2018

"Nevertheless, She Persisted": The Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Novice Female Charter School Principals

Heather McManus
Loyola Marymount University

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

"Nevertheless, She Persisted":

The Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Novice Female Charter School Principals

by

Heather McManus

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2018

“Nevertheless, She Persisted”:

The Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Novice Female Charter School Principals

by

Heather McManus

Loyola Marymount University
School of Education
Los Angeles, CA 90045

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

Date January 18, 2018

Dissertation Committee

[redacted]
Shane P. Martin, Ph.D., Committee Member

[redacted]
Jill Bickett, Ed.D., Committee Member

[redacted]
Ana Ponce, Ed.D., Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people to acknowledge for my success in the writing of this dissertation.

To begin, I am grateful to my Chair, Dr. Shane Martin, Dean of the School of Education, for agreeing to take me on as a student and support me through the process.

To my committee member and director of the Doctoral Program, Dr. Jill Bickett, for your constant cheerleading, encouragement, and feedback.

To Dr. Ana F. Ponce, for your over ten years of mentorship and push to enroll in the program. I would probably still be thinking about it, and you are right—three years goes by fast!

To my mom, who taught me how to cook and fix a broken sink, your consistent support and encouragement throughout my life has allowed me to become the fiercely independent woman I am.

To my writing buddy and partner in crime, Matt Hill. Thanks for holding me accountable over the past three years.

To Delta Airlines for providing the Wifi and smooth flights that allowed me to write nearly 90% of the papers and this dissertation over the past three years.

To all my female rock star friends who are literally smashing the patriarchy every day—thank you for lifting me up when I needed it most.

And finally, to the seven participants of my study. Thank you for agreeing to let your voices be heard and to let me learn from you in the struggle.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Papa, Frederick Monks Ritchie. For the past 35 years of my life, I have been blessed to have a grandfather who deeply supported my work and education. I remember clearly December 24, 2000, when Papa cornered me in his kitchen and demanded I reconsider my desire to attend Michigan State University. I had also gotten into the University of Michigan, and to him, the choice was clear. After this conversation, I did reconsider my decision and ultimately landed at the University of Michigan. This decision has significantly altered the course of my life, and perhaps is responsible for both my ultimate pathway and my success.

From an early age, my Papa instilled the value of education in me. He so valued the work I did as a teacher in Los Angeles and followed closely my success as a principal. It was not uncommon to get a news clipping in the mail on the latest happenings with the Secretary of Education in D.C. or some education-related news in Detroit, Michigan. He ensured he read up on my line of work so that he could ask questions and engage in conversations when we were together. For most of his life, he read multiple newspapers cover to cover each morning and never stopped pushing his grandchildren towards higher education. It is no wonder that his four

grandchildren have a combined nine degrees from institutes of higher education, including one medical doctor and one soon-to-be educational doctor.

Throughout the process of writing this dissertation, my Papa has provided me support and feedback. The section on mentorship is a direct result of feedback he provided to me on the importance of mentorship in his own field of patent law. No doubt, this became one of the sub-themes that emerged from participants in the study.

My Papa passed away on December 19, 2017, the day after I submitted my final dissertation for my defense. It is not lost on me that he was alive when I submitted the document. It is his life and his encouragement that pushed me to the very end and ensured that I met my goal.

To Papa Fred, for your endless support, encouragement, and love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LISTS OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

“Nevertheless She Persisted:” The Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Novice Female Charter School Principals

by

Heather McManus

While education is typically considered a feminized field, educational administration has long been dominated by males. This dissertation examines the historical reasons for this gender paradox and explores the challenges and opportunities specifically for novice female charter school principals through the theoretical frameworks of organizational socialization and social role theory. The dissertation studied 7 novice female charter school principals within their first 3 years in the role and utilized a qualitative methodology with semistructured interviews, focus groups, and field notes as data sources. Findings indicate that it is still difficult to be considered a good leader and a good female. Additionally, while females experience significant challenges related to their gender, opportunities for dramatically improving results for students and paving the way for other females are key opportunities for novice female charter school principals. The findings support the need for considering different ways to support novice female charter school principals.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Since the beginning of the common school movement in the mid-nineteenth century, the role of females in public education has been fraught with contradiction. On one hand, public education is largely considered a feminized field, with the percent of female teachers outweighing that of male teachers. On the other hand, the principal role has remained under-representative of females' long-standing majority within the teaching field (Blount, 1999; Burton & Weiner, 2016; Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Mertz, 2006). Given that the principal role is commonly filled with individuals who have come from the classroom, understanding this continued under-representation is critical to move toward gender equity in the field.

As discussed in the literature females face many challenges entering the field of educational leadership, particularly the principal position. Some of these challenges are rooted in the historical feminization of the education field and the bureaucratization of school districts and administrative roles in the mid-twentieth century (Blount, 1999). Other challenges are rooted in the biases and prejudices of hiring committees traditionally led by White male superintendents (Eckman, 2004; Mertz, 2006). Additional challenges are rooted in perceived gender norms and stereotypical expectations for how females should behave (Blount, 1999; Burton & Weiner,

2016; Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Goldstein, 2014). Females' ability to enter the field at rates equitable to males is concerning given research that suggests that female principals are particularly well-aligned to the type of leadership necessary to increase student achievement (Grogran & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Considering how to support female principals' entrance into the field is critical for ensuring a shift in the types of principals trained to ensure all students learn equitably. Since the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act and the push to reform schools over the past 15 years, increased attention is being paid to the importance of the role of the principal in influencing student achievement outcomes (Celoria & Roberson, 2015). Some studies have attributed nearly 25% of student achievement to the effectiveness of the school principal (Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2007). The importance of the principal is a productive area of focus for school reform efforts moving forward to ensure socially just, sustainable change.

This is especially true considering the literature on current principal sustainability and attrition rates. Goldring, Gray, Westat, and Broughman (2013) found that nearly 20% of principals in affluent public schools leave every year. This number increases to nearly 50% with principals leaving by the end of their third year in urban districts (Goldring et al., 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2014). The literature points to a number of reasons that may explain why the principal

attrition rate continues to increase. Studies have found that the isolation of the job, the lack of emotional preparation, the sense of ultimate responsibility, and the complex nature of the role, all make sustaining this work for long periods of time challenging (Spillane & Lee, 2014).

One area of particular concern is the rate at which novice female charter school principals leave the field. Charter schools—founded by a desire to have community-based schools that may better meet the needs of students within the community—are more often led by female principals (Goldring et al., 2013). The literature suggests that female principals running charter schools are uniquely poised to lead in the types of ways that most effectively improve student learning and school effectiveness (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). However, both female principals and charter school female principals are leaving the field at higher rates than traditional public school and male principals (Goldring et al., 2013).

Beyond the challenges that all principals face, novice female charter principals face added challenges of being judged for their perceived gender-based abilities. Perceptions of their abilities based on gender-norms and expectant leader behaviors often place female principals in a double bind: judged negatively if they act too masculine, given they are females, or too feminine, given they are leaders (Eagly, 2007; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Additionally, research suggests that expected norms of gender roles often leads to experiences of microagressions

(Nadal, 2010). Gender microagressions are common experiences with "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative sexist slights and insults towards women (Nadal, 2010, p.155). Microagressions are covert, and often recipient do not even perceive the microagression as sexist. Research shows that, over time, microagressions can lead to feelings of inferiority, lowered self-confidence, and lack of ambition (Nadal, 2010).

Statement of the Problem through a Social-Justice Lens

The school reform movement, while good intentioned, has had unintended consequences for leader and teacher pipelines. Not only are fewer individuals choosing to enter the field, but those who do enter do not stay long enough to make a lasting impact (School Leaders Network, 2014). Most concerning is that leader turnover is highly concentrated in urban schools and is more pronounced in female principalships, where the need for consistency and excellence is greater than ever before (Cuban, 2001). This study examined the reasons for these disparities.

The experience of female principals in education was particularly of interest in the 1970s and 1980s after the passage of Title IX (Goodman, 2002). Yet, even with increased focus on females within education, Goodman (2002) found that inequalities in leadership based on gender persisted in fields such as education where females are overrepresented as teachers. A 2013

study by Goldring et al. found that females comprised 76% of the teaching profession; 89% of elementary school teachers was female while 58% of secondary teachers was female. Yet, only 64% of elementary and 40% of high school principals was female (Bitterman, Goldring, Gray, & Broughman, 2013).

Even when female principals are able to enter the field, they often note added challenges to their perceived effectiveness within the role (Gutsch, 2002). Specifically, female principals reported that they "struggle within the public school system to be accepted as school leaders and, as a result, they are subjected to more intense scrutiny and demands than their male colleagues" (Gutsch, 2002, p. 132). Ensuring that female school principals can stay in their positions past 3 years is important to securing quality schools for all students, particularly in urban schools (Cuban, 2001). Additionally, addressing inequitable pathways and expectations for females within the principal role is necessary to maintaining equity within the field. One way to do this is by understanding the lived experiences of novice female charter school principals within the role.

Purpose of the Study

Given the current literature on the length of the average principal tenure and the reasons why principals leave the profession, this research sought to understand how to better support novice female principals' entry into the field. Ultimately, the purpose of this research was to understand the challenges that novice female charter school principals experienced in their entrance into the role and how this entrance impacted their longevity in the field. Secondly, the research explored the opportunities of being a female charter school principal, with a particular lens toward leadership for social change, social justice, and gender equity. Finally, the research intended to shed light on the urban charter schools can support their female principals to stay in the profession beyond the current average tenure of 3 years.

Research Question

This research sought to answer the research question:

> What are the challenges and opportunities experienced by novice female charter school principals?

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks guided this research. The first theoretical framework was organizational socialization; the second was social role theory. Both of these theoretical frameworks are discussed in more detail in the next section.

Organizational Socialization

The first theoretical framework was organization socialization first identified by Van Maanen and Schein in 1977. In general, organizational socialization is defined as the process individuals undergo when joining a pre-existing culture (Bengston, 2014; Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). Organizational socialization generally includes a number of processes, including anticipation, entrance into the role, and settling into the role (Bengston, 2014). Within the context of novice female charter school principals, organizational socialization begins when a teacher or assistant principal decides she would like to be a school principal and proceeds through the formal preparation program into a leadership position (Benston, 2014). The process of organizational socialization is ultimately a process of sense-making, and thus socialization that occurs outside of the context of the novice principal's role at an actual school site is limited in effectiveness (Bengston, 2014). One important note of consideration is that many charter school principals do not enter the field through traditional means—namely, through an

administrative credential program. Charter school principals are not required by law to have administrative credentials in California, and thus traditional organizational socialization that female public-school principals experience is not applicable to all female charter school principals.

Social Role Theory

The second theoretical framework for this research was social role theory. This theoretical lens explores the expectations for men and women based on the historical division of labor. Eagly and Johannensen-Schmidt (2001) posited that leadership role expectations are only one way in which new leaders experience the role. New leaders also experience new roles through the perceived roles of their socially identified sex. Given that school leadership is historically held by males, novice female principals entering the role may also have to contend with perceived sex roles of a traditionally male role (Doud & Keller, 1998).

This study considered the lived experiences of novice female charter school principals through the theoretical frames of organizational socialization and social role theory to better understand the opportunities and challenges they faced in an effort to improve their ability to remain in the field beyond the first 3 years.

Methodology

This research study utilized a qualitative methodology to answer the research question: what are the challenges and opportunities experienced by novice female charter school principals? The study had three sources of data collection. The primary source of data was the use of semistructured interviews with seven current novice female urban charter school principals in Los Angeles. Secondly, five of the seven novice female urban charter school principals participated in one of two focus groups. Finally, field notes from the semistructured interviews and focus groups were used to triangulate the data and improve the rigor and validity of the study.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

This study encountered a number of limitations. The primarily limitation of the study was the sample size and population. While the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) does keep a roster of principals of charter schools, the roster does not delineate the identified sex of each leader. Additionally, the roster is not a live document, and may in fact contain inaccuracies that impacted the sampled population. Working off a list pulled in May 2017, I emailed each principal an invitation to participate in the study, but it was impossible to know of that list what percent of the principals were novice and identified as females.

A second potential limitation of the study was that two of the participating principals worked under the researcher. Like the other participants of the study, principals at the researcher's workplace received the invitation to participate, and two principals ended up participating in the study. The researcher attempted to minimize this limitation by clearly explaining that participation was optional, assuring the participants that the researcher was undertaking the study from a learning stance, and that no information shared would be used in the workplace. Further, throughout the study, the principals were reminded of their optional participation and the anonymity of their experiences.

This study was specifically delimited to novice female charter school principals. While the research shows that all school principals are experiencing increased levels of scrutiny and higher expectations, novice female charter school principals have an added layer of complexity in their work as they need to transcend long-held expectations of principals and gender in the current context of school reform. Additionally, charter school principals have increased levels of autonomy in exchange for increased levels of accountability from the state and federal governments. Narrowing the research to novice female charter school principals supported the validity and reliability of the conclusions of the research.

Significance of the Study

This research sought to better understand novice female principals' challenges as they entered into the field and the ways in which urban charter schools can better support this process to ensure their sustainability.

The research has number of areas of significance within the field. To begin, novice female principals will benefit from an increased understanding of how to better support their entry into the profession. Second, better understanding the challenges that novice female charter school principals experience has the potential to inform the ways in which charter management organizations and networks support their work in the role. Finally, highlighting the opportunities and ways in which novice female charter school principals are acting as leaders of social justice and change contributes to the literature on the importance of recruiting, supporting, and retaining female principals.

Positionality

It is important to note that as the researcher of this study, I come from a place of bias and positionality. While completing this research, I was employed as organizational leader of a charter management network that ran seven public charter schools and one preschool. Prior to assuming the role of Chief Learning Officer, I served as an assistant principal and principal of a

school in the organization. My desire to study the challenges and opportunities that novice female charter schools experience was deeply rooted in my own experiences as a young, female school leader in a public charter school. I remember many moments in my first few years as a leader when I questioned my ability to remain in the work and the field. Yet, 12 years later, through the support of mentors and coaches, I believe I am not only sustaining, I am thriving.

Within qualitative research, positionality can be seen as both a benefit and a potential limitation in the field. Within this particular research study and topic, I argue that my experience as a school leader and my own struggle with overcoming role's expectations and organizational socialization into the role strengthened my ability to build rapport with participants and represent their voices adequately.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in a traditional five-chapter format. Chapter 1 explored the background of the problem, the theoretical framework for the research, the question addressed in the study, the purpose and significance of the study, and offered a brief discussion of the research design and limitations, and a definition of key terms. Chapter 2 reviews the current literature within the field related to the study. Chapter 3 discusses the qualitative research methodology, including question set and data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 outlines the data and findings of

the research from the semistructured interviews, focus groups, and field notes. Chapter 5 analyzes the findings and concludes with recommendations to the field to better support novice female charter school principals.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines the opportunities and challenges of being a novice female charter school principal. Now, more than ever, it is important to consider leadership through the perspectives of females, who for so many years have been cast as second-class citizens, not worthy of the highest positions of leadership in our country. Female charter school principals serve in a unique role, filling what has traditionally been a male-dominated field but doing so in a context that is shifting what it means to be a principal (Blount, 1999; Burton & Weiner, 2016; Goldstein, 2004; Mertz, 2006; Rousmaniere, 2007). For example, scholars have noted that over the past 50 years school reform movements have shifted the traditional role of principal from that of a middle-manager to that of an instructional leader who is able to manage structures, people, and processes to influence student achievement (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Cuban, 2001; Gawlik, 2008; Marzano et al., 2003; Seashore Louis, Leightwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). However, scholars have also noted that the increased accountability and high-stakes nature of the latest school reform movements have increased pressure on public school principals. This growing pressure has led to high rates of principal attrition (Fuller & Young, 2009; Hargreaves, 2006; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2013). One subgroup of

principals with some of the highest attrition rates are novice female principals, particularly in urban charter schools (Goldring et al., 2014; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2007; Sun & Ni, 2015; Vickers, 2014). Beyond the traditional organizational socialization and pressures of the role, female charter school principals face pressures related to the historical schooling context and the male-dominated nature of the role (Eagly, 2007; Goldstein, 2014; Loder & Spillane, 2007; Shakeshaft et al., 2007; Williamson, 2002). However, female charter school principals are also uniquely positioned to make a long-lasting impact on outcomes for students based on their feminized styles of leadership and their position as social-change leaders (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Luekens, 2004; Shakeshaft et al., 2007).

This literature review starts by exploring the gender paradox in school leadership and the challenges that females face entering and working within the field of educational leadership. The review then explores how school reform movements have shifted the role of public school principals and brought about new ways of schooling with the emergence of charter schools. Next, this review explores the correlation between increased accountability and principal attrition and the reasons why novice principals leave the field at higher rates in their first three to five years in the role, with particular attention to the attrition rates of novice female charter school principals. The review then transitions to explore the compounded challenges that novice female

charter school principals experience in the field, particularly given their underrepresentation in leadership in the female-dominated teaching profession. Specifically, the review uses social role theory to look at novice female charter school principals' organizational socialization into the role and the paradox of education as a feminized field led primarily by males. Finally, the review focuses on the opportunities of being a novice female charter school principal in the field and the type of leadership necessary to successfully influence student achievement and pave the way for more females to aspire toward, enter into, and sustain careers in public charter school leadership.

The Gender Paradox in Education

This section discusses the persistent gender paradox in K–12 educational leadership. It is a widely discussed fact that while public school teaching is dominated by females, males continue to hold a majority of leadership roles within schools (Burton & Weiner, 2016; Mertz, 2006). Specifically, females currently comprise 76% of the teaching profession; 89% of elementary school teachers are female while 58% of secondary teachers are females (Goldring et al., 2013). Yet, only 64% of elementary and 40% of high school principals are females (Bitterman et al., 2013). Scholars attribute this paradox to the feminization of the teaching profession and the masculinization of the school administration (Blount, 1999; Burton & Weiner, 2016; Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Goldstein, 2014; Mertz, 2006). Despite passage of the

landmark antigender discrimination amendment Title IX over 40 years ago, this underrepresentation of females within educational leadership roles continues to persist (Mertz, 2006).

The Feminization of the Teaching Profession

Throughout the literature, the teaching profession is widely viewed as a feminized profession (Blount, 1999; Carrington & McPhee, 2008). The term *feminized* generally refers to the overrepresentation of females within the field as well as the movement toward more socially ascribed gender norms (Blount, 1999). Scholars cite two significant reasons for this feminization of the field: the historical movement to common schools early in the 20th century as well as widely held and socially constructed views of gender (Blount, 1999; Carrington & McPhee, 2008).

Common school movement's impact on the feminization of the teaching profession.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the United States saw progression toward the common school movement (Goldstein, 2014). This movement was essentially the first edition of public school education as it is known today. The common school movement brought increases in the number of students served by the school system as it sought to educate significantly more students than the White males who previously were the only students allowed to attend school (Goldstein,

2014). Thus, with the founding of common schools, there was an increased need for teachers (Blount, 1999; Goldstein, 2014). Schools and early districts looking to hire significantly more teachers saw an opportunity to more efficiently use resources by hiring female teachers for less money than male teachers (Blount, 1999). During this time-period, the demographics of the teaching profession changed dramatically with the number of female teachers increasing (Blount, 1999; Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Goldstein, 2014). One study found that the percent of female teacher nearly tripled from 25% in 1850 to 68% in 1880 (Strober & Landford, 1986).

Socially constructed views of gender. In addition to scholars attributing the feminization of the teaching field to the overrepresentation of female teachers, they also note the widely held, socially constructed view of females as nurturing care-takers (Blount, 1999). During the same time the common school movement was expanding, Horace Mann, a well-known advocate for universal access noted that "teaching was a women's true calling, one that would take advantage of all her natural, God-given talents of a nurturer" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 26). Teaching has been extensively researched as a feminized field because of its close alignment with traditional social role expectations of women as caretakers (Burton & Weiner, 2016; Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Goldstein, 2014). This gendered view of the teaching profession further reinforced the decline of male teachers, particularly at the elementary school level,

moving into the mid-twentieth century and World War II. As men joined the military and went off to war, women remained behind and continued to fill teaching positions at an over-representative rate (Carrington & McPhee, 2008). While females filled teaching positions, they did not move into educational leadership positions at the same rate (Rousmaniere, 2007). The next section discusses the emergence of the principal position through a gender lens.

A Gendered Analysis of the Emergence of the Principal Position

The principal position began to emerge in the mid-twentieth century with the growth of urban schools (Rousmaniere, 2007). Between the 1920s and 1950s, the principal role continued to solidify its place in education. At the beginning of the emergence, the principal role was one of head teacher—a position that gave a teacher additional administrative responsibility to support the working of the school (Blount, 1999; Rousmaniere, 2007). This early movement to school administrator resulted in a more representative sample of female school leaders since administrators were also teachers. For example, between 1900 and 1950, over two-thirds of elementary schools had female principals (Rousmaniere, 2007). However, this initial representative sample of principals did not last at the elementary school level. In 1972, when Title IX was passed by the United States Congress, females comprised only 20% of elementary school principals (Mertz, 2006).

Conversely, the secondary school principal role has been male-dominated since the inception of the position. Scholars note that the early architecture of secondary schools—such as being more specialized in nature toward vocational and college preparatory—created a more bureaucratized structure that favored a male principal (Rousmaniere, 2007). As of 2013, 60% of public school secondary principals were males (Bitterman et al., 2013).

Scholars attribute the decline in female elementary school principals to a number of factors, led primarily by the bureaucratization of education and educational leadership in both secondary and elementary education meant to professionalize the field (Blount, 1999; Rousmaniere, 2007). Professionalizing the field of educational leadership meant defeminizing the elementary school principal position by adding requirements for educational credentials in graduate school that were limited to men, consolidating smaller schools to create larger schools to attract more male principals, and replacing female elementary principals with male principals (Blount, 1999; Rousmaniere, 2007). Additionally, the decline of females in the principalship is correlated with the end of the World Wars and the return of male soldiers who began to take over the field (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

By 1960s, the principalship in the United States came into alignment with gender norms (Rousmaniere, 2007). “Institutional and personal definitions of manhood and womanhood played

out in schools' staff with the woman in the classroom and the man in the principal's office" (Rousmaniere, 2007, p. 19). This shift toward a gendered view of the principalship set the stage for the passage of Title IX less than a decade later.

The Passage of Title IX

Title IX was passed into law in 1972. This law sought to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex under any educational program or activity that received federal financial assistance. Title IX proclaimed that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (Title IX of the Educational Amendments, 1972).

Schooling and education pre–Title IX. Prior to Title IX, disparities and inequities in females' experiences in schooling stemmed from pervasive discrimination that systematically limited women's abilities to access the same opportunities as males (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Before Title IX, three areas in particular created barriers to females' access to educational administration positions: access to higher education, overt discrimination prior to being admitted to higher education, and blatant discrimination once in the field (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002).

Access to higher education. The first barrier to administration was females' access to higher education. Prior to 1970, it was simply a fact that many higher education institutions excluded females (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). For example, it took more than 100 years for Harvard University to admit females after it was founded, and the University of Virginia did not allow females to attend until 1970 (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Some schools allowed females to attend but had admission policies or other regulations that made it more challenging for them to do so. For example, the University of North Carolina required females to live on campus but had limited on-campus housing options (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). This de facto segregation limited females' access to the education they needed to be considered qualified for administration roles (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002).

Overt discrimination in higher education. The second barrier females experienced on their path to the principal's office related to the types of fields they studied even once they were admitted into higher education institutions (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Females were excluded from studying fields such as math and science, business and administration, and were often segregated into the humanities, elementary education, and psychology. This limitation created inequities in their ability to go into fields such as educational administration (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002).

Overt discrimination in job access. Finally, females experienced overt discrimination even after they attended higher education, had become qualified for the position, and had appropriate experience to enter male-dominated fields (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Discrimination on the basis of gender, such as having children, marital status, or perceived inadequacies, significantly limited their access to higher-level administrative positions (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Title IX sought to eliminate these barriers for females to allow for equitable access to educational administration (Mertz, 2006).

Schooling and education post–Title IX. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 was designed to be comprehensive legislation that would cover all forms of discrimination experienced on the basis of sex (Mertz, 2006; Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Indeed, the law included regulations related to sports and athletics, career advancement, educational opportunity, pregnancy and parenting, and sexual harassment (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). While it is true that advancement has been made as a result of the landmark law, disparities in outcomes for females still exist across all areas that Title IX sought to remedy (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002).

Inequities in degree programs. In 2002, nearly 40 years after Title IX was passed, females made up more than half of all undergraduate students, yet inequities still exist between males and females in doctoral and professional degrees (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). For example,

in 1971, females comprised 16% of all doctorate degrees compared to 42% in 1998 (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). Additionally, females continue to be overrepresented in education, humanities, and psychology and underrepresented in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and math (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). This inequitable representation is a direct result of discriminatory practices prior to Title IX. For example, data representing undergraduate degrees show that females receive 75% of education degrees, 74% of psychology degrees, and 67% of English degrees and only 39% of physical science degrees, 27% of computer science and information degrees, and 8% of engineering degrees (Pueschel & Zirkin, 2002). The following section discusses the longitudinal effect of Title IX on females' access to educational leadership opportunities.

Title IX's Impact on Females in Educational Leadership

Longitudinal studies on the impact of Title IX on females' ability to access educational leadership showed mixed results. Many scholars have noted that one of the biggest challenges to determining the impact of Title IX is the lack of a comprehensive database for, or systematic method of, collecting data to validate analysis (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Levin, Tyack, & Hansot, 1982; Mertz, 2006). Regardless, a few large-scale quantitative studies and longitudinal studies offered some insight into the impact Title IX has had on females in educational

leadership (Mertz, 2006).

The Persistent Underrepresentation of Females in School Leadership

Given the passage of Title IX nearly 50 years ago, one might believe that the United States is approaching equity in regards to the representation of females and males in school principalship. In 1972, when Title IX passed, females comprised 88% of elementary school teachers and 49% of secondary school teachers—but only 2% of high school principals, 3% of middle school principals, and 20% of elementary school principal (Mertz, 2006). A study in 2016 found that females now comprise 64% of K–8 principals and 40% of high school principals (Bitterman et al., 2013). While these current trends certainly represent growth within the number of females currently serving in educational leadership roles, scholars note that the number of males serving in these roles has not decreased (Mertz, 2006). Research attributes the increase in females and the static number of male leaders to an increase in the positions available for leadership and not necessarily to increased percentages of females in the field (Mertz, 2006). The data also do not represent equity given the percentages of females serving as teachers within the field in 2013: 89% of elementary school teachers were female and 58% of secondary school teachers were female (Goldring et al., 2013).

Scholars have argued that, while equity is certainly closer today than in 1972, it remains

elusive. Despite the passage of Title IX, females continue to be underrepresented in school leadership while males continue to fill school leadership roles at over-representative rates (Mertz, 2006). The literature cites a number of reasons for this continued inequity within the field of school leadership. Among the reasons include a historical perspective of the role, a lack of mentorship and networks, the "good ol' boys' club," and role congruity (Eckman, 2004; Goldstein, 2014; Mertz, 2006).

A historical perspective. One reason for the underrepresentation of females in educational leadership is their historical entrance in the field. The common school movement discussed earlier in this chapter was both a catalyst for females in the educational field as well as a barrier to their continued advancement (Rousmaniere, 2007). The common school movement was founded on the ideals of a democratic society (Martin, 2016). Prior to its inception, schooling was reserved for a small subset of wealthy, White males. Horace Mann believed that schooling should be for all and worked to ensure this was the case by founding the common school movement (Blount, 1999; Rousmaniere, 2007). However, with the need to educate more students came the need for more teachers. Females were recruited because they could be paid significantly less than males to teach (Blount, 1999; Goldstein, 2014). The decision to bring females to the field of education feminized teaching while proclaiming that females were second

to men within the field. This legacy can still be seen today, particularly at the high school level where men continue to be a majority (Goldstein, 2014; Martin, 2016).

The good ol' boys' club. Another reason for the persistent underrepresentation of females and overrepresentation of males in school leadership is the "good ole boy's club" (Eckman, 2004). Scholars have found that pathways to the recruitment and selection to the principalship look different for males and females given the dominance of males in decision-making positions, such as the superintendency (Eckman, 2004; Mertz; 2006).

In a study that looked at the differences experienced by male and female principals at the secondary level, Eckman (2004) found that both male and female principals commented on the impact that the disproportionate number of males at the decision-making level had on their access to the principal role. Of the 8 male respondents in a mixed-method study, 6 respondents commented on the role that males within the system had helped them become principals (Eckman, 2004). One male commented that "it's not an objective system where the best person gets to the right places. It's still a good ol' boys network, with all kinds of favoritism, demonstrated in all kinds of ways" (Eckman, 2004, p. 197).

Many of the females in the study also commented on and noticed the role that working within a male-dominated network had had on their pathways to the principalship. For example,

none of the 8 female participants cited receiving phone calls that gave them a lead on an open position. Contrastingly, 6 of the 8 males in the study detailed receiving a call from another male leader encouraging them to apply for or noting an open leadership position (Eckman, 2004).

Male-dominated superintendency. In a longitudinal study on the effect of Title IX on females in educational leadership, Mertz (2006) found that the superintendency is one position where the percent of females holding the role has increased only slightly. In 2000, Skrla, Reyes, and Scheurich found that men were 40 times more likely than females to progress to the superintendency position. While the role of superintendency saw a slight increase in the years following the common school movement, the field has been largely dominated by White males since the 1950s (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Scholars believe that given the slow rate of increases in female superintendents, it will likely be another 77 years for females to be proportionally represented (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Given the role that superintendents play as gatekeepers to the principal role through hiring decisions, mentor and role-model positional power, and accepted norms of the role, the male-dominated superintendency likely limits the movement of females into principal position (Mertz, 2006).

Biases in hiring process. Scholars note that even females who are able to get a foot in the door and make it to an interview process regardless of the "good ol' boys club" often

encounter hiring and interview biases that limited their entry into the field. Eckman (2004) found that 4 of the 8 principals interviewed reported hiring practices that favored males throughout their pathway to the principalship and most of the participants noted that the "good ol' boys club" systematically disadvantaged females seeking school leadership. Another study by Burton and Weiner (2016) found similar experiences by aspiring female principals. One participant noted that despite her efforts to attain a principal position, she was ultimately not offered the role. Through feedback from individuals, the participant realized that "they were really looking for a male leader for the building" (Burton & Weiner, 2016, p. 9).

External barriers to aspiration into the role. In *Women Leading School Systems*, Brunner and Grogan (2007) examined the external barriers to aspiration into school leadership roles.

Lack of sponsorship and role models. The lack of female superintendents and underrepresentation of females in principal roles may be traced back to a lack of mentors for females who are looking to access these positions. The importance of having a sponsor or mentor has been widely noted in the literature as a limiting factor for increasing the number of females in school leadership roles (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

Opportunities for Female Principals

Regardless of the challenges females face entering the field, their place within educational leadership is critical to making changes to the public-school system so it serves all students equitably. The next section will discuss how the role of the public-school principal has shifted with school reform movements over the past 50 years. Scholars have argued that new conceptualizations of the principal role are more aligned to the ways females have traditionally led. This is not to say that all female leaders approach leadership in the same way, but rather a commentary on empirical findings that show female leaders tend to be more participatory, democratic, and collaborative in their leadership styles (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). The next section explores how the shifting principal role and the emergence of charter schools provide an opportunity for female leaders.

School Reform's Impact on the Role of the Public-School Principal

This section discusses how school reform movements over the past 30 years have necessitated a change in the traditional role of public school principals. Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, public education has been a frenzy of new accountability measures and reform (Cuban, 1999). Prior to the past 20 years, very little research focused on the importance of the principal in ensuring ongoing student achievement growth (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

With the rise of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the sense of urgency related to rising student achievement data, focus has turned to the role of the principal in school reform (Marzano et al., 2005). Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) found that state accountability systems under NCLB placed the imperative of school achievement and student achievement on the principal and placed punitive measures on principals when achievement did not meet federal mandates. This high-stakes climate has dramatically shifted the imperative of ensuring strong leaders for every school.

Due to the changing role of schools in educating all students, there is no question that the role of a principal has expanded considerably (Gawlik, 2008). Whereas principals used to be able to succeed by simply following orders, they now must be visionaries and strong leaders to guide the work forward. Gawlik (2008) described this shift:

> Studies on the topic of educational leadership suggest that in the past, principals were able to succeed, at least partially, by simply carrying out the directives of central administration. But management by principals is no longer enough to meet today's educational challenges; instead, principals must assume a greater leadership role. (p. 785)

Namely, the principal's responsibility for ensuring the learning of all students is a key theme in the literature (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Wahlstrom, Seashore

Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). Additionally, the research is clear that strong principals can produce strong results for students and poor leadership can lead to limited student achievement, particularly in urban schools (Marzano et al., 2003). The following section discusses the extent to which principals can influence student achievement and the ways in which this influence occurs.

Measuring a Principal's Impact on Student Achievement

This section discusses current literature on a principal's impact on student achievement. A number of key longitudinal studies measured a principal's impact on student achievement. One meta-analysis of 70 studies involving 2,894 schools and approximately 1.1 million students and 14,000 teachers found a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement (Waters et al., 2003). The study found an average effect size between student achievement and school leadership at nearly .25, meaning that school leadership may account for nearly 25% of the learning gains experienced within a school by students (Waters et al., 2003). Another study, which spanned a 6-year period, sought to validate the claim that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

That a principal can impact student learning is not new information; however, the degree of learning attributed to principals and the ways in which principals can impact learning are

additions to the field of study (Waters et al., 2003). Literature on the topic cites two primary ways that principals impact student achievement and learning (Cravens, Goldring, & Penaloza, 2011). One way principals impact student achievement is through leadership behaviors that work in coordination with each other to create school conditions that foster student learning. In this way, principals play an essential role in ensuring a strong school culture (Cravens et al., 2011; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Secondly, the research has found instructional leadership as a key trait of principals who impact student achievement (Cravens et al., 2011).

The Emergence of the Principal as an Instructional Leader

This section focuses on the shift of principals as instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005; Horng & Loeb, 2010). The construct of principal as instructional leader has been the most studied model of school leadership since the early 1980s (Hallinger, 2005). Hallinger noted the broad agreement on the importance of a shift in the historical lens of principals from middle-manager to local instructional leader. The initial shift to principal as instructional leader began in the late 1970s and 1980s after the emergence of research on the effective schooling movement and has continued in the current school reform movements of NCLB (Hallinger, 2005).

What is meant exactly by the term instructional leader is not uniformly accepted across the field (Hallinger, 2005). However, one construct most widely used in the literature is the

model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). In this model, there are three dimensions of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school culture (Hallinger, 2005). These dimensions have been codified in the research as leadership behaviors that impact student achievement.

Leadership behaviors that impact student achievement. Research has found that when most variables of successful schools are considered, each variable has little effect on the overall success of the school (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Rather, the power of the variables working in tandem with each other is what makes a difference on student achievement outcomes (Wallace Foundation, 2013). The principal has the greatest ability to ensure that these variables work together in ways that foster a strong school culture for student learning (Wahlstrom, Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2013). The Wallace Foundation has named five key ways leaders impact the many variables of student achievement, namely: shaping a vision of academic success for all students; creating a climate hospitable to education; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction; and, managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. These five key areas are discussed in detail in the next section.

Shaping a vision of academic success for all students. This first key practice requires a

fundamental shift in the historic role of the principal within the school (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Historically, the principal role has been one of middle-management. Primarily, the role of the principal was to translate the vision of teaching and learning from the district office and implement and manage the processes in their school building; very little innovation and vision-setting occurred (Rousmaniere, 2007). This key leadership practice requires principals to become learning leaders who set and drive forward an ambitious vision of academic success for all students (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Creating a climate hospitable to education. This key leadership practice means that principals are able to create learning cultures for both students and adults in the school (Wallace Foundation, 2013). One way this happens is through the cultivation of strong professional communities focused on student learning. One longitudinal study found that "leadership effects on student learning occur largely because leadership strengthens professional community; teachers' engagement in professional community, in turn, fosters the use of instructional practices that are associated with student achievement" (Wahlstrom, Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010, p. 10).

Cultivating leadership in others. This key leadership practice requires principals to shift from a more historical authoritative or autocratic view of leadership to a more democratic or

collaborative style of leadership so that "teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 3). Given that principals primarily do their work by influencing and motivating others, being able to establish the conditions to allow others to lead fosters shared purpose and direction (Leithwood, 2003).

Improving instruction. This key leadership practice calls for both indirect and direct methods for improving instruction for all students. Leaders can indirectly improve instruction through strong hiring choices with teachers, strong evaluation processes, and creating conditions for teachers to learn and grow from successful teachers within and outside of school (Wallace Foundation, 2013). This key leadership practice must work in tandem with the others to ensure a strong vision of achievement for all, a school climate and culture focused on student achievement, and a desire to build teacher leaders who own their craft and build up those around them (Leithwood, 2005). Additionally, "principals are increasingly expected to lead their schools within a framework of collaboration and shared decision making with teachers and other staff members" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 2)

Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. The final key leadership practice most resembles the historical role of the school principal as manager but insists that the key function of the management of people, data, and processes is to foster school

improvement (Wallace Foundation, 2013). A number of studies have found that principals need to devote equal amounts of time to developing their instructional leadership and their organizational management:

> Effective instructional leadership combines an understanding of the instructional needs of the school with an ability to target resources where they are needed, hire the best available teachers, provide teachers with the opportunities they need to improve, and keep the school running smoothly. (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 6)

These key leadership behaviors represent the type of leadership necessary to dramatically change results for students in public schools. Scholars have argued that these behaviors are particularly aligned to more feminized approaches to leadership. This is discussed further in in the following section.

Opportunities for Female Principals

Scholars have argued that shifts in the types of principals needed to impact student achievement are also shifts from a masculine style of leadership to a more feminized style of leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). The type of principals needed to maintain authority and push central office directives are leaders who embody more authoritative and agentic leadership qualities. However, the leadership behaviors outlined by the Wallace Foundation require a more

communal approach to the work (2013). This shift represents an opportunity for female principals to find alignment with what is needed to dramatically change results for students and their leadership style (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This shift is explored further in this literature review. The next section explores another shift in schooling and education brought on by the school reform movement, which presents further opportunities for female principals.

School Reform and the Emergence of Charter Schools

Just as school reform efforts have shifted the role of the principal, so too has it impacted the fundamental model of schooling in the United States. This section describes the emergence of public charter schools as a means of better serving students in all school. Prior to 1990, no charter schools existed in the United States. In 1988, Albert Shanker, then president of the American Federation of Teachers, advocated for a new type of school—a charter school (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2015). Shanker was disappointed with the state of public education and the federal and state mandates that were taking away autonomy and freedom from teachers. Shanker contended that in the current approach to educating children, more than 80% of students were not well served. Under Shanker's model, schools would be laboratories for innovation and new ways of educating more students (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2015).

In 1991, Minnesota became the first state in the country to pass legislation allowing the

formation of charter schools. “Following Minnesota’s adoption of the nation’s first charter school law in 1991, state legislation was introduced and passed in state after state. By 2014, there were 6,400 charter schools in 42 states and the District of Columbia” (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2015, p.7). While charter schools differ in some ways from Shanker’s original vision, the key tenants of innovation and local control have remained primary elements of charter schools since 1991 (Luekens, 2004). “A charter school is a public school that, in accordance with an enabling statute, has been granted a charter exempting it from selected state or local rules and regulations” (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p. 4). Like other traditional public schools, charter schools must provide a free and appropriate education, they must be nonsectarian, they are funded through public dollars and must therefore follow all state and federal laws preventing discrimination (Luekens, 2004). A key element that sets charter schools apart from traditional public schools is the autonomy they are granted for increased accountability (Luekens, 2004).

Demographics of Charter School Principals

Much like traditional public schools, charter schools are traditionally run by a school leader, most often called a principal but also referred to as director, executive director, dean of school, and school leader. There are notable differences between traditional district public school principals and charter school principals. Differences span gender, age, and educational lines.

Charter school leaders are much more likely than public school principals to be females (Luekens, 2004).

Charter school principals have been found to be slightly younger and slightly more racially and ethnically diverse than traditional public school principals, even though the overwhelming majority of school leaders continue to be White (Luekens, 2004). On average, charter school principals have less experience as principals and teachers than public district school principals (Luekens, 2004), including years in leadership positions and teaching experience. Additionally, charter school principals are more likely to move directly from teaching to leadership positions than move into an assistant principalship first (Luekens, 2004). Charter school leaders are less likely than traditional public school principals to hold a graduate degree; nearly 20% of charter school principals earned a bachelor's degree or less compared to only 2% of traditional public school administrators (Luekens, 2004).

Gender demographics of charter school leaders. Comparing the gender demographics of charter schools to traditional public schools, the former is more diverse and gender-representative than the latter (Bitterman et al., 2014; Vickers, 2014). This is not to say that females are represented equitably in charter schools but rather that they are closer to being represented equitably there than in traditional public schools. The most recent survey of public

and private school principals revealed that females made up 53.5% of all charter school principals while they make up only 51.5% of traditional public school principals (Bitterman et al., 2014). A comparison study completed for a dissertation on charter school principals and traditional public school principals also found that charter school principals were more likely to be female (Vickers, 2014).

Charter School Principals' Leadership Behaviors

As with traditional public school principals, charter school principals are expected to be instructional leaders who are able to set direction toward a vision, cultivate a climate that inspires learning, hire and retain talent, improve instruction, and manage people, data, and processes (Wallace Foundation, 2013). However, charter school principals often have additional responsibilities beyond what a traditional public school principal would have. For example, charter school principals may have tasks that are historically taken care of by district-level administration in traditional school districts. Examples of this might include facilities, budgeting, human resources, and fundraising (Cravens et al., 2012; Luekens, 2004; Vickers, 2014).

> Given the multiple, unique responsibilities involved in the administration and management of charter schools, it has become clear that these schools require experienced, highly qualified leaders. In fact, because of their autonomy, charter schools

may require even stronger leadership than traditional public schools. (Luekens, 2004, p. 3)

Opportunities for Charter School Principals

Many charter school principals have an opportunity to create excellent schools given the context of charter schools. Among the opportunities afforded to charter school principals discussed in the literature is the autonomy they have to do their job, the choice inherent in working at a charter school, and the high level of flexibility and local decision-making for the school to best serve its student body (Gawlik, 2008; Luekens, 2004). The following section discusses these opportunities in depth.

Autonomy. Charter school principals experience a number of opportunities related to their work in the field. A key opportunity for charter school principals is the autonomy they experience in the role (Gawlik, 2008). Charter schools are often seen as deregulated entities and thus principals there experience more autonomy than in a bureaucratic entity of a school district (Gawlik, 2008).

Choice. Another opportunity explored in the literature is the idea of choice. Charter schools have long been viewed as schools of choice for students and families. So is it true that charter schools are schools of choice for principals (Gawlik, 2008). Unlike traditional districts,

where principals are often placed by superintendents, charter school principals select the schools they want to work (Gawlik, 2008). The idea of choice is important in considering its correlation to job satisfaction (Luekens, 2004).

Local control. Charter schools were founded on the premise that locally controlled schools could make better decisions to serve the specific student population of the school (Gawlik, 2008). Unlike traditional public school districts that may have superintendents making decisions related to instruction for students across multiple demographic, cultural, and academic spectrums in a top-down manner, charter school principals can make decisions on a local level. This local level control and decision making allows better data-driven and informed decisions for student achievement (Gawlik, 2008).

Challenges for Charter School Principals

The opportunities afforded to charter school principals are not devoid of challenges. As discussed earlier, the charter school principal role is often more expansive than that of a traditional public school principal, requiring strong leaders to do the job well (Gawlik, 2008). Additionally, with the opportunity for increased autonomy and innovation comes the challenge

of an increase in accountability (Luekens, 2004). This section further discusses these challenges in depth.

Additional responsibilities. Given the smaller, less bureaucratic nature of charter schools, charter school principals must handle administrative tasks typically completed at the district level, including financial management, recruitment and hiring of personnel, data collection and reporting, and record-keeping (Cravens et al., 2012; Luekens, 2004;). Additional responsibilities of charter school principals might include maintaining facilities, recruiting and retaining families, leading fundraising efforts, and collaborating with a governing board and authorizing district or agency (Carpenter & Peak, 2013). In fact, many charter school principals describe their roles more like that of a district superintendent (Perry, 2008).

Accountability. The tradeoff that charter school principals make for an increase in autonomy in their work is the expectation that their schools perform better than the local district traditional public schools. "This new form of accountability holds charter schools accountable for their outcomes as specified in their charters" (Gawlik, 2008, p. 784). This increase in accountability can counteract the autonomy charter school principals have by increasing the perceived constraints of the school (Gawlik, 2008). Scholars have noted that charter schools are held accountable to the same measurements of success as traditional public schools, namely:

student achievement, standards and curriculum, assessments, and discipline (Dressler, 2001). However, unlike traditional public schools that will continue to exist even after not meeting accountability targets, charter schools are at risk of losing their right to operate (Dressler, 2001). Given that charter schools are only authorized for a period of time, achieving and maintaining student achievement results is imperative for the sustainability and longevity of the school.

Principal attrition. The challenges of increased accountability and workload have led to increases in the rates of charter school principals leaving the profession. A study comparing traditional public school principals and charter school principals found that that charter school principals left the profession at a higher and faster rate than traditional public school principals (Sun & Ni, 2015). In a field where the attrition rate is already high for principals, the fact that nearly 50% of principals leave the field within five years is a staggering reality (Fuller & Young, 2009). The next section discusses principal sustainability in the current era of school reform, with a particular emphasis on novice female charter school principals.

School Reform and Principal Sustainability

The previous section discussed how school reform movements have influenced the changing role of public school principals and the emergence of charter schools. Given the findings related to the impact that principal leadership has on student achievement and the fact

that principals live in the nexus of school reform and accountability, ensuring they can sustain the role is an important consideration (Hargreaves, 2006). The literature in the field on principal sustainability shows that it takes, on average, five years to fully realize the shared vision, expectations, and school culture necessary for sustained and improved student achievement (Hargreaves, 2006; Seashore Louis et al., 2004). A study conducted by Fuller and Young (2009) found that only about half of newly hired principals stayed for 3 years. Even more concerning is that less than 30% of principals stayed beyond five years (Goldring et al., 2014).

Using data from a 2012–2013 survey, Goldring et al. (2014) studied the attrition rates and mobility of school leaders across public and private school sectors. The study used the public school principal status and private school principal status data file for the 2012–2013 Principal Follow-up Survey (PFS). The PFS is a nationally representative sample survey of traditional public district schools and charter public schools as well as private school principals. The U.S. Census Bureau conducted the survey. Surveys were mailed to participants of the 2011–2012 Schools and Staffing Survey. Of the 9,200 possible schools, 4,800 schools responded.

Themes in Principal Attrition

Goldring et al. (2014) found a number of variables related to principal attrition, including differences in school setting, experience level, and gender, among other factors. The following sections describe the findings related to differences between these variables.

Principal attrition by school setting. Goldring et al. (2014) found that nearly 20% of principals in affluent public schools left every year. This attrition rate is even more significant when examining schools that work with historically underserved and oppressed populations as the percent increases when looking at high poverty school principals and charter school principals (Goldring et al., 2014). The study found that of all district public school principals who responded (N = 4,800) in the 2012–2013 school year, 78% stayed in their school from the previous year. For principals of public charter schools, only 71% of principals remained in the same school. Additionally, the percent of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch was positively correlated with the attrition rate of principals. Schools where 0–34% of students qualified for free and reduced lunch had a principal retention rate of 80% while schools with 75% or more had a retention rate of 72.6% (Goldring et al., 2014). Given that many urban

charter schools fit the categorization of serving a higher percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, they are more susceptible to higher principal turnover rates.

Principal attrition by experience level. A study conducted by Fuller and Young (2009) found that just over 50% of new principals stay for 3 years and less than 30% of principals stay beyond year five. For principals who do stay beyond the initial five years, the attrition rate continues to be above 10% per year. For principals who stay in the role for ten years, the attrition rate jumps to 16% per year (Goldring et al., 2014). These data points show that retaining newer principals in the field over a longer period of time is as important as recruiting and replacing principals who have been in the role for longer.

Principal attrition by gender. Research has found mixed-results on principal attrition by gender. These mixed-results are partly due to the limited amount of research on the topic and partly due to the lack of a comprehensive, systematic database that tracks trends in principal mobility and attrition. Regardless of the limited data, much of the research that does exist in the field showed that females were more likely than males to change positions or leave the educational field altogether (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

In a review of trends between 1987 and 2011, the National Center for Educational Statistics found that experienced female principals were actually less representative of the field

today than in 1987. For example, in 1987, experienced female principals represented 47% of all principals whereas today, only 12% of principals were experienced females (Hill, Ottem, & DeRoche, 2016). These data points suggest that female principals are leaving the field at higher rates than male principals. Additionally, in charter schools, where the percent of female principals is more representative of the number of females in the field, principals leave at higher rates than traditional public schools (Goldring et al., 2014). Considering the underrepresentation of female leaders within the field, higher rates of attrition for females is concerning.

Reasons for Principal Attrition

This section discusses themes in the literature related to why principals are leaving the field at such high rates. First, the review discusses the overarching body of literature related to increasing novice principal attrition rates. The themes that this literature review discuss include an increasingly negative perspective of public school employees, a sense of ultimate responsibility, the complexity of the role, and the isolation experienced by new principals.

Increasingly negative public perspective. A study completed by Public Agenda, a research-based organization that seeks to research the public's perspective on policy issues for the Wallace Foundation, found that the movement to high-stakes testing accountability impacted the public's perception of the quality of principals in the field and their ability to improve

educational outcomes for students (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Ultimately, one of the major findings of the study was the impact NCLB legislation had had on the public's perspective of public schooling. The study found that principals had taken on a sense of responsibility while the public's support for public education had wavered (Wallace Foundation, 2013). This has driven even some of the best principals from the field (Farkas et al., 2003).

Ultimate sense of responsibility and isolation. Beyond the increasing levels of responsibility and challenges facing principals, novice principals new to the field face heightened levels of challenges. Spillane and Lee (2013) looked at the transition into the principal role by novice principals. By using data from the Principal Policy and Practice Study conducted by Northwestern University's School of Education, the transition and on-the-job socialization of new principals was considered. The study found that newer principals, in particular, were underprepared for the increased of stress of "ultimate responsibility" of the job. They found the role isolating, lonely, and stressful—characteristics that other studies have cited as leading to burnout and attrition (Spillane & Lee, 2013).

Organizational socialization into the role. The literature cites several areas in which new principals struggle beyond the ultimate sense of responsibility. New principals often struggle with the socialization of becoming a principal—the shift from a larger peer group to

being the person in charge with no other peers at a school, and the professional isolation that follows (Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Spillane & Lee, 2014). New principals also struggled with the legacy of the previous principal of the school, particularly when the previous principal had a particular style of leadership that differed from their style (Spillane & Lee, 2013). When principals came into a school culture with established procedures, routines, and ways of being, at times, changes they made resulted in resistance by the school staff (Spillane & Lee, 2013).

Complexity of the role. New principals frequently were challenged to manage their time and prioritize the multiple tasks required of them (Spillane & Lee, 2013). New principals must quickly get up to speed with the context, culture, and needs of the school while dealing with the day-to-day operations of the school. Many of the tasks principals deal with on a day-to-day basis are unconnected, and thus novice principals struggle to manage their time and prioritize the most important tasks (Spillane & Lee, 2013).

Charter School Attrition Challenges

Given the challenges that principals face, the complex nature of charter schools adds an even greater layer of challenge to the role. Many charter schools lack the district level support, and thus charter school principals are responsible for many district-like responsibilities in addition to the traditional principal responsibilities (Cravens et al., 2012; Luekens, 2004). The

added complexity to the role principal role in charter schools may be contributing the increased levels of attrition (Sun & Ni, 2015).

The Compounded Challenges for Novice Female Principals

The previous section discussed themes in the literature related to socializing into the role and the reasons why principals are leaving the field at high rates. Beyond the challenges that nearly all principals experienced entering the role and the added challenges of being a charter school principal, female principals experienced additional challenges related to their perceived gender roles and the fact that the principalship has historically been male-dominated (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010). Scholars noted that leadership styles most typically associated as feminine and found in correlation with female leaders are closely aligned with the type of leadership currently needed with urban school reform (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). However, Eagly (2007) noted that females are increasingly known for having strong leadership skills associated with capably managing school reform, stereotypes, biases, and challenges to enter, sustain, and be successful in the field are still commonly present for female leaders. The next section discusses the added challenges that novice female principals experience in the role including a historical perspective of the challenges, their socialization into the role, and traditional views of leadership.

Historical Perspective

As discussed earlier in the literature review, from a historical perspective, women's entrance into the field set up the pathway for their marginalization in administration roles. Specifically, women's barriers to administration are rooted in nineteenth-century ideas about the teaching role as an extension of the domestic ideal (Goldstein, 2014; Loder & Spillane, 2005). The separation between teaching and administration began with the inception of more bureaucratic institutions such as school districts. Moving into the mid-twentieth century, education became guided by the scientific management of schools. During this time, men were believed to be more capable of leading and managing. This belief has been rooted firmly in the fabric of American public education and has impacted female principal's experience within the role (Loder & Spillane, 2005).

Organizational socialization into the role. The literature suggests that this theoretical lens is applicable to all new principals but is especially intense for novice female charter school leaders (Williamson & Hudson, 2002). The literature defines organizational socialization as a process in which one develops the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to perform a role (Merton, 1968). Research on educational leadership suggests that the socialization process is intense and informal (Williamson & Hudson, 2002). The informal ways that leaders socialize

into the role include "perceptions of the role by others, the images of the profession, and the degree to which the role influenced other occupations, one's personal orientation to the job, family influences, and personal conceptions of the role" (Williamson & Hudson, 2002, p. 6).

Females who are entering leadership roles have the added challenge of considering the ways their gender and leadership style is perceived by stakeholders around them. "Because traditional stereotypes cast women… as socially incongruent as leaders, they face greater challenges becoming integrated into the organization "(Shakeshaft et al., 2007, p. 109). Given that females are entering a traditionally male-dominated field, their ability to critically analyze the expectations of the role and the perceived expectations of the role is necessary to succeed.

Traditional views of leadership. One challenge with socializing into leadership is that traditional views of leadership tend to be masculine in nature (Eagly, 2007). Other scholars have noted that when gender is studied in leadership, it is traditionally studied from a female lens (Shakeshaft et al., 2007). The lack of research on male leadership is evidence of the bias that when leadership has been studied, it is done from a male-centric lens. Scholars have found that "people more easily credit men with leadership ability and more readily accept them as leaders" (Eagly, 2007, p. 3).

Prejudice related to gender. Another challenge that females experience in the field is their perceived capabilities prior to even entering a role. Eagly (2007) discussed this prejudicial bias by examining a Gallup Survey from 1953 to 2006 that asked respondents whether they preferred to work for a man or a woman. While 43% of respondents said "it did not matter," 37% of respondents said they would prefer to work for a male (Eagly, 2007). As already discussed, this preference can lead to inequities in promotions for positions (Eagly, 2007). However, once a female is in a leadership position, it can also lead to inequitable evaluation and support processes (Eagly, 2007).

Social Role Theory

Another theoretical lens through which to analyze the challenges female principals face is social role theory. This theoretical lens originally emerged following a period of research on gender from the 1950s–1970s that found differences associated with gender norms and expectations. During the 1980s, in an increasing body of literature on the role that expectancy places on outcomes, scholars began to note the match between perceived gender differences and gender performance (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). Social role theory "argues that the beliefs that people hold about the sexes are derived from observations of the role performances of men and women and thus reflect the sexual division of labor and gender hierarchy of the society"

(Eagly et al., 2000, p. 125). This theory is based on the importance of social roles, specifically the traditional familial roles based originally on work by Parsons and Bales in 1955 (Eagly et al., 2000).

This theoretical lens examines the challenges that individuals have when they are in roles that are historically gender-dominated by the opposite gender. In the United States, females continue to have lower wages than males and are less likely to be found in higher levels of an organization (Eagly et al., 2000). Social role theory argues that individuals start to take on the expectant behaviors of the role based on commonly held beliefs about the roles. "The expectancies associated with gender roles act as normative pressures that foster behaviors consistent with sex-typical work roles through expectancy confirmation process and self-regulatory processes" (Eagly et al., 2000, p. 127).

This literature review has already examined the historical lens of the male-dominated principal role. However, further examining this role from a social role theory perspective determined that female principals are challenged in multiple ways. On one hand, female principals operate in a traditionally male field. Females who bring styles of leadership that are more feminine in nature as discussed earlier may be judged as not being tough enough for the role. Conversely, females who bring more masculine leadership styles will be seen as

incongruent with their perceived gender. In this sense, "this marginalization results in women not only being expected to behave like men, but also on being judged on how womanly they are (Shakeshaft et al., 2007, p. 109). Eagly (2007) named this contradiction a double bind—females are expected to be "communal because of the expectations inherent in the female gender role, and they are also expected to be agentic because of the expectations inherent in most leader roles" (p. 3).

Challenges associated with feminized styles of leadership. Females who take on a more feminized style of leadership are viewed as congruent with their gender but may have their credibility and abilities as a leader questioned. Williamson and Hudson (2002) examined graduate students' perspectives on entering the field and found that female leaders who embodied more feminine leadership qualities such as relational leadership, leadership for social justice, and spiritual leadership acknowledged that they encountered challenges. Some leaders spoke specifically of blatant discrimination based on their styles of leadership such as being called weak, and being told to "be more assertive" and "act more male" (Williamson & Hudson, 2002, p. 21). Skrla et al. (2000) characterized this conundrum as female leaders being seen as incompetent because they are not acting like men. Yet, even when females embrace a more masculinized approach to leadership, they experience additional challenges in the role (Eagly,

2007).

Challenges associated with masculine styles of leadership. Females who take on a more masculine style of leadership are viewed as incongruent with their gender and thus may be discriminated against based on traditional views of being female. Skrla et al. (2000) noted that this incongruence of females who have more masculine leadership styles can lead to negative perceptions. For example, a number of studies have noted the gender prejudice females experience in this regard. Specifically, one study noted that while a man may be complimented as being firm, a female will be called stubborn (Williamson & Hudson, 2002). Thus, females who employ more masculine styles of leadership may face challenges to their leadership in principal roles (Eagly, 2007).

Microagressions and Their Effects

Scholars have noted that overt forms of hostile sexism may have given way to the more covert forms of sexism females experience (Paludi & Breena, 2011). Some of these covert forms of sexism are called microagressions. Microagressions are defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavior, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards members of oppressed groups" (Nadal, 2008, p. 23).

While microagressions may seem like small slights, studies have shown that, over time, they are detrimental to the group on the receiving end (Wing Sue, 2010). Research has shown that the consistent presence of microagressions against female leaders can lead to decreased levels of self-confidence, increased levels of stress, higher rates of instances of mental health issues, increased levels of cognitive disruption, and increased levels of stereotype threat (Wing Sue, 2010). The constant presence of microagressions in female's everyday life may lead to challenges sustaining in the field.

Opportunities for Novice Female Charter School Principals

This literature review has thus far examined the gender paradox within K–12 educational leadership and the impact that historical context and laws have had on females within the field. Additionally, the literature review has explored the emergence of new ways of leading and schooling within education and analyzed females' connections and roles within these new fields. Next, the literature review identified the challenges of sustaining as a new leader and then moved into discussing the added challenges novice females face socializing into the field from a social role theoretical frame. The next section will discuss the opportunities within the field for novice female charter school principals. Novice females serving as principals of charter schools have an

opportunity to work in an emerging context of school leadership to make significant impacts on student achievement. Given the autonomy and choice associated with being a charter school principal, the flexibility to innovate and provide additional support and resources, and the correlation between feminized leadership styles and the type of leadership needed to significantly impact student achievement, great opportunity for female principals exists within the role.

Leadership that Leads to Dramatically Different Results

Novice female charter school principals have an opportunity to dramatically influence students' current and future achievement by imagining new ways of leading. Given the ability of charter school principals to lead with more autonomy and innovation and the research literature that speaks to the connections of feminized leadership styles with the type of leadership necessary for school reform, novice female charter school leaders are uniquely poised to greatly impact outcomes for students (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2007; Luekens, 2004). This section outlines the literature in the field related to studying female leaders and their behavioral attributes.

How Female Principals Lead

Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) noted that the literature on female leadership styles suggest some thematic areas associated with females. The scholars noted that researching

leadership behaviors that are commonly found among females is not the same as comparing female and male leadership behaviors. In fact, scholars noted that "the body of research that examines leadership behaviors suggests several components of female leadership, although gender comparative studies do not support that only women employ these approaches (Shakeshaft et al., 2007, p. 116). Scholars noted five trends related to how female principals lead: relational leadership, leadership for social justice, leadership for learning, spiritual leadership, and balanced leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Shakeshaft et al., 2007).

Relational leadership. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) characterized this attribute by noting that leadership is not always a hierarchical endeavor. Rather, they argued that a review of empirical research on female leaders noted that females often discussed their accomplishment of goals as a group effort. Specifically, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) noted that "studies suggest that women conceptualize power differently and are likely to seek to expand everyone's power [and that this] approach has considerable impact on organizational behavior and change (p. 7). Literature studied by Grogan and Shakeshaft to examine females' perceptions of the importance of power in leading show differences from the typical masculine portrayals of power over someone else. Rather, females view "the concept of power with rather than power over" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 7).

The concept of power *with* is critical in considering how females lead through relationships. Relational leadership is about the ability of a leader to build relationships through power sharing rather than power taking. One way that female leaders display this leadership attribute is through leadership moves that gather feedback and information from stakeholders (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). In a meta-analysis of studies looking at differences between male and female leaders, Eagly, Karau, and Johnson (1992) found that female principals were much more likely than male principals to lead in a more democratic style and thus that "women who occupy the principal role are more likely than men to treat teachers and other organizational subordinates as colleagues and equals and to invite their participation in the decision making" (p. 91). Ultimately, "relational leadership is about facilitating the work of others who share the power and authority to collaboratively craft direction" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 10).

Leadership for social justice. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) found that females were more likely than men to identify their motivation for entering the field of education as the desire to make change in the world. Specifically, females, "more often than men, talk about having entered teaching to change the lives of children, to make the world a fairer place, and to change intuitions so that all children have a chance" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 11). Grogan and

Shakeshaft noted many studies that indicated social justice as an initial motivator for entering the field.

Spiritual leadership. This attribute is closely aligned with leadership for social justice. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) noted that many female school leaders are dually interested in leadership for social justice and being called to do so by a higher power. The scholars noted that spiritual leadership is a strong theme found throughout the literature, particularly for female leaders of color (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Beyond being a motivation for entering the field and being called by a higher power, spiritual leadership serves female leaders by guiding the ways in which they lead others and in serving as a source of inspiration in challenging times (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). "Many women educational administrators report that it is their spirituality that gives them hope, increasing their resilience so that they can keep working for change" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 15).

Leadership for learning. Perhaps the leadership attribute most directly aligned with the type of principals needed for school reform is leadership for learning. Shakeshaft and Grogan (2011) noted that many studies have highlighted the importance of instruction for female educational leaders. Studies have shown that female leaders are likely to develop effective staff development approaches, nurture innovation within instructional approaches, and highlight the

importance of strong instruction in the school (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This attribute makes females more likely to "push for instructional change that improves learning" a key in the type of leadership that is necessary to impact school reform. (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 18).

Brunner and Grogan (2007) noted that one reason this attribute seems to be true for females is that they tend to spend more time in the classroom than their male counterparts. Additionally, female leaders tend to make and prioritize decisions in their leadership based on teaching and learning (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). It is not that female leaders do not manage the other details of the school but rather that they are inspired by "watching students grow and develop" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 19).

Balanced leadership. The final theme that emerged from literature on female leaders is that of balanced leadership. With this theme, scholars noted that female leaders worked to balance the responsibilities they had at work and the responsibilities they had at home (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). A number of different scholars have studied this phenomenon. Scholars have found that females from both traditional and nontraditional gender-role marriages or backgrounds felt a desire to balance both their work as educational leaders and their home life (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) specifically noted that "although women leaders in the twenty-first century are clearly free to choose to concentrate on work in the

same way a man does, many prefer to attain a balance between their work lives and their family lives (p. 23).

Connections between How Females Lead and Leadership Behaviors for Student Achievement

The previous sections detailed research on how females lead. This section discusses the intersection between how females lead and leadership behaviors for student achievement as discussed earlier in this review. Some of the leadership behaviors that are themes in the literature are directly correlated to key attributes in the ways females lead. Instructional leadership, setting a vision for all students to learn, and leading for learning are direct connections between the two fields of study. Additionally, female leaders' desire to lead from a relational place is connected to cultivating leadership in others and creating a climate hospitable to education.

Leadership that Develops and Supports Other Female Leaders

If one of the challenges for female leaders is a lack of role models, mentors, and networks to encourage others to go into the field, novice female charter school leaders have an opportunity to encourage the development and advancement of more female leaders by serving as mentors and role models for aspiring female leaders. Just as studies found that the dominance of males within administration roles leads to the recruitment and appointment of more males within the

role (Eckman, 2004), so too can the encouragement and hiring by females lead to the hiring and appointment of more females (Shakeshaft et al., 2007).

In a study that looked at the differences experienced by male and female principals at the secondary level, Eckman (2004) found that both male and female current principals commented on the impact that the disproportionate number of males at the decision-making level had on their access to the principal role. Given the role superintendents play as gate-keepers to the principal role, the male-dominated nature of the role may limit the movement of females into principal roles (Mertz, 2006). However, females have an opportunity to work in direct opposition to this finding by serving as mentors, volunteering for search committees and hiring committees and encouraging other females to consider educational administration roles (Shakeshaft et al, 2007).

Leadership that Breaks Through Glass Ceilings and Represents Social Change

Finally, novice female charter school principals have an opportunity to continue to push toward cracking and breaking the glass ceiling that so many females have run into (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Females serving in principal roles operate as direct agents of social justice and change itself, and females in educational administration roles challenge the status quo (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Grogan and Shakeshaft noted that females "lives and work were

not just directed toward changing the social context in which children grow and learn: their lives—all by themselves—represented change. In other words, the women were the change." (p. 15). Female leaders serving as principals have the opportunity to make lasting change as they stand on the shoulders of those who came before them, and continue to pave the way.

Conclusion

This review examined literature on the opportunities and challenges that novice charter school principals experience in the field. First, the review explored the gender paradox in education by considering why, when education is a female-dominated field, are the majority of administrators men. The review explored the historical reasons for this gender paradox and the impact Title IX had on the overrepresentation of male principals. The review then explored the shifting role of the public school principal and the emergence of charter schools. Next, the review explored the challenges that principals and charter school principals have socializing into the role. Finally, the review discussed the challenges female principals experience through the lens of social role theory and challenges and opportunities for novice female charter school principals. Understanding the experiences of a novice female charter school principal is an important step in supporting their longevity and duration in the field to have an impact on student learning and shifting the status quo of access to leadership for other females.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter explored the challenges and opportunities that novice female charter school principals experience in the role. Challenges related to organizational socialization and perceived credibility within the context of historical gender norms can make it difficult for novice female charter school principals to persist and excel in the role. However, literature notes that the types of leaders needed to truly reform public education are most often leaders who lead from a feminized approach—that is to say a more democratic, communal, and relational place. This alignment between the types of leaders needed to improve outcomes for students and the ways in which female principals lead presents an opportunity to capitalize on this finding. Developing a deeper understanding of the experiences of novice female charter school leaders will contribute to the literature and public education's ability to better support novice female charter schools to sustain in the field longer.

This chapter explores the research question and design underpinning the study. Specifically, the use of qualitative research methodology using semistructured interviews, focus groups, and field notes is discussed in depth. This chapter also presents the site selection, data collection, participant sampling methodology, and data management and analysis. Additionally,

the chapter discusses the positionality of the researcher, the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the study, the limitations of the study, and the timeline for the study.

Research Question

The question that guided this research was: what are the challenges and opportunities experienced by novice female charter school principals? This research question allowed for the lived experiences and voices of novice female charter school principals to be elevated and to guide the study. The question allowed for the stories of the participants of the study to shape the findings while being grounded in the theoretical frameworks of organizational socialization and social role theory.

Rationale of the Qualitative Research Approach

The study used a qualitative research methodology approach to explore the experiences of novice female charter schools to make meaning of the opportunities and challenges that they face in the role. Qualitative research is particularly well aligned to this purpose as it is meant for research that explores human experiences and perspectives that are complex and rich (Flick, 2014). Additionally, the voices of females are often marginalized through nonqualitative

methods; qualitative research methods support the goal of this study to elevate the voices of females and allow their stories and their goals to be heard (Flick, 2014).

Methodology

Specifically, the study employed three types of qualitative data collection meant to allow for triangulation of the data collection process. Flick noted, "triangulation refers to the combination of different methods, study groups, local, and temporal settings, and different theoretical perspectives in dealing with a phenomenon" (2014, p. 183). In this study, semistructured interviews, focus groups, and field notes were used to collect the data and allow for rigorous triangulated data analysis.

Semistructured Interviews

The primary data collection used in the study was semistructured interviews. The semistructured methodology is particularly effective for research designs that are meant to allow the voices of participants to reveal information and support the process of new meaning making through the research study (Flick, 2014). Flick noted that semistructured interviews assume that interviewees have deep understanding of the topic of study. "This knowledge includes assumptions that are explicit and immediate and which interviewees can express spontaneously in answering an open question" (Flick, 2014, p. 217). Within this particular study, semistructured

interviews supported the researcher's desire to tell the stories of novice female charter school principals to elevate the opportunities and challenges they experience on a day-to-day basis. Specially, "The semi-structured interview provides a repertoire of possibilities. It is sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of the study, while leaving space for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus" (Galleta, 2013, p. 24). The participants of the study supported the construction of the knowledge through their engagement with the interview question set and the conversation with the researcher.

Given the researcher's own invested interest in the topic, having once been a novice charter school principal who sustained in the field beyond the typical 3 years cited in the research, the semistructured interview process allowed a natural conversation to occur. "The reciprocity, or give and take, create[ed] space for the researcher to probe a participant's responses for clarification, meaning making, and critical reflection" (Galleta, 2013, p. 24). Together, the researcher and participant allowed the stories to unfold and guide the focus of the study. The semistructured interviews were guided by an interview protocol that followed Galleta's (2013) recommendation for interviews with increasing complexity. The first block of the interview protocol focused on questions meant to develop rapport between the participant and researcher. Block two of the interview protocol provided an opportunity to dive deeper into

questions meant to elicit themes from the research. Finally, block three included questions that Galleta named as *confronting*: meant to illicit deeper thoughts related to the themes found in the literature. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix A.

Focus Groups

A focus group is an informal discussion about a topic by a particular group of individuals (Wilkinson, 2004). Focus groups have their roots in the early 1920s but were not widely used until the 1970s, when their popularity increased through the use of market research (Wilkinson, 2004). Unlike interviews, focus groups involve posing questions to support a dialogue among the focus group members. The purpose of the researcher is to promote the interaction between the focus group members to allow for more the collective knowledge and meaning-making of the group to emerge (Morgan, 1997).

Particularly given literature on the potential of developing networks of female leaders and the power of serving as support systems for each other, the focus group methodology was aligned with the research question (Shakeshaft et al., 2007). The underlying belief is that the solidarity that emerges from being in a group of people with similar lived experiences may make it easier for the participants to be more authentic, honest, and reflective in their discussions and answers (Wilkinson, 2004). Focus groups allow for participants to build off one another's ideas

to make meaning together. In this way, the focus group process becomes more synergist and allows for more elaboration and depth than found in one-on-one interviews (Wilkinson, 2004). "The hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Morgan, 1997, p. 2).

Use of a focus group followed the completion of the individual semistructured interviews. The question set was based on themes that emerged from the initial semistructured interview data analysis. The purpose of this was to allow for deeper exploration of the lived experiences of novice female charter school principals. Morgan (1997) noted that "preliminary individual interviews can help generate focus group discussion guides by giving a feel for how people think and talk about the topic that the group[s] will discuss" (p. 22). Additionally, conducting a focus group allowed the analysis to guide the interview set for the focus group. Morgan (1997) argued that the combination of semistructured interviews and the focus group methodology serves the purpose of strengthening the entire research study.

Field Notes

The third method of data collection for this research study was the use of field notes during the semistructured interviews and focus groups. Field notes are "the written account of

what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data of the qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 119). The use of field notes aligns closely with the reflexive nature of qualitative research. "Qualitative research… involves reflexivity. This reflexivity is intimately bound up in all phases of the research, often contributing in substantial ways to the resulting conceptual framework" (Galletta, 2013, p. 77)

The use of field notes through the semistructured interviews and the focus group served two main functions. The first was to remain conscious of the need for reflexivity. As an individual who was once a novice female charter school principal, I bring with me my own lived experiences, assumptions, and beliefs around the challenges and opportunities that face novice female charter school principals. Ensuring that I was raising my consciousness around my own reactions and meaning-making from participants stories and responses supported the validity of the analysis that emerged from the study.

In qualitative research, the primary instrument of data collection is the researcher (Patton, 2015). Therefore, the field notes also serve as a meaning-making opportunity for the researcher's lived experience. They allow the researcher to make connections, observe participants' experiences with the study, and capture potential thoughts around the significance of the study. Field notes were taken during the interviews and focus group and included a period of reflection

following each interview and focus group for approximately one hour. Flick (2014) noted that the immediacy of reflecting on the field notes produces rigor in the study.

Research Setting

The setting for this research study was urban charter schools in Los Angeles County. Charter schools are schools that have an approved charter through a valid authorizing district or county of education division. Urban is defined as schools that serve a majority of students who either qualify for free and reduced lunch status and/or racially identify as non-White. While the setting for this study was not any single school, the novice female principals were currently serving as leaders of schools that met these definitions.

Los Angeles is home to more charter schools than any other city in the United States (California Charter School Association [CCSA], 2015. In the 2015–2016 school year, there were 359 charter schools serving nearly 200,000 students in the Los Angeles county area (CCSA, 2014). Of these students, 83% identified as Latino or African American, and 79% qualified for free and reduced lunch.

Data show that charters in Los Angeles are outperforming local school districts in serving low-income students of color. Specifically, in 2015 the CCSA reported that LAUSD has a large achievement gap between different student subgroups, with graduation rates ranging from 52%

to 85%. This gap was almost nonexistent in charters, ranging from 75% for African American students to 79% for Asian students (CCSA, 2015).

Sampling Criteria for Participants

Selecting a sampling technique in qualitative research necessitates that the "small number of individuals… chosen will be good key informants who will contribute to the researcher's understanding" (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012, p. 142). Given this logic, a purposeful criterion sample was used in this research study. Patton (2015) has discussed the strength of purposeful sampling in qualitative research design as "purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study" (p. 264). This sampling technique ensured that the selected participants could best add to the knowledge base (Gay et al., 2014).

The purposeful criterion sample population was generated through a series of steps. First, the researcher downloaded the current list of principals in LAUSD charter schools and sent an email to all current sitting principals of Los Angeles charter schools. This publically available database compiled principal names and email, but not gender, for each school. All current principals were invited to participate in the study and asked to complete a short survey identifying their gender, role, and years of experience in the role. A total of 280 principals were emailed using the current LAUSD Database. Of those 280 total principals, 18 answered the

survey. Of those 18 respondents, 9 met the criteria. The 7 candidates who did not meet the criteria had been a principal for longer than 3 years, did not answer the gender question, were not a principal, or were not located in Los Angeles County, according to their survey responses.

Respondents who identified as female and who had been in the principal role for 3 or less years were invited to engage in an initial phone call with the researcher. The purpose of this phone call was to explain the study and the time commitment and to answer any questions the participant had. Of the nine participants invited to an initial phone call, seven responded. Following these conversations, the researcher invited all seven participants who responded to the survey, met the qualifications, responded to the email invitation to participate in an introductory call, and participated in the introductory call. Each potential participant displayed a strong level of interest in participating in the study. One of the participants noted the need to have her voice heard while another one noted a time that her gender had influenced whether or not she got a position. One participant revealed that her boss had asked her to participate in the study. After disclosing this, the participant was told that her participation was optional. Upon further questioning, the participant confirmed her desire to participant. After this initial conversation with each participant, the researcher sent an email invitation to participate with a description of next steps for setting up the initial interview.

Participants

A total of seven novice female charter school principals participated in the study. All of the participants had been in the role between 1 and 3 years at the start of the study. The participants ranged in age from 31 to 36. The following table details information about the participants including their age, years in the role, race, and information about their school and/or charter management organization.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Administrative Credential	Years in Role	CMO
Jessica	35	Latina	Yes	2	Yes
Carmen	31	Bi-racial (Mexican & White	Yes	3	Yes
Laura	31	Mexican	Yes	3	Yes
Michelle	34	White	Yes	1	Yes
Maribel	32	Black	Yes	3	No
Daisy	34	White	Yes	2	No
Bridget	36	Black	No	1	Yes

Methods of Data Collection and Management

This section discusses the methods of data collection and management used by the

research design. The data collection and management technique for semistructured interviews, focus group, and field notes are discussed separately.

Semistructured Interviews

The semistructured interviews were scheduled for 2 hour blocks of time at a date, time, and location of the participant's choice. Each semistructured interview took place between the months of June and September, prior to the focus group. Five of the seven interviews took place at the participant's own school. Two of the seven interviews took place at a local coffee shop of the participant's choice.

Each participant received the questions approximately one week prior to the interview. It was clear from participant's responses that those who had reviewed the questions in advance had considered times when their gender had affected their work and were able to speak to these times readily in the interview. In her interview, Jessica commented that she had spent time recounting stories and instances with her boyfriend prior to the interview that helped her realized just how impactful instances of prejudicial treatment because of her gender had been on her leadership. All but one of the interviews took place in a single block of time. However, for Bridget, the interview had to be paused and rescheduled due to her young daughter's needs. In this case, the first interview took place in June and was finalized in September.

All interviews were recorded with participant permission using an audio-recording device. All recorded interviews were uploaded to a secure, password-protected computer kept in a locked office within 24 hours of the interview and were saved using a participant number. Each interview was transcribed using an online transcription website and was saved on a secure password-protected computer. Each transcription was saved using a participant number. All data from semistructured interviews will be kept for 3 years after the publication of this dissertation and then will be discarded appropriately to maintain the security of the data. Electronic data will be deleted and the trash bin will be emptied. Hard copy data will be shredded through a professional company.

Focus Groups

Originally, a single focus group was planned for all seven participants of the study. However, finding a single time and day during the school year in the month of September when all seven principals were available was extremely challenging. Therefore, after soliciting feedback from the participants, two focus group options were available. Each of the seven participants signed up for one of the two focus groups. The focus groups were held from 4:00pm-6:00pm during a week night at a school located in a central Los Angeles, given the

geographic location of the participant schools. Dinner and water were provided to the participants.

Five of the participants signed up for the first focus group, however two of the participants texted and emailed within one hour of the start of the focus group canceling due to an unforeseen work emergency. Therefore, the first focus group had three participants. Two of the participants knew each other in this focus group from previous work and schooling. The second focus group had two participants who did not previously know each other.

The focus group was recorded with participant permission using an audio-recording device. Participants were asked to state their name prior to answering a question during the focus group. The recording was uploaded to a secure password-protected computer kept in a locked office within 24 hours of the focus group. The focus group recording was transcribed using an online transcription website and was saved on a secure, password protected computer. All data from the focus group will be kept for 3 years after the publication of this dissertation and then will be discarded appropriately to maintain the security of the data. Electronic data will be deleted and the trash bin will be emptied. Hard copy data will be shredded through a professional company.

Field Notes

Throughout the semistructured interviews and focus groups, field notes were collected using a standardized template (Appendix C). Each field note document was collected first using pencil and paper so as not to be too obtrusive during the interview and focus group process. The researcher used the field notes to gather observations related to any body language, emotion, or nonverbal cues that the recording would not capture. Secondly, the field notes captured the researcher's reactions, thoughts, and personal connections during the semistructured interviews and focus groups. After each data collection, the researcher would re-listen to the interview or the focus group and transfer the notes from the paper template to an electronic template saved on a secure, password protected computer that was kept in a locked office. The hard copy handwritten notes were scanned and saved on a secure computer. The hard copy handwritten notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in secure office. All the field notes will be kept for 3 years after the publication of this dissertation and then will be discarded appropriately to maintain the security of the data. Electronic data will be deleted and the trash bin will be emptied. Hard copy data will be shredded through a professional company.

The following table shows the methods of data collection for each of the data sources in the study.

Table 2

Data Collection Overview

	Participants	*Number*	*Hours*
Semistructured Interviews	Jessica Carmen Laura Michelle Maribel Daisy Bridget	7	14
Focus Groups	Jessica Carmen Michelle Daisy Bridget	2	4
Field Notes		9*	18

*Each field note document was approximately 10 pages in length

Method of Data Analysis

Qualitative research analysis is complex and involves analyzing data in "a dependable and accurate manner and leads to the presentation of study findings in a manner that has an air of undeniability" (Gay et al., 2012, p. 465). The data collected was coded and analyzed using pattern analysis to identify patterns within and across the methodologies used in the study. Pattern analysis is the reduction of data and sense-making efforts by identifying descriptive patterns within the data (Patton, 2015). Patton discussed pattern analysis as a process of "discovering patters, themes, and categories in one's data. Findings emerge out of the data, through the analyst's interactions with the data" (p. 542). Further, pattern analysis is an inductive process that results in the generation of new concepts, explanations, or theories from data

(Patton, 2015). The process for analyzing each individual methodology as well as across methodologies is described in the following sections.

Semistructured Interview

The semistructured interview data analysis preceded the focus group. First, an initial read of the semistructured interview transcriptions was completed using open coding, and initial patterns were identified. Patton discussed this first read as "developing the coding categories or classification system" (2015, p. 554). Using the initial pattern coding of the semistructured interviews aided in the development of the focus group question protocol.

Following the focus groups, the transcriptions were read a second time and were coded using selective coding from patterns that emerged during the initial open coding. The researcher hand coded the transcriptions using color-coding and brackets during the second reading. The use of brackets helped reduce data down to the patterns. Patton discussed the use of bracketing as closely inspecting and confronting the text outside of the context in which it is occurring (Patton, 2015).

After the second read of all interview transcriptions, the transcriptions were read a third time to cross-check the patterns that emerged and identify themes across patterns to again reduce the amount of data (Flick, 2014). The purpose of the data reduction was to identify the themes

that were most prominent across the semistructured interviews. As discussed, the themes that emerged from the semistructured interviews were the primary guide to developing the focus group interview protocol. Additionally, the semistructured interview data analysis developed the anchor patterns that were triangulated against the focus group and field note data.

Focus Group

Throughout the study, the researcher returned to the data in an iterative process. Using the patterns that were developed in the semistructured interviews, the researcher designed the focus group question protocol to explore potential themes more deeply. The focus group question protocol served as both a member check opportunity as well as an opportunity to deepen the stories and insights gain from participants.

The focus group transcriptions were analyzed using pattern analysis as well. As with the semistructured interviews, first the focus group transcriptions were read through using open coding, and initial patterns were identified. The data were read a second time with selective coding to identify patterns that emerged from the data.

Field Notes

The field notes included reactions to the narratives of participants, personal connections with the stories that emerged, and interpretations of the participants' body language and nonverbal communication. Like the semistructured interview data analysis and the focus group data analysis, the field note documents were analyzed using thematic pattern analysis of the documents. The field notes were analyzed using only a selective coding process to further analyze the patterns that were identified in the semistructured interviews and the focus groups.

Across Data Collection Analysis

Having three sources of data "produce[d] knowledge on different levels, which means insights that go beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach and thus contribute to promoting quality in [the] research" (Flick, 2014, p. 184). The semistructured interview pattern analysis was used as the anchor data for this study. The focus group and field note pattern analysis were used as triangulation data points and were analyzed by dialoguing with the findings with the semistructured interview data as the anchor findings. Specifically, this study employed data and methodological triangulation as defined by Patton: the use of a variety of data sources and multiple methods to study a single phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Limitations

There were a number of limitations to this research design. The first limitation was the lack of generalizability of the study. Given the sampling method of a purposeful criterion sample and the small sample size, the interpretation and insights that emerged from this study might not be generalizable to all novice female charter school principals.

Another limitation of the study was the sensitive nature of disclosing issues of perceived or actual threats to a participant's self-worth or esteem. The researcher asked participants to consider times when their gender had impacted their ability to be successful. While efforts were made to ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and security in the research process, some participants might not have been fully honest in their responses, which could represent an external threat to validity.

Another limitation was the extent to which participants were conscious of their experiences with gender and gender-related opportunities and challenges. Much of the way female leaders are treated is arguably engrained in the status quo of our patriarchal society. Thus, novice female charter school principals may not perceive some of the challenges they have experienced through a gendered lens. I attempted to control for this limitation by selecting a

criterion sample that disclosed that they have the ability to speak openly and honestly about the topic.

Credibility

As the researcher, I sought to increase the credibility of the study in multiple ways. The first way was through the data and methodological triangulation previously discussed in this chapter. Another way was through a member check. Participants of the study had the opportunity to give feedback on the analysis and findings during the focus group. Additionally, participants of the study were sent the final dissertation prior to defense and publication and offered an opportunity to respond if they desired.

Positionality

As a one-time novice female charter school principal and the primary instrument of the qualitative study, I sought to establish investigator credibility throughout the duration of the study by making connections, telling stories, and listening empathetically to participants. I

leveraged my position as a charter school female leader to guide the work of the qualitative study and increase credibility.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the research methodology that this study utilized to answer the research question: what are the challenges and opportunities experienced by novice female charter school principals? The study used a purposeful criterion sample of seven novice female charter school principals in Los Angeles. Using a qualitative research approach, the study included semistructured interviews, focus groups, and field notes. Data were collected and maintained using secure electronic procedures. Any hard copies of notes or data will be kept in a secure location as well for the specified amount of time before being professionally destroyed. Data were analyzed primarily using an inductive coding approach grounded in pattern analysis to identify major patterns that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Background

The previous chapter explored the research design and methodology of this study. The study used a qualitative research design with three data sources: semistructured interviews, focus groups, and field notes to explore the research question. Specifically, the research design of this study was developed to answer the question:

What are the challenges and opportunities experienced by novice female charter school principals?

Subpatterns from the data and the most salient examples of these patterns triangulated across the three data sources.

This chapter begins by discussing overall trends from the data collection. Next, the chapter discusses the emerging patterns and theoretical frames for the study as they relate to the patterns that emerged from the data collection and analysis. The chapter then reports the patterns identified and data collected through the study. Specifically, the pattern and data reporting are organized by patterns generated using the research question. First, patterns and data related to the challenges of novice female charter school principals are identified. Next, patterns and data

related to the opportunities of novice female charter school principals are identified. The chapter ends by discussing implications for analysis.

Overall Trends from Data Collection

The data sources helped to synthesize and gather trends from across the participants. The field notes helped to capture overall trends from across the data sources that would not be apparent from just reading or listening to the recordings. Across the interviews, there was a development of rapport and reciprocity between the researcher and participants and between the participants themselves.

There were connections made with past schooling and with work histories between five of the seven participants and me. For example, Carmen graduated two years behind the me from the University of Michigan for her undergraduate degree and followed a similar pathway to the principal role as I did. This connection was not known until sitting down in the interview. Maribel previously taught with me when they both were first-year teachers. She received the same generic introduction to participate as other principals. However, what most inspired her to participate in the interview was that she too was in a doctorate program and wanted to support my work. Furthermore, during the focus group interviews, I noted many instances of rapport and

solidarity. At times participants were laughing together, saying "Me too!" and shaking their heads in solidarity or disgust with a situation that someone was sharing.

Additionally, the prevalence of vulnerability and emotion throughout many of the interviews and the focus group is important to note. Participants told deeply troubling stories they had experienced as principals. They shared their own insecurities in the role and as female leaders. They disclosed their challenges with their bosses or charter management organizations and their fears of having more children and still being able to be a successful principal. Laura cried while sharing that, ultimately, she questioned whether she could be a principal and have a second child. Yet, she knew that she had to, for both herself and for others to come.

The participants of this study wanted their voices to count. This was clear from the initial phone calls, when participants shared with me this exact desire and when participants asked when the dissertation would be published and ready for them to read. The participant's desire to shape the narrative of females' experiences in the world was prevalent throughout the study and should be noted when reading the data collected and the analysis of that data.

Theoretical Frames

This study examined the lived experiences of novice female charter school principals through the theoretical frames of organizational socialization and social role theory. As discussed

in the literature review, being a school principal is challenging for anyone in the role. Yet, as this study indicated, for novice female principals of charter schools, the challenges seemed to be compounded by the complexity and nuances of the charter school principal role and of being a female in a historically overrepresented male position. This section will example the theoretical frames that guided the study and data collection.

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization was first explored by Van Maanen and Schein in 1977. In general, socialization is defined as the process individuals undergo when joining a pre-existing culture (Bengston, 2014; Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). All of the participants in this study had become principals of schools that already existed. Most of the participants had moved from other roles within the school or organization, such as teacher or assistant principal while one of the participants was hired on as a principal after having served as an assistant principal of another organization. The process of organizational socialization into the role posed a number of challenges for the participants of the study including not knowing how to do the work, trying to understand who they were as a leader, navigating new or shifting relationships with colleagues, and the socialization of the principal role by those around them.

Social Role Theory

Social role theory is based on scholarship that began in the 1950s and 1960s exploring differences between the genders. Social role theory "argues that the beliefs that people hold about the sexes are derived from observations of the role performances of men and women and thus reflect the sexual division of labor and gender hierarchy of the society" (Eagly et al., 2000, p. 125). Participants in the study noted a number of challenges they had experienced because of expectations related to their gender. Specifically, participants noted being judged for their looks, having their credentials questioned, experiencing pervasive microagressions, having to repeat themselves, having to explain themselves, feeling guilty for not being able to do it all at home and at school, and questioning their own goals in life.

Yet, throughout the study, participants were hopeful for their abilities to make real change for both the students and staff members they served. They were eager to examine how charter management organizations could better support females' transitions and sustainability in the role. They were hopeful for female leaders across and beyond the sector and believed that their voices and lived experiences would pave the way for others.

This study aimed to answer the research question: what are the challenges and opportunities experienced by novice female charter school principals? The following section

discusses the challenges and opportunities of novice female charter school principals that emerged from the study. The findings are presented first using the patterns that emerged as challenges and then the patterns that emerged as opportunities. The following table gives an overview of the patterns and subpatterns that emerged under the challenges and opportunities that are discussed in depth in this chapter.

Table 3

Pattern and Subpattern Overview

Challenges	Opportunities
The complex nature of being a charter school principal	**Leadership focused on improving student achievement**
Multifaceted nature of the principal role	*Impacting beyond the classroom*
Nuances of being a charter school principal	*Student-centered, data-based leadership*
Structure of charter management organizations	*Leveraging community*
Lack of onboarding support	*Leadership for students' futures*
Ultimate sense of responsibility and loneliness	
Pervasive sexism	**Leadership that sustains**
Hostile, overt sexism	*A continuous focus on growth*
Benevolent and covert sexism	*Lasting legacy of the school*
Intersectionality of age and race	*Selfless leadership*
Double bind of being a female leader in a masculinized role	**Shifting the masculinized definition of leadership**
The challenge of credibility	*Who can be a principal*
Questioning leadership style	*Leading from why*
Feeling inadequate	*Team-centered leadership*
	Relational leadership
	Leading from a space of vulnerability
Internalized oppression	**Leadership that paves the way for other females**
Becoming one of the guys	*Mentorship and sponsorship as a key pathway to leadership*
Disassociation with traditional female stereotypes	*Leadership that embraces balance*
Guilt with having it all	*Leadership that is glass-breaking*

Challenges for Novice Female Charter School Principals

Despite the fact that novice female charter school principals are positioned to make change both within their schools and for female leaders themselves, the challenges they face in the role keep many from being able to sustain beyond a few years or being as effective as possible. The study revealed a number of patterns that represent the challenges that most impact novice female charter school principals in the role.

Summary of Emerging Patterns

The first pattern to emerge as a challenge for novice female charter school principals was the complex nature of being a charter school principal. The charter school principal role brings with it particular challenges that do not necessarily exist for district public school principals. Within this first pattern, five subpatterns further illuminated what makes being a charter school principal so challenging: the multifaceted nature of the role; the nuances of being a charter school principal; the structure of the charter management organization (CMO), the lack of onboarding support for principals coming into the role; and, finally, the ultimate sense of responsibility and loneliness that principals feel in the role.

The second pattern to emerge was pervasive sexism experienced by the novice female charter school principals. The sexism took on many forms, including hostile and overt and

nonthreatening and covert. Principals experienced sexism from colleagues, students, and parents in their schools. Additionally, many participants noted issues of equity that intersected with gender, such as race and age. Within this pattern, the subpatterns to emerge allowed for a deeper understanding of the ways participants experienced sexism in their roles as principals. The subpatterns to emerge from this pattern were: hostile, overt sexism; benevolent and covert sexism; and the intersectionality of race and age.

The third pattern to emerge was the double bind of being a female leader in a masculinized role. Participants felt that they were in a catch-22 situation where they were either judged for being too feminine in a male role or too masculine and a female. The subpatterns to emerge from this pattern highlight the impact that serving in a masculinized role can have on females; they were: the challenge of credibility; questioning leadership style; and feeling inadequate.

The final pattern to emerge as a challenge was the internalized oppression the participants experienced. Throughout the study, participants expressed a binary conceptualization of strength and femininity and receptiveness to traditional feminine roles. Female leaders felt they had to leave their femaleness at the door and learn how to play the political game in order to achieve anything. The subpatterns that emerged from this pattern were: becoming one of the guys;

disassociation from traditional female stereotypes; and guilt at having it all. The next section will discuss the findings that emerged from the data using these patterns and subpatterns.

The Complex Nature of Being a Charter School Principal

The first pattern to emerge from the data under the challenges experienced by novice female principals was the complex nature of being a charter school principal. In the interviews, multiple principals compared the role to other high stakes role. For example, Jessica related her work to being the CEO of a multimillion dollar company, responsible for budget, prioritization of funds, leading people, staffing, customer service, and the product—the students. Carmen discussed her role as a politician:

> It's almost like I'm a politician. I'm interacting with stakeholders all day whether that be kids, parents, teachers, keep a pulse check on the culture both with staff and students, and checking in to make sure that we're delivering on our results.

Other participants noted the complexities of the roles throughout the interviews and focus groups.

Several subpatterns emerged from the data that illuminated the multifaceted nature of the role for any principal in any school. Additionally, the ultimate sense of responsibility for the success of the school compounded the challenge for participants of the study. The participants

further highlighted the particular nuances of serving in a charter school that make the role even more complex. Additional subpatterns emerged related to the structure of the CMO that employed each individual: principals who were at larger, more established CMOs felt more supported and ultimately believed they would be able to sustain longer. Principals at CMOs that were single-site organizations or had tumultuous events happen in the school's history were more likely to question their ability to sustain in the role. The subpatterns are discussed in depth in the following section.

Multifaceted Nature of the Principal Role

Nearly every participant spoke to the challenges from the multifaceted nature of the principalship in her interview, either directly or indirectly. A common pattern was the breadth of the skill set and experience level, and the knowledge necessary to be successful in the role. Laura spoke to this in her interview:

> I think the breadth of the skillset necessary to be effective. So you have to be emotionally intelligent. You have to be a great manager. You have to be a wonderful coach. You have to be strategic and problem solving at all times everywhere. And then you have to then tailor all of those things and those messages to radically different audiences and convince everybody that that's the right way to do it. And then you have to deliver.

She went on to say that, in most businesses and companies, different individuals hold those roles in departments such as human resources, public relations, finance, and management. However, for the charter school principal role, it is all wrapped into one.

In her interview and in the focus group, Michelle discussed not being totally equipped with all the skills necessary for the principal role because she came into the role with her teaching instructional background. Yet, success in the role requires knowing about human resources, public relations, finance, programs, and operations, to name a few. In her focus group, Carmen described her role as that of a "fire women," feeling like she was constantly going around putting out fires and dealing with crises or problems that arose. The participants believed that a principal role in any type of school is challenging but that charters pose an added challenge. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Nuances of Being a Charter School Principal

The principals in the study largely agreed that any principal role in any school is a difficult job. Yet, they spoke to the nuances of being a charter school principal that add layers of challenges to the role that a principal of a traditional district school may not need to deal with. In the focus group, for example, Bridget commented on the nuances for charter school principals:

> I think it's definitely complex no matter where you are. I think working in a charter school there's extra layers that maybe a traditional public school doesn't have to deal with like – you deal with facilities but you deal with facilities on a different level whether that be co-located and you're working out agreements and you're making sure that you have enough classrooms and the resources that you need –and it's in a fair manner. Or if it's renewing your school. Whereas district schools, they don't necessarily have to deal with those things. So there's a lot of different layers where it's almost like you're a superintendent. At least for my school that's what I feel like because I handle every single aspect including working with legal to make sure that our rights are not violated as a charter school organization and that we have advocacy so that we can get the things we need accomplished.

The issue of colocations and facilities came up for five of the seven participants in the study. For Carmen, her permanent facility was not completed on time, and she needed to move her school to a temporary location on a colocated district campus this year. Beyond dealing with the emotions of her staff and stakeholder groups, she had to navigate protests from the union and parent stakeholders at the district school. She spoke to the challenges that arose navigating this

setback with her staff in her interview and spoke about additional challenges she had had with the colocation this year in the focus group.

Maribel and Daisy spoke to the impact that having to move and having multiple facilities had had on their school culture in their interview. The lack of permanent facilities caused the schools to lose students and put pressure on the principals to ensure their enrollment was high enough to avoid making budget cuts.

Bridget spoke to the challenges of navigating renewals and charter authorizing with the district or county office of education in her interview. For charter school principals, it is not a given that the school will operate in perpetuity. Schools must meet standards set forth by the charter law, and even then, the politicized nature of charter schools creates uncertainty during renewal time. While charter school principals have the ability to make changes and work in more autonomous ways, as Daisy pointed out in the focus group, principals ultimately must show results in order to stay open as a school.

Data that emerged from the interviews and focus groups indicated that the levels challenges may differ based on the structure of the CMO. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Structure of Charter Management Organizations

A subpattern that emerged from the data was the significance of the support provided by the CMO, or the back office in the case of single charter schools. Jessica, Carmen, Laura, Michelle, and Bridget worked at CMOs that operated multiple schools. Maribel and Daisy worked at single school organizations with smaller back office support. In addition, Daisy and Bridget worked at organizations that had had significant turmoil in their organization through allegations of wrongdoings by the founders of the schools prior to their assuming the principal role.

Participants who worked for CMOs spoke to the level of support and development they received as a new principal in a structured way. Data from the interviews revealed the ways in which CMOs supported novice principals in the role. For example, Carmen spoke of her one-on-one meetings with her direct supervisor. She found these meetings supportive of her professional development and growth as a leader in the organization. Jessica spoke of her budget meetings with the organization's acting chief financial officer and how this person's support and training of finances supported her ability to effectively manage the budget. Michelle spoke of the strong team she worked with on a day-to-day basis and how this team helped her be as effective as possible.

Conversely, Maribel, Daisy, and Bridget spoke to the lack of support they felt from their employer. In the focus group, Daisy spoke of her transition into the role of secondary principal from an elementary background and the necessity for her to learn many of the nuances of the high school world on her own since there was no one in the organization to support her. In her interview, Maribel spoke to the challenges she had with her executive director and the board of directors. When asked if she received any support or guidance from the executive director, she firmly answered no. Bridget spoke to the challenges at her CMO and the affect this had on her ability to be successful. For example, due to financial misappropriation, the CMO had to cut down on central staff and the principals were now responsible for running payroll. Ultimately, Bridget felt like these cuts prevented her from successfully focusing on the work she needed to do to improve student achievement at the school. Regardless of the CMO or organizational structure, many of the principals felt like their onboarding into the role could have been more purposeful to support their initial success in the role. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Lack of Onboarding Support

Data from the interviews and focus groups revealed that principals felt that they lacked the skills, knowledge, and information to successfully enter into the role and believed that the

learning curve was steeper than it had to be. For example, in her interview, Jessica spoke of needing to learn the school accreditation process in her first year as principal and not receiving the appropriate guidance, support, or training from the CMO. In fact, she felt like the person who was supporting her at the CMO was just as uninformed as she was, which caused a lot of unnecessary work and stress. She believed this could have been more effectively addressed in her onboarding into the role.

In her interview, Michelle also spoke to the learning curve she had had in the role this year:

> There are things I am learning about that I had very little information about and really had no desire to know more information about previously. Yeah, I was perfectly fine with being oblivious and not having that knowledge base. And so I think the learning part, the learning curve, for me this year has been really big.

Jessica referred to all this new learning as the "nitty gritty" of the role. Across the participants, it was their least favorite part of the role and they felt that it got in the way of the actual work of increasing student achievement. They also seemed to recognize that the learning mattered for the long-term success of the school. These challenges were compounded when adding the ultimate

sense of responsibility and loneliness the participants felt as the entered the role. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Ultimate Sense of Responsibility and Loneliness

The final subpattern to emerge under the complex nature of the principal role was the ultimate sense of responsibility principals felt in their role. This sense of responsibility spanned both a sense of accountability for student results and the day-to-day safety of students and staff at the schools. This subpattern emerged in both the interviews and the focus groups. Every principal spoke to this element of the role and the toll it took on their mental well-being and their ability to sustain in the role. For example, in her interview, Jessica spoke to the transition from being a teacher to a leader at the same school and needing to navigate shifting relationships. She ultimately had friendships change and felt that she was not prepared for the loneliness of the leadership role.

In her interview, Carmen spoke of her fear for student safety on a daily basis. She said that when students went off campus on field trips, she felt like she could breathe until they returned safely to campus. She spoke of her transition from a dean position, where she was perfectly happy not having the final say in decisions, to a position in which she had the responsibility of keeping everyone at the school safe. Safety for students was also a fear for

Maribel, who spoke of an instance in which a student brought a gun to school that was unaccounted for nearly three hours. When asked about her biggest fear, she responded that ensuring student safety was number one. For many of the principals in the study, the fear of being responsible for hundreds of students' lives caused chronic stress.

In their interviews, Laura and Michelle spoke of being exhausted yet needing to remain positive. Laura spoke of the times of year that are particularly challenging at a school site and needing to maintain positivity and composure, even when no one else was doing so, and Michelle spoke about times of being mentally exhausted from the responsibility of the work. Maribel spoke of a serious incident with a teacher that took a lot out of her personally. In the focus group, Bridget spoke of her guilt at not being able to let go of the work and always thinking about it. Sometimes she will be lying in bed not able to shut off the thoughts racing through her mind about work. She recognized this experience as unhealthy and that it would ultimately spell her inability to sustain the role. When asked during her interview how long she thought she would be in the role, Bridget said "I want to quit every day." This outsized stress would become deleterious and unsustainable if appropriate support and coping mechanisms were not put into place.

The field notes recorded similar challenges for me as I entered into the role. One particularly telling instance with a parent resulted in such a bad migraine that I had to lie down in an office and could barely drive myself home. That moment was an important turning point in my thinking about the need to balance the work to ensure I could sustain myself in the role.

The complexities of the role and the particular nuances of being a charter school principal are compounded by the sexism experienced by the principals in the study. The data that emerged from the study indicated that female principals, like many females, experience pervasive sexism from those around them. This pattern is discussed in the following section.

Pervasive Sexism

The second pattern to emerge for the participants of the study was the pervasive sexism they experienced in the role. The stories and experiences of the participants can be categorized into experiences with overt and hostile sexism such as being told they were too emotional in a parent meeting about a student discipline issue. Other experiences with sexism were more covert and may have been disguised as a compliment but were really grounded in inequitable treatment of females, and particularly female leaders. In particular, consistent microaggressions were evident from the data. Finally, for some of the female principals, there was an intersectionality of ageism and racism that compounded the sexism they experience in the role.

Hostile, Overt Sexism

The first subpattern under sexism was experiences with hostile, overt sexism. Hostile sexism is defined as overt and aggressive, such as questioning one's life choices, making crude comments, or using stereotypical comments to judge a person's abilities (Rollero & Fedi, 2014). Nearly every participant shared a story of overt or hostile sexism although not every principal named the experience as sexism. Experiences with hostile sexism came from both parent stakeholders as well as colleagues and community partners.

Hostile sexism from parents. Four of the principals discussed times when they had experienced hostile sexism from a parent. In her interview, Jessica spoke of parents who requested to meet with male assistant principals rather than her during issues that came up for their children, even though she was the principal. Laura recounted situations with parents when she was discussing discipline issues or retention recommendations for students. On more than one occasion, she had been told she was too emotional or exaggerating the issue when she was simply recounting facts that occurred. She did not believe a male principal would be told this.

In her interview, Carmen discussed her first parent *cafecito* (a common name for a gathering where coffee is served and parents have an opportunity to speak with the principal) where a father stood up in front of the entire parent community and asked her to explain her

credentials for taking the principal role. She remembered having to talk through her years of experience and her multiple degrees, including her recent master's degree in educational leadership from a prestigious Ivy League university. She did not want to come off as bragging, yet she recognized that her credibility and expertise were being questioned and felt the need to prove herself.

Hostile, overt sexism from community partners. In addition to experiencing overt and hostile sexism from parents, participants in the study noted experiencing this type of sexism from law enforcement or other community partners. Laura told stories in her interviews of having to deal with law enforcement at the school site. When police officers came to the school and asked to speak to the principal, they often did not believe that she was the principal. There had been times when she has even had to show identification to prove to them that she was, in fact, running the school. In the focus group, Bridget recounted several situations where male assistant principals were assumed to be the principal, and she had to call out the assumption. "No, I've been here for way longer than them and you've met me on several occasions. They're not the principal. I'm the principal."

Similarly, in the focus group, Carmen spoke of a recent situation she had had with a neighbor of the school who was overtly hostile to her and became noticeably more aggressive

when he found out she was the principal. She commented that she could physically see the change in his behavior when she told him she was the principal and that he immediately became more aggressive and overtly hostile toward her.

> I could see that shift in his mind where he went from like 'oh this is going to be fun. This is someone I get to deal with. This is the person that I'm upset with and she is weak.'
>
> And I was like I'm not fucking weak. Like you don't mess with me.

In the focus group, Carmen talked about how this experience had impacted her for the next few days to the point where she cried about it, which she said was unlike her.

Hostile, overt sexism from colleagues. Perhaps most pervasive were experiences with hostile, overt sexism from the principal's own colleagues. In her interview, Maribel recounted her relationship with her male CEO, who originally hired her because he wanted someone organized and he felt that a female would be more organized. Maribel believed he bullied her for her different approach to leadership than his. She shared that he would ask her about scenarios in an aggressive, noncollaborative manner and then criticized her when she responded with an approach that was different from the approach he would take.

In her interview, Bridget discussed being constantly questioned or having to repeat herself with members of her home office and school staff. She recounted a number of stories

with colleagues where she had to go back and forth on email or bring in additional people to solve the problem. Bridget attributed these challenges to the perception that she did not know what she was doing, which she attached to her gender.

In her interview, Bridget discussed her school interview process versus that of a male candidate for the principal role. She experienced pervasive sexism from her colleagues who felt that the male applicant had it in the bag. She endured rumors, degrading comments, and challenges related to her interviewing for the promotion. Bridget reflected on this experience in the interview:

> It was a lot of resistance. It was a lot of gossip. It was a lot. It was very nasty. It was very nasty. I wouldn't say it was on the level of like a Hillary Clinton situation, but very similar to where it's like, she doesn't know, you know, she knows what she's doing but she doesn't have an admin credential. You don't have to have an admin credential, but I do have my Master's and I do have teaching experience.

Bridget felt that her background qualified her for the role but she experienced challenges with her colleagues questioning her credentials and abilities long after she had become principal. Beyond experiences with overt and hostile sexism, instances of more covert sexism were also pervasive. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Benevolent and Covert Sexism

Participants of the study recounted multiple experiences of benevolent and covert sexism. Benevolent sexism is often disguised as a compliment but is based on stereotypical gender roles that ultimately discredit females' abilities or life choices. For example, in the focus groups the participants recounted questioning such as "Why aren't you married?" or "Why don't you have children?" or "You look too young to be a principal" on a regular basis.

By far, the most pervasive form of benevolent sexism the participants experienced were daily microagressions. Gender microagressions are common experiences with "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative sexist slights and insults toward women (Nadal, 2010). Jessica and Michelle discussed experiences with males and microagressions at length during the focus group. Both had experience with males who worked in the home office or district setting who engaged in behavior that would fall under the category of microagressions. For example, Jessica had to deal with a facilities director who treated her like she did not know anything about the facilities of the school even though she had been at the school for seven years. The facilities director even called her by the wrong principal's name as he confused her for the other pregnant Latina female

in the organization. He attempted to explain everything to her as if she did not run the multimillion dollar budget or know what it took to effectively manage the building.

Daisy discussed being raised in a family of female teachers who were surprised when she went into leadership. When they found out she was going into leadership they said, “We didn’t expect this of you” but they qualified this by saying they understood how hard she was working and that she deserved the position. Daisy did not necessarily recognize this as a microagression based on socialized gender norms.

Jessica recounted a recent experience she had had with students and parents that she recognized as benevolent sexism. Jessica had had an unplanned child in her first year as a principal. Jessica made her own life choice not to be married, and while she did receive comments from parents related to her marriage status, she did not realize it was such an issue until she had recently become engaged. Jessica discussed this experience in the focus group and talked about how, since she had become engaged, she felt a newfound respect from parents in the community. This made her uncomfortable as it highlighted the judgement she experienced from choosing not to be married and having a child.

Much of the benevolent sexism experienced by principals from parents had to do with marital status and whether or not the principal had children. However, there was also a subset of

experiences that had to do with strength and security. In her interview, Carmen recounted a parent who wore a security jacket and patrolled the school of his own accord. She commented that she felt like there were assumptions about the strength of her all-female team and their ability to truly keep the school safe. This pattern emerged for Maribel in her interview as well. Beyond microagressions related to gender, issues of age and race were present for the principals. The intersectionality of age, race, and gender is discussed in the following section.

Intersectionality of Age and Race

Many of the participants commented on experience they had had with either ageism or racism, or both, in addition to sexism. Age was the most common intersectional issue with sexism that emerged from the data. The principals in the study ranged from the ages of 31 to 36. Throughout the interviews, there were multiple instances of the participants noting questions related to their age. For example, in the instance when the parent questioned Carmen's credentials at the cafecito, Carmen felt that age had also played into the questioning of her credentials and qualifications.

In the example of Jessica discussing parents who requested to specifically meet with male assistant principals, she commented, "I learned that I really need to convince people to work with me past whatever they see. Sometimes it's gender, and sometimes it's assumption of age."

Michelle discussed how people questioned her ability to work effectively with middle-school kids given that she looked so young, and Maribel discussed her need to draw a clear line in the sand with her high school students as she realized she looked so young.

Jessica, Laura, and Bridget also discussed how their race played into how they were treated by parents, students, and staff. For example, when asked about how her leadership was perceived by those she worked with given that she is female, Bridget said in her interview: “Oh, I'm a black female, too. So I'm angry. I'm angry. I'm impulsive. I don't follow protocols. I'm difficult. I'm emotional. And I over-exaggerate.” She went on to discuss the daily struggle of effectively communicating with those around her and ensuring that the she was able to accomplish her goals by thinking about how she would be perceived. Jessica and Laura felt as if their background as a Latina females working in a primarily Latino community created a dynamic whereby they were often viewed from a maternal perspective.

The presence of sexism across the spectrum of hostile to benevolent, overt to covert, and the intersectionality of other marginalizing issues for the participants of this study were ever present. These realities influenced females’ experiences in leadership roles when their abilities, credentials, styles, and adequacy were called into question. The next section will discuss the

pattern of the double bind, or "Catch-22," that female leaders experienced as females in a masculinized role.

Double Bind of Being a Female Leader in a Masculinized Role

The third pattern to emerge from the data was the double bind of being a female leader in a masculinized role. The literature defines a double bind as a "Catch-22" situation--meaning you lose either way you approach a situation. In the context of being a female leader in a masculinized role, the participants felt like they were judged for being either too weak or too aggressive. Any style they embodied or response they had to a particular situation was criticized, and the participants felt like they were in a lose-lose situation. The participants noted instances related to the double bind in terms of their credibility, leadership style and perceived inadequacy. These subpatterns are discussed in the next section.

The Challenge of Credibility

A number of stories related to the participants' credibility, particularly as they assumed the role. For example, even though she had over seven years of teaching experience and an administrative credential, Jessica reported feeling questioned in her ability to go into the assistant principal role when she transitioned out of the classroom. At the time, the team was made up of all men, and she experienced tension from them when she accepted the assistant principal role

instead of a literacy coordinator role—a more historically feminized role. Similarly, Bridget shared her story of interviewing for the position and having her credibility questioned for choosing to go into the role. Both she and another dean were applying for the same role with the same credentials; however, her credentials were questioned as being inadequate for going into the role while the male was just assumed a sure-thing by her colleagues—and they told her so.

Participants felt their appearance linked closely to their credibility. Many principals talked about needing to dress up and look professional in order to be taken seriously. In her interview, Jessica shared that her male colleagues could regularly show up in a t-shirt and shorts and still be seen as credible by stakeholders but that if she were to do the same people would question her abilities in the role. In her interview, she shared that "people are going to make all their assumptions about my capacity of a leader, based on what they see in the first five seconds. So they have to see clean lines. Kind of like a power suit."

Michelle spoke to this in the focus group as well. She said she always dressed professionally "to compensate for the fact that people will acknowledge my age or how young I look. And I have to combat that somehow to kind of get the immediate respect."

Similarly, Carmen shared in the focus group that being colocated on a campus with an older male principal who wore a suit every day created a situation in which she found herself dressing up more to compensate for questions related to her credibility.

> I've noticed that this year I've been wearing a lot more dresses and like jewelry and things to kind of make myself look older because our co-location is fine-ish but there's still challenges. And people will come into the office and they'll say "Where is the principal?" And when I raise my hand like the looks are just—and I feel like it impacts me.

The impact that Carmen was referring to became linked to feelings of inadequacy experienced by the other participant-principals.

Questioning Leadership Style

Another subpattern to emerge in this pattern was questioning of the participants' leadership style either overtly or through more covert reactions to their leadership. During her interview, Laura told a story about using two different types of leadership styles, and both styles were questioned.

> I remember very distinctly there was a teacher who said "Well we just need you to be firm, proactive, and –." I forget the other word but it was that. And then when I took

action that aligned to that – and it was like well we need you to take our input and be – take this into consideration and make this part of the decision process.

Laura reflected further on this experience in the following exchange in the interview:

Laura: I think there's an immediate association with femininity or being a female leader with weakness – that there will be things that you won't be proactive, that you won't be firm. Like these associations that you're going to be super emotional or be able to be talked into something.

Researcher: And are those things you feel like you've experienced?

Laura: I think so. I think folks have been really taken aback when that's not the case. And the response is not, "Good, that's what we need," but rather like, "Eh –."

Researcher: There's something wrong with you.

Laura: Yeah like there's something about you that's off when the response has been very firm. And then similarly I think there has been a lot of criticism when it is collaborative or when it is not a directive. And so it's almost like this catch-22.

Not being considered a strong leader if you operate with traditionally feminized traits—such as engaging in a collaborative approach, or listening to stakeholders before making a decision—was a common pattern among participants. For example, Carmen discussed this in both her interview and the focus group. In her interview, she discussed being seen as someone

who is sweet and innocent and wanting to ensure people are happy. She felt like this perception of her approach did not adequately convey "how intense" she really is. Conversely, she described another leader in the organization who was very direct in her leadership approach and was often referred to as a "bitch" or "intimidating"

This idea of engaging with stakeholders in a way that ensured they did not offend other people came up in both the interviews and focus group. Bridget discussed this issue at length in her interview as well as in the focus group. When asked how she was perceived by those she worked with, she said "Oh, I'm a bitch!" In her interview, she also discussed needing to be mindful of how she was communicating so that she was able to effectively communicate and get the work done and not be derailed by colleagues questioning her style.

Similarly, Michelle discussed needing to approach her communication with others, particularly males, from a stance that did not seem like she was telling them what to do. Rather, both she and Jessica discussed taking a modeling approach to ensure that they were able to accomplish what they needed without being side-tracked by communication critiques. Being constantly questioned regarding their credentials or their leadership styles made the leaders question their own abilities and adequacy in the role. These feelings of inadequacy are discussed in the next section.

Feeling Inadequate

During the semistructured interviews, participants were asked to tell a story about a time they felt had inadequate in their leadership. Of the seven leaders, six of them answered this question with some variation of "All the time." Many followed up this response with a laugh or an exaggerated sigh. It was clear to the researcher during these moments that while most of the participants played off the instinctual response as somewhat of a joke, the feelings of inadequacy were a constant for the principals in the study.

During the focus group, Michelle described this sense of inadequacy as a feeling of discomfort. Specifically, she was referring to the constant questioning of the fact that she was a principal. She said, "There's a discomfort in someone being surprised by something that just comes so naturally for you." This discomfort seemed to come from insecurity related to others' reactions to their work. She went on to say, "I question myself all the time. Because my judgment has the potential of being questioned."

Similarly, many principals reported being confident in their abilities but having doubt instilled in them by others. Carmen discussed this feeling of doubt as it related to her ability to be a successful principal during her interview. She felt like her style was perceived by some as inadequate or ineffective, which this made her question her own abilities even though she

believed she was capable of doing the work. Laura similar reflected on how her leadership style was perceived by those around her and the impact it had had on her confidence in the work.

Daisy also talked about feelings of doubt in her interview: “I’m very sure of what I can do in certain aspects. I doubt a lot of what I can do personally but I don’t let that show.” This idea of hiding your true self or your true feelings to be successful or make it in the role was prevalent in the data. The following section will discuss this pattern in depth.

Internalized Oppression

The final pattern to emerge from the data was a pattern of the participants telling stories that indicated their internalized gender oppression. This internalized oppression manifested in a number of ways. First, participants told stories where they had to take on traditional masculine traits in order to fit in and be successful. Additionally, there was a disassociation of traditional female gender roles by many of the females and, in some cases, a prejudice against others who embodied these traditional stereotypes. There was guilt associated with choosing to take on leadership roles and feeling like they could not be successful at both being a female and a leader. There was a pervasive mutual exclusiveness between strength and femininity and a sense that they needed to leave their femaleness at the door and learn how to play the political game in order to be successful.

Becoming One of the Guys

The first subpattern to emerge in this pattern was the need for the participants to become "one of the guys" in order to be successful. This was particularly true for females who worked on leadership teams with males. Jessica spoke of this at length in both her interview and focus group. Jessica originally came into the role as an assistant principal on an all-male team. She was explicitly told early on in her tenure that if she was going to be a successful member of the team, she would need to pick her basketball team—the Lakers or the Clippers. Jessica did not care for basketball (she was more of a hockey girl) but she realized she needed to play the game to be accepted by the team. "I quickly became one of the guys, and so sometimes I had a different hat with them. Sometimes I was their mom. Sometimes I was like a bro."

Jessica told a story in her interview that clearly illustrated this subpattern. When she originally came into the assistant principal role, the principal at the time had a pull-up bar in his office door and, at times, the all-male team would have pull up challenges. Jessica was never invited to participate in these challenges until one day she asked if she could join in. The team looked at each other and smugly smiled. Eventually they agreed to let her participate to appease her. When she got up to do the pull up challenge in her skirt and high heels, she could sense the all-male team was confident that she would not come close to their amount of pull ups. What the

team did not know was that Jessica had a personal trainer and was working on her upper body strength. Jessica blew their scores out of the water and, in turn, received a new level of respect from the team. They started to call her she-hulk and, according to Jessica, this was because they were trying to bridge the connection between her femininity and her strength. In reflecting on this, Jessica said in the focus group: "They made me tough, but none of them conformed to being a female… I grew up to be a powerful male on the leadership team."

Daisy also spoke extensively about being "one of the guys." First in her interview, Daisy spoke to her upbringing in a family of strong males that taught her to be tough.

> They treated me the same way they treated the boys. And so even at an early age, I was taught to be really tough. You know, both physically and mentally. That it wasn't just—I was never the little girl that's gonna sit in the corner. I was always the one that was told to be outspoken, to stand up for myself, to stand up for what's right, stand up for what you believe in. And I have never seen myself as anything other than that.

Daisy often referred to experiences not based on gender issues but rather just a product of the situation. She felt like she had been taught how to be successful by being tough and strong and not letting her weakness show.

Disassociation with Traditional Female Stereotypes

Even while embracing more feminized styles of leaderships, the subpattern of disassociating themselves from traditional female stereotypes was prevalent in many of the stories in the study. For example, Bridget discussed her affinity for working with males over females because there was less talking and more action.

Carmen discussed this disassociation at length in her interview. She told a story about being compared to other females who went into teaching and the stereotype of going into teaching so you can have summers off and leave the profession when you have kids. Carmen did not want to be compared to females who go into the profession for these reasons and was resentful when this has happened with her husband's friends in the past. In the focus group, she also discussed being stereotyped by others based on her gender. She specifically discussed this in relation to the assumption that she was an elementary school principal, which she was. She was annoyed when others "put her in a box" and annoyed that she has to say yes, she did work at an elementary school, because she knew she had the experience and ability to be successful at the secondary level as well. Carmen was thankful for her husband, who "doesn't encourage me to teach and take the traditional path of having kids."

Jessica discussed her feelings about getting pregnant, and furthermore her feelings about the benevolent sexism she experienced about not getting married prior to having a child. Jessica spoke to her initial reaction to finding out she was pregnant in the focus group:

> I had just been given like this principalship and so the moment I found out that I was pregnant I felt like crap, my life is over. I finally got the position that I wanted and now I'm going to lose it. I'm going to like let people down and my school is going to fall apart.

Since this initial feeling, Jessica had shifted her feelings about being a mom and getting married. However, her initial feelings are symbolic of disassociation with the stereotypical female role.

Guilt about Having It All

Of the leaders who did have children, pervasive guilt came from not being able to give as much time as they previously had to the role or not being able to give enough time to their own families. Similar to the double-bind leaders experienced in the leadership styles, participants in the study discussed not being able to dedicate the time they felt was necessary to being a mom *and* being a principal.

When Jessica first learned she was pregnant, she confided in her interview, she felt like it was the worst thing in the world and would keep her from being successful in the role. Similarly,

Laura discussed the decision to have a second child and needing to work through the guilt associated with her decisions. Particularly when she was on maternity leave, Laura noted she had guilt related to things that happened in her absence and sometimes felt that if she had not been on maternity leave those things would not have happened.

Bridget discussed feeling guilty when her time with her daughter was taken up by work-related events. Already, much of her personal time was limited by being a principal and having uninterrupted time with her daughter. She felt guilty both when she was spending time with her daughter but also when she is spending time at work.

> You feel like you have to shut your emotions off or your connections off to be able to disconnect. It's very hard to find a balance to like care and be there –and then be like ok, it's done. I'm cutting it off. That's someone else's problem or that problem is just going to have to wait because you're just so used to solving things like all day, all night. Or people coming to you. Like I have 500 emails right now and I'm just going to have it because I have to shut off. I have to be a mom.

Carmen discussed her feelings about doing this work long into the future and concern about feeling guilty when she was not giving as much as she could when she did not have kids.

"I don't – I think being able to switch off and not feel guilt is like the only way. I don't know how to do that. And maybe it comes with time. But I also don't want to lose my effectiveness."

The study participants lived in a world that had taught them, both explicitly and implicitly, how they should be. Each day, in spite of showing up to a leadership position, they were not meeting the expectations of the system. These feelings of inadequacy, combined with daily reminders of their femaleness, created dissonance that turned to internalized oppression. Many of the leaders cited experiences with issues of gender or sexism prior to being in the study but they also noted that their participation in the study created opportunities for them to think differently about the experiences. Jessica shared that she first struggled to think about times when she had experienced sexism at her school site but after her boyfriend asked her to think about how she would have been treated differently if she were a man, the stories and examples flowed from her. Similarly, during the focus group, Michelle exclaimed that she just realized that this year she was experiencing an increased number of microagressions.

The challenges for the participants of this study were immense. Yet, it was also clear that the principals were hopeful and resilient. They believed that their stories mattered and hoped that, by sharing them, they could help other female leaders overcome the same challenges they had had to overcome. Ultimately, in spite of all the challenges, the principals noted moments of

immense hope and potential in their work. They believed they could and would make a difference in the lives of those they lead, and it was this hope and deep desire that propelled them through the challenges. The opportunities for novice female charter school principals are discussed in the next section.

Opportunities for Novice Female Charter School Principals

Novice female charter school principals represent an emerging group of leaders who are positioned to make lasting change in their schools and organizations if they are able to sustain in the field beyond the traditional three to five years as noted in Superville in 2014. Examining the ways in which novice female charter school principals conceptualized and actualized the work led to discovery of several patterns from the data.

Summary of Emerging Patterns

The first pattern to emerge was leadership focused on improving student achievement. Throughout the study, it was clear that the participants cared deeply about improving outcomes for the students they served. The subpatterns within this pattern were: impacting beyond the classroom; student-centered, data-based leadership; leveraging community; and leadership for students' futures.

The second pattern that emerged under opportunities was novice female charter school principals' work to build sustainable leadership. Within this pattern, the principals of the study were focused on ensuring that the work they engaged in sustained well beyond their tenure at the school. The subpatterns to emerge from this pattern were: a continuous focus on growth; lasting legacy of the school; and selfless leadership.

The third pattern that emerged was novice female charter school principals' ability to shift the masculinized definition of leadership. By being leaders in a traditionally masculinized role, the principals of this study were slowing shifting the perception of what it meant to be a leader. The subpatterns to emerge from this pattern were: who can be a principal; leading from why; team-centered leadership; relational leadership; and leading from a space of vulnerability.

The final pattern that emerged from the data was leadership that paved the way for other female leaders. The participants of this study recognized that not only were they leading for themselves and their students, but also, they were slowly paving the way for other leaders to move into leadership roles in the future. The subpatterns to emerge from this pattern were: mentorship and sponsorship as a key pathway to leadership; leadership that embraces balance; and leadership that is glass-breaking.

Leadership Focused on Improving Student Achievement

The first pattern that emerged from the data was the participant focus on leadership that improved student achievement. In the semistructured interviews, each of the seven participants discussed her role as an instructional leader. Additionally, the idea of influencing student achievement was discussed by participants in both focus groups. Many of the participants noted that while other aspects of the work may complicate their ability to focus on this area, the most important role they had was influencing student achievement.

In her interview, Bridget cited from memory her students' current math and English proficiency rates on state standardized testing: "I have to be the champion of figuring out the strategy to improve that." Additionally, in her interview, Carmen noted her school's desire to create a school in which the achievement gap did not exist because they had the ability to control for that starting with their students in kindergarten.

Within the first focus group, Carmen noted that the biggest difference she saw between charter school principals and district principals was the ability to focus on the ultimate goal of student learning and achievement instead of being frustrated by things they could not change at a district level, or being held down by bureaucratic issues and red tape. This was echoed by participants in both focus groups.

Throughout the interviews and the focus groups, a number of subpatterns emerged in terms of how the participants actualized their desire to improve student achievement. Namely, their desire to impact beyond their classroom, student-centered, data-based leadership, leveraging community, and supporting students' hopes and dreams emerged as subpatterns. Each subpattern is discussed in the following sections.

Impacting Beyond the Classroom

The subpattern of the desire to have an impact on student achievement beyond the individual classroom emerged from the data. A number of the participants commented on their desire to have an impact on student achievement beyond school and academics as a reason for going into the principal role. In her interview, Maribel expressed feeling that she was able to have a strong impact on her own students' achievement and that she would be able to extend that impact by going into a leadership role. Daisy discussed her ability to impact teachers' practices, which ultimately impacted students in the classroom. She found this particularly true of new teachers coming into the role and felt like this was where she was able to see her impact on student achievement beyond the classroom.

Laura discussed the pride she felt when the school's first class of graduating seniors walked off the stage. Specifically, she named the role she played in helping to shift the narrative

of what was possible for the students at her school as a source of success and pride. Her ability to influence the entire community to believe what was possible and achieve it for the students was her ultimate success.

During the first focus group, Michelle discussed her work to support teachers in their professional growth to support students. “I think a lot about…my role in serving my staff so that they can then best serve my students.” Jessica discussed focusing on capacity-building at all levels, in particular with her leadership team, to impact student achievement.

The field notes revealed connections the researcher had to this idea of ultimate impact. Specifically, participants addressed the notion of recognizing where one’s ultimate impact could take place and taking a leap into a position with less control but more responsibility for ensuring the success of a larger group of students. The moral obligation to do this work when you knew that you had the ability was a resonating theme with both participants and the researcher.

Student-Centered, Data-Based Leadership

A second subpattern was student-centered, data-based leadership . Throughout the semistructured interviews, nearly every participant discussed student data and the use of data in their leadership.

In her interview, Jessica discussed the need to use data to make decisions related to what was best for students: “It’s looking at our data and saying what’s best for student this year is that we really focus and have a push on writing, per se. That’s going to be the lever that’s going to get our kids to do better in college.”

In her interview, Carmen discussed her intimate knowledge of each student’s abilities and achievement outcomes and the reasons for each particular outcome. She described the next steps and the hope she had for every student to be successful. Ultimately, her goal was for all students to leave her school on or above grade level in English and math.

Bridget explicitly explained that there was a lot of work to do as it related to the current student achievement outcomes at the school. Daisy listed her desire to get back to the where the school had been in the past in terms of student achievement as an explicit goal for the future. In the focus groups, when explicitly asked how improving achievement was actualized, many participants discussed their work to lead others to results by leveraging community. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Leveraging Community

A third subpattern that impacted student achievement was the principals' work to leverage the community for the good of students. Many of the principals discussed the importance of the community in achieving long-term results for students.

A number of examples of this subpattern emerged from the semistructured interviews. Jessica discussed the ultimate goal of the school in raising student achievement and uplifting the community. "It's the fact that our goal is always to create a highly successful school that really changes the game for the kids in this community."

In her interview, Laura discussed her fortune to teach in the community where she was raised and to instill in her students the same mentality that her mentor instilled in her: that community was a place to build and grow from within. She viewed her role as uplifting the entire community: "My role involves working with and embracing the challenges faced by stakeholders at all levels—students, parents, teachers—and working to make their hopes and dreams for the kids in the community a reality." Michelle discussed the sense of servitude she had to both the students and the community, and that it was a responsibility she took seriously. Bridget saw her most important role as forging connections between all stakeholders in the community to address the needs of students.

This subpattern also emerged from the focus groups. During the second focus group, Carmen noted her work as "the community builder…with parents, scholars, and teachers" and the importance of this role for impacting student achievement. Leveraging the community for students' current outcomes was important for thinking about students' futures. Leadership for students' futures is the last subpattern within this opportunity.

Leadership for Students' Futures

The final subpattern that emerged from the data is leadership that is focused on students' futures. To the principals in the study, their impact on students was not just about yearly student achievement. Many of the participants discussed their desire to ultimately help students achieve their goals and desires for the future.

A number of examples from the interviews show the prominence of this subpattern. Michelle discussed her most successful moment as seeing her K8 students achieve in high school once they had left her school. Maribel named her ultimate goal as ensuring that all of her students get into college and that they choose to go. Bridget discussed a particular student who came to her for support navigating a conversation with her mother about going away to college. This student was accepted to Howard University but was struggling to get her mother to see that going out of state to college was the best move for her. Bridget counseled, coached, and

ultimately supported the student to engage in difficult conversations with her mother on long-term life decisions.

Ultimately, the data from interviews and the focus groups indicated a strong focus on leadership that impacts student achievement through a desire to have a long-term impact on them. This includes ensuring strong student achievement on a yearly basis but also a focus on the long-term goals of each student. To successfully engage in this work, the principals of the study were deeply focused on ensuring that the work they were doing would sustain at the school level. This second pattern is discussed in the next section.

Leadership That Sustains

The second pattern to emerge under opportunities for novice female charter school principals was leadership that focused on the long-term sustainability of the school. All of the participants of the study spoke to their desire to ensure the school continued to evolve, grow, and be a safe, effective learning space for students, families, and staff beyond the principals' tenure at the school. For example, in her interview Jessica said, "My fear is all the work we'll be doing, that we have done and continue to do, gets lost along the way somewhere if bad leadership comes up."

A number of subpatterns emerged under the pattern of leadership that sustains. Specifically, the participants spoke to their continued focus on the growth of the school, focusing on the lasting legacy of the school, and leading from a selfless place. During the semistructured interviews, many of the principals spoke to not seeing the success of the school sustain while discussing their fears for the school. These subpatterns are discussed in the following section.

A Continuous Focus on Growth

The first subpattern to emerge under leadership that sustains was a continuous focus on growth. When asked what their fears for the school were in the semistructured interviews, many of the participants spoke to their fears of not seeing the school continue to grow in the future. For example, Carmen commented that her biggest fear was "that we won't continue to have the same results that we have. Like I really believe that we can keep improving every year but I like worry about not."

Laura discussed her fears of ensuring that the school did not get complacent and was able to maintain hope for continuous growth and momentum toward what was to come. Her school had gone through growth every year since opening five years previously, and she was concerned that now that the school was done growing in size people would become stagnant and lose their vision toward excellence.

Daisy discussed her desire to ensure the school would grow. She specifically discussed the challenges the school had experienced by moving sites so often and the challenges to sustaining the school population this had created. Her hope was for the school to grow back to the place it once was and to improve beyond that initial success she remembered. Beyond the continual growth of the school, the principals in the study were also concerned with ensuring a strong legacy at the school. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Lasting Legacy of the School

Another subpattern to emerge within leadership that sustains was the focus on building the legacy of the school. The participants of the study were focused on both the continuous growth of the school and the lasting legacy of the school. As with the focus on student achievement, they had a keen sense of the present while keeping an eye on the future.

For example, in her interview Jessica discussed this idea of legacy while thinking about how long she would be at the school for:

> I have to make sure that my time here at [school] makes a really solid path, so that whoever ends up coming after me in 30 years when I retire has a very clear understanding of what we do here, and why we do it.

She also discussed the need to build pipelines of teachers and leaders to ensure the sustainability and legacy of the school.

Michelle discussed her desire to maintain the reputation of her organization as they opened a new school, and to ensure a strong legacy well beyond her time with the organization. Given the role she played in ensuring the quality of the school, she felt a large responsibility to ensure she upheld the legacy and supported continued growth. Carmen discussed how she wanted to be a principal forever but realized that there would come a time for her to move on. Her ultimate goal, though, was is to "build a really great school."

Maribel discussed her hopes to get all of her students accepted into and attending a four-year university. She recognized that to do this her focus needed to be on the sustainability of the school, particularly with regard to staffing and setting up structures and processes.

The field notes revealed connections the researcher had with this subpattern. As a principal and assistant principal the focus, I noted that the focus was always on ensuring that the systems and structures that were put in place would ensure the lasting success of the school. The focus on the long-term success shows the ways in which the principals lead. The final subpattern within this pattern is selfless leadership. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Selfless Leadership

The final subpattern to emerge was the resounding presence of selfless leadership. A number of times throughout the interviews, the participants discussed being of service to the community and school as a driving force for their leadership. For example, many of the participants saw a need in the community or a void in leadership that they either felt they could fill or were encouraged by others to do so. None of the principals talked about taking their role as a principal as a power-driven or ego-centric decision.

This subpattern was most prominent in responses to the interview questions about how long they planned to stay in the principal roles. In her interview, Michelle discussed her desire to stay in the role until she realized that she was no longer what was best for the organization:

> I think I'll be a principal until I feel that I'm not contributing to the growth of the school… or I feel that I have done a lot of what I can and that there is someone else who might be able to step into this role and really, that would really benefit the organization or the school. I think that loyalty part of me goes to doing what's best for the organization and not what's best for myself.

In the focus group, she expanded on this by saying she did not take the principal role for the title, but rather because she saw a need at the school and realized she could step into this need. In her

interview, Carmen shared a similar sentiment when discussing how long she would stay in the role: “I think as long as I can continue to feel like my presence and work is having an impact.”

In the second focus group, this pattern of stepping into the role to fill a need was further discussed. Both Carmen and Bridget said that they were essentially doing leadership roles at the school even without the title, and ultimately decided that what was best for the school was stepping into the leadership role even if it was not what they originally aspired to do. This selfless approach represented a more feminized approach to leadership that was grounded in research. The leaders represented shifts from the male-centric approach most often referenced when discussing leadership. This was the third pattern to emerge under opportunities for female leaders and is discussed in the following section.

Shifting the Masculinized Definition of Leadership

The third pattern that emerged under opportunities for female leaders was the everyday work of shifting the normative definition of leadership. Scholars have noted that many conceptualizations of leadership studied and espoused in the United States are based on a masculinized conceptualization of the role (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2012). This conceptualization can delegitimize females and males who serve in leadership roles but do not necessarily embrace a masculinized approach.

Novice female charter school principals have an opportunity through their everyday work to shift what it means to be a successful leader within public education. They do this in a number of ways. First, by showing up every day to work as a novice female principal, they are calling into question the stereotypical norms of public school principals. Additionally, the participants of this study spoke extensively about their focus on leading from their values, focusing on team-based leadership, developing strong relationships with those around them to influence and achieve success, and finally, leading from a space of vulnerability. The following section describes the findings from these subpatterns in depth.

Shifting the Stereotype of Who Can Be a Principal

The first subpattern to emerge is the shifting of the stereotype of who can be a principal. Many of the participants in the study discussed experiences with individuals outside of their immediate network finding out they were a principal and being shocked. The conversation in most cases was very similar among participants in both interviews and the focus group. For example, in her interview, Laura discussed experiences dealing with law enforcement that came to the school for various reasons. When police officers found out she was the principal, they often second-guessed her and some had even asked for identification to prove that she is the

principal. Field notes from this interview revealed similar experiences with law enforcement by the researcher.

Other participants shared similar stories, even when discussing their work and role in nonwork-related settings. In the second focus group, Carmen commented that "I don't look like a principal." In the first focus group Jessica, Michelle, and Daisy shared that they often told people they were "in education" instead of sharing right away that they were a principal. Usually, they received follow-up inquiries about whether they were teachers. When they finally confided that they were in fact a principal, the revelation was usually followed by comments of disbelief. The participants believed that this disbelief was due to the stereotype of a principal as an older White male.

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, participants believed that this disbelief was due to both gender and age. A number of the participants commented in both the semistructured interviews and the focus groups that they recognized that if they were working in a traditional public school system, the chance that they would be female principals by the age of 31 would be slim. In her interview, Jessica shared:

> I didn't see [district] as a space that was going to let me grow as a leader, nor were they going to pick me up any time soon. I was very young for being a principal. At that point I wasn't even 30 years old. So I was looking at getting a principal job in 10-15 years later.

By taking on the principal role and showing up to work every day, the participants of this study were slowing shifting the norm about who can be a principal. Beyond this, the principals in the study noted their desire to lead from their values. This was the second subpattern to emerge and is discussed in the next section.

Leading from Why

A second subpattern that shifted the masculinized view of leadership was leadership that was value driven and based on leaders' "why." Throughout the interviews and the focus groups, participants noted times in their leadership when they had to rely on the values they held as leaders in addition to the values of their organization. This was particular true both in terms of making decisions of where to work and leading during challenging situations.

In the focus group, Michelle discussed working for an organization that is in alignment with her values. She believed deeply in the mission of the school and the ways in which the organization seeks to achieve that mission. Similarly, in her interview, Laura discussed that it was not necessarily a charter school that she chose to work at, but a very specific charter school

with a very specific set of values and mission. For both of these principals, it was not leadership alone they were seeking, but rather leadership that was in alignment with their core beliefs.

All seven participants spoke to challenges they experienced in the role as a principal. Many of the participants had multiple challenges and told deeply personal stories about experiences they had had in the role. What was clear across the stories was that the participants approached solving the challenges, or in some cases weathering the challenges, by relying on their why. In one particularly challenging situation, Laura discussed her approach to dealing with a major mistake at the school:

> It was very clear to me what we needed to do and it wasn't up for debate because we were going to do what was best for kids and not sit around and discuss and sort of meander and figure it out.

Similarly, Jessica discussed bringing back the why during challenging situations between adults on the campus. She specifically named an individualized education meeting for a student with special needs that was contentious or when adult co-teachers were not getting along at the school, she reminded everyone that they were there to serve the students and families and to work in the best interest of this why. Ultimately, the principals in the study felt that leading from why was most effective in ensuring they met the mission of the school. Additionally, beyond

leading from why, the principals spoke at length about ensuring they were effectively leading their teams and engaging their teams in the work. This subpattern is discussed in the following section.

Team-Centered Leadership

A third subpattern that emerged throughout the study was leadership that was based in team-centered approaches. When talking about successes and decision-making at the school level, many of the participants discussed utilizing the strength of the school team or their leadership team to achieve success. Carmen spoke extensively about this approach and her desire to ensure a democratic, collaborative environment for her staff in her interview:

> I'd say I'm very people oriented, diplomatic, very like a democracy. It's funny because people are always like you're so good about being vulnerable with your team and asking them for support and I'm like I don't like actively try to do that. I just like ask them for help because I want their opinions. So I have some core teachers who serve as instructional coaches and I rely on them to give me the like, no, really, what would this be like? How would this decision impact you as a teacher?

She went on to speak about the importance of having buy-in and satisfied teachers for the long-term success of the school. She viewed this as her most important work to impact student achievement.

Similarly, Daisy believed that a team-centered approach helped ensure a strong culture for the school. She spoke of the importance of pitching in and helping out when necessary. Specifically, she said she would not ask anybody to do anything she would not do herself, which means that some days she was picking up trash, some days she was serving lunch, and other days she was hanging a sign outside. Being willing to do what is outside of your job description is a part of being on a team whose individuals support each other.

Another way that participants discussed leading from a team-centered approach is not always being the one in front. Jessica described her role to create a cohesive team as running a relay race in her interview:

> I go back and forth between sometimes being the person in the front, where I'm leading, and where we're all going to do this and I'm going to show you how to do it, then running to the back and watching everybody else doing it, and making sure that everyone's doing it well, and kind of observing, and then seeing like oh, we're going the wrong way, so run to the front again. But I would like to say that I lead from behind.

Her role to guide the vision while letting others lead the way supports a team-centered approach that shifted people's perspective on what a powerful leadership can be. Focusing on team aligns to the fourth subpattern found in this opportunity—a focus on relationships. Relational leadership is discussed in the following section.

Relational Leadership

The fourth subpattern that emerged within leadership that shifts the masculinized definition of leadership was an approach grounded in relationships. Every participant of the study explicitly named relationships with stakeholders as a key to their success in the work. Whether it was creating strong relationships with their leadership teams, supervisors, students, or parents, each participant told a story or situation that was grounded in developing strong relationships to effectively do their work. Maribel and Bridget spoke of their work to build trust and strong relationships with parents. They both believed that parents relied on them to help them navigate the educational landscape for their children. Daisy spoke of using relationships to navigate tricky litigious parents who one second may be threatening to sue the school and the next be walking out of her office smiling at the solution.

Carmen spoke of her reciprocal relationship with her leadership team in her interview. She recognized that they supported her growth and development just as much as she supported

theirs and she relied heavily on their feedback, guidance, and backing to achieve the mission and goals of the school.

Carmen also spoke of leveraging relationships in working through challenges. In the past school year, Carmen had learned that the new building being constructed for her school was delayed and would not be ready in time. She had to rely on the relational trust and power she had developed with families and staff at the school to explain that the school would have to temporarily move to a colocated space with a district school. This temporary move resulted in protests from the district-school teachers and parents, who further challenged Carmen in her leadership. However, in meetings with parents and staff, it was clear that there was deep trust in her as a person and a leader and that they would work with her to ensure the success of the school even through the challenge. The field notes reveal connections with the me, having had the exact same situation my last 3 years as a leader of a school and also having to rely on strong relationships with students, staff, and parents to make it through the challenge successfully. The ability to lead differently, to develop strong relationships, to be team-centered and selfless required the principals to demonstrate high levels of vulnerability in their roles. This final subpattern is discussed in the following section.

Leading from a Space of Vulnerability

The final subpattern to emerge in shifting the masculinized definition of leadership was leading from a space of vulnerability. Stories and examples that the participants shared represented this subpattern. Field notes and observations from the interviews and focus groups indicated moments throughout the study when the participants showed vulnerability.

In the interviews, Laura cried while sharing her struggles with deciding whether to have a second child as a principal and being concerned with whether she could do both to the level of expectation that she had for herself. Maribel revealed a situation between a student and teacher that had occurred in the past year and the guilt and remorse she felt for not knowing what was going on before it was reported to her.

Carmen revealed that in the meeting she had had with families to share the news about the building being delayed, she shed some tears in front of them as she was overwhelmed with not being able to deliver on the promise that the organization had made. Bridget confided that she was not sure she would make it to Christmas as a principal and that she considered quitting every single day.

In the focus group, Jessica shared how she partnered with parents to solve problems and did not approach the situation from a place of knowing everything:

> So I'm approaching the work this year from a very different space. And I am telling parents that like I don't know the rules on how to be a parent and sometimes it happens when being a principal. Like nobody gave me a manual that said when a kid throws a chair across the room react this way.

The stories and experiences that the participants shared exemplify that they show up as principals first as human beings and that they rely on the same emotions and feelings that others do in their leadership.

The study's principals worked to show up each day as themselves, to lead from a team-oriented, relational space, and to be vulnerable with stakeholders, exemplifying how they were shifting the masculinized definition of leadership. In doing so, female leaders were paving the way for other female leaders to enter into the field. This final pattern under opportunities for female leaders is discussed in the next section.

Leadership that Paves the Way for Other Female Leaders

The final pattern to emerge within opportunities for female leaders was leadership that paves the way for other females to grow into leadership. Scholars have noted the importance of female leaders opening doors and supporting other female leaders in moving into leadership roles (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2012). The data that emerged from the interviews and focus group

supported this notion and revealed the ways in which female leaders supported others on their pathway to leadership. Specifically, the data from the participants of the study revealed the importance of mentors and sponsors in their own career trajectories and life. They noted that having the experiences to learn and grow and stretch in their work created the pathway for them to move into the principal position. The participants of the study shared that they, too, struggled to prove that one could, in fact, be a principal, and a mom or a wife, or have your own life, and that it is possible to be successful at both. Finally, the principals in the study represent glass-breaking leadership and social change: they showed up to work every day recognizing inequity in their lives and they remained hopeful for the future. These subpatterns are discussed in the next four sections.

Mentorship and Sponsorship as a Key Building Block to Leadership

The first subpattern to emerge from the data was the importance of mentorship and sponsorship for females going into leadership roles. Every participant in the study was able to speak about somebody who had mentored them or sponsored their leadership along the way to the principal role, and most continued to have a mentor who encouraged their growth even after they moved into the principal role. In turn, many of the participants had taken on a mentorship role for others whom they supervised or informally supported.

All seven of the principals specifically named a female who in some way supported their growth into leadership. Five of the seven participants named this female a mentor of their work and discussed the importance of the mentor relationship in ensuring that they felt confident going into the role. Many of the mentors pushed the principals to consider principal positions before the participants themselves thought they were ready. For example, Carmen discussed how she knew that the school would ask her to move into a leadership role when one opened up midyear, even though she had wanted to stay in the classroom. Others saw her skills and leadership abilities and encouraged her to take risks to move into the role and use those risks. In her interview, Carmen shared that one of her mentors told her:

> "You could be a principal. You would be a really good principal. I see you in school leadership." So then she like gave me a lot of responsibility like grade level care and meeting PDs and stuff like that. She was the one that encouraged me to apply to be a dean. So she really supported in that sense.

Carmen also spoke of other sponsors who encouraged her ultimate rise into the principal role. Specifically, she shared that the encouragement from both her mentors as well as her husband convinced her to take the principal role even though she felt like she was not ready yet.

Maribel shared in her interview that she was given stretch assignments by her principal after she complained about the quality of the professional development as a teacher. The principal gave her some responsibilities planning and facilitating professional development as a teacher, and it was in such assignments that she was able to start seeing herself as a leader of other adults. Similarly, in her interview, Daisy shared that she had a principal who told her early in her career that she would be running the school in a few years.

Many of the participants noted moments like this when a mentor's or supporter's confidence in them encouraged their growth into leadership roles that they would not have considered on their own. During the focus group, participants noted the similarities in this aspect of their pathway to leadership. After a particular story told by one of the participants about being encouraged to go into a role, Carmen shared:

> I think your story resonated with me a lot because I too needed somebody else to tell me like you're good for this or you should do this…. But for whatever reason still needing that reassurance of like you're the right person for the job.

The participants made a connection in the focus group to the purpose of the study, thus this pattern that emerged.

Other participants spoke of the importance of having specifically a female role model in navigating a masculinized field. For example, Jessica shared in her interview that it was not until she had had a female mentor that she started to understand some of the challenges she was experiencing and the way she was approaching leadership. This participant spoke to her entrance into the role and being encouraged by a female mentor to ask for a higher salary given her credentials, qualifications, and experience. The female leader shared that she initially approached accepting the position from a place of gratitude and humility and felt that asking for a higher salary would make her seem ungrateful and selfish. Through conversation with a mentor, she realized that those feelings were based in gendered expectations and that men would not hesitate to ask for more money. Having a female mentor who encouraged her to engage in the political aspect of leadership and encouraged her to embrace her worth was important to her success.

Leadership That Embraces Balance

Many of the principals noted the challenges associated with being a mother or considering motherhood while in the principal role. Of the seven participants in the study, three had children. Carmen and Maribel were considering having children. Carmen had originally planned to have children at age 30 but was putting it off because she went into a principal

position. Maribel specifically said she would be in a principal position until she had a child, which she planned to do in the next few years.

The principals who did have children made it a point to share their thoughts on being able to prioritize both being a mother and being a principal. Jessica became unexpectedly pregnant during her first year in the role, and during her interview she disclosed how devastated she was when this happened. She worried about her ability to be successful in her first year while being out on maternity leave. However, now in her second year as a principal with a child who was to turn one in the spring, she believed that having a child was one of the best things that could have happened to her, both for her personal life and for her role as a principal. She believed it had allowed her to gain perspective to better work with all stakeholders and deepened her trust and care with her own staff.

Carmen, who talked about wanting children and actively putting off having one after she went into the principal role, also discussed her work to ensure a strong balance in her life. To Carmen, running was an important part of her daily routine to stay healthy and balanced. She worked to incorporate it into her schedule each day at 4pm. To her, it was important that her staff realized that she worked just as hard at taking care of herself as she did at meeting the goals of the school so that they had permission to do the same.

Two of the principals in the study did not have children nor talked about wanting children. However, personal balance and self-care were also important in their work. Michelle noted in her interview that because she was single and did not have children and worked with others who did have children or were in relationships, she was often called on to work late or on the weekends. She saw these demands as preventing her effort to live a balanced life. She discussed how she advocated for equitable work patterns for all females to sustain in the work, with or without families. The goal for all the principals in this study was to figure out how more female leaders could break through the glass-ceiling that for too long has held many down. This subpattern is discussed in the next section.

Leadership That is Glass-Breaking

The principals in this study represented glass-breaking leadership. One-by-one they shifted the percentage of female principals working to sustain in school leadership roles throughout this country. They persevered in an inequitable world and they recognized that their work individually cracked—and collectively shattered—the glass ceiling that has kept females from school leadership roles. Throughout the study, the participants noted their awareness of this and the enormous responsibility they felt to continue being a steward of the work both with colleagues and their female students.

During the focus group, the participants noted that they liked that their position and success caused people to rethink what is possible for female leaders. Bridget noted how empowered she felt when she proved a stereotype wrong:

> I think it empowers me actually because I like the fact that it's breaking a barrier or a stereotype about what a principal is or how old a principal should be or what gender a principal typically is. So I like that shock factor. It motivates me.

Bridget recognized that people questioned her ability as a female leader without merit, yet she found motivation in being able to prove them wrong.

At one particularly emotional point of her interview, Laura shared that she struggled with the decision to have a second child in the principal role. She considered not having a second child and, alternatively, leaving the principal role altogether. However, at the end of the day, she came to the realization that she felt a responsibility to prove that it was possible to do both.

> And really thinking that I couldn't do it because I was a principal; I couldn't have a baby. That was a really hard time too. I had to do a lot of soul searching in terms of like am I going to be okay walking away because it's not okay to be a principal and be a mom. And, so I think after talking to mentors and friends what became very clear is we needed to pave the way. So I needed to do it to be able to figure out how to do it so that other people could

feel like they could do it too and that those things cannot be – that I was not going to be okay with those things being mutually exclusive.

Her desire to be able to have a second child and still feel effective could fall under leadership that embraces balance; however, even more powerful here was her desire to pave the way for others to do it, too.

Beyond breaking the glass for female peers, the participants spoke to their desire to pave the way for their female students. In the focus group, Carmen spoke of how her all-female team worked to counteract negativity against females in the 2016 presidential election. When Hillary Clinton lost, many of the participants were disappointed both from a political standpoint and a gender standpoint. They came to school the next morning, had a morning huddle to discuss their game plan, and then made sure they continued to build up their female students by complimenting their abilities, their smarts, and their contributions to the world. They made a conscious decision to build their female students up over time with love and with confidence to counteract the inequity in the world.

Conclusion

The participants of this study elected to be a part of the research because they believed their stories matter. The female participants of the study were hopeful. Many of them recognized

that the world in which they lead does treats females equitably. They experience challenges on a daily basis that make them question their abilities, feel inadequate, question who they are as humans; these are, quite frankly, challenges that would break anyone down on any given day. Yet, they choose to remain hopeful. They recognized the power that female leaders have in shifting the world for the better and for all the little girls out there, and they recognized the power of what they represent. The opportunities for female leaders are rooted in the social change and institutional growth that is possible under their leadership. Female leaders are poised to make real change for students through new ways of leading. Female leaders are oriented toward long-term sustainable leadership. They were paving the way for other female leaders to move into leadership positions, and they remained hopeful, despite inequitable conditions, that their work and their voice mattered.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a well-respected business professor at Harvard University, is quoted as saying "it's an uphill struggle, to be judged both as a good woman and a good leader" (Paludi & Coates, 2011, p. xxxi). Perhaps nowhere is this truer than for females who are trying to be leaders in roles that have been historically filled by males. The public school principalship is one such role. Even the inception of the role, largely a bureaucratic position with gender barriers that have persisted, was intended to keep females in the classroom and out of the principal's office.

Since the passage of Title IX nearly 50 years ago, equity for females has certainly progressed. However, the lasting effects of legal inequity and unequal treatment remain. Females experience challenges even moving into the role because of historical hiring practices, the lack of females in superintendency roles, and socialized norms of the roles.

Even when females do manage to secure leadership roles, they experience challenges based on the perceived expectations of their gender being in conflict with the socialized expectations of the roles. Overt sexism, microagressions, perceived credibility, internalized

inadequacy, and oppression compound the already-complex nature of the role. These challenges make sustaining in the role most challenging for novice female charter school principals.

Yet, literature also shows that female principals are uniquely positioned to make lasting change for all stakeholders of the school community. The principal position has been shown to account for nearly 25% of all student learning in a school. Additionally, a feminized approach to school leadership has been touted as the type of leadership needed to make real change throughout education today.

Female leaders themselves represent glass-breaking, social change leadership. By showing up, by changing the norm of what it means to be a public school principal, by leading from a selfless place, and focusing on the longevity and duration of the school, female principals may be the key to finally moving the needle for students and families today.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand the challenges that novice female charter school principals experienced during their first 3 years in the role and to consider how this entrance impacted their ability to sustain in the field. Additionally, the study sought to explore the ways in which novice female charter school leaders conceptualized and actualized their work and the opportunities they had to make lasting change both in the classroom and in the

principal's office. Finally, the study sought to highlight the ways in which urban charter schools can better retain their female principals with more targeted and differentiated support.

Significance of the Study

The principal role has been historically viewed as a role for older White males. This stereotype is often reinforced by movies about schools as well the experience of many American adults who attended schools with principals who were in fact older, White males. The principal role has been historically overrepresentative of males in the field, with females comprising nearly 89% of elementary and 58% of secondary teaching roles but only 65% and 40% of the principalship, respectively. The females who participated in this study benefited from an increased understanding of the ways in which the lasting and current effects of sexism impact them on a daily basis. Additionally, the female participants benefited from meeting other novice charter school principals to begin to develop a peer network from which to gain support. The part of the study that participants were most excited about was the focus group, where they were able to interact with others who were going through the same challenges they were.

The findings of this study have the potential to support charter management organizations' understanding of how to best support female principals to sustain in the role. Already, as a result of this study, I put together a new-mom support group for four of the female

principals in my network. The support group is working with trained life coaches on a monthly basis to cover topics such as: no guilt-moming, setting time boundaries to be able to pump and leave on time, learning how to delegate, food and sleep, knowing your worth and power, healthy communication with your partner, ways to be present with family at home, and integrating these practices into the school site. Further research on the impact of this support may lead to additional findings on ways to change what is possible for female principals in charter schools.

Finally, from a scholarly perspective, understanding the ways in which the female leaders of this study acted as leaders of social justice and change, both by impacting outcomes for students and paving the way for other female leaders will contribute to the literature.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study intended to answer the research question: what are the opportunities and challenges experienced by novice female charter school principals. Specifically, the theoretical frames of organizational socialization and social role theory were used to examine the experiences of novice charter school principals. A brief overview of each theoretical frame is discussed below.

Organizational Socialization

Many of the challenges that participants cited were grounded in their socialization into the role. Lack of formal onboarding for the participants into the role, a steep learning curve, and trying to be as effective as a leader using prior socialized norms of leadership created challenges for the participants of the study.

Social Role Theory

Being a female in a historically masculinized role also posed challenges for the participants of the study. The principals experienced pervasive sexism from stakeholders. This sexism took the form of hostile, aggressive sexism but also more covert, benevolent, and microagressive sexism. Females in the study were attempting to forge a new path and figure out what it meant to be leader in a role where they will never be able to fulfill the socialized expectations of being a male.

The Intersectionality of Organizational Socialization and Social Role Theory

This study explored the intersectionality of organizational socialization and social role theory. The socialization of the general US population regarding who gets to be a principal and what a principal does was grounded in the theoretical framework of social role theory. Many

people are socialized to have certain opinions about principals, and this socialization is then projected on females in the role.

Female leaders are socialized as females throughout their lives, being taught the expected norms and ideas of what it means to be a female just by existing in society. When this is combined with the socialization of what it means to be a principal through their own time in education and again through society's expectations of the role, the cognitive dissonance and insecurity of not meeting socialized expectations creates a feeling of inadequacy.

The presence of feeling inadequate was pronounced for participants throughout the study. In fact, when asked about a time they had felt inadequate in the role, every participant answered by saying some variation of "all the time" almost instantaneously. Yet, when asked to consider a time they felt successful, the participants of the study sometimes struggled to name a specific time.

The following figure details this major finding as the intersection of organizational socialization and social role theory.

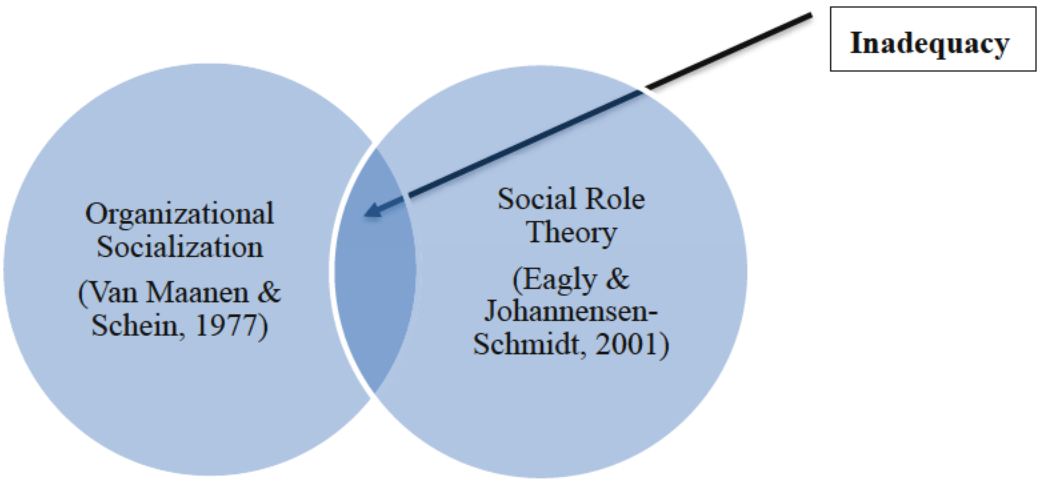

Figure 1. The intersection of theoretical frames.

Feeling overwhelmed and having a steep learning curve only adds to feelings of inadequacy; it is no surprise that sustainability seems to be unlikely for many. The findings from this study will add to the literature on female leadership and, in particular, to the literature on supporting female leaders to sustain as principals.

Summary of Findings

Three major findings emerged from the patterns in the data. First, the findings from this study underscored that it is still difficult today to be seen as a "good" female and a good leader. The socialized norms of being a female and the socialized norms of being a leader are often in conflict with each other, causing dissonance for the female leaders as well as for those around them. Second, increasing the number of female leaders in education is imperative. Doing so will both start to shift the narrative of what a leader is and continue to pave the way for more female

leaders to come. Finally, the principal role will undoubtedly continue to be a challenging one; however, shifting the type of support that novice female principals receive may support their ability to sustain in the role for longer periods of time.

Being a Good Female and a Good Leader, Simultaneously

The findings of this study confirmed that it is difficult to be seen as both a good female and a good leader, as suggested by Professor Moss Kanter (Paludi & Coates, 2011). The socialized views of these two characteristics and the historical role of the leader position have created conditions in which female leaders are challenged to prove themselves as both a credible female and a credible leader. Given that the masculine socialized characteristics of a leader are often in conflict with feminized leadership characteristics or stereotypical female traits, this feat may prove nearly impossible. Female leaders who are able to be successful must learn to "become one of the guys" or internalize the oppression that exists in order to get ahead. Along the way, fear of inadequacy may derail their abilities to sustain in the role.

Increasing the Number of Female Leaders Matters

The limited number of female leaders in superintendency positions or leading charter management organizations is a roadblock to moving more females into leadership positions and to reshaping the narrative of what is possible in leadership. Yet, the power of female leaders to

make lasting change from an ethical and humanistic perspective is well-documented in the literature as well as in the findings that emerged from this study.

The principals in this study came into leadership because they believed they had a moral responsibility to support their organization and other female leaders. The principals were most concerned with the long-term growth of the school to ultimately better support student learning and their students' futures. They also ensured that the voices of all stakeholders mattered in the process of leading the school. Female leaders themselves considered the ways in which their leadership was breaking the glass ceiling or paving an easier path for those who come after them.

Imagine if all leaders in the world approached the work from this same place. There likely would be more peace, more justice, more kindness, and more love. We need more female leaders, now more than ever.

Differentiating Support for Novice Female Principals is Critical

The final finding is the need to differentiate support for novice female principals who have compounded challenges when entering the role. An onboarding process that more effectively trains novice female principals in the new information and skills they need to be successful is necessary to alleviate unnecessary stress.

Additionally, a coaching and mentoring model that specifically addresses the gender challenges female principals will face will support them to sustain in the role. In this study, the principals' most powerful mentoring moments were those in which they recognized how their gender was impacting the challenges they experienced and then were given tools to address the situation. Coaching and mentoring that addresses the work from a female's perspective has the ability to empower female principals to embrace their leadership style and approach and harness the potential for lasting change. It may reframe female principal's thoughts around being able to live their lives fully as a female and fully as a leader. It may shift the conversation from being one of guilt to one of grace and has the ability to change the game for novice female leaders' sustainability.

Limitations of the Study

The study had a number of potential limitations. Some of the limitations were based on the research design of the study. First, there may be a lack of generalizability due to the small sample size and the sampling method of purposeful criterion sample. Efforts were made to limit bias by sending an invitation to every charter school principal listed in LAUSD's charter principal directory. However, due to the constant movement in leaders and the potential inaccuracy of the data, it was hard to tell exactly what percent of the population the participant

pool represented. Due to these limitations, the interpretations and insights that emerged from the study may not be generalizable to all novice female charter school principals.

Another potential limitation of the study was the extent to which the participants were completely forthcoming with their experiences as novice female charter school principals. While I attempted to negate this limitation by working to develop rapport with participants, ensuring anonymity, disclosing the potential risks of the study, and sending the questions to the participants ahead of time, there were moments during the study when I felt that participants had more to say, but did not. Thus, some participants may not have been fully honest in their responses, which may represent an external threat to validity.

It was also clear that there were moments that the participants of the study had not perceived as being gender related but that the researcher interpreted as clearly connected to gender-issues. The participants' own lack of experience with studying gender-related issues may have played into what they disclosed to the researcher. Some participants seemed to increase their ability to identify experiences with sexism or gender-related issues as they went through the study. Because much of the way female leaders are treated is arguably engrained in the status quo of our patriarchal society, this limitation is not surprising. As researcher, I attempted to control for this limitation by selecting a criterion sample that disclosed that they have the ability

to speak openly and honestly about the topic, but there were varying levels of this once the study was actually completed.

Recommendations for Charter Management Organizations

Charter management organizations are positioned as innovative entities in education. Thus, their abilities to be flexible and agile in making changes is a key element of the reason behind the charter school law. Based on the data that emerged from participants and the findings of this study, there are a number of recommendations for CMOs.

Reconceptualizing the Principal Role

The principal role remains largely the same as it was when it came into existence in the mid-twentieth century. Some shifts to the role of principal as instructional leader have occurred, but the operational, fiscal, human capital, and public relations aspects of the role continue to drive the focus of many leaders who come into the position with strong instructional backgrounds. Additionally, the masculinized nature of the role has preconceived notions that female leaders attempt to break through.

Charter schools are uniquely positioned to reconsider administrative team structures and the support of the back office or home support office to ensure a principal's focus is on the instructional and adult leadership of the school, foci that are well-aligned with a feminized

approach. Yet, the structures of many of the schools and administrative leadership teams have remained largely similar to the district public schools from which charters are trying to innovate. There are ways in which charter organization can rethink delegating responsibilities, systematizing operational responsibilities, delegating resources, and ensuring that principals are not doing it all and thus recreating the status quo.

Executive Coaching with a Gender Focus

Principals in the study who had strong coaching and mentorship were more likely to say they saw themselves sustaining in the role. Yet, even those with coaches still felt that coaching with a specific gender focus would help them sustain in the role longer. Executive coaching with a gender focus could help female principals embrace their leadership style, fight through feelings of inadequacy, and figure out how to lead from a more graceful space.

Pooling Resources

Unlike a big district, CMOs are sometimes limited in their ability to offer strong coaching and support for senior-level leaders as this would take away finances from the school site. One recommendation is for midsized and small CMOs to pool resources in a collaborative structure for support. For example, in a collaborative model, a number of CMOs could pay for resources together that would support the principals across the organization.

Purposeful Onboarding

CMOs should examine their onboarding procedures as they relate to the training and skills necessary to be successful in the principal role. Principals who are thrown into the role and expected to be successful of their own accord were more likely to discuss quitting or not sustaining in the role. Purposefully onboarding through well-thought-out training and supports could help alleviate unnecessary stress and anxiety that new principals feel based on the steep amount of learning and new information necessary they must acquire.

Examining Inclusive Policies and Supports

CMOs should examine the ways in which their expectation for leaders is grounded in a masculinized approach to leadership. For example, does the organization have a lactation policy? Are school leaders encouraged to engage in behaviors that allow for balance and care of self? Does the school have policies that support having children? Does the school allow principals to bring their children to events? Does it discourage weekend emailing? Are principals who take time off to attend events at their child's school or who travel over the summer with their family less likely to be successful in the organization? Critically examining the ways in which the CMO may inadvertently discourage female leaders from assuming or sustaining in the role will be necessary in addition to making explicit moves to better support female leaders.

Recommendations for Policy Leaders

Many of the ways that CMOs are organized around leadership and supporting female leaders are grounded in policy related to administrative credentials, education law, and civil rights laws. This section will examine recommendations for policy leaders in promoting sustainability for novice female charter school leaders.

Title IX

Title IX was originally passed in 1972, and while there have been some updates to the original law, it remains largely unchanged. Furthermore, with each change in administration, the interpretation of the law shifts, sometimes swinging from one side of the pendulum to the other. For example, guidance given under the Obama administration regarding sexual assaults on college campuses under Title IX was recently rescinded by the current administration. It is clear that inequity persists between males and females in many areas. Consideration should be given to ways in which the system perpetuates inequity under Title IX.

Inclusive Policies Related to Maternity Leave

The United States lags far behind other countries in policies related to being a mother and being employed—both in terms of how much time mothers get for paid maternity leave and other policies that inequitably penalize females who choose to both work and have children. For

example, in some school districts if you are out on maternity leave for more than 25% of the year, the year of service does not count in your salary. Policies like this continue to disproportionately affect females. Examining the ways in which these policies perpetuate inequity is imperative to supporting more female leaders.

Administrative Credential Programs

Administrative credential programs are still largely grounded in the masculinized approaches that have been present since their inception. While some shifts have occurred as the movement toward principal as more of an instructional leader has occurred, the study of school leadership is based largely on the socialized expectations of what it means to be a principal. Credential programs should examine the ways in which they exist in a patriarchal society and make intentional shifts to change the narrative of what is possible.

Recommendations for Female Leaders

The female leaders who participated in this study did so because of their interest in the topic and own experiences with inequity in the field. The research question and statistics on principal sustainability resonated with their own personal experience. And, while CMOs and policy leaders can certainly do better to ensure female principals are able to sustain in the role, female leaders can also proactively put strategies in place to support their own sustainability.

Find a Mentor

It was clear from the study that having a mentor was an important factor in participants moving into a leadership role. Mentors help leaders continue to grow in informal and formal ways. For example, a mentor may help advise principals during particular tricky situations, may serve as a coach or a champion of their work, may connect or network principals to others who can support them, and may act as a sponsor when necessary. The participants of the study had both male and female mentors. Female mentors are particularly powerful for female principals as they can support from both a leader and gender perspective.

Develop a Peer Network

This study confirmed the literature related to the lonely nature of the role. Yet, there are thousands of principals throughout the country. Female principals can support their ability to sustain in the role by developing an informal peer network. Perhaps this peer network comes together once a month at a different school site to engage in collaborative development. Perhaps this peer network has a group email or chat where principals can quickly check their thinking with other principals. Perhaps this peer network gets together at a social event once a quarter to decompress. Whatever the function, novice female principals should connect to other principals so they understand they are not in the position alone.

Ask for the Raise

Both literally and figuratively, novice female charter school principals should ask for a raise. Female leaders are less likely to advocate for themselves, to recognize their worth, or to think it is socially acceptable to ask for the raise. Do it. Not only will it become easier for you to do over time, but if you do not know your worth, who will?

Future Research Recommendations

This study was focused on the impact that being a female and being a novice principal had on one's ability to sustain in the role. While other considerations emerged during the course of the study, these elements were not controlled as a part of this study and may be important for future research.

One area for future research is the role that race plays for female leaders. There was a distinct difference between the ways in which White principals entered the role and the ways in which the female principals of color entered the role. Additionally, many of the leaders of color spoke to the added challenges they experienced in the role based on their assumed or actual race or ethnicity. Future research in this area could add to the literature and support more targeted differentiation for novice female charter school principals of color.

An additional area for future research is the impact of CMO structure on charter school principals' sustainability. Principals who were located at stable, well-run CMOs noted the impact of the quality of support they received while principals of single-schools or of schools that had operational challenges noted the lack of support they received. Perhaps further consideration of differences among charter schools would lead to a deeper understanding of the challenges facing charter school principals.

Another area of further research is the impact of the recommendations for CMOs, particularly within the types of support CMOs offer to newer principals. Executive coaching has a wide range of strategies and skills as does approaching the work from a gendered perspective. Research on the most effective types of support, coaching, and development for novice principals will support the refinement of programs and approaches to support their sustainability.

Finally, given the current political climate and events related to females in the United States, additional research on the impact that the 2016 election had on female leaders and the lasting effects on their ability to sustain and be successful may be impactful to the field. More on this recommendation is discussed in the following personal reflection.

Personal Reflection

It seems necessary to note that throughout the course of conducting this research and writing this dissertation, the state of affairs for females in United States became complicated. In November 2016, many females watched in anticipation of seeing the first female president elected president. It was the first time either party had nominated a presidential candidate who was female. Hillary Clinton won the democratic ticket and seemed to have a strong chance of winning against the Republican Party nominee, a career businessman and reality television star. Those who follow women in politics will know the commentary on how Hillary Clinton had shifted her approach from her lost presidential bid against Barack Obama. Her tone and look had softened; she was advised to be more likeable and less aggressive.

Throughout the 2016 presidential debates, it became clear that Hillary Clinton was the more qualified candidate. Forget party lines or political beliefs: based on educational degrees, years of experience, and knowledge, Clinton far surpassed her opponent's qualifications. Yet, throughout the campaign and election, her qualifications were certainly questioned. Her opponent called on others to question her credibility. She was degraded by her opponent in a debate when he called her a "nasty" women instead of having any thoughtful response to her intelligent critical point of his debate answer. Her looks, her clothing choice, her past

relationship choices, and her desire to be a president, all made people question what was wrong with Hillary.

And, on November 8, 2016, when the final electoral vote was tallied, women across the United States were devastated. I cried on my way to work the next morning. I cried for all of my Latino students who were also a part of the opponent's tirades and incoherent arguments. I cried for my gay brother and friends who had recently been given the right to marry and questioned what would be overturned in the new administration. But, I also cried for myself, as a female leader, who saw first-hand the mountain in front of me. I saw that it really did not matter how hard you worked, how much you deserved it, or how qualified you were. If you are a man with zero qualifications, zero experience, and quite frankly zero ethics, you could be president. But if you are a female, good luck, there is work to do.

The war on females since Hillary's opponent took office has been unprecedented in modern times. Examples are plentiful. For example, Senator Elizabeth Warren was silenced during a speech she was giving against the attorney general nomination. In responding to her silencing, Senator McConnell said, "She was warned, she was given an explanation, and nevertheless, she persisted" (*New York Times*, 2017). Imagine saying this to a congressman.

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi was recently at a dinner at the White house to discuss potential solutions to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals law that had been recently overturned. She was the only woman at the dinner and is reported as having said “Do women get to talk around here?” after having been interrupted numerous times by the males in the room (Diaz, 2017).

And yet, the war on women will not stop us from continuing to struggle for equality in the oval office, in the board room, in the c-suite, in the principal’s office, and in any other role females have historically been kept from. In fact, the election of Hillary’s opponent offers the opportunity to galvanize females from all over the world.

On January 21, 2017, nearly two million female and female allies came together for the Women’s March. On Facebook, Pantsuit Nation, a group of over 120,000 people tells daily stories of resistance and taking control and power over women’s rights and women’s bodies.

Female after female has come out against men in power in the entertainment industry, politics, and business to give voice to the pervasive behavior of sexual harassment and sexual assault. The hashtag “me too” has been used a rallying cry to show the extensive nature and impact poor behavior against women has had on thousands and thousands of females.

EMILY's List, a national organization dedicated to electing more prochoice, democratic women to office announced that since the 2016 election, nearly 20,000 women have reached out for organizing support to run for office. Nearly 40 women are planning to run for governors' seats in 2018 (Dobie, 2017).

The knowledge, power, and solidarity that this election created will only continue to propel the work toward equity and justice forward. In this spirit, I am reminded of a Cesar Chavez quote: "Once social change begins, cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore" (1984).

The work of female principals has the ability to change this world. Imagine if every child across the United States had a strong, confident, capable female leader at the helm of his or her school. Imagine the ways we could begin to shift the narrative around what is possible, not only for females in this world but also for all people, for all beings. Imagine the peace, the love, the kindness, the grace, the new ways of leading, being, and seeing the world that might make the world a more just place.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Block 1 Questions

1. How long have you been a principal?
2. How did you get to the principal role?
    a. What were some of the major career experiences that led you here?
    b. Who were some of the mentors/supporters who helped you get here?
    c. Why specifically are you working at a charter school?
3. How would you describe the major functions of your role to someone who didn't work in education?

Block 2 Questions

4. How would you describe your leadership style:
    a. As it relates to making decisions?
    b. As it related to improving student achievement?
    c. As it relates to cultivating a strong school culture?
5. What are some of the support or guidance you have received from others that has helped you feel successful in the role?
6. What are some of the elements of the role that make it most challenging?
7. How long do you think you will be a principal for?
8. What do you think you'll do next?

Block 3 Questions

9. How do you think being a female influences how your leadership is perceived by those you work with?
    a. How do you think being a female influences how your leadership is perceived by your students?
    b. How do you think being a female influences how your leadership is perceived by families?
    c. How do you think being a female influences how your leadership is perceived by those you interact with but don't directly work with (not immediate colleagues)?
10. Tell me a story about a time when your leadership or career trajectory was impacted by being a female?
11. Tell me a story about a time when you felt inadequate in your leadership?

12. Tell me a story about a time when you felt highly successful in your leadership?
13. What are your fears for the future of your school?
14. What are your hopes for the future of your school?

Appendix B

Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Question Protocol

1. Introduce self, school, and years in the position. Share briefly about why you became a principal. If it wasn't for _____ (person or thing), I probably would not be a principal today.
3. Many of you commented on the complex nature of the role in your semi-structured interviews. Do you think the complexity of being a school leader is particularly true in charter schools versus a traditional district school? Why or why not?
4. In what ways do you think you impact student learning and achievement at your school?
5. What has been your most challenging moment as a school leader?
6. Describe a moment in your principalship where you doubted your ability to be successful or to sustain in the role?
7. How often are you asked "how you do it" as a mom and a principal? How often are you asked "are you married or do you have kids?"
8. One of themes that came across in the individual issues was the intersectionality between age and gender. Specifically, many of you noted that you often think about your appearance or hear comments about your age when people either find out you are a principal or when they are talking to you about your work. Do these themes resonate with you? How do you think the presence of this theme in the work of female principals impacts you in the role?
9. One of the themes that came across in the interviews was the presence of microagressions. Microagressions are experiences with sexism that are so ubiquitous in our society that we often don't even realize they are present. Some common microagressions females face are: tone policing, language policing, interrupting, questions related to being a mom, being married, our appearance, mansplanning. In reflecting on this, how have you experienced microagressions and do you think these microagressions have influenced you in your role over time?
10. In what ways do you think the presidential election of 2016 impacted you as a female leader?
11. In what ways do you think your organization/school did a good job in supporting your transition into the role? In what ways could your organizations/schools have done a better job of supporting your transition into the role?
12. What ideas do you have for supporting novice female charter school principals to sustain for more than 3-5 years in the field?

Appendix C

Field Notes Template

Question	**Key Highlights from Answer**	**Body Language or other observations**	**Researcher Reactions/Connections**

Appendix D

IRB Informed Consent Form

Date of Preparation 4/1/2017

Loyola Marymount University

The Opportunities and Challenges Experienced by Novice Female Charter School Principals

1) I hereby authorize Heather McManus to include me in the following research study: The Opportunities and Challenges Experienced by Novice Female Charter School Principals

2) I have been asked to participate on a research project which is designed to better understand the experiences of novice female charter school principals entrance into the field and which will last for approximately four months.

3) It has been explained to me that the reason for my inclusion in this project is that I am a novice female charter school principal.

4) I understand that if I am a subject, I will participate in an interview and focus group.

   The investigator(s) will facilitate the interview and focus group and notes from these events to complete her dissertation.

   These procedures have been explained to me by Heather McManus, Doctoral Candidate.

5) I understand that I will be audiotaped in the process of these research procedures. It has been explained to me that these tapes will be used for teaching and/or research purposes only and that my identity will not be disclosed. I have been assured that the tapes will be destroyed after their use in this research project is completed. I understand that I have the right to review the tapes made as part of the study to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or in part.

6) I understand that the study described above may involve the following risks and/or discomforts: discomfort or nervousness with sharing moments where participants may have felt vulnerable. Specifically, participants may be asked to recall moments that were embarrassing in their leadership or that they may have developed some internal guilt or shame around. Additionally, a risk may be the lack of assurance for confidentiality in the focus group.

7) I also understand that the possible benefits of the study are elevating the voices of novice female charter school principals; meeting other novice female charter school principals; validating shared experiences in the role.

8) I understand that Heather McManus who can be reached at 3238686674 will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.

9) If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent reobtained.

10) I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time without prejudice to (e.g., my future medical care at LMU.)

11) I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my participation before the completion of the study.

12) I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent except as specifically required by law.

13) I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question that I may not wish to answer.

14) I understand that in the event of research related injury, compensation and medical treatment are not provided by Loyola Marymount University.

15) I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact David Moffet, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 at david.moffet@lmu.edu.

16) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Appendix E

Experimental Subjects' Bill of Rights

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §24172, I understand that I have the following rights as a participant in a research study:

1. I will be informed of the nature and purpose of the experiment.

2. I will be given an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the medical experiment, and any drug or device to be utilized.

3. I will be given a description of any attendant discomforts and risks to be reasonably expected from the study.

4. I will be given an explanation of any benefits to be expected from the study, if applicable.

5. I will be given a disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures, drugs or devices that might be advantageous and their relative risks and benefits.

6. I will be informed of the avenues of medical treatment, if any, available after the study is completed if complications should arise.

7. I will be given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study or the procedures involved.

8. I will be instructed that consent to participate in the research study may be withdrawn at any time and that I may discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

9. I will be given a copy of the signed and dated written consent form.

10. I will be given the opportunity to decide to consent or not to consent to the study without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, coercion, or undue influence on my decision.

REFERENCES

Bengtson, E. (2014). Principals' socialization. *Journal of School Leadership*, *24*(4), 725–752.

Bitterman, A., Goldring, R., Gray, L., & Broughman, W. (2013). *Characteristics of public and private elementary and secondary school principals in the United States: Results from the 2011–12 schools and staffing survey first look.* Retrieved from National Center for Education Statistics website; http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013313.pdf

Blount, J. (1999). Manliness and the gendered construction of school administration in the USA. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *2*(2), 55–68. doi:10.1080/136031299293101.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston, MA: Pearson Higher Ed.

Bottoms, G., & O'Neill, K. (2001). *Preparing a new generation of school principals: It's time for action*. Retrieved from Southern Regional Education Board website http://www.sreb.org.

Brazer, S., & Bauer, S. (2013). Preparing instructional leaders: A model. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *49*(4), 645–684. doi:10.1177/0013161x13478977.

Brunner, C., & Grogan, M. (2007). *Women leading school systems: Uncommon roads to fulfillment*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Burton, L., & Weiner, J. (2016). They were really looking for a male leader for the building: Gender, identity and leadership development in a principal preparation program. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7.* doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00141.

California Charter School Association (2015). Charter school data: LAUSD. Retrieved from http://www.ccsa.org/2015LAUSD_Charters_FactSheet_Fall_2015_.pdf

Carpenter, D., & Peak, C. (2013). Leading charters: How charter school administrators define their roles and their ability to lead. *Management in Education*, *27(4)*, 150–158. doi:10.1177/0892020613487919.

Carrington, B., & McPhee, A. (2008). Boys' underachievement and the feminization of teaching. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *34(2),* 109–120. doi: 10.1080/02607470801979558.

Celoria, D., & Roberson, I. (2015). New principal coaching as a safety net. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and program development*, 2686–2699.

Chavez, C. (1984). Commonwealth Club Addressed. Retrieved from https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essays/essays/CESAR%20CHAVEZ%20COMMONWEALTH%20SPEECH.pdf

Cravens, X., Goldring, E., & Penaloza, R. (2012). Leadership practice in the context of U.S. school choice reform. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *11*(4), 452–476. doi: 10.1080/15700763.2012.700989.

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming again, again, and again. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(1), 3 doi:10.2307/1176529.

Diaz, D. (2017, September 15). At WH dinner, Pelosi asked "Do the women get to talk around here?" Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/15/politics/nancy-pelosi-white-house-dinner-donald-trump/index.html

Dobie, M. (2017, November 12). A watershed moment for U.S. Women [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.emilyslist.org/news/c/emilys-list-in-the-news.

Doud, J., & Keller, E. (1998). *The K-8 principal in 1998: A ten-year study*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Dressler, B. (2001). Charter school leadership. *Education and Urban Society*, *33(2)*, 175–185. doi:10.1177/0013124501332006.

Eagly, A. (2007). Female leadership advantage and disadvantage: Resolving the contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *31*(1),1–12. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00326.x.

Eagly, A., & Johannensen-Schmidt, M. (2001). The leadership styles of women and men. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(4), 781–797.

Eagly, A., Karau, S., & Johnson, B. (1992). Gender and leadership style among school principals: A meta-analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *28(1),* 76–102. doi: 10.1177/0013161x92028001004.

Eagly, A., Wood, W., & Diekman, A. (2001). Social role theory of sex differences: A current appraisal. In T. Eckes & H. Trautnet (Eds.), *The developmental social psychology of gender* (pp. 123–174). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Eckman, E. (2004). Does gender make a difference? Voices of male and female high school principals. *Planning and Changing*, *35*(4 & 5),192–208.

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffet, A. (2003), *Rolling up their sleeves: Superintendents and principals talk about what's needed to fix public schools.* New York, NY: Public Agenda.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fuller, E., & Young, M. (2009). *Tenure and retention of newly hired principals in Texas.* Texas High School Project: Leadership Initiative Issue Brief 1. Austin, Texas: Department of Educational Administration, The University of Texas at Austin.

Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Gawlik, M. A. (2008). Breaking loose: Principal autonomy in charter and public schools. *Educational Policy*, *22*(6), 783–804. doi:10.1177/0895904807307058.

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (2011). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Boston, MA. Pearson Higher Ed.

Goldring, R., Gray, L., Westat, A., & Broughman, S. (2013). *Characteristics of public and private elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States: Results from the 2011–12 schools and staffing survey first look*. Retrieved from National Center for Education Statistics website: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013314.pdf

Goldstein, D. (2014). *The teacher wars: A history of America's most embattled profession*. New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Goodman, G. (2002). Administrator preparations programs: Do universities advance of inhibit females? In S. Korcheck & M. Reese, M (Eds.), *Women as school executives: Research and reflections on educational leadership* (pp. 136–144). Austin, TX: Texas Council of Women School Executives.

Grogan, M., & Shakeshaft, C. (2010). *Women and educational leadership.* San Francisco, CA: Wiley, John & Sons.

Gutsch, L. (2002). Women in elementary school leadership: Challenge and change. In S. Korcheck, & M. Reese (Eds.). *Women as school executives: Research and reflections on educational leadership* (pp. 125–135). Austin, TX: Texas Council of Women School Executives.

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *4*(3), 221–239. doi: 10.1080/15700760500244793.

Hallinger, P. & Murphey, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional management behavior of principals. *The Elementary School Journal, 86(2)*, 217-247.

Hargreaves, A. (2006). Educational change over time? The sustainability and nonsustainability of three decades of secondary school change and continuity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *42*(1), 3–41. doi:10.1177/0013161x05277975.

Hill, J., Ottem, R., & DeRoche, J. (2016). Trends in public and private school principal demographics and qualifications: 1987-88 to 2011-12. Stats in brief. NCES 2016-189. *National Center for Education Statistics*.

Horng, E., & Loeb, S. (2010). New thinking about instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *92*(3), 66–69. doi:10.1177/003172171009200319.

Kahlenberg, R., & Potter, H. (2005). Restoring Shanker's vision for charter schools. *American Educator*, *38*(4), 4–13.

Leithwood, K. (2005). What do we already know about educational leadership? In C. Riehl (Ed.) *A new agenda for research in educational leadership* (pp. 12–27). New York, NY: Teacher's College Columbia University.

Levin, H. M., Tyack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America, 1820-1980. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *2*(1),128. doi:10.2307/3323663.

Loder, T., & Spillane, J. (2005). Is a principal still a teacher? U.S. women administrators' accounts of role conflict and role discontinuity. *School Leadership & Management*, *25*(3), 263–279. doi:10.1080/13634230500116348.

Luekens, M. (2004). Who's the Boss? An examination of the characteristics, experience, and training of charter school principals. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, San Diego, Ca.

Martin, S. (2016). *Education in the time of cholera: Is there a future for our democratic society?* 14 November, 2016.

Marzano, R., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Problems of practice in transitioning to the principal's office. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(3), 431–465. doi:10.1177/0013161X13505290

Merton, R. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Mertz, N. (2006). The promise of Title IX: Longitudinal study of gender in urban school administration, 1972 to 2002. *Urban Education*, *41*(6), 544–559. doi: 10.1177/0042085906292511.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Qualitative research methods: Focus groups as qualitative research*: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781412984287

Nadal, K. L. (2008). Preventing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual minority, disability, and religious microaggressions: Recommendations for promoting positive mental health. *Prevention in Counseling Psychology: Theory, Research, Practice and Training, 2*(1), 22–27.

Nadal, K. L. (2010). Gender microaggressions: Implications for mental health. In M. A. Paludi (Ed.), *Feminism and Women's Rights Worldwide,* vol. 2: Mental and Physical Health (pp. 155–175). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

National Center for Educational Statistics (2011). T*he condition of education 2011*: *The contexts of elementary and secondary education* [online]. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011033_5.pdf

Paludi, M. A., & Coates, B. (2011). *Women as transformational leaders: From grassroots to global interests.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Patton, M. (2014). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice.* Saint Paul, MN: Sage Publisher.

Perry, E. (2008). *Charter school executives: Toward A new generation of leadership*. Retrieved from National Association of Charter Schools website: http://www.publiccharters.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/07/2008_Toward_a_New_Generation_of_Leadership_20110402T222340.pdf

Pueschel, J., & Zirkin, N. (2002). *Title IX at 30: Report card on gender equity.* Retrieved from National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education website: http://feminist.org/education/TitleIXat30.pdf

Quinn, P. M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA*:* Sage Publications.

Rollero, C., & Fedi, A. (2014). When benevolence harms women and favours men: The effects of ambivalent sexism on leadership aspirations. *Ceskoslovenska Psychologie*, *58*, 535–542.

Rousmaniere, K. (2007). Go to the principal's office. *History of Education Quarterly Education Association*, *47(1),* 1–22.

School Leaders Network (2014). *Churn: The high cost of principal turnover.* Retrieved from http://connectleadsucceed.org/sites/default/files/principal_turnover_cost.pdf.

Seashore Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning final report of research findings learning from leadership project*. Retrieved from Wallace Foundation website: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf

Shakeshaft, C., Brown, G., Irby, B. J., Grogan, M., & Ballenger, J. (2007). Increasing gender equity in educational leadership. In S. Klein, C. Dwyer, D. Grayson, C. Kramarae, B. Richardson, & L. Fox (Eds.). *Handbook for achieving gender equity through education* (pp. 103–129). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Skrla, L., Reyes, P. & Scheurich, J. (2000). Sexism, silence, and solutions: Women superintendents speak up and speak out. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *36*(1), 44–75. doi:10.1177/00131610021968895.

Spillane, J. & Lee, L. (2013). Novice school principals' sense of ultimate responsibility: Problems of practice in Transitioning to the principal's office. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(3), 431–465. doi:10.1177/0013161x13505290.

Strober, M. H., & Lanford, A. G. (1986). The feminization of public school teaching: Cross-sectional analysis, 1850-1880. *Signs*, *2*, 212–235.

Sun, M., & Ni, Y. (2015). Work environments and labor markets: Explaining principal turnover gap between charter schools and traditional public schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *52*(1), 144–183. doi: 10.1177/0013161x15616659.

Superville, D. R. (2014). Study finds principal mobility takes toll on budgets, learning; "Churn: the high cost of principal turnover." *Education Week*, (12).

Title IX, Educational Amendment of 1972. Title 20 U.S.C. Sections 1681-1688.

U.S. Department of Education. (1999). *The schools and staffing survey, public charter school questionnaire (Form SASS 3-D).* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Van Maanen, J., & Schein, E. (1977). Towards a theory of organizational socialization. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *1*, 209–264.

Vickers, J. (2004). *A comparison of charter public and traditional public school principals: Who they are and how they function* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Kalamazo, MI, University of Western Michigan.

Victor, D. (2017, February 8). "Nevertheless, she persisted": How Senate's silencing of Warren became a meme. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com /2017/02/08/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-republicans-facebook-twitter.html

Wallace Foundation. (2013). *What the research says about the importance of principal leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.naesp.org/sites /default/files/LeadershipMatters.pdf

Wahlstrom, K, Seashore-Louis, K., Leithwood, K., & Anderson, S. (2010). *Investigating the Links to improved student learning: Executive summary of research findings.* New York: The Wallace Foundation.

Williamson, R. (2002). *Breaking the bonds: Women school leaders confront the effects of socialization.* Paper presented at the meeting of American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Wilkinson, S. (2004). Focus group research. In D. Silverman (ed.), Qualitative research: Theory, method, and practice (pp. 177–199). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wing Sue, D. (2010). *Microagressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.