individual student contested any one of these three elements, connection to the community could be attenuated, limited, or denied.

St. Marian's is not alone in its promotion of a school culture that requires compliance and imposed limitations. Feminist theorists argue that school cultures of compliance and obedience emanate from an educational philosophy that "prepares women for their role subordinate to men" (Arnot, 2002, p. 58). And Arnot also sees forced compliance in the hierarchical division of labor in schools. Bowles and Gintis (1976) see the vertical authority line from administration to teacher to student as the reason for student alienation from the educational process. Gina chafed under the hierarchical structure of a community that forced her to subordinate herself to the administration of the school. Others at St. Marian's, however, felt both nurtured and constrained in this community, and thus were set to negotiate identity in an environment that sent mixed signals.

I had not anticipated the strong component of compliance that became a part of the community discussion within this particular environment. Because of the strongly felt and deeply shared attitudes within the community, differences were sometimes viewed as dissent that upset the homeostasis of the tightly knit community. This finding laid the groundwork for further discoveries.

Empowerment

Students at this high school clearly understood that an important part of their education was to empower them to be strong, confident women who understand their value in society. In documents and interviews, the focus on the advantages of the all female environment usually included mention of the young women reaching their potential and finding their voice. The culture was supportive, female-oriented, and sensitive to the fact that the gender of the students required targeted instruction outside the scope of the regular curriculum. The environment successfully increased student awareness that they should not view gender as a barrier to achieving their goals. These findings are corroborated in other female single-sex literature (Bryk et al. 1993; Lee & Bryk, 1986; Streitmatter, 1999).

However, some participants in this environment lacked a critical lens with which to view the issue of gender equity at the school site and in society more generally. Students and faculty members with whom I spoke did not question the usual assumptions of society and Church about proper gender roles. While students were taught that women could be strong and achieve great things, there was little awareness or discussion about the practical realities of gender-based barriers that these young women will soon face when they join society as adults. My observations detected little discernable awareness, no general dialogue, and no official communications that explicitly addressed what obstacles women might meet, how they might be overcome, or how resistance may play a part in achieving success for women seeking acceptance into the dominant male culture. These absences may be artifacts of the unresolved tension between the school's

philosophy of empowerment and the gender-based limitations imposed on women by the Church and society in general. This suggests that despite some literature that finds that all female high schools can be places of empowerment (Bryk et al., 1993; Watson et al., 2002), they also may be places of social reproduction that replicate gender models that society expects of women, roles that require compliance and acceptance. This corroborates a study by Lee and Marks (1990) that found that women who attended single-sex Catholic high schools endorsed traditional attitudes toward the roles that men and women should take in the workplace at a greater rate than their coed peers. However, this contradicts a previous quantitative study by Lee and Bryk (1986), which compared single-sex and coeducational schools and found that young women from single-sex schools in their senior year had significantly less sex-role stereotyping in the workplace than young women from coeducational schools.

Religion and Spirituality

Students at this Catholic female single-sex high school made a clear distinction between religion and spirituality. Religion for St. Marian's students meant the rules and rituals of the Catholic Church, "a more systematic and universal" understanding of faith. Spirituality was defined as "being open to faith and to the presence of the sacred and God," a more subjective, personal view of faith. Students embraced the notion of spirituality, and they felt supported and uplifted by this approach. They felt less constrained by the doctrine of the Church, much of which they questioned or rejected, and felt comfortable being able to embrace their Catholic tradition in a loose framework that allowed them to question but still feel a part of the community of the Catholic faith.

In fact, some students cited community as one of the most significant benefits of participating in Catholic ritual. The most interesting finding came, however, when I explored why spirituality was the chosen focus for students at St. Marian's.

The data showed that the turn toward spirituality might be the result of young women feeling disenfranchised from the institution of the Catholic Church. The meditative rather than religious prayer, the apathy about women being excluded from the priesthood, the focus on the Church's controversies rather than the Church as a pathway to the divine—all of these things may be explained as the students' attempts to negotiate a place where they are able to name themselves, see themselves, and be themselves fully in the institution of the Church. Their resistance to religion may be a gendered reaction to an organization that does not wholly embrace them. Students believe that Church and priest are not necessary "in your own spiritual world." And while not a Catholic sentiment, this is one that feels comfortable to young women who yearn for a connection to the divine but who, at this moment in their development, cannot abide by the restrictions placed on them by the institution of the Church and its gendered notion of leadership.

Other Findings

Gay Students in a Catholic High School

In a discussion of women's roles in relation to the social reproduction that may be occurring at St. Marian's, one alumna spoke of female gay students and Catholic schools, and the reaction that these students may elicit from peers. Her view was that lesbian students at a Catholic school were not "free to be themselves" because they would be

labeled and treated differently by peers if they identified themselves as gay. The observation that the Catholic school community may not be supportive of the gay student identity is an important one. Though this topic is outside the scope of my research and literary review, I do not believe it should be ignored altogether. The Church's teaching regarding homosexuality (distinguishing the activity versus the orientation) can be confusing to a student who defines herself by her sexuality. The Church's nuanced position may be perceived as disapproval of the orientation, thereby placing gay students in a difficult position. As described above, the highly functioning community is a positive environment for those who remain within the norms of the community. Though the Church insists that it embraces homosexuals, there still may remain a stigma for the gay student who is attempting to be accepted by self, peers, and church community. Both Catholic and non-Catholic students would face this dilemma.

Brother and Sister Schools

St. Marian's was affiliated with a Catholic male single-sex high school across town; it is commonly called the "brother school." The issue of the brother school came up several times in my interviewing and observations. Students and faculty believe the lack of males on campus may be a disadvantage for the young women's social development. Thus, the affiliation with the brother school is seen to be a mitigating influence that provides social opportunities for young men and women to meet and socialize. My brief observation of the interaction between the two schools found that, while social opportunities were made available, they carried with them gendered notions of the male/female dynamic, and may have a negative influence on the female students'

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attitudes about themselves and about the male perspective of them. The female cheerleaders who cheer for the male school teams but not their own, and the newspaper comments of the males that focus only on the young women's appearance when asked about their "ideal" girl, are both warning signs that the influence of the brother school may be reproducing gender stereotypes that are unhealthy for young women. As the girls cheer on the sidelines for males only and their bodies are compared to the "ideal" shape, the young women are objectified by the students from the brother school and may not be seen by themselves or others as the young women of confidence and competence that St. Marian's wishes them to be.

Recommendations and Implications

Site Based

Leadership

Education professionals should reflect on the type of leadership that is being fostered at the school. Student leadership must be cognizant of mission, but it must also prepare students for leadership roles outside of St. Marian's in a male dominated setting. Training for students and professionals would be beneficial in this area.

Service

Education professionals should reconsider mandatory service hours and reflect on the impact they have on student perspective about service. Further, service should reflect a broad spectrum of non-gendered opportunities. In addition, education professionals should examine student motivation for service and reflect on how this may or may not affect student perspective about service in the present and in the future.

Theoretical Framework

Education professionals administering school programs may benefit from an understanding of Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice theory. Reminding teachers and administrators that learning is not limited only to what is taught inside the classroom is a valuable lesson, and it would broaden teaching professionals' understanding of the scope of their practice.

Community

Education professionals should reflect on the student practice of resistance as a form of leadership and consider how the community can respond to it in a way that reinforces the positive messages the community wishes to inculcate in their students. Professionals may benefit from training in this area.

Empowerment

Education professionals should consider moving beyond the language of empowerment to the language of action. What do students need to know about the society they will enter? How does the patriarchy affect their current worldview? How might it present obstacles to future access and equity? Students and faculty members need to actively question the assumed gender roles society places on young women. Training and education may be needed to help students operationalize the empowerment that education professionals advocate for their students.

Religion and Spirituality

Student embrace of spirituality and rejection of religiosity may signal a discontent with the Catholic Church that education professionals may need to more actively

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negotiate. Allowing students the freedom to accept a spiritual approach to religion while in a Catholic institution is one positive way to keep students connected to a faith life. Exploring other means of helping young women negotiate the divide between religiosity and spirituality may allow them to more freely embrace Catholicism in adulthood.

Gay Students in a Catholic School

Education professionals need to be aware of students who are struggling with their sexual identity and provide whatever support is possible in the current environment. Additionally, education professionals need to actively pursue Catholic leadership for advice on how to deal with the difficult situation both gay students and the school may experience. Support groups, counseling, teacher training, and sensitivity workshops may all be possibilities to consider.

Brother and Sister Schools

Education professionals need to dialogue with the brother school and view female student interactions with the all male high school using a critical eye, ascertaining if their presence on campus (whatever form this takes) meets the goals set for this affiliation.

School Type Implications

Single-sex female high schools must be aware of the social reproduction that may occur at the school site. A single-sex environment itself is not enough to combat the strong societal and historical influences that continue to marginalize women. Single-sex female schools must consciously create mission, curriculum, and pedagogy that informs, engages, and enlightens young women in ways that help them learn, and they must

educate students about creating opportunities and overcoming the obstacles to accessing them.

Future Research

Additional research would be beneficial in the following areas:

1. A study should be considered that utilizes the theoretical framework for the Catholic female single-sex high school and brings to the fore other student related variables such as academics, standards, or extracurricular concerns. Repetition of the framework use will further confirm its validity.

2. A comparative study focused on leadership participation in single-sex high schools. Do young men and young women at single-sex high schools view leadership in the same way? Does the single-sex environment exacerbate the gendering of leadership models?

3. How is resistance handled in Catholic schools compared to non-Catholic schools? How is resistance handled at all female high schools compared to all male high schools? Are young women being taught compliance? Further study in this area is necessary.

4. A long term study about the efficacy of mandatory service and student motivation for service in Catholic and non-Catholic high schools would be beneficial to clarify what type of service provides the best long term outcomes for students.

5. A comparative study of service opportunities at an all male high school and an all female high school would help determine if service opportunities at single-sex

schools are gendered. A separate study in single-sex Catholic schools would also be valuable.

6. Is the preference for spirituality over religiosity in a Catholic female single-sex high school gender-driven? What other factors are at play? This requires further research.

7. A study that explores the connection of service to faith at Catholic high schools would be valuable to provide answers about service motivation and long-term commitment to a life of service.

8. The study of gay students on Catholic campuses is under-researched. Studies might explore student self-concept, peer relations, support systems, identity formation, and/or relationship to Catholicity.

9. A comparative study of an all male high school community and a similar sized all female high school community in relation to community ties should be done. Are community ties stronger at an all female school? Is connection to community related to gender?

10. A study comparing a non-Catholic or public single-sex high school to a Catholic female single-sex high school would allow the researcher to hone in more specifically on the influence of Catholicity on the single-sex experience.

Concluding Thoughts

My life experience has taught me that Catholic female single-sex high schools are communities that can nurture strong, confident women. The data from my research partially corroborates this experience. I was not surprised to find that all of the young

women and the alumnae that I spoke with felt strongly that their experience at St. Marian's had been a positive, empowering one. Though some of what I observed suggested that the practice of social reproduction was occurring and that gender stereotypes were not being resisted, this should have been no surprise to me. Bourdieu's (1977) theory that schools reproduce the culture of the dominant or dominated classes neatly explains this phenomenon, yet somehow I hoped the single-sex school to prove him wrong. Nonetheless, there are things in place at this Catholic female single-sex high school that are striving toward a more gender equitable society. The tightly knit community, the nurturing atmosphere, the consciousness raising for women's empowerment, all these things go further than many schools to guide young women to be their best selves, but more needs to be done. This study provides one small step toward accomplishing that task.

APPENDIX A: Student Interview Questions

Background and Philosophy
1. How long have you been at this school?
2. Why did you choose a Catholic female single sex high school?
3. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of Catholic education?
4. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of female single sex education?
5. Do you feel your classes, curriculum or extra curricular activities are affected by the Catholicity of the school? How?
6. Do you feel your classes, curriculum, or extra curricular activities are affected by the single sex nature of the school? How?

Leadership
1. Does this school teach leadership? How?
2. Are young women empowered to be leaders? How?
3. Does the Catholicity of the school affect the leadership practices at the school?
4. Does the single sex nature of the school affect the leadership practices of the school?
5. Are young women encouraged to see themselves as leaders
   a. In their future careers
   b. In their faith
      How?
6. Is there any aspect of leadership that the young women resist? Why do you think this is so?

Service
1. Does this school teach about the notion of service? How?
2. Are young women encouraged to participate in service? How?
3. Does the Catholicity of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
4. Does the single sex nature of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
5. Is the notion of "servant leadership" used? If so, how do the students respond to this?
6. Is there any aspect of service that the young women resist? Why do you think this is so?

Student Outcomes
1. Upon graduation what is your perspective on service and leadership?
2. Do you think that Catholic and non Catholic students share the same perspectives? If not, how do they differ?

Environment

1. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment encourage leadership and service?
2. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment discourage leadership and service?
3. Describe the community environment of the Catholic female single sex high school. How is community affected by
   a. Catholicity
   b. Gender
   c. Single-sex
   d. High School level student interaction

APPENDIX B: Young Alumnae Interview Questions

Background and Philosophy
1. When did you attend this school?
2. Why did you choose a Catholic female single sex high school?
3. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of Catholic education?
4. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of female single sex education?
5. Do you feel your classes, curriculum or extra curricular activities were affected by the Catholicity of the school? How?
6. Did you feel your classes, curriculum, or extra curricular activities were affected by the single sex nature of the school? How?

Leadership
1. Did this school teach leadership? How?
2. Were young women empowered to be leaders? How?
3. Did the Catholicity of the school affect the leadership practices at the school?
4. Did the single sex nature of the school affect the leadership practices of the school?
5. Were young women encouraged to see themselves as leaders
    c. In their future
    d. In their faith
       How?
6. Were there aspects of leadership that the young women resisted? Why do you think this was so?

Service
1. Did this school teach about the notion of service? How?
2. Were young women encouraged to participate in service? How?
3. Did the Catholicity of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
4. Did the single sex nature of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
5. Was the notion of "servant leadership" used? If so, how do the students respond to this?
6. Did faculty/staff role modeling about service and leadership affect your perspective?
7. Was there any aspect of service that the young women resisted? Why do you think this was so?

Student Outcomes
1. Upon graduation what was your perspective on service and leadership?
2. Has your Catholic single sex experience affected your college experience? How? What college choices do you feel were affected by your Catholic female single sex schooling?

3. Do you currently participate in leadership or service? What kind? Do you attribute any of these choices to your high school education?
4. What other influences shaped your perspective on leadership and service?

<u>Environment</u>
1. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment encourage leadership and service?
2. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment discourage leadership and service?
3. Describe the community environment of the Catholic female single sex high school. How is community affected by
    e. Catholicity
    f. Gender
    g. Single-sex
    h. High School level student interaction

APPENDIX C: Mature Alumnae Interview Questions

Background and Philosophy
1. When did you attend this school?
2. Why did you choose a Catholic female single sex high school?
3. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of Catholic education?
4. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of female single sex education?
5. Do you feel your classes, curriculum or extra curricular activities were affected by the Catholicity of the school? How?
6. Did you feel your classes, curriculum, or extra curricular activities were affected by the single sex nature of the school? How?

Leadership
1. Did this school teach leadership? How?
2. Were young women empowered to be leaders? How?
3. Did the Catholicity of the school affect the leadership practices at the school?
4. Did the single sex nature of the school affect the leadership practices of the school?
5. Were young women encouraged to see themselves as leaders
   e. In their future
   f. In their faith
      How?
6. Were there aspects of leadership that the young women resisted? Why do you think this was so?

Service
1. Did this school teach about the notion of service? How?
2. Were young women encouraged to participate in service? How?
3. Did the Catholicity of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
4. Did the single sex nature of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
5. Was the notion of "servant leadership" used? If so, how do the students respond to this?
6. Did faculty/staff role modeling about service and leadership affect your perspective?
7. Was there any aspect of service that the young women resisted? Why do you think this was so?

Student Outcomes
1. Upon graduation what was your perspective on service and leadership?
2. Has your Catholic single sex experience affected your life path? How? What choices do you feel were affected by your Catholic female single sex schooling?

3. Do you currently participate in leadership or service? What kind? Do you attribute any of these choices to your high school education?
4. What other influences shaped your perspective on leadership and service?

Environment
1. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment encouraged leadership and service?
2. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment discouraged leadership and service?
3. Describe the community environment of the Catholic female single sex high school. How was community affected by
   i. Catholicity
   j. Gender
   k. Single-sex
   l. High School level student interaction

APPENDIX D: Faculty/Staff Interview Questions

Background and Teaching Philosophy
1. How long have you been a teacher? At this school?
2. What motivated you to become a teacher?
3. Why did you choose to teach at a Catholic female single sex high school?
4. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of Catholic education?
5. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of female single sex education?
6. Is your teaching philosophy/curriculum/preparation/pedagogy affected by the Catholicity of the school?
7. Is your teaching philosophy/curriculum/preparation/pedagogy affected by the single sex nature of the school?

Leadership
1. Does this school teach leadership? How?
2. Are young women empowered to be leaders? How?
3. Does the Catholicity of the school affect the leadership practices at the school?
4. Does the single sex nature of the school affect the leadership practices of the school?
5. Are young women encouraged to see themselves as leaders
    g. In their future careers
    h. In their faith
       How?
6. Is there any aspect of leadership that the young women resist? Why do you think this is so?

Service
1. Does this school teach about the notion of service? How?
2. Are young women encouraged to participate in service? How?
3. Does the Catholicity of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
4. Does the single sex nature of the school affect the practice of service at the school?
5. Is the notion of "servant leadership" used? If so, how do the students respond to this?
6. Is there any aspect of service that the young women resist? Why do you think this is so?
7. Are students guided toward specific kinds of service?

Student Outcomes
1. Upon graduation what do you hope is the student perspective about service and leadership?

2. Upon graduation what do you believe is the student perspective about service and leadership?
3. Do you think that Catholic and non Catholic students share the same perspectives? If not, how do they differ?

Environment
1. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment encourage leadership and service?
2. What aspects of the Catholic female single-sex environment discourage leadership and service?
3. Describe the community environment of the Catholic female single sex high school. How is community affected by
    m. Catholicity
    n. Gender
    o. Single-sex
    p. High School level student interaction

APPENDIX E: Member Check Letter

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me about leadership and service at
_____. I enjoyed our time together, and I know that our work will make a
difference in research for young women in the future.

Enclosed are two important documents:

1) A written transcript of our conversation. These may contain some spelling errors, or
improperly spelled proper nouns that were unfamiliar to the transcriptionist. I apologize
for these errors—but trust that I know the proper spelling of the places and people we
spoke about—and this will have no bearing on the content of our conversation.

2) A copy of the researcher agreement that was signed before our talk.

The researcher agreement is for your records. However, I ask that you read the transcripts
and verify that you approve the content. If there is anything that you would like to delete
or add—please notify me. Let me restate here that everything you said in our interview is
completely anonymous, and neither you nor _____ will ever be identified with
any comments that you made. However, if you still have concerns, you may contact me
through any of the following means:

     a) Email me. Let me know that you approve of the contents—or indicate what
        you would like changed.
     b) Call me. I am happy to have a phone conversation and discuss any issues you
        may have.
     c) Mail the document back with any changes marked. No editing is necessary—
        just content changes required.

     If I do not hear from you I will assume that you approve of the contents.

     Thanks again for your time.

Jill Bickett
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola Marymount University

Document Description and Code

Essays from AP Literature
  1. An Off Beat? Hip Hop Music's Impact on Women
  2. Women: The Inferior Sex
  3. Repeat Discrimination
  4. Off the Sidelines and into the Extreme
  5. Japan: Land of the Rising Female
  6. Peace is Born in Mothers
  7. Women and Selective Equality

8. Daily Announcement Bulletin
9. Email correspondence #1
10. Email correspondence #2
11. AP Literature PowerPoint Are Women Happy Under the Glass Ceiling?
12. Email correspondence #3
13. Daily Announcement Bulletin
14. Scholarship Speech for Sports Award
15. Mrs. Ross Notes/Quotes
16. Parent Bulletin
17. Expanded Alumnae Magazine
18. Yearbook
19. Christian Women Gift Book
20. ASB Induction Day Morning Prayer
21. Student Body Morning Prayer 22. Women Role Models 23. Oprah Winfrey 24. Mother Teresa 25. Rosa Parks 26. Shirley Temple 27. Susan B. Anthony
28. Alumnae of ASB Morning Prayers
29. Calendar
30. Master Schedule
31. Faculty List (with Alums)
32. Yearbook Dedication Speech
33. Worship Aid for Mother/Daughter Liturgy
34. Call to Worship, Readings, and Petitions
35. Senior Nominations for Interview

36. Times Article re: AAUW Study on Pay Gap (from librarian)
37. Literary Magazine
38. Curriculum Guide 2001-2002
39. Activities 2001-2002
40. Baccalaureate: Readings, petitions, Reflection, Worship Aid, Gifts, Call to Worship, Faculty Blessing, Blessing
41. Prayers from Morality class
42. Alumni Update: Interview with Mrs. Simon
43. WASC Student and Community Profile
44. Commencement Program
45. Review Sheet from Morality class
46. Modern World Class, ICON handout
47. Guide for Teenagers: Distributed to Seniors
48. Letter from Mrs. Ross
49. Student Newspaper April
50. Student Newspaper June
51. Letter from Student to Assistant Head
52. Class election candidate lists
53. Christian service award
54. Assembly Speech for service recognition and ASB induction
55. ASB Elections Packet
56. ASB Declaration of Candidacy
57. ASB Election Candidate Speeches (26)
58. ASB Candidate Information Sheets (26)
59. ASB Election Ballot with Winners marked
60. ASB election vote percentages
61. Class elections prep packet
62. Class Election Candidates List
63. Class of 2010 election campaign & results packet
64. Class of 2009 election packet campaign & results packet
65. Class of 2008 election packet campaign & results packet
66. Handouts from Mrs. Ross Class (2)
67. President Speech for Incoming Freshmen
68. ASB leader speech for Incoming Freshmen
69. Admissions Materials (2)
70. 80s school docs
71. Commencement speech
72. Locker Notes to Freshman
73. Service Days Information Sheets (5)
74. Library Search for "Feminism" on computer

APPENDIX G: Permission Letter

From: Adam Hirschberg <ahirschberg@cambridge.org>

Date: Wed, 21 May 2008 10:11:32
To:JPBickett <jpbickett@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Request for permission to reproduce copyrighted figure

JP,
You have our permission to reprint this figure in your dissertation.
Please cite us in your work.
Thank you.

Adam

_____

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