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## The male educational leader in Utah: Gender dynamics, power, and relational leadership in a Mormon dominant culture

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THE MALE EDUCATIONAL LEADER IN UTAH:  
GENDER DYNAMICS, POWER, AND RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN A  
MORMON DOMINANT CULTURE

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

**Doctorate of Educational Leadership  
Department of Educational Leadership  
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**Graduate College  
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## THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

**Rick Robins**

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**May 2011**

## ABSTRACT

### **The Male Educational Leader in Utah Gender Dynamics, Power, and Relational Leadership in a Mormon Dominant Culture**

By

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This qualitative study explored the impact of Mormon culture and theology on male and female school leaders that co-exist on high school administrative teams. This problematic relationship is caused by the scarcity of female administrators in Utah as they move up the leadership ladder in education. According to the Utah State Office of Education in 2006, there were 118 public high schools in the state of Utah. Out of those 118 high schools, 18 were lead by female principals. There were 141 middle schools. Of the middle schools in the state, 40 were lead by female principals. Of the 617 public elementary schools, 334 were lead by female principals. Of the 40 school districts in the state, only two were lead by females not counting the state superintendent at the time who was female. The teaching population in Utah is over 70% female. This under representation may be approached with more traditional reasoning like family issues, marriage, and other responsibilities female leaders may have. These issues may certainly play a part in the equation, however it appears that there may be more to this story. It appears men may have more access to power and position in Utah, however it doesn't guarantee their success once they are in the position. The predominant Mormon culture

forces school leaders to confront or embrace their own masculinities, values, and beliefs as leaders. They must delicately navigate their own leadership style that not only agrees with effective leadership practices, but also falls in line with the surrounding culture and climate of the community they serve. Male leaders in Utah must define themselves in communities that mostly have a one-track perception of what an effective school leader should be. It appears women leaders struggle to access power and positions because the predominant Mormon culture may work against them inside out and outside in. Not only does the culture appear to not embrace their upward movement, many women themselves within the culture do not embrace or support each other's upward movement in school administration.

The research design and approach for this study was phenomenological using interpretive methods. Moustakas (1994) describes phenomenological research in which the researcher identifies the “essence” of human experience concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Understanding the “lived experiences” marks phenomenology as a philosophy, as well as a method, and procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In the process, the researcher “brackets” his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993).

Ultimately, the significance of this study may be furthering the discourse surrounding educational leadership for men and women in Utah and how they negotiate their careers in a state that is dominated by a Mormon culture.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Epoche**

I am a Caucasian, male, married, high school principal of 4 years, and currently a practicing member of the Mormon religion. I believe these characteristics have played an important role in my access to power and privilege within the educational leadership community in Utah. I have heard it said that Utah school boards hire principals that look the part of a Mormon bishop. I believe that I probably fit the stereotype.

As a young high school principal, I struggle with the traditional role of the male in our culture. I see myself as part of a new breed of leader that is more transformational and equipped with a skill set that is built on the foundation of a relational leadership model. I am focused on the well being of all stakeholders. It is important to me to see and ensure that all boys and girls have equal access to opportunities that will develop them as people and leaders. This vision for a new future may be in conflict with our surrounding culture that has rigorously defined roles for men and women.

I was born and raised in rural Utah. I didn't meet a non-Mormon until I was 17 years old. Although I was sheltered and socialized in a predominant Mormon culture, my parents instilled in me a quiet ideal that I was no better or worse than anyone else. I remember my mother and father always telling me that this way of living was a "higher law" given to us by God. I have grown to appreciate the family values of my Mormon faith, however I have always wrestled with the fact that Mormon women, including the

women in my life, my wife, mother, and my beautiful daughters, have a different status than males in our culture.

This culture spills over into our education system in many places. I believe it is a very complex endeavor for female school leaders to navigate the cultural landscape in Utah; it is just as difficult for male administrators like myself who see the importance of equality for women. I am fortunate to have developed a leadership skill set, through my life experience and active participation in athletics that allowed me to thrive in our system. Some are not so lucky. I believe that most educators would agree with my position, that the Mormon culture plays an important role in our educational system. Because I am so entrenched in the culture we live and work in, this study will challenge my abilities as a researcher. My personal perspectives are deeply engrained into my leadership practices and my personal life, therefore I will need to guard against interjecting my views into the conversation with the study participants.

### **Background of Study**

The state of Utah has a rich tradition of excellence among its' leaders that supports quality leadership in education. Historically there has been an emphasis on family values that supports the formal and informal education of its' leaders within the state. Communities in Utah have continually cultivated great leaders over the years who have contributed in many ways to the common good of all people. Utah's strong patriarchal culture has defined family values and beliefs across many fronts. Men and women's roles in this paradigm are directed and explicit. The foundation of this separation may be found in the possession of the priesthood by male members of the LDS

church. The priesthood delegation creates a culture of patriarchy, which implies father rule over a group of people characterized by shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices (Evans, 1992). Those values and separations of the roles of men and women continue to inform the practice in Utah culture (Wheatley, 1992). To many Mormons, gender is theologically important; in fact, Quinn (1994) calls it a “patriarchal priesthood.” One is gendered not only in one’s earthly life, but in the afterlife as well (Cornwall, 1994). Mary Day (1985) described how LDS patriarchal teachings give women a sense that their status is elevated and that being a mother or “helpmate” to the patriarch is a place of honor.

Overtime, as the church has grown into a larger institution be, the patriarchal hierarchy has become formalized and less inclined to empower creative freedom among individuals, men or women (Solomon, 2007). This deeply embedded Mormon culture may be described as two spheres, public and private. Feminist Sandra Harding explains, these dualities are reflective of a more general gender dichotomy between culture and nature, where men and masculinity are strongly associated with the public, cultural role and women and femininity with the private, natural role (Harding, 1995). This dichotomy divides the world into two separate, gendered domains- a public work sphere, where the dominant actor is assumed to be male, and a private family sphere, where the dominant actor is assumed to be female (Harding, 1997). It is critical to understand the impact of this culture as the population in Utah still remains predominantly Mormon.

Utah’s education system can be seen as a microcosm of its’ Mormon influenced societal culture . The belief that the mother-child relationship is central to a child’s success appears to be carried over into the teaching ranks of Utah educators. A large

percentage of women in Utah choose education as their profession of choice to assist in teaching our children. Males that enter the education field are also expected to be the breadwinners at home, thus they have a strong sense of stewardship and care for the common good of all children. Mormon theology places men as the providers and as the visible patriarch of the family. Mormon men, in contrast to women, are encouraged to better their careers and move into management positions if it is desired by the individual and can help sustain the family.

### **Effective Leadership**

In this complex educational culture, men and women must coexist and construct their own realities as leaders. Much of the research today suggests that effective leadership practices may be more feminine (Miller, 2008). This creates an obvious intersection with male leaders that have been raised and socialized to believe leadership is more of a masculine endeavor. This value and belief system agrees with a more traditional transactional leadership style. Bass and Avilio (1994) describe three forms of transactional leadership: *management by exception-passive*, *management by exception-active*, and *constructive transactional*. Sosik and Dionne (1997) explain that management by excessive-passive involves setting standards, but waiting for major problems to occur before exerting leadership behavior. Followers of this leadership approach typically believe that their job is to maintain the status quo. Leaders who demonstrate management by exception-active pay attention to issues that arise, set standards, and carefully monitor behavior. In fact, they are so aggressive in their management behavior that followers of this leadership perspective believe that they should not take risks or demonstrate initiative. Constructive transactional leadership is the most effective and active of the

transactional leadership styles. This type of leader sets goals, clarifies desired outcomes, exchanges rewards and recognition for accomplishments, suggests or consults, provides feedback, and gives employees praise when it is deserved. The distinguishing feature of this transactional leadership style is that followers are invited into the management process. Followers generally react by focusing on and achieving expected performance goals. Effective education leaders must decide to walk a path that is rewarding but also challenging. With reshaping of the traditional organization, we are told, the worker of the future must be a collaborative team player, able to give and receive help, empower others, and operate in a world of independence. This new worker needs emotional intelligence and relational skills-the ability to work effectively with others and to understand the emotional context in which work takes place-that are traditionally described as feminine. Fletcher (2001) argues that, paradoxically, the very skills that may give organizations a competitive advantage may be precisely those that prevent individuals, especially women, from advancing. Utah's educational leaders face a very different challenge if they wish to enact relational leadership.

### **Relational Leadership**

For change to occur in the predominant culture in the Utah education leadership ranks, the "new male" administrators of today and tomorrow must embrace the practice of relational leadership. First proposed by Jean Baker Miller and psychologists and psychiatrists at the Stone Center at Wellesley College and supported by the work of Carol Gilligan and others, the basic tenet of relational theory is that growth and development require a context of connection (Fletcher, 2001). Work done by Regan and Brooks (1995), who studies educators engaged in relational leadership, describe their model as a

double helix. This model explained how feminine and masculine leadership approaches intersect and work together to build a more effective and collaborative organization. They define relational leadership in terms of five attributes: collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision. Dyer (2001) asserts that relational leadership involves being attuned to and in touch with the intricate web of inter-and-intra-relationships that influence an organization. As Etienne Wagner (1998) points out in her book *Communities of Practice*, it is about the meaning and identity that are created when people work together.

Many men and women in education want to lead in the state of Utah. Many of these men and women possess the necessary tools to be effective leaders that will change the face of education leadership in the state of Utah for the good. According to Burns (1978) transformational leaders form a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. After his meta-analysis of leadership studies, Marzano (2005) concluded that the school leader must attend to the needs of and provide personal attention to individual staff members, particularly those who seem left out, help staff members think of old problems in new ways and communicate high expectations for teachers and students alike. Finally through personal accomplishments and demonstrated character, the effective principal must provide a model for the behavior of teachers. Ken Leithwood (1994) whose research informed the transformational model of school leadership, noted that the Four I's of transformational leadership identified by Bass and Avolio (1994) are necessary skills for school principals if they are to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The skills include: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized

influence. In my view, transformational leadership practice that is embedded in the tenets of relational leadership, may be the gold strike that aspiring education leaders are searching for.

### **Problem Statement**

The primary assumption is that Mormon culture and theology impact the working relationship between male and female school leaders that co-exist on Utah's high school administrative teams, grounds this inquiry. This problematic relationship is enhanced by the scarcity of female administrators actually moving up the leadership ladder in Utah's school districts. According to the Utah State Office of Education in 2006, there were 118 public high schools in the state of Utah and out of those 118 high schools, only 18 (15%) were lead by female principals. There were 141 middle schools 40 of those 118 (28%) were lead by female principals. Of the 617 public elementary schools, 334 (54%) were lead by female principals. Of the 40 school districts in the state, only 2 (5%) were lead by females not counting the state superintendent at the time who was female. The latter statistic recently changed by one, as a district hired the first female school superintended in their 105-year history.

The teaching population in Utah is over 70% female. The under representation of women administrators and over representation of female teachers may be explained by the continuing traditional struggle female leaders face to balance family issues, marriage, and other responsibilities. These issues may certainly play a part in the equation, however it appears that there may be more to this story in Utah, where a more complex cultural and theological environment may exist. The statistics noted above suggest that men may have more access to power and position in Utah, even though that access



doesn't guarantee their success once they are in the position. Once in a school leadership position, the dominant Mormon culture forces school leaders to confront or embrace their own masculinities, values, and beliefs as leaders. They must delicately navigate the dichotomy between their beliefs about effective leadership practices and the surrounding culture and climate of the community in which they serve. Male leaders in Utah must define themselves in communities that mostly have a singular, and particularly ideological, perception of what an effective school leader should be. It appears women leaders struggle to access power and positions because the predominant culture may foster forces against them inside and out. Not only does the culture appear to not embrace their upward movement, many women themselves within the culture do not embrace or support each other's upward movement in school administration (Miller, 2008).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to explore the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that male and female education leaders experience with in the context of a predominantly Mormon culture, specifically in the state of Utah.

### **Research Questions**

The questions that guided the inquiry that follows, included:

1. What are the gendered experiences of male administrators in Utah working with female administrators on their team in the context of a patriarchal Mormon culture?
2. How do male administrators in Utah conceptualize and understand their own masculinity and its role in shaping their own professional and personal world as a high school principal?

3. How do male administrators in a Mormon patriarchal culture negotiate their own position and role with female administrators who are their subordinates or equal?
4. In what way does a dominant religious ideology that narrowly defines women's roles influence a male administrator's approach to gender issues in a public sector organization?

### **Summary of Methodology**

The research employed a qualitative phenomenological design, using narrative methods. The study examined the perceptions and lived experiences of male principals along the Wasatch front in relation to power, gender, relational leadership, and the Mormon culture. I used multiple forms of data collection, including, interviews, direct observations, and document analysis to document and analyze the information collected from these individuals.

### **Significance of the Study**

The educational leadership culture in the state of Utah provided a unique glimpse into the psyche of our population and a fascinating opportunity to examine the issues of gender and access to power and privilege. Through personal experience, I have had the chance to experience the full range of this spectrum. Women and men in Utah aspiring to be educational leaders will hopefully find this discourse to be helpful and informative because anyone within the Utah educational community that decides to delve into school administration quickly recognizes that there appear to be rules of the game not found in their preparatory programs.

The Mormon religion has had a profound impact on the state of Utah in many ways. This can not be minimized in any study done in Utah. The Mormon culture is embedded at many levels of almost every system politically and socially. The male dominated patriarchal system of power is critical to understand if any leader is to be successful. The school system in Utah does not escape this paradigm. From this cultural crucible, new leaders may be emerging that are prepared to be top flight executives through out the educational system in Utah and the United States. Female and male educational leaders in Utah have had to develop their own professional and personal skill sets to navigate this tricky landscape. This new generation of leader in Utah is one that is respectful to their heritage and past, but one that is not defined by their environment. They are dynamic leaders that demonstrate high degrees of relational leadership. These are new leaders that are transformational and less transactional as many of their predecessors.

Ultimately, the significance of this study is to further the discourse surrounding educational leadership for men and women in Utah and how they negotiate their careers in a state that is held by a dominate Mormon culture.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are commonly used in society, but they do not have standard accepted meanings. It is essential that I define how I understand and use them.

*Culture:* A system of shared values and beliefs that interact with an organization's people, organizational structures, and control systems to produce behavioral norms. In

practical terms, shared values mean “what is important,” beliefs mean, “what we think is true,” and behavior norms mean “how we do things around here” (Owens, 2004).

*LDS*: Latter Day Saint.

*Feminist Leadership*: Leadership described by the development of more nurturing academic communities. Feminist leaders are student centered, focused on equity, and work to build holistic environments in which all constituents can thrive (Blackmore, 1999).

*Masculine Leadership*: A perception that male leaders demonstrate stronger characteristics acting more powerful, competent, confident, autonomous, and transactional (Connell, 1997).

*Mormon*: A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (<http://www.lds.org>, 2010).

*Patriarchy*: A social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family (<http://www.lds.org>, 2010)

*Priesthood*: God gives priesthood authority to worthy male members of the Church so they can act in His name for the salvation of His children. Priesthood holders can be authorized to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, and govern the kingdom of God on the earth (<http://www.lds.org>, 2010).

The state of Utah offers a unique combination of cultural facets that turn the wheels of almost every aspect of life in the state. The Utah territory was settled by pioneers seeking religious freedom and independence from those that wished to control

them. From its' earliest days, many people around the world have sought to better understand the Mormon culture and how it lives and breathes. The chapters that follow include (a) an extensive review of the literature related to the Mormon culture and its intersections with literature on gender, gender dynamics, masculine identity, and leadership; (b) the methodology that framed this study; (c) a detailed description of the findings supported by the data and literature; and (d) the implications and conclusions of my research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter summarizes the literature that examines the issues in the education arena that are specific to gender and leadership in the state of Utah. The intent of my review was to locate literature and research that would inform a study of gender issues in leadership within the context of the Mormon culture. My intent was to examine the cultural and theological environment female and male leaders must navigate within their arena and discover a range of questions by untangling a complicated paradigm of a patriarchal hierarchy and its grip on the education leadership field in Utah. The topic of gender issues in leadership has been widely published and pursued, however there appeared to be limited research on gender leadership issues specifically under the influence of the Mormon culture and theology.

As I examined Utah's leadership ranks, female school administrators diminish in great numbers as they move up the leadership ladder. This trend appears to conflict with the notion that we value a woman's leadership style of a more nurturing, collaborative, and shared environment for children. Of the 118 public high schools in the state of Utah, according to the State Office of Education, in the year 2006, only 18 were led by female principals. This trend also exists in Utah's middle schools as 101 are led by male principals, versus 40 led by female principals. This is below the national average of 27% female secondary principals (U.S. Department of Education Statistics 2007). The statistics for superintendents show only two female district leaders among Utah's 40 school districts, not counting the state education leader; when data are compared to

current national statistics, Utah's 2% is a stark contrast to the 30% of women who hold the superintendent's position in the United States (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

### **Mormon Culture and Gender**

Popular culture uses the word patriarchy to refer to the belief that men take primary responsibility for the welfare of the society as a whole, and hence fulfill the duties as leaders in the political arena. Patriarchy has its' roots in religions based on the Bible where biblical passages teach men to rule women and women learn to be submissive to their husbands making heterogeneity the norm (Daly, 1985; Mckinnon, 1992).

To understand Mormon patriarchy today, we must study a bit of the past. The church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints members populated the Salt Lake Valley in the late 1840s. Driven out of Illinois and Missouri by mainstream Christians and others distrusting this upstart religion, Mormons fled to the Utah territory in search of a place to practice their religious beliefs (Quinn, 1994). In the barren desert, they planted crops and built homes, temples, businesses, and hospitals (Warenski, 1978). Because Mormons take doctrinal messages from the *Book of Mormon*, popular discourse, media, and members refer to this religious group as "Mormons" (Miller, 2008).

Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, have defined a patriarchal order where men head the family and become bishops, leaders of wards, presidents in charge of stakes, and are governors of the church (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles). In contrast to some religions, where only priests and heads of the church hold the priesthood, in the Mormon Church, all males have the priesthood beginning at the age of 12 (Hanks, 1992b). Because the

LDS culture grew out of the 1830's in New England, the LDS church acquired many of the values ascribed to the general culture in the religious, political, and social lives of Mormon pioneers who immigrated to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 (Hanks, 1992). Those values and separations of the roles of men and women continue to inform the practice in Utah culture (Wheatley, 1992).

In the late 1840's, as Mormon pioneers began to settle the Utah territory, the practice of polygamy was very common among members. Ironically, given that polygamy was perceived to diminish women, it actually acted as a liberating force for many Mormon women of the day. Plural marriage enhanced women's independence. The early practice of this principle required women to act for her self and family. Women owned land, made political decisions, and built their own financial foundation. Mormon women were active in public life by writing and editing newspapers and publications of the day. The absolute necessity to make one's own living empowered women to lead lives of their own volition and creation (Solomon, 2007). Mormon women were politically active even on a national scene. LDS women, Phebe Woodruff and Bathsheba Smith led a group of Mormon women to demand to be franchised by the federal government and given the right to vote. On February 9, 1870, the women of the Utah Territory were granted their right to vote by Governor S.A. Mann. By and large, early LDS women were strong minded and strong willed, and felt themselves endowed with the power of God to choose the character of their own lives (Solomon, 2007).

Unfortunately near the turn of the century, Mormon women found themselves fighting again for independence. In 1887, under the Edmunds-Tucker Act, women's right



to vote was retracted by the federal government. Mormon President Wilford Woodruff understood the work of the church would be halted if the practice of polygamy continued. In 1890, Woodruff issued a manifesto abolishing polygamy from the LDS church. Later in 1920, Utah's women were guaranteed suffrage under the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. These two events also seemed to lessen the Mormon women's movement on a national level as the Mormon Relief Society ended its' relationship with some national women's organizations.

Kristina Gibby-Wachter (2006) studied Utah women during the American Progressive Era, 1890-1920. She predicted Mormon women's success in breaking down the barriers to power and independence as teachers and administrators. Her perspective used evidence of women creating businesses and resources for LDS people and blending of the private and public sphere for Utah women. History did not fulfill that promise. Gibby- Wachter found that even though women seemed to be more independent and autonomous in the face of feminization of teaching, and were encouraged to be teachers, administrators, and Normal School principals, they were not without constraints. At that point in history, feminization and professionalization of teaching was circumscribed and fell within the parameters of the church's patriarchal control. The Progressive Era did not change practice of patriarchal control. The Church was trying to escape its polygamous past and quickly proving compliance with the law. Society was changing too, the world was growing more liberal, so church leaders worked to shore up the moral fiber of its members. The larger the institution become, the more formal the patriarchal hierarchy and the less inclined it has been to empower creative freedom and individuals, men or women (Solomon, 2007). During the 1920's and on into the Great Depression, Mormon

women were encouraged to focus their attention on the homestead. They lived in households dominated by men in their families and, typically, Mormon men discouraged their women from working outside the home. As women committed to their duties at home, they were often ignored, dismissed, and patronized by their men (Solomon, 2007).

In the past half-century, many Mormon women have struggled with their own reconciliation of their membership in the church. On occasion, Mormon women are in a position to stand on their own and take charge of the home front again. This has been the case during times of war as many men leave to fight, but when it came time for these men to return home, Mormon women are often pushed back to *their place*. A time consideration of the post- World War II years reads that Mormons led the return to American domesticity. But as the nation moved toward a liberal counter culture in the 1960's, a culture that threatened traditional roles, the Church broadcast a conservative ideal, appearing to relate autonomous women's leadership roles under the priesthood. Mormon women, who followed that ideal, lagged behind national trends and faced a divided societal and religious culture. In the 1950s they had been the ideal women. By the 1970s, some felt left behind. Many women cherished their roles in the traditional church, while a vocal, progressive minority felt ostracized, lamenting the disparity between LDS female past and present (Bushman, 2009).

By the 1970s and 1980s, many Mormon women suffered from depression. This was deemed an epidemic by much of the media (Solomon, 2007). LDS social workers and counselors began to address some of the root causes and many people sought transformations that would empower women. The brightest most progressive LDS women who survived this period of pretending began to write and speak out, to

communicate with each other, and to lobby for change. Some became discouraged and left the church, yet found they couldn't leave the issues they carried inside. Others stayed, committed to creating change by leading fulfilled lives within the church (Solomon, 2007).

Currently, some institutional changes in the church have increased priesthood powers and decreased all female responsibilities. Women may appear to have lost visibility and are scarcely involved in areas where they had been prominent: welfare, leadership training, publishing, policy setting. Whereas LDS women had once assumed many responsibilities, running women's, children's and many social and cultural activities, after the 1970's they found themselves without autonomy, just when other American women were pressing for and gaining more social influence (Bushman, 2009).

The brief history noted above begged for an examination of the relationship between the Mormon culture and its' influence on the education leadership enterprise. When women are appointed to leadership positions, they enter existing social groups with established norms, beliefs, and assumptions that guide interactions and relationships. School principals, superintendents, and other educational administrators must take charge and become functioning, integrated group members, at the same time that they try to understand and accommodate the unwritten norms of the group" (Miller, 2008 pg. 85). This process is complex for all newly appointed leaders, but it is particularly difficult for those who are different- in ethnicity, race, or gender- from traditional incumbents in leadership roles (Hart, 1991). A person's gender should make no difference in the world of leadership, however the reality for many is much different. Gender is a cultural term. It describes the characteristics we ascribe to people because of their sex. The ways we

believe they behave or the characteristics we believe they possess, based on our cultural expectations of what male and what is female. As Shakeshaft (1989) noted when she began her work, one's biological identification as male or female had little to do with how people behave and the work they did in schools. Yet Mormon Church policies and the social context in which women find themselves in a predominately Mormon culture, shapes the boundaries within which they exercise their agency. Those boundaries are by no means static: they shift and change over time. Gender roles are one such "boundary" (Miller, 2008).

To many Mormons, gender is theologically important. D. Michael Quinn (1994) called it "patriarchal priesthood" and documented how gender evolved into the present structure. The priesthood empowers men to take leadership positions in the LDS church. All leadership positions require the priesthood except for women's auxiliary organizations, which still require the approval and oversight by a priesthood holder (Quinn, 1994). One is gendered not only in one's earthly life, but in the afterlife as well (Cornwall, 1994). My personal experience validates the literature; LDS women are encouraged by church leaders to give their domestic roles top priority in order to promote the stability of the family (Mauss, 1994). Mary Daly's (1985) review of LDS patriarchal teachings, found that women perceived an elevated status for a being a mother or a "helpmate" to the patriarch; it was a place of honor. The priesthood delegation obviously supports and sustains a culture of patriarchy that implies father rule over a group of people characterized by shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices (Evans, 1992). Marilyn Warenski (1978), a feminist historian suggested, The Mormon culture can be viewed as a patriarchal microcosm, in which the history of women is one of subtle

subversion. She described a unique religious culture, but found little difference for women in the LDS faith and other Christian religions or ways of being that deny women the same opportunities as men. Margaret Toscano (2007) argued for a more specific gender discrimination. Priesthood, as the power to act in God's name, put the spiritual mission of gospel salvation in the hands of men, not women, which inevitably made men's work seem more far-reaching.

Spencer, and Mathews (2000) found that the primary issue facing both men and women school principals was "managing their work and their time and coping with the stresses, tasks and responsibilities of the job." This role conflict among many Mormon women was described by Beaman's (2001) as becoming fully prepared for public life but are then learning that women's most meaningful role was that of mother with a focus on family life as a full-time vocation. The tension in the role expectations for women then becomes: be responsible for yourself, yet dependent on your husbands.

The Mormon culture teaches that one of the women's fundamental responsibilities is to bear and raise children. The "ideal" life situation for an adult woman always included marriage, several children, and a husband who earns enough money that the woman need not work. Church leaders have not abandoned their traditional ideal of the non-working mother, caring fulltime for her family. Only her husband, children, and God can release a woman from her obligations to them (Iannaccone & Miles, 1990).

Without the power of the priesthood, women do not have ultimate authority in the practice of religion, community, or in social networks. Although religion is only part of the political and social environment in Utah, the power of the LDS church appears in political ideology that informs societal structure within the state. When Utah voted

against ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1978, it was after the LDS church leaders took a stand against the amendment; consequently legislators, many of whom were Mormon, changed their positions (Garrard, 2003; Hanks, 1992a; Johnson, 1979; Mauss, 1994; Warenski, 1978). Miller (2008) described God's power in LDS theology as directing all major ways of being. Based on her view, it is reasonable to assume that schools embody some religious overtones, power, and authority that men have at home. Although this has not been researched specifically, it follows the theoretical tenants of the *'ol boy network* defined by several researchers of women in educational leadership (Shakeshaft, 1989; Gardiner & Grogan, 2000).

### **Women, Leadership, and Role Conflict**

Policies around gender roles and interpretation of theology form a “transcendent perspective” which make up the structure in which Mormon women negotiate their daily lives. LDS women exercise agency in their interpretation of church doctrine and sometimes by ignoring it (Ammerman, 1997). These interpretations of church doctrine vary from city to city and town to town, so defining and documenting the central issues for women leaders even more difficult. Julie Beck (2007), the president of the LDS Relief Society, reminded women that their first duty was to their children and keeping their homes like a temple. Even though discourse frames women's roles as equal to men (Wallace, 1996), the social capital acquired through priesthood power is indisputably a structural liability for women who want to lead in the culture where men have inordinate promise from God to be *in charge*. As late as 1987, former LDS president Ezra Taft Benson confirmed that a woman's place was in the home, even though they are encouraged to pursue education (Innaccone & Miles, 1990). Miller (2008) concluded that

although gender roles continue to evolve as theology evolves and social entities challenge assumptions, researchers may not be keeping up with those changes (Miller, 2008). Additionally, Beaman (2001) discovered disparate ideologies among women who are LDS and argued for plurality of descriptions of women who are Mormon. Among Mormon women, there are those who are beginning to question their purpose when there is an absence of some fulfillment and a desire for difference. Beaman (2001) did not propose a typical woman, but identified three categories: Molly Mormon, a moderate Mormon, and a feminist Mormon. She found individual responses to and acknowledgements of oppression in LDS arrangements of power. Some women saw no oppression; others saw much.

That same subtle oppression was found in university programs that teach women to dress appropriately, speak in the expected way for women, and lead according to the patterns set up by the masculine organizations. Women who follow those instructions simply re-created the power dynamics and the male leadership paradigm (Miller, 2008; Rusch & Marshall, 2006).

Gossetti and Rusch (1995) advocated looking not only through a feminist lens to view the power structures and inherent liabilities for women, but also look through the lens of privilege to understand individualism and meritocracy that deny sexist practices of leadership where women may not measure up to the masculine model. Privilege grants dominance and the power to control, where power becomes something one group exercises over another. Privilege is invisible, and appears to be the natural way of doing things. Consequently, organizations do not recognize women's characteristics as part of the leadership model, so women have a struggle to define their successes. Poplin Gosetti

and Rusch (1995) called for a democratic leadership practice that includes women's voices to develop a new leadership paradigm. Rusch and Marshall (1995) concluded that achieving gender equity would require disrupting institutionalized norms that sustained the masculine view of leadership.

The persistent message in the findings of school reform studies suggests that the given time and place for disrupting the institutionalized norms is now. If women's ways of leading and feminist values are indeed dominating the expectations for the practice of instructional leaders, how is the leadership and organizational theory discourse representing those norms? Women who are practicing administrators have managed to negotiate a masculine system dominated system and often cite individual hard work for the reason for their success. Many are unaware of the inequities in administrative access (Blackmore, 1993). Min and Huh (2001) found that male administrators said their success was natural and deserved, whereas female administrators described themselves as lucky. External and internal socialized practices create notions of access and achievement (Shakeshaft, 1989). Miller (2008) describes teacher's mythology about the nurturing side of teaching best played out by women, and the presiding side of leading, best played out by men.



## **Socialization**

Mormon socialization was an important factor for examining the culture and climate in Utah Schools. The institution of family is central to LDS theology and religious practice and family is the basis of social order and development within LDS culture (Foster, 1991). Early Mormon polygamist family structure was important in Utah along with teaching of social understanding and inculcating strong LDS moral values (Miller, 2008). Although Bartky (1990) documented psychological oppression emerging out of objectification, stereotypes, and cultural domination, LDS historians have often promoted Mormonism as a culture that requires a patriarchal restriction of women in order to preserve the family (Hanks, 1992; Warenski, 1978).

In light of separation of church and state, the Mormon way of life still manifests itself in many ways through out Utah Schools. This cultural identity is important to understand because of the socialization of the children in the state of Utah. This process of socialization may help explain the impact on female leadership in Utah Schools. According to an opinion article by Stephanie Mencimer (2001) published in the *Washington Monthly*, separation of church and state in Utah continues to be a problem. Mencimer, a former Utahan, complained about the problems she faced growing up as an outsider in the Mormon dominated culture. She described teachers and administrators who had important positions in the church overwhelmingly biased toward educational materials embedded with Mormon ideology, Mormon songs were sung in choirs, Mormon prayers were common before athletic events, and school policy did not let students compete on Sunday. In addition to many school administrators belonging to the Mormon faith, many school districts in Utah partner with the LDS church to offer

Mormon religion education courses during the regular school day. This is done in LDS church buildings called seminaries. They are usually built right next to the public high school. Students are released from school during the day to attend these seminaries.

Although Mormon history is relatively short dating back to the mid 1800s, their history is important to grasp if we are to understand the evolution of the state's socialization. In the mid-1800s, the Mormon pioneers moved west to settle the Utah territory. They sought religious and cultural freedoms that were not afforded them in their views from the U.S. federal government of the time. Through hardships and persecution they successfully settled in the west. They brought with them powerful cultural norms, church leaders maintained from the beginning the focus of the religion was the strength of family. This tradition has carried on today. These values, norms, and beliefs may have stuck because of the hardships many of the pioneers suffered on their way to Utah. In 1995, church leaders declared a family proclamation that stated that a woman's primary role in the family setting was to nurture and care for the children. With in every reach of society this attitude can be heard that "women should be home with the kids." This proclamation to the world re-affirmed the Mormon value system that is so deeply rooted. Smith (1987) described how embedded assumptions emerge:

Like a fossil captured in stone or a footprint indelibly left in wet cement, the conceptions and impressions of what we know, experience and imagine become embedded in all facets of our lives. Theories, practices, rules norms, and standards make up the foundations of societies and cultures. As foundations, they become the stone and the concrete into which we embed the fossils and footprints of our assumptions and values (Smith, 1987 pg.163).

Iannaccone & Miles (1990) described how writings in the 1950s and 1960s invariably stressed that a wife's first responsibility was to her family, that a Mormon woman should not work outside of the home unless there was no other way to support the family. Some early 1970's writings permitted "sequential" arrangements, in which women first raise families and later sought careers. Similarly, before the mid-1970s, mothers with young children were permitted to work only if the father was absent or disabled. After 1976, however, several authors defended employment for mothers who receive their husband's approval, know their children will not be neglected, and have prayed and received personal approval from God. These concessions made it possible for Mormon women to work without violating church doctrine. By the 1980s, authors strongly supported a career after children were grown, that a career became virtually an assumed part of the ideal woman's life. Still, church leaders have not abandoned their traditional ideals of the nonworking mother caring fulltime for her family. Tawney (1926) would suggest that these examples illustrate how an organization can sometimes exercise "flexibility in practice while maintaining purity of doctrine." Owens (2004) defined culture as a system of shared values and beliefs that interact with an organization's people, organizational structures, and control systems to produce behavioral norms. In practical terms, shared values mean "what is important," beliefs mean "what we think is true," and behavior norms mean "how we do things around here." Climate is defined as the characteristics of the total environment. Regardless of religious beliefs, female leaders in the state of Utah are subject to the culture and climate. They both seem to characterize encourage and support women's independence pursuit of individual goals, as long as certain glass ceilings are not broken.

Masculine patterns of domination continue with the patriarchal traditions that frame power in the Mormon Church. LDS feminist historians claimed that women once had the power from church founder Joseph Smith to do many of the church rituals that only male members of the priesthood now practice. Women contributed to the economic and social life during the early years of the LDS church, but did so under the rule of the patriarchy. Although women's writings were unedited by men during the first 50 years of the church, after the turn of the century that began to change when priesthood members controlled production of all writings for all church groups (Miller, 2008). Church leaders give messages about a woman's place, but do insist that if she works outside the home, she must not do so at the expense of her family, which implies her responsibility for motherhood, which church authorities equate with the power of the priesthood (Farnsworth, 1992).

Mormon boys and girls are taught Mormon values and beliefs at a very young age. They are baptized into the church at age 8. It is not by chance that the roles of men and women are clearly shaped long before kids become adults. It can be very difficult for many Mormon men and women to come to reconciliation with their own feelings about their lived experiences.

Marilyn Warenski (1978) found a blending of religion into the political, economic, and social life of the Mormon community. Earlier figures from 1985 predicted 60% to 83% percent of the population along the Wasatch front were members of the LDS faith (Presley et al., 1985). Although the population appears to be changing, the religious

community contextualizes education and administrative practices. Cultural changes takes longer to realize (Canham, 2007). This study was grounded in an assumption that socialization was one key to deconstructing the contemporary gender leadership gap.

### **History of Women's Leadership**

Although the majority of leadership theories are presented as gender-neutral, the fact is the discourse surrounding leadership has long been confounded by gender (Rusch & Marshall, 2009). Historically, educational research and theories created male and female roles with separate traits that defined leadership positions. White males, with school board encouragement, moved into teaching with the promised prize of administrative roles as the reward for teaching. Women moved into teaching to teach. Women who saw the advantages of the power, the influence and the economic benefits, attempted to create inroads into the masculine dominated system and were met with resistance, isolation, frustration, and often failure to achieve their goals (Blackmore, 1999; Blount, 1998; Cooper, 1995, Shakeshaft, 1989).

Prior to the 1800s, teaching was predominantly a profession dominated by men. Blount (1998) and Shakeshaft (1989) noted women's place in education began to change with the feminization of teaching during two powerful movements in the early 1800s: "the republican motherhood," and "the cult of true womanhood." This movement defined the women who were nurturing and available to serve families and the community by becoming educated in order to provide teachers for a growing demand. Teaching paid well for men, but women could be paid one-third to one-half of what men required (Shakeshaft, 1989). Acker (1995), wrote about the caring work of women teachers but also, highlighted the stereotypes of women as more caring, connected, and relational and,

therefore, better suited to the teaching of children. She noted this perspective was often viewed as “mothering work.” Therefore, at the turn of the century, school leadership was defined as a masculine profession and teaching continued to be defined as a profession more suited to the feminine personality (Blount, 1999). The masculine model constructs rituals, myths, discourses, and structures that recreate the way of doing administration that assumes types of knowledge and methods that are more competitive, more linear, rational, and less emotional than what is stereotypically expected from female leaders. When female principals are seen as successful, they are often seen as more “masculine” and their success attributed to acting more powerful, competent, competitive, confident, and autonomous (Gardiner et al., 2000; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Economic issues, embedded in capitalism, complicated the role of women in the social and political arena during the development of public education (Miller, 2008). Several researchers described a capitalist enterprise that acknowledged *women’s work* as unpaid laborers who produced but did not control production (Harding, 1995; Folbre, 1993; Mohanty, 1991). Under those auspices, lower pay was the norm for teaching and other feminized professions. Since women were unpaid laborers at home, when the woman worked outside the home, industry also paid less. Wepler (1995) argued that the authority structure in schools sustained male administration making decisions and influencing teachers. Thus, women’s positions in the school sector were highly segregated, women remained under-represented in school leadership, and *slow progress* is still seen as improvement.

As entrenched as the male dominated system had become, Blount (1998) detailed a time in the early 1900s when women had growing influence in education as county

superintendents. Women accessed these positions by being elected and because administrators were scarce at the time, many men viewed these jobs with disdain. Blount suggested that the government shifted power out of women's hands by discontinuing the role of county superintendents. Shakeshaft (1989) also reported that women made gains in education administration in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but those percentages were often exaggerated and were not sustained after 1930. Miller (2008) described inherent structures, such as mentors, and support for advanced degrees, that were denied to women aspiring to administrative positions. She went on to define this as a masculinist leadership model that hindered women's access through discriminatory practices. In her view, the practices fostered a "legacy of discrimination."

Today, with increasing numbers of women and people of color assuming leadership roles in schools and districts, the face of school leadership has changed (Rusch & Barber, 2009). In 2003-04 49.7% of principals were women, an increase of almost 10% in 10 years (U.S. Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). The authors noted that these changes paralleled the increase in women who pursued advanced degrees and certificates. (Rusch & Barber, 2009). At the same time, Rusch & Barber (2009) noted that there was still a glaring gap between women and men in secondary principalships. Data from Utah suggest that the gap is far more than glaring.

The history of educational administration informs the present study because of the rooted practice of patriarchy in this culture, which implies men as leaders in home and in social institutions (Miller, 2008). Shakeshaft (1989) affirmed that social and political systems recognized men as being more adept in public arenas than women and the politics of men leaders and women followers was set in these early practices. It was the

function of administration to supervise teachers that led to male teacher's decision to leave the classroom and either find other employment opportunities or to become administrators. The path to administration was created social networks or accumulating cultural capital, often available only to certain segments of the population (Bourdieu, 1997; Blackmore, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1989). This historical position also described the sustained patriarchal patterns within the Mormon Church.

### **Women in Leadership**

There is a large body of research and work that suggested female school leaders are adept and effective in today's educational world. Even though many women may be equipped with the necessary skill set, they often find their journey through administrative ranks to be a difficult maze with a challenge comparable to treading on land mines. The educational leadership arena in the state of Utah that supports future female leaders continues to defy this evidence of women leaders' effectiveness by not promoting many female administrators to secondary administrative positions. Poplin Gosetti and Rusch (1995) found that leadership texts that promote and equity and diversity continued to marginalize women and persons of color by excluding those perspectives. The authors argued that when women joined a male dominated system and their knowledge was not valued, they found a foreign territory where the rules were covert and the values and standards were very different from what many women held dear. Poplin Gosetti and Rusch (1995) concluded that women had a much harder time being effective in that system. Miller's work supported that view; she found although a woman principal might have great personal intuitive ability to lead, if the institution did not recognize her authority, then the gendered perception hampered her ability to negotiate community



acceptance and support (Miller, 2008). These conclusion match the scholarly observations that women have to battle the engrained expectation of masculine leadership norms in top leadership positions (Blackmore, 1999; Gardiner et al.,2000; Shakeshaft, 1989). Dunlap (1995) described the isolation, bias, and frustration that women leaders experience and called for new leadership theory that could emerge out of research about women's experience.

### **Effective Leadership**

Many experts working in the arena of gender and leadership issues agree with Dr. Edith Rusch's perspective, that

the institutionalized dominance of male-influenced leadership holds even though research suggests that leadership based on women's ways of knowing and women's leadership practice is more collegial, more attuned to instruction and children, less concerned with politics and bureaucracy, and is more inclusive and empowering (Rusch, 2004, p.31).

Many of the descriptors noted as effective leadership characteristics are also identified as female characteristics. Blackmore (2006) cited studies of women leaders that argued that leadership was relational work and was effective at developing caring, democratic, ethical and collaborative cultures. In the same vein, Poplin Gosetti & Rusch (1995) suggested that women tended to encourage participation and share power and information. Collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision are dominant

characteristics of women in educational leadership positions (Eakle,1995; Regan & Brooks, 1995).

Porat (1991) asserted that good school administration is more attuned to feminine than masculine models of leadership behavior. Attributes typically ascribed to women, such as nurturing, being sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, caring, cooperative, and accommodative are increasingly associated with effective or transformational leadership. This current wave of leadership theory would characterize many female education leaders. There is a line of argument in leadership literature contending that female leaders tend to be more transformational than male leaders. (Rosener,1990) asserted that women spend more time with people, communicate more, care more about differences, are concerned more with teachers and marginal students, and motivate more than men do.

Every female administrator we interviewed and observed was more aware of and skillful in the give and take of interpersonal communication. Most instances of collaboration, involvement, and shared influence took place in the school that had female principals. In those places, we saw teamwork, excitement, and enthusiasm (Rosener, 1990, p.45).

The researchers also found that many female school administrators express the desire to facilitate the learning process. Women embraced relationships, sharing, and process. Many researchers have reported that women leaders, stereotypically exhibited more caring and collaborative styles of leadership. That did not mean all women were more caring and that caring was an inherent trait, but rather, researchers observed those

qualities more often among women leaders (Chliwniak, 1997; Grogan, 1999; Hurty, 1995; Young, 2001). Researchers have also found that women stay in the classroom longer, have more years of experience, and are older when they enter administration, and concluded that is why women administrators focus more on students and instructional leadership (Blackmore, 1993; Emmert, 1998; Miller, 2005; Porat, 1991; Strachan, 1999).

### **Women's Influence on Effective Leadership**

The relationship between proven effective educational leadership and female leadership styles has become more evident. It may be somewhat ironic that an educational system that has traditionally socialized many women to model leadership qualities more affiliated with male managerial models, now appears to be demanding leaders that are transformational, democratic, and based on many of the characteristics associated with female leaders. Robert Marzano, in his meta-analysis of characteristics of effective leadership, identified many qualities that align with female leadership styles. Marzano (2005) notes,

effective school leaders establish strong lines of communication with and between teachers and students. This responsibility seems self evident – good communication is a critical feature of any endeavor in which people work in close proximity for a common purpose. The school leader is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders. The school leader must have the willingness to communicate to individuals inside and outside the school. This behavior is based on the principle of outreach (Marzano, 2005, p.87).

Early on, Shakeshaft (1995) suggested women were taught to pay attention to relationships, be polite, to give technical and specific feedback, and to use power-with rather power-over. In her view, the effectiveness of women as administrators had much to do with their socialization about what it is to be a woman. Today, Elmore (2000) recommends that principals should rely more heavily on face-to-face relationships than on bureaucratic routines.

### **Organizational Discrimination**

Miller (2008) viewed the feminist leadership model as challenging the Mormon hierarchal views of organizations and argued for the transformation of leadership theory. She portrayed the collaborative nature of women leaders and the empowerment of widespread leadership within school districts, noting that leadership meant empowering more than one administrator, empowering leaders in a non-hierarchal approach, and creating collaborative communities focused on improving curriculum. She concluded that a community with many leaders and powerful actors working together to achieve better learning (Miller, 2008). Bryk & Schneider (2003) asserted that each party in a relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role's obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other parties. Relational trust is grounded in the social respect that comes from the kinds of social discourse that take place across the school community (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

Some believe women are forced to act like men (Daresh, 2001). Many female leaders find great difficulty addressing their own internal struggle with the roles they play. For many women, this dual life can be very tough. Eckman (2004) states that role conflict occurs as individuals attempt to balance their family and home roles with their

professional roles. Hochschild (1989) described the “second shift” that faces working women at the end of the day as they turn to their personal roles as parents and wives. Kochan, Spencer, and Mathews (2000) found that the primary issue facing female and male principals was “managing their work, time, and coping with the stresses, tasks, and responsibilities of the job.” Women high school principals have the ability to adapt and balance conflicts with masculine leadership norms (Cooper, 2000; Regan, 1990, Tedrow, 1999).

Despite what is known about effective leadership, the theology and culture in Utah may lessen the talents of many possible future school administrators. This cultural impact may be viewed by some as systemic discrimination and may be described in an organizational discrimination model (Tallerico & Burstyn, 1996). Differences between career aspirations and achievements of men and women may be an effect of the limited opportunities for women because of systematic gender bias. The discrimination occurs when the practices, rules, and policies of formal organizations, such as corporations or government agencies, are different for men and women. Although this model may be applied to more of a formal organizational structure, it may also appear be present in an environment that has a predominant cultural influence as in the state of Utah. This model explains the results of a recent study done by the Utah Department of Workforce Services in 2010. The findings show that Utah women make 69% percent of Utah men’s median income, only 26% of Utah women get bachelor’s degrees compared to 32% for men, and yet 62% of Utah women work, compared to 60% of women nationally. The organizational discrimination model may also explain the hiring practices for Utah women in educational leadership positions, especially in secondary schools. Only 10% of

Utah high schools are led by female principals. The percentage is even less (5%) in the ranks of Utah superintendents. Men seem to advance to higher levels because they are favored in promotional practices and...women cannot advance even if they choose to do so (Estler, 1975). Schmuck (1980) described this type of discrimination as the *woman's place* model that emphasizes cultural and social norms that encourage discriminatory practices. Historically, administrative success for men was easier because masculine ways of leading were valued more than women's ways of leading (Shakeshaft, 1989). In fact, Blackmore (1999) discovered women principals felt most inhibited in their capacity to act freely and with energy due to the discursive cultural practices that positioned women as lesser, powerless, and undervalued.

### **Gender Dynamics Among Leaders**

What is the other side to the story? Although looking at the experiences of women in a state like Utah is important, the masculine side to this story may be even more complex and difficult to understand. Male educational leaders in Utah are expected to uphold the dominant culture and to promote their access to power and privilege. Male leaders that seem to work against the stream may be viewed by many as being weak or not up-to-par. It is important to examine the dynamics between men and women, particularly when each is defined by religious ideology.

Sampson (2009) defines masculinity as "machismo" or a strong sense of masculine pride, and or a person with an exaggerated sense of power and strength. Many male leaders in Utah are confronted with their own masculinity and machismo. Men who support feminism are not in for an easy ride. They are likely to be met with antagonism and derision from other men, picturing them as eunuchs, queers or sellouts to political

correctness. According to Connell (1997), these men will not necessarily get warm support from women who are feminists – some of whom are deeply suspicious of all men, most of whom are wary of men's power, and all of whom make a primary commitment to solidarity with women. Although in the early 1970's it was argued that men had a lot gain from women's liberation, which would lead to men being freed from their rigid sex roles, Connell (1997) maintained that it was often easier to acknowledge women's rights to fair and equal treatment in the public world than to confront some sexism at a personal level. Rusch and Marshall's (2006) research on gender filters validated Connell's viewpoint.

The problem may be rigidities of sex roles, but that is far from the whole story because gender dynamics are visible in mixed sex leadership teams as well. The work of Robert Connell, a professor of education at the University of Sydney is particularly instructive. He has published over 15 books on the topic of gender dynamics, and is considered by many as a leading analyst and expert in the field of masculinities. Connell (1997) stated that the popular ideology of gender assumed that masculinity and femininity were unchanging, and a direct expressions of male and female bodies. So, male bodies are viewed as strong and dominant and female bodies are viewed as passive and nurturing. If male bodies are nurturing, then it may be assumed that male leaders may be weak and passive.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

Stereotypes of all kinds tend to be durable over time. People evidently like to categorize themselves and others into groups along primary and secondary dimensions of diversity and identify ways in which their own group is better than and different from

other groups. When these beliefs act as self-fulfilling prophecies, there is little reason for them to change. Also, girls and boys tend to learn stereotypes of different groups in their formative years from parents, teachers, and other adults, and the media. By the time they become adults themselves, their stereo types of various groups are mostly fixed. People are reluctant to give up a long-held stereotype unless it is thoroughly discredited and even then they may still hold on to it (Fiske, S.T., 1998).

The predominant Mormon culture in Utah appears to support this ideology through its patriarchal structure. Subsequent research studies have found little change in gender stereotypes originally documented by Donald Broverman in 1978. His study assessed the perceptions of men's and women's beliefs about feminist traits and masculine traits. Beliefs about sex differences have remained essentially the same since the 1970s despite considerable change in the roles of women and men in the workplace. Across cultures, the male stereotype was seen as stronger and more active than the female stereotype. The male stereotype was characterized by high needs for dominance, autonomy, aggression, and achievement. The female stereotype are characterized by high needs for deference, nurturance, and affiliation (Deaux & LaFrance; Deaux, K., & Kite, M., 1993). Paechter (1998) states that gendered roles mean that women are identified with the home, and the care of small children, and men are identified with the wider working environment. The work and world of men have generally been valued over that of women, so that work identified with women is seen as inferior.

Graves & Powell (2003) described the bulk of evidence regarding sex differences in leader behavior as gender stereotypes. In all types of studies, women score higher in interpersonal style and democratic decision making than men. Women are score higher



on the individualized consideration dimension of transformational leadership, which is associated with the feminine stereotype. But men and women do not differ in the task style in any type of study (Graves & Powell, 2003). Graves & Powell (2003) also noted that studies that directly measure leader effectiveness, rate women as no more less effective than men. Additional evidence suggested that situational factors influence whether men or women are more effective as leaders. These factors included the nature of the organizational setting and leader role, the proportions of male leaders and followers, and the managerial level of the position. As a result some leader roles are more congenial to male leaders, whereas other leader roles are more congenial to female leaders (Graves, & Powell, 2003). These findings also relate to the contexts that male and female leaders face in Utah.

### **Sexism**

A study done on secondary principals or head masters in England in 2004 shed some light on perceptions of leadership roles by men and women (Coleman, 2005). Half of the women in the study surveyed said they had experienced sexism from colleagues or peers and were conscious of their gender as leaders in education. The men in the study were not generally aware of sexism in their role as heads and tended not to question their being in leadership roles. The experience of discrimination of the women focused on being patronized by male colleagues and on feeling that they had to prove themselves as women leaders. Coleman (2005) further explained that it was often presumed that the leader would be male, and concluded that it was not surprising that a large proportion of women in the study thought that they, at some time, had to prove their worth as a woman

leader. Coleman also found that the proportion of men who felt the need to prove themselves had also gone up, but their feelings were not gender related.

Why should they be gender related? According to Schien, (1994) there is the unconscious linkage between leadership and men that is made internationally by men and women, young and old. In a patriarchal society, the dominant or hegemonic form of masculinity embodies the currently successful strategy for subordinating women. Connell (2005) argued that hegemonic masculinity is heterosexual, aggressive, and competitive, and homo-social. It emphasizes hierarchy and the capacity to dominate other men as well as women.

Several perspectives have emerged on the basic behavior differences between male and female leaders. When women began to study the background and preparation of men and women leaders, they concluded that men may be better prepared to be managers because of their unique socialization (Hennig, & Jardim, 1977). According to the researchers, men came into management with a clearer, stronger and more definite understanding of where they saw themselves going, what they had to do, how they should act, and what they had to consider in order to achieve the objectives they set for themselves. In some of the earliest studies on gender differences among leaders, Hennig and Jardim (1977) highlighted the ways in which boys acquired and developed skills among themselves that eventually gave them an advantage over women when they move into the workplace. The acculturated and socialized mindset that gave men an immediate advantage is comparable to the acculturated and socialized mindset every Mormon male experiences.

An evolution of viewpoints began to change as women attained positions and power in organizations. It may be possible that women have gained the upper hand as leaders. A second wave of women is making its way into top management, not by adopting the style and habits that have proved successful for men but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experience as women. These second-generation managerial women are drawing on what is unique to their socialization as women and creating a different path to the top (Rosener, 1997).

However, despite the evolution of viewpoints, the constraints of the leader role may minimize the effects of both men's and women's prior socialization on how they behave as leaders. Powerful forces influence the behavior of leaders of both sexes. These include self-selection, organizational selection, organizational socialization, with female and male managers being similarly socialized into proper role behavior early in their careers and rewarded for exhibiting the right kinds of behavior, and organizational structure (Lefkowitz, 1994). Grogan (2005) described other common factors in women needed for advancing into high-level leadership positions; they include interpersonal skills, ability to maintain organizational relationships and responsiveness to parents and community groups. Her factors correlate to the tenets of relational leadership (Fletcher, 2001).

### **The “New Male Leader Emerges”**

Could effective educational leadership become more gender neutral for both male and females. Is the pendulum swinging away from school leaders that are identified simply by their sex? Is the education system more adept at identifying school leaders

marked by their effectiveness? This culture began to take shape upon the passage of federal legislation known as the No Child left Behind Act.

The “new male leader” is one that is dynamic in many forms. Understanding the complexity of this new leader is substantial. Connell (1997) contends that the “traditional male” is not necessarily the reality most men live in. Few men are heavy hitters as corporate executives, or exemplars of masculinity as combat heroes, sport or film stars. There are subordinated masculinities, formed at the bottom of the gender hierarchy among men; many are found in marginalized masculinities of oppressed groups, including ethnic groups and of sexual orientation. There are also forms of masculinity that found among men who are complicit in the patriarchal system. They accept the patriarchal dividend, but are directly involved in wielding power, in personal violence, or displays of prowess. Among these forms of masculinity, there are complex hierarchies, exclusions, alliances, and oppressions. Recognizing the complexity of this picture goes a long way in explaining men’s responses to feminist ideas (Connell, 1997).

Miller (1976) describes the differences she saw in the male world of power and influence through the lens of relational theory. Relational attributes are not commonly seen as strengths, but instead as feminine traits associated with women’s greater emotional needs. Miller noted that because men are socialized to devalue and deny themselves the relational skills needed to survive psychologically, they tend to rely on women to provide these attributes. Thus, women become the carriers of relational strengths in society, responsible for creating relational connections for others and meeting basic relational needs without calling attention to themselves.

Men can find common cause with feminist women without falling into the “me-too” mold. Connell (1997) professes that is required is, quite simply, a commitment to social justice. A few men have embraced feminism at a deeper emotional level, and have attempted to reconstruct their personality in total to escape conventional masculinity. This has elicited a variety of responses- becoming non competitive, and taking a supportive rather than dominating position in conversations. The numbers trying these ways to exit from mainstream masculinities are small, and it is difficult to see this approach becoming widely popular. The emotional costs are high; the practice provokes ridicule from more conservative men and is not attractive to all women either (Connell, 1997).

A call for re-socialization of males and masculinity, like many other human traits, is determined by both biological and environmental factors. While there is extensive research indicating biological factors are significant in shaping masculine behavior, there is undeniable evidence that cultural and environmental factors are strong enough to override biological impulses. Much of what boys learn about masculinity comes from the influence of parents, siblings, and role models portrayed on television. Even the school curriculum and environment provide powerful reinforcing images of traditional masculinity. Some believe that boys should be taught to accept their vulnerability, express a range of emotions such as fear and sadness, and ask for help and support in appropriate situations. Additionally boys should be taught to be gentle, nurturing, cooperative, and communicative, and in particular, learn nonviolent means of resolving conflicts. Courage, physical strength, and independence, are positive qualities for males,

provided they are not obsessive traits nor used to exploit or dominate others (Thompson, 1986).

The development of a new conception of masculinity based on this vision is an ambitious task, but an essential one for the health and safety of both men and women. Traditional definitions of masculinity only widen the gaps that currently separate men from women and men from each other and the change can begin with how we teach about masculinity (Thompson, 1986). In the long run, the democratization of gender will require profound social change, and the dismantling of conventional masculinities (Connell, 1997).

The new male leader may best be characterized by using relational theory. Fletcher (2001) describes relational practice as a way of working that reflects a relational logic of effectiveness and requires a number of relational skills such as empathy, mutuality, reciprocity, and a sensitivity to emotional contexts. Obsatz (1975) asked if we believe that it is un-masculine for a “real man” to show concern or “reveal himself”, and that real men have every right to remain detached during group process and not take responsibility to interact and make decisions? Those beliefs allow males to distance themselves and give little support to those men who are trying to develop more collaborate environments. The gender sensitive leader will examine, admit to, and be willing to modify any personal assumptions that interfere with group members’ acceptance, full participation, and personal growth (Obsatz, 1975).

Fletcher (2001) further described the practice of relational leadership using four different categories. The first category, preserving, includes activities intended to preserve the life and well-being of the project by taking on tasks that would protect it

from harm or prevent future problems. One way of doing this is to shoulder responsibility for tasks that were outside the technical definition of the job and doing them with the attitude of “doing whatever it takes,” even if that meant putting aside a personal agenda or sacrifice some symbols of status. The second category is mutual empowering. This refers to behavior intended to enable others’ achievement and contribution to the project. An empowered worker is one who has the information and authority to make decisions, to structure and prioritize task, or to improve process. The third category is self-achieving. This refers to a leader using relational skills to enhance one’s professional growth and effectiveness. Implicit in this behavior is the belief that relationships are important to growth and achievement and that the long term benefits of maintaining and nurturing affiliations with others outweigh the costs. The fourth category is creating team. This refers to activities intended to foster group life. It differs from what is generally thought of as team building because it is concerned with creating a generalized experience of the team rather than the more typical task of creating team identity. Relational leadership involves being attuned and in touch with the intricate web of inter- and intra- relationships that influence an organization. As Wenger (1998) points out, it is about the meaning and identity that are created when people work together. Regardless of rules, structures or roles and irrespective of tasks, strategic plans, political alliances, programs, contracts, lawsuits, etc...relational leadership is about people and their perceptions (which in essence, are their realities) of how they are being treated (Dyer, 2001).

As new educational leaders emerge in the state of Utah, their skills will be tested unlike any other experience they may have. Males and females must construct a relational

leadership model in order to navigate the difficult cultural landscape they may find themselves in.

## **Conclusion**

Although the historical foundation of leadership is based on a masculine paradigm, women who are in leadership positions and women that are desirous of leadership positions continue to influence the system for good. Male leaders in Utah have always had access to power and privilege and therefore have not been through the same rigors. They often have not faced the same rigors to gain access and thus do not easily understand women's challenges in attaining and holding leadership positions. There is an emerging ideal that both men and women of a new generation can survive any and all external factors to become great leaders.

In the state of Utah, the present culture is embedded with over a hundred years of a dominant patriarchal theology, therefore the culture is woven in to every thread of fabric in the lives of Utahans. Women that wish to venture outside recommended boundaries, the task of navigating and managing their environment can be a stiff test. It starts with an understanding of the game.

The state of Utah has a relatively brief history. It was settled by Mormon pioneers. They brought a spirit of independence and wish for freedom. Ironically the very environment they sought, the freedom from oppression, led to them to an unintended consequence as some view as a limitation to one of their own populations. It is likely Utah would not have gained statehood had polygamy continued to exist. By silencing voices and practices that seemed out of the mainstream, the state of Utah stayed out sight



and out of mind in the east. Mormon leadership actions ensured the state future statehood, but their actions also set in motion a long-term commitment to a masculine enterprise.

Is leadership by design destined to be influenced by male or female qualities or can it become a gender-neutral activity, modeled on the concept of a double helix (Regan & Brooks, 1995)? In the world of education, this principle should especially be true since all of us in our society agree that access to an education for every boy and girl is critical to any enduring success our country is to have in the future.

Women leaders in education in the state of Utah have managed to address and deal with their own paradigms in different ways. Solomon (2007) describes many have made their personal odysseys to freedom and enlightenment the subject of essays, poems, stories, and speeches without reviling their religious leaders and usually without sacrificing their membership in the LDS Church. Many others worked out their issues in the privacy of their own souls as women have done since Eve chose to bite into the apple and as Mary pondered the circumstances of Jesus' conception and birth in her heart. Some spoke of these things to their husbands or their closest friends, while others simply thought and whispered the truth to them as they waited for a new day to dawn. Debrah Brooks-Golden (2006) discovered that women had many reasons for wanting to be principals based on religion, psychosocial development, and desire for equality in the workplace to support families. She identified spiritual needs of women and their ability to multitask to fill expectations of families and personal goals.

This study is not limited to a focus on how women in Utah lead in education, nor is it bound to a study of the way women leaders in Utah understand their own experience in a system dominated by a male driven patriarchal culture. This study is also not limited

to a focus on male leaders as the dominant players and holders of power, privilege and the priesthood, but it is a study to assist male and female education leaders in Utah to understand the complex dynamics of their own gendered experiences and how it relates to other leaders both male and female around them.

Today there is a wide interest in leadership among educators. Much is at stake. Modern research is telling us that effective leadership is described by being participatory, flexible, group initiated, and non-hierarchical. This may be seen by some as feminine. It is critical that we do not get trapped in these unsafe assumptions. There should be critical dialogue of leadership as gender labeled. The potential consequences and rewards to this conversation and the future are tremendous.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study described and analyzed the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that male and female education leaders experience with in the context of a predominantly Mormon culture specifically in the state of Utah. In particular, it documented and explored the perceptions and lived experiences of male high school principals along the Wasatch front in the state of Utah that serve on administrative teams consisting of male and female members. The intent of the study was to provide a deeper understanding of workplace gender dynamics for current and future school administrators in the state of Utah.

#### **Research Philosophy**

The constructivist approach, as articulated by Charmaz (1990, 2000) was a major paradigm that informed this study. Charmaz focused on the meanings ascribed by participants, probing more for views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals, rather than gathering facts and describing acts. A constructivist study also highlighted the beliefs and values of the researcher and eschewed predetermined categories, such as those found in axial coding. The narrative was written to be more explanatory, more discursive, and more probing of assumptions and meanings for individuals in the study. The constructivist approach best described my own approach to leadership and the way I learn best through my experiences on a professional level, social level, and personal level. It was my journey to search for the real meaning of relationships, to find the beliefs that drive us, and explore the feelings that make us real

as men and women. The constant in my life has always been an educational culture and a strong Mormon environment. Without question, the people within these paradigms had a significant role in my development. Connell (2000) described school as probably not being the most influential in developing masculinity, with the childhood family, the adult workplace, and sexual relationships being more potent. A person's schooling is still very powerful across the board, and in some cases, it is decisive. "It may also be the most strategic, in the sense that the education system is the setting where an open debate about the democratization of gender relations is most likely to happen, and can gain some purchase on practice" (Connell, 2000 pg. 147).

In keeping with my constructivist beliefs, phenomenology, coupled with interpretive methods, guided the study design. Moustakas (1994) described phenomenological research in which the researcher identifies the "essence" of human experience concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Understanding the "lived experiences" marks phenomenology as a philosophy, as well as a method, and the procedures involve studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In the process, the researcher "brackets" his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993). Those elements best described the framework for this study's design.

Capturing lived experiences and perceptions required a research approach that allows individuals to tell stories that explain their understandings of gender identity and gender dynamics. The interviews were the primary data collection method, but they were

augmented with direct observations and document analysis in order to triangulate data collected from the participants.

To guide the research, I developed the following research questions. These questions served as more heuristic than concrete questions requiring definite answers.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the gendered experiences of male administrators in Utah working with female administrators on their team in the context of a patriarchal Mormon culture?
2. How do male administrators in Utah conceptualize and understand their own masculinity and its role in shaping their own professional and personal world as a high school principal?
3. How do male administrators in a Mormon patriarchal culture negotiate their own position and role with female administrators who are their subordinates or equal?
4. In what way does a dominant religious ideology that narrowly defines women's roles influence a male administrator's approach to gender issues in a public sector organization?

### **Design of Study**

Qualitative research explores a human or social problem in a natural setting where the researcher collects data and interprets individual experiences inductively by focusing on participant perspectives and meaning (Creswell, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). It is "pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of people" and is conducted by researchers who "are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as

expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 2). Unlike quantitative research, which uses “few variables and many cases,” qualitative inquiry works with “few cases and many variables” (Creswell, 2004, p. 16).

I chose qualitative research for this study because there is very little academic research of the impact of the Mormon culture on the male and female educational leadership experience in the state of Utah. I also chose qualitative research to examine the male educational leader in context to a relational leadership model that is emerging. This process of investigation was messy and complex at best, necessitating a plan of study that was descriptive and exploratory. Qualitative study has been used to document the under studied phenomenon and this study was intended to meet that standard.

As Glesne explained, “To understand the nature of constructed realities, qualitative researchers interact and talk with participants about their perceptions” (Glesne, 1998, p. 5). Because these perceptions are in large part products of individual construction and interpretation, they cannot be easily measured or analyzed quantitatively, which is another reason why the qualitative paradigm was more appropriate for this particular study.

The research design and approach for this study was phenomenological using interpretive methods. Moustakas (1994) described phenomenological research in which the researcher identifies the “essence” of human experience concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Understanding the “lived experiences” marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, so the procedures involved studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop

patterns and relationships of meaning. As part of the research the process, I also bracketed my own experiences through an epoche, found in the beginning of chapter one, in order to better understand how my story related to that of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993).

The educational leadership arena in the state of Utah has many unique facets that are rooted in deep traditions, rituals, and culture. These aspects are truly phenomenological and can only be understood by sharing the lived experiences of the participants within. This was accomplished by employing narrative methods used as a strategy of inquiry.

This study hopefully raised the consciousness of an entire educational society. By raising the level awareness, social change can hopefully occur. The study was based on a premise that women educational leaders were marginalized by the culture and system within the state of Utah. While I initially believed the word *oppression* was too harsh, I did feel there was compelling evidence that the voice of women leaders, as well as male leaders that demonstrated relational or transformational leadership characteristics had been silenced at some levels.

### **Participant and Site Selection**

During my experience as a school leader in the state of Utah, I had the opportunity to work with female leaders as their equal, subordinate, and their superior. The settings included urban schools as well as rural schools. This experience of nearly 15 years gave me tremendous insight into our unique culture in the state of Utah. As a male member of the Mormon faith myself, I was raised and socialized in the traditions of my ancestors. Along with this came many questions and thoughts of inquiry about our

religion, especially about gender, and access to power. Over time, I sought more understanding of the gender issues in leadership within our state. Why was there an underrepresentation of women high school principals? What was the perceived experience by the male leaders, the other side of the story?

These questions have developed as I have emerged in my career as an educational leader.

Miller, in her 2008 dissertation, argued that the realization that the LDS faith, structure, and cultural capital those two factors generate, are a driving and pervasive force for women and men who move into this climate, granting them cultural advantage through church affiliation.

Lack of that social capital could imperil success in public educational administration; therefore, the principals in the study engaged political intelligence to interface with the culture: Women chose to act LDS, engage male mentors, follow male role models, and although they were feminist leaders, viewed leadership through a male prism, discounting the structural barriers and inequity in leadership practice. The power of the LDS priesthood in the culture advantages men in leadership. Priesthood power spills over from religious venues because LDS ministers as unpaid clergy are not just ministers but may be teachers, administrators, and staff of public schools. The ‘power from God’ invades the workplace from those whose religious and public duties overlap and changes the way that women and men act and lead” (Miller, 2009 pg. 259).

Miller (2008) found that the dominant religious structure set up accepted leadership models and those in leadership positions valued and then transferred those practices to nonreligious social and political communities in Utah.



To create trustworthiness and transferability in my study, and to align it with Miller's (2008) study, I chose male principals serving in high schools along the Wasatch front. Each participant also had females that served as assistant principals on their administrative teams. I also selected principals in like school districts, taking into consideration school size and demographics, as well as similarities in school communities.

I contacted 5 principals for this study and I shared my research interests with them. I gauged their interest as we spoke and exchanged emails. They all seemed very willing to participate. I prepared and submitted my proposal to the Institutional Review Board, and then sent each participant a formal letter inviting them to participate in the study, along with a informed consent form. I committed to not revealing the names of the individual participants, their schools or school districts. I did not have any problems with obtaining consent from all five invited participants. It is important to note that their agreement was also influenced by my long term relationship with each principal.

### **Data Collection**

Marshall and Rossman (1999) recommended interviewing, observation, and document review as data collection methods. I used in depth interviews and I recorded and transcribed each interview while I kept observational field notes and notes of participants' data. I used a coding system recommended by Poland and Moustakas (1994) and interviewing techniques based on Fontana and Frey (2005) which included assessing the setting and establishing trust. Phenomenology also guided many of the methods I utilized.

I employed the phenomenological practice of epoche to view the data with "pure

and unfettered scrutiny” (Groenewald, 2004). I preempted suppositions that would cloud the view and increase trustworthiness by experiencing nuanced meanings of the participant. Moustakas (1994) describes listening and awareness, This way of perceiving life called for looking, noticing, and becoming aware, without imposing our pre-judgment on I saw, imagined, or felt. The approach required genuine looking that precedes reflectiveness, the making of judgments, or reaching conclusions. Moutakas stresses the importance of suspending everything that interferes with fresh vision. In many respects that was the most difficult part of this study due to my personal involvement in the Mormon Church and my career as a Utah administrator.

I employed a phenomenological interviewing approach as described by (Marshall and Rossman, 2009). Phenomenological interviewing is a specific type in depth interviewing grounded in a philosophical tradition. Phenomenology is the study of lived experiences and the ways we understand those experiences to develop a worldview. It rests on the assumption that there is a structure and essence to shared experiences that can be narrated. The purpose of this type of interviewing is to describe the meaning of a concept or phenomenon that several individuals share.

I used a three-pronged approach to develop the interview questions (Seidman, 1998). The first set of questions focuses on past experience with the phenomenon of interest; the second set focused on the present experience; and the third set of questions joined these two narratives to describe the individual’s essential experience with the phenomenon. Prior to interviewing, I kept a full written description of my own experience, thereby bracketing off my experience from those of the interviewees. This phase of inquiry is referred to as epoche. This self-examination permitted me to gain

clarity from her own preconceptions, as part of the ongoing process rather than a single fixed event. The epoche proved to be a valuable tool for triangulating my data.

I also employed phenomenological reduction to identify the essence of the phenomenon (Patton, 1990). I clustered the data around themes in order to bring order to the interview data. Finally, I used structural synthesis, a process Cresswell (1998) described as an imaginative exploration of all the possible meanings perspectives

I completed a pilot interview with a male school administrator. The open-ended interview questions were replicated from Miller's 2008 dissertation. From the pilot interview, I refined the research instrument to better fit the needs of my study. I reordered some of the questions to create a better flow. Smith (1999) states that pilot studies have great use in data collection in foreshadowing research problems and questions, in highlighting gaps and wastage in data collection, and considering broader highly significant issues such as validity, ethics, representation, and researcher health and safety. The pilot study helped me become aware of the social and political ramifications of the interview and my privileged position as researcher. Moustakas (1994) advised establishing co-researcher status with participants. Hopefully this made the interview less of an object relationship. I built an interactive pattern to validate each participants' point of view.

After the pilot interview process was complete, and the interview and observation process had been refined, I initiated contact with the principals involved in the official study. My interviews occurred in February and March of 2011 and each lasted between 60-120 minutes. I asked the participants to allow me to video tape the interview process. Marshall and Rossman (2009) assert that film is especially valuable for discovery and

validation. The video documented nonverbal behavior and communication such as facial expressions, gestures, and emotions. I also assured my participants that the videos would be returned to them or destroyed once my dissertation was accepted by my committee.

After the interviews were transcribed, I sent a copy of the interview transcript back to the interviewee to check for accuracy. That was followed up with a phone call. These efforts were done to ensure trustworthiness and validity. I recorded my visits to various schools and kept my field observation notes in a pre-constructed template to ensure an organized means of keeping my notes. This was done on my Ipad.

As noted above, each participant was asked open-ended questions in three stages. The first stage was early background questions in relation to their childhood and socialization. The second stage was career questions in relation to their perspective on their own personal careers. The third stage was more global administrative practice questions in relation to their overall perspective of their professional practice.

### **Data Analysis**

As Glesne (1998) explained, “data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds.” She described coding as the process of “conceptualizing the data, raising questions, providing provisional answers about the relationships among and within the data, and discovering the data” and “breaking the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data.” Throughout the data collection process, I carefully documented and recorded categories, patterns, and trends that I saw emerging as the data unfolded. I organized the data into taxonomies to accurately illustrate themes that were collectively emerging from my interviews and observations.

My plan for data analysis followed the steps outline by Creswell (2005). This plan was in relation to the phenomenological design of the study. The first step was to organize the data in usable parts. This was done by developing a matrix to organize all available resources. The second step was to transcribe the data accurately after listening and watching the recordings multiple times. At that point, I coded the data by hand, because I believed that to be the best way to become intimately familiar with nuances and feeling tone of the data. I believe I was able to write a richer description of what I saw and heard by doing this by hand. It was my intention to be as close to the data as possible because my sample of participants was small. The third step was to develop a representation of my findings. This included comparisons, diagrams, figures, and maps. I used vivid detail in reporting quotes, perspectives, metaphors, and analogies. As this dialogue unfolded, it was important to make comparisons and establish relationships to the literature. The final stage was to compose a summary of the findings. This was the recap of the major findings.

### **Analytical Framework**

A conceptual framework used for this study was based on the basic tenet of relational theory first proposed by Jean Baker Miller at the Stone Center at Wellesley College and supported by the work of Carol Gilligan and others. Relational theory is based on the notion that growth and development require a context of connection. I also used the lens of transformational leadership developed by Kenneth Leithwood (1994) compared to the transactional leadership model described by Bass and Avolio (1994).

## **Trustworthiness**

To ensure trustworthiness of my study, I established the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in order to create the necessary rigor and quality of my research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Purposive sampling, as described earlier, is the intentional selection of participants by Creswell (2004) for a study that ensures transferability. The selection of the target principals for participation were purposive on many fronts. This included demographics, location of each principalship was within the boundaries of the metropolitan Wasatch front area, principals were serving with at least one female assistant principal on their administrative team. Ensuring “contextual similarity” (Creswell, 2004, p. 298) “through these parameters will allow others to make ties to their own situation and reality” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

Dependability calls upon “...the researcher to attempt to account for the changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study and changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). I documented the chain of events in the course of change as my perspective and perception changes as the interviews and data collection proceeded. As I observed changes, collected the data, documented, organized, and theorized about the data I worked to ensure external reliability, known as dependability.

Confirmability was achieved through the use of triangulation among data collected from video recordings of interviews, reflective journal responses by the researcher, and field notes kept on observations made at interview sights. Transcription of oral text and field notes further confirmed the researcher’s objectivity.

As recommended by Lincoln and Guba, (1985) a reflexive journal was maintained. This journal included: "(1) the daily schedule and logistics of the study; (2) a personal diary that provided the opportunity for catharsis, for reflection upon what happened in terms of one's own values and interests, and for speculation about growing insights; and (3) a methodological log in which methodological decisions and accompanying rationales are recorded." My reflexive journal served as a means of establishing trustworthiness by making available "the same kind of data about the human instrument as found in the data transcribed from the participants.

### **Limitations**

I am a Caucasian male member of the Mormon Church. I have also been a high school principal for almost 4 years. This is an obvious limitation to this study. I have lived my entire life in the state of Utah and that limited my context to our state only. By gaining access to administrative positions, I was limited to a perspective from the inside looking out. The cultural impact, and influence the Mormon Church may have on gender issues in leadership, may be different in other states or parts of the world. My selection of 5 high school principals was limited to the urban greater metropolitan area near Salt Lake City, Utah. There may be other school leaders male or female from surrounding areas that have developed different perspectives from their lived experience. I was also limited by the number of principals and their geographic location.

Access and time were limitations to this study. The principals that participated in this study were very gracious in granting me full access to themselves and their administrative teams. They were very accommodating by scheduling team meetings on a

single day. However, they were clear that a 1-day visit to complete all research activities was the most time they could spare. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject, and my presence, I honored their requests and chose not to return to the school sites for further observation beyond the single day.

### **Delimitations**

There are many people in Utah that are not Mormon, and there are many school administrators in Utah that are female. For this dissertation, I chose to study high school principals that serve in Wasatch front high schools for a variety of reasons. As the researcher, I am familiar with urban Wasatch front schools because I have experience working in many of these schools and communities. This gives me a strong context to work from. The Wasatch front is also considered to be the central head quarters for the Mormon church. This perception has great influence on the surrounding communities.

### **Conclusion**

The chapters that follow include an aggregated description of the school communities in this study and a full description of the themes that emerged from the data. Each theme is supported by the data and the literature. The final chapter provides an overview of the study, a critique of the methodology, and my personal observations about the findings of this research study.



## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: THE COLLECTIVE STORY

This qualitative study was set in motion to describe and analyze the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that male and female education leaders experience within the context of a predominantly Mormon culture specifically in the state of Utah. The study explores the perceptions and lived experiences of male high school principals along the Wasatch front in the state of Utah that serve on administrative teams consisting of male and female members. The study is based on a premise that the complexity of gender dynamics in leadership in Utah is magnified by the unique impact of the Mormon religion and its' rituals, traditions, and culture. Male and female school leaders must navigate and reconcile with their own professional and personal world as they are acted upon by a culture steeped in patriarchal morays.

#### **Conceptual Framework: Relational Theory**

A conceptual framework used for this study was based on the tenets of relational theory first proposed by Jean Baker Miller at the Stone Center at Wellesley College and supported by the work of Carol Gilligan and others, that growth and development require a context of connection. In her work at the Jean Baker Miller Training Institute, Dr. Judith Jordan describes relational awareness or this connection as a way of clarifying the movement of relationship (Jordan, 2004). This is important in understanding connections, disconnections, and transforming the flow from the direction of disconnection to connection. One premise that framed this study is that gender dynamics among male and female administrators in Utah are transformed by individuals' abilities to navigate the

disconnections of expectations for quality leadership and the expectations of the Mormon ideology about masculinity, femininity, and the relationship between men and women.

The workplace dynamics were examined using Fletcher's (2002) model of two spheres, split by a gendered division of labor. Her model offered a unique perspective of the dichotomy individuals may experience when the spheres are socially constructed as separate and discrete. Fletcher (2002) argued that the spheres are socially constructed as separate and discrete. One sphere is described as occupational with the valued skills having perceived male characteristics to "produce things." The other sphere is described as domestic and the skills valued have perceived female characteristics to "grow people." Separately one sphere not only devalues the other, but having skills in one sphere almost disqualifies you from being good in the other (Fletcher, 2002). Although Mormon theology is prescribed as patriarchal, and only men are allowed to hold the highest church leadership positions, the men who hold these top positions consistently and persistently remind Mormons that relationships between men and women should be viewed as equal partnerships. Fletcher's (2002) dichotomy is relevant because that equal partnership is focused on sustaining the family unit with ultimate authority residing with the male partner, the priesthood holder.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided my study were based on an extensive literature review and Miller's (2008) study of four women administrators from Utah. These questions did not require explicit answers as they provided heuristic framework for the study. They included:

1. What are the gendered experiences of male administrators in Utah working with female administrators on their team in the context of a patriarchal Mormon culture?
2. How do male administrators in Utah conceptualize and understand their own masculinity and its role in shaping their own professional and personal worlds as a high school principal?
3. How do male administrators in a Mormon patriarchal culture negotiate their own position and role with female administrators who are their subordinates or equal?
4. In what way does a dominant religious ideology that narrowly defines women's roles influence a male administrator's approach to gender issues in a public sector organization?

### **The Principals**

Five male principals who work on mixed gender administrative teams were the primary participants in the study. In order to protect their anonymity, the following pseudonyms are used to tell their stories: Alex Dodge, Joe Starr, Larry Snow, John Hall, and Kent Brooks. I spent 8- 10 hours at each school site interacting with respective administrative teams and interviewing the participating principals. The amount of time spent at each site was the preference of the participants and was based on scheduled administrative team meetings, as well as some faculty team meetings. I spent at between 1 -2 hours with each principal conducting the interviews and debriefing the study with them. As the day proceeded at each site, I had full access to shadow the principal or

move in and out of any meetings that might be taking place. As the interviews concluded, each principal had designed time for me to observe different activities taking place in their schools. I spent 2- 3 hours observing team meetings that included secretarial staff, counselors, student trackers, and school resource officers. These meetings were usually less formal as the agenda mostly revolved around school management issues like the calendar and clerical issues. In two schools, the meetings with the counselors involved discussions about at risk students and intervention strategies. Up to 2 hours in each school were spent in observation of administration team meetings that only included the principal and assistant principals. These were formal meetings that involved discussions about personnel, curriculum, instruction, and school management issues. In two schools, I spent 1-hour in each observing teacher collaboration meetings as I shadowed the principal.

The Utah educational community is very small and the individuals and districts can easily be identified, making the presentation and discussion of the data more complex. Because of the sensitive nature of the study, the results and data analysis are presented in themes that emerged from the data rather than individual detailed cases. Also much of the context data is presented as a composite rather than specifically connected to the individual principal. Pseudonyms are used for both the participants and the districts. The sections that follow are based on a thorough analysis that involved comparison and contrast of individuals, but those actual individual comparisons are presented more thematically in order to protect their identity.

## **School Contexts**

The five principals selected for this study all serve in large schools in three different school districts across urban areas in the northern part of Utah. Snow Hills District is one of Utah's largest school districts in terms of student population. There are 7 high schools located in this district. It serves with over 50,000 students who are mostly Caucasian and live in mostly middle to upper socio-economic families. The economy is driven by a variety of sources. Technology, service, higher education and urban development appear to be major providers of employment in the area. The communities in the Snow Hills District have an approximate population of 30,000 residents each, and this area has experienced great change in recent years, as its' Latino population has experienced tremendous growth. Some of the high schools in this district have experienced over a 25% growth of Hispanic/Latino students. The Snow Hills District lies geographically along the Wasatch front, and encompasses mostly suburban communities that surround larger urban areas. Multiple junior highs and elementary schools feed each high school. The high schools in the Snow Hills District traditionally experience high graduation rates above 90 % annually. They have also traditionally met all state and federal achievement levels. The communities are very supportive of their schools and appear to provide the necessary resources for their schools to be successful.

The Mormon religion is very prominent within the conservative Snow Hills District community. Up to 90 % of the population are members of the Mormon Church. To illustrate this, there are three Mormon temples built within a radius of 50 miles from each other to serve the Mormon population. Another example of the Mormon influence on the local educational culture is that the Snow Hills District supports very few school

activities on Mondays as well as none on Sundays. This is in accordance with the Mormon practice of family night on Monday evenings. Mormon tradition holds Monday nights as sacred for families to be together for activities. During the regular school day, students have access to ecclesiastical courses in Mormon seminaries that are located within walking distance to each high school. The majority of the students in each high school enroll in one period of seminary each day. Students are encouraged to take seminary by their local church leaders and parents.

The next two principals serve in the Lakeview School District. The Lakeview district serves a student population of about 14,000. The Lakeview district resides within the city of Lakeview. The city's population is well over 100,000 people. The population is mostly Caucasian with roughly about 15-20% Hispanic residents, and the socio-economic conditions are very diverse in Lakeview, from very wealthy, to about 28% of the population lives below the poverty-line. The community is much more urban than the Snow Hills District. The area is filled with shopping malls, office buildings, and large freeway systems. It really is a city hub for an entire county. The Lakeview economy is mostly based on local and international companies. At one time the city of Lakeview supported a large steel mill that was eventually shutdown because of the economy. This was a drastic hit to the community and state of Utah. Higher education is also a major contributor to the Lakeview economy. The local university is one of the largest privately owned universities in the United States. It is owned by the Mormon Church. The school district maintains two traditional high schools with multiple junior high schools and elementary schools that feed into the high schools. Both schools' student populations are primarily Caucasian as well as substantial Hispanic, and Pacific Islander populations.

The Mormon Church is also very dominant in the Lakeview area as approximately 80 % of the population are members of the Mormon Church. Within the city of Lakeview, the Mormon Church owns one of the largest private universities in the country. The university serves well over 30,000 students. The Church also owns a training center for its' missionaries, as well as a temple for its' members. In Lakeview School District, both high schools sit close to Mormon seminaries for its' students to access during the day like Snow Hills School District.

This study also included administrators from Battle Mountain School District that serves approximately 30,000 students and also lies near the end of the Wasatch front. Battle Mountain District maintains five traditional high schools with multiple junior high schools and elementary schools that feed into the high schools. The district serves a more rural and smaller communities than that of Snow Hills and Lakeview districts. The communities served by Battle Mountain range from 10,000 to 20,000 residents. The demographic make up of these communities is mostly Caucasian with a small but growing Hispanic population. The socio-economic conditions are mostly made up of middle-income families. The communities include mostly middle-income families and the economy is supported primarily by urban development and agriculture. Many residents choose to live in this area and commute to the city. They choose to live in the area for the more quiet laidback life style. This part of the state is a prominent place for fruit growers with a significant percentage of the nation's cherries are grown in this part of Utah. This part of the state is growing. Two of the high schools in the Battle Mountain District have been built in the past 3 years. The district is continuing to bond and look for more options to build schools.

The Mormon population is also dominant in this area with approximately 80% of the residents being members. The Mormon Church recently announced that a new temple would be built in one of the cities within the Battle Mountain School District area. This would add to the other three temples already within 50 miles. The high schools in Battle Mountain also sit next to Mormon seminaries for the students that attend those high schools.

The high schools these principals serve in range from 1200 - 1800 students. The student populations in these schools also span a very wide range in socio-economic status. The school populations are very reflective of the communities they serve. Each school is high performing academically, in the arts, and athletically. Each has signature programs that are well known around the state of Utah. This is a real compliment to each principal, as they are the guiding force in each one of their respective school communities.

The administrative teams for each school were mixed in gender. Two of the schools have two female assistant principals, while the other three have one female assistant principal. The range of leadership experience among these administrative teams is extensive. One of the principals was nearing retirement. Another had just accepted a position in the district office. Another principal had recently opened a new high school in his district. The other two principals were new into their position as principal by less than 2 years. Two of these principals have earned doctorate degrees. All of these principals have extensive experience serving in secondary and elementary positions. An estimate of average leadership years served would be around 15. All are Caucasian ethnicity. Four of the five principals were raised in the state of Utah in a Mormon family culture.



Additionally, many of these principals have gone onto hold leadership positions within the Mormon Church.

Upon visiting each school, it was apparent to me that each principal has a very unique style that is reflected through the physical and social environments of each school. At each school, there seemed to be a strong expectation to maintain a very professional atmosphere. School staff members were very courteous and they all extended very warm hospitality. As I visited each school, I had many opportunities to observe these principals interact with teams of teachers, counselors, and their own administrative teams. The focus in each school was one of collaboration. There were different levels of shared leadership capacity as some principals carried varying responsibilities versus others. One example observed was the principal delegating complete departmental control to his assistant principals. Their responsibilities included teacher evaluation, department supervision, and curriculum guidance. In all schools, principals were very adept at delegation and seeking input from team members to solve problems. Each principal was very approachable and willing to dialogue with me about anything I chose to talk about. My relationship with each of these principals has been developed over years of serving with them in different capacities. The trust level among us is very high.

### **Analysis of Data**

The analysis that follows aggregates the data around themes that lead to informing the findings. The themes include (a) how principals understand their own masculine identity; (b) how male principal experience gender dynamics in the workplace; (c) how men view women; (d) how principals treat women and men in the workplace; (e) how

positions are negotiated in these workplaces; and (f) the perceived influence of the Mormon ideology on the work of these administrative teams.

### **Masculinity**

The five principals that participated in this seemed very comfortable talking about their early childhood experiences with gender. Their body language suggested that this time in their life was more comfortable than other times. Like most of us, the memories of their parents seemed to come rushing back. It appeared by their relaxed appearance that these were some fond times. It was obvious with each principal that parental influence played a substantial role in his or her perceptions of masculinity as a child and into adulthood later and this parental influence emerged many times in the interview process. The data from all participants included a religious component to parental influence. The father's role in the church was prominent as principals suggested their parents were influenced by a higher power.

Four out of the five principals participating in the study identified themselves as members of the Mormon religion and had been raised in Mormon household. Gender in Mormon theology is very important to understand their backgrounds because the church teaches very fundamental roles for men and women. Their experience as youth and how they developed their own perceptions of gender appeared to be more conservative. For example, Principal Brooks stated, "I think the values of the predominant faith here in our community would encourage a mother to be the primary nurturer in the home whenever possible."

According to church doctrine, the woman's fundamental responsibility is to bear and raise children. The "ideal" life situation for an adult woman always included

marriage, several children, and a husband who earned enough money that the woman need not work. Church leaders have not abandoned their traditional ideal of the non-working mother caring fulltime for her family. Only her husband, children, and God can release a woman from her obligations to them. (Iannaccone & Miles, 1990).

Several participants recounted childhood experiences that vividly explained the construction of their masculinity. In fact, the recollections paralleled Connell's (1997) views that masculinity is constructed on notions that male bodies are strong and dominant and female bodies are passive and nurturing. Principal Dodge stated,

The guys were assigned more of the rough and tough kinds of roles like mowing the lawn. The girls would have simple tasks around the house, laundry, vacuuming, jobs that weren't so rigorous or demanding. . . . [My father's] job was to go to work, provide for the family and come home and support. My dad was viewed as the one who would take care of the discipline. . . the LDS Church . . . emphasized that, you know, the man, the male should be the breadwinner in the home, and if at [all] possible, the wife should stay home, be there for the kids.

Principal Starr had similar memories, noting

I learned early there was a difference, from my father. I grew up on a ranch. The boys, from the time we were big enough to hardly get along, we were with dad. The boys were involved with docking lambs, branding calves, and castration of livestock and that sort of thing. The girls were kept away from all of that. They didn't get to be part of that; my dad was very sensitive to that. So I probably

began to learn that women were different and special. My dad was one of the last men that I could remember that would still tip his hat to a lady.

The expressions of masculine identity noted by these interviewees, matches Connell's (1997) view of men who experience the patriarchal dividend by wielding power through displays of prowess. The construction of male identity based on clear differences between men and women leads directly to the notion of the patriarchal priesthood (Quinn, 1994) that empowers men to take leadership positions in the LDS Church. All leadership positions require the priesthood except for women's auxiliary organizations, which still require the approval and oversight by a priesthood holder (Quinn, 1994). One is gendered not only in one's earthly life, but in the afterlife as well (Cornwall, 1994). From my personal experience, LDS women are encouraged by church leaders to give their domestic roles top priority in order to promote the stability of the family (Mauss, 1994). The priesthood delegation creates a culture of patriarchy, which implies father rule over a group of people characterized by shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices (Evans, 1992).

The degree to which those values become embedded in everyday life was highlighted by Principal Snow who stated, "I think on the masculine end, we tend to be a little more strict. We expect a lot out of people. I think it goes back to the value system you have been raised with. We tend to want to keep those values." Principal Brooks concurred,

I learned my dad would go out and do the work, and he would be the bread winner. He would be gone a lot. He was not very involved with the kids

whatsoever. I think he came from the tradition of *I just do that and, the lady takes care of the kids*, and so that was truly where that came from.

When Daly (1985) examined LDS patriarchal teachings, she concluded that women perceived being a mother or a “helpmate” to a patriarch was a place of honor. That perspective from women in the Mormon culture also constructs and sustains masculine identity among Mormon men.

Although much of the data from these principals supports the view that their masculinity is conceptualized and understood through traditional avenues, there were strands of data that suggest a ‘new male leader’ is emerging with a more contemporary conceptualization and understanding of their masculinity. Principal Dodge’s observations about male physiques was a contrast to some of the viewpoints noted above. He said,

It all depends on your approach. I think there are some administrators in our district who have the physique, that male physique, where they are big and tall, they are just viewed as, I mean when they walk into the room, you know that’s the guy in charge. There are others who are male who maybe don’t have the physique who are outstanding administrators.

His view was an example of Connell’s (1997) perspective, that the “traditional male” is not necessarily the reality most men live in. Connell’s research suggests that few men are exemplars of masculinity as combat heroes, sport or film stars and he argues that there are subordinated masculinities, formed at the bottom of the gender hierarchy among men. Although these masculinities appear most often among oppressed groups, the data from

these principals suggests there may be an emerging variation of traditional patriarchal priesthood among Mormon men.

Principal Hall seemed to be very comfortable with a masculine identity that did not necessarily match the patriarchal ideology. He said,

I learned how to get along. I learned how to separate myself out and do my own thing in spite of not being included. You kind of learn to fit in, and you also kind of learn to do your own thing. You know, you have to have association with friends.

He also described alternative experiences with gender dynamics at a young age, noting,

When I went into the military, my first commander was female and my last commander was female. In a professional world . . . I had no problem dealing with women in charge . . . . my first principal when I was a teacher was female and when I became an intern administrator my principal was female, and when I became an assistant principal, my principal was female. So to me it wasn't a big deal. I had worked with women my whole life and it wasn't that big a deal.

Principal Hall's personal background included growing up in a female dominated family; he had six sisters and spent much of his youth learning how to negotiate his own needs and interests in a family where female interests were dominant. He also described a more matriarchal structure in his family, recalling a family joke that his parents had agreed when they got married "that [Mom] would make all the little decisions and Dad would

make all the big decisions and after 50 years, no big decisions had come up.” Most of Principal Hall’s responses represented a more contemporary perspective on relationships between men and women including his primary emphasis on “respect” being a critical piece of an administrative team. . His experiences are one indicator of the importance of a relational model of leadership. According to Fletcher (2001), relational requires a skills such as empathy, mutuality, reciprocity, and a sensitivity to emotional contexts.

### **Gendered Experience**

The principals selected for this study were selected to build on the findings from Miller’s dissertation in (2008) that focused on the experience of high school female principals along the Wasatch front. The intent of my study was to represent the other side of the story. To gain a deeper understanding and grasp of the phenomenon, I also chose principals who work with mixed gender administrative teams. Through my observations, interviews, and field notes, I was able to construct meaning through a process of building a bricolage. In other words, the principals interviewed for this study represented diverse perceptions that, when pieced together like a mosaic, offer a greater understanding of the collective experience of gender in the workplace.

Graves & Powell (2003) suggest that the bulk of evidence regarding sex differences in leader behavior comes from the existence of stereotypical differences. In all types of research, both laboratory experiments and assessment studies on gender stereotypes, findings show that women are higher in interpersonal style and higher in democratic decision making style than men. Men and women do not differ in the task style in any type of study (Graves & Powell, 2003). However, the authors observe that studies that directly measure leader effectiveness, however, rate women as no more or

less effective than men. Additional evidence suggests that situational factors influence whether men or women are more effective as leaders. These factors include the nature of the organizational setting and leader role, the proportions of male leaders and followers, and the managerial level of the position. Three distinct perspectives between male and female leaders have emerged on whether there are basic behavior differences between male and female leaders. When women began to study the background and preparation of men and women leaders, they concluded that men may be better prepared to be managers because of their unique socialization (Hennig, & Jardim, 1977). Men bring to the management setting, a clearer, stronger and more definite understanding of where they see themselves going, what they will have to do, how they will have to act, and what they must take into account if they are to achieve the objectives they have set for themselves. In some of the earliest studies on gender differences among leaders, Hennig and Jardim (1977) highlighted the ways in which boys acquire and develop skills among themselves that eventually give them an advantage over women when they move into the workplace. A mind set learned, acculturated and socialized which gives men an immediate advantage as they move into management positions (Hennig, & Jardim, 1977).

All five principals shared some lived experiences that had help to create their current perceptions of their gendered experiences. The experiences were demonstrated and shared in multiple ways through the interviews and observational data that was collected. By carefully reviewing the data, three themes emerged that inform the principals' gendered experience. How men view women, how men treat women, and how men treat men.



### **How men view women.**

Gender differences make a difference in how people react to each other's behavior in the workplace. These differences represent beliefs held by large populations. As children grow up through adolescence, boys and girls develop different interests, activities, and views of the opposite sex. As they grow older they exhibit considerable differences (Graves & Powell, 2003). This research is important to assist us in understanding the relationship dynamics between school administrators in Utah, especially in mixed gender teams. Lekowitz (1994) further suggests that the constraints of the leader role may minimize the effects of both men's and women's prior socialization on how they behave as leaders. Powerful forces influence the behavior of leaders of both sexes. These include self-selection, organizational selection, organizational socialization, with female and male managers being similarly socialized into proper role behavior early in their careers and rewarded for exhibiting the right kinds of behavior, and organizational structure.

Principal Snow described his gendered experience in terms of leadership gender roles. He expressed a great appreciation for what female administrators do while carrying many responsibilities. In his experience he recognized that female administrators were always trying to prove themselves.

I think it's more taxing on a woman. Generally those that I have worked with have families that are younger and with all of the night time activities and all of the time you are away from home, I have wondered how will they keep up with it. One thing I have noticed about them is a drive to prove themselves. This is

with all women I have worked with that there is this inward drive that they need to provide and they feel like they have got to do it a lot better to prove themselves. Sometimes you would like them to just relax and not feel that drive all the time on competing for every little thing.

His view fits with scholarly observations that women have to battle the engrained expectation of masculine leadership norms in top leadership positions (Blackmore, 1999; Gardiner et al., 2000; Shakeshaft, 1989). Coleman (2005) further explains it is often presumed that the leader will be male, it is not surprising that a large proportion of women in the study think that they, at some time, have had to prove their worth as a woman leader. Perhaps that has something to do with public management and a perceived contemporary masculine template of leadership, one that is concerned with achievement targets, league tables, and being entrepreneurial. Expectations in leadership are high and women feel they have to prove they can do everything.

All of the principals in the study shared experiences and perceptions of women that may be viewed through traditional roles defined by Paechter (1998) who argues that gendered roles mean that women are identified with the home, and the care of small children, and men are identified with the wider working environment. The work and world of men have generally been valued over that of women, so that work identified with women is seen as inferior. Principal Snow stated,

When I was a junior high principal one of my assistant principals I hired was female. I really enjoyed having a relationship because kids come along, especially with female students some have issues that would sooner work with a woman.

Even at the high school level, I have enjoyed having a woman administrator to work on those kinds of things. The women I have worked with have been very bright and so they add a quality to their vision of where education is going, that I might not have.

Three of the younger principals gendered experiences in relation to their views on women were not as defined as the others. When asked to define what male and female leadership characteristics might look like to them, three of the principals almost seemed puzzled. One principal responded by saying, “ I have never thought of it that way.” This perception is supported Shakeshaft, (1989) a person’s gender should make no difference in the world of leadership, however the reality for many is much different. Gender is a cultural term. It describes the characteristics we ascribe to people because of their sex- the ways we believe they behave or the characteristics we believe they possess, based on our cultural expectations of what male and what is female. As far as we can determine from our work and the work of others based on perspectives found in the extant literature, one’s biological identification as male or female has little to do with how people behave and the work they do in schools. In contrast, other principals articulated a more concrete picture, they pointed out their views on men were more “strict” and more “organized.”

Principals Dodge, Hall, and Brooks’ gendered experience may be described by Marzano (2005) notes, effective school leaders establish strong lines of communication with and between teachers and students. This responsibility seems self evident – good communication is a critical feature of any endeavor in which people work in close proximity for a common purpose. The school leader is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders. The school leader must have the willingness to

communicate to individuals inside and outside the school. This behavior is based on the principle of “outreach” (Marzano, 2005). Elmore (2000) recommends that principals should rely more heavily on face to face relationships than on bureaucratic routines.

Principal Dodge stated,

it seems like there are so many variables that go into it. I think whether your male or female, I mean you can be successful either way. It all depends on your approach. I think in the end, it really is the ability of the person or leader to be able to connect and work with the people whom they work with or lead.

Women’s attention to relationships was a focus of Principal Hall’s responses, but he offered a very nuanced view of women’s navigation between the spheres of relationships and tasks, recalling he had worked

with some really strong women who aren’t afraid to just say sorry, you’re not getting the job done and we need to make a change. I don’t think weakness is an issue with women’s leadership, but I do think they often focus on relationships more rather than the traditional power structure. In my life, there has been some reinforcement of the idea that men are more matter of fact and women are a little more emotional about how they make decisions.

Principal Brooks was less aware of gender as a factor in leadership work, stating,

I don’t know if I have ever thought of it as gender specific leadership. I don’t think I have ever differentiated that before as a male style of leadership versus a female style of leadership. Again, I have never thought of feminine as a style of

leadership. I often think that women leaders are questioned more than men. I don't know if I can even say this, but a female leader maybe more thoughtful on how people will perceive what they do, because I think they might be watched a little closer by other women especially. I don't think other men watch, but I think women watch.

Today we find ourselves in a period of change. The workplace and its rewards may not be equally distributed between the sexes, enough change has occurred to make traditional gender roles no longer the correct guideline for workplace behavior. However, new standards have not entirely replaced the old standards. Whether they know consciously them? This question is especially significant in the state of Utah considering the impact the culture has on the workplace. One of the few advantages of adhering to traditional gender roles was that men and women knew how they were expected to treat each other. That advantage is gone. In replacement, women and men need to understand each other better in workplace roles (Graves & Powell, 2003).

Although gender roles continue to evolve to the extent that theology evolves and social entities challenge assumption, researchers may not be keeping up (Miller, 2008). Miller (2008) describes teacher's mythology about the nurturing side of teaching best played out by women, and the presiding side of leading, best played out by men.

After analyzing the data in my study, I found that the Mormon patriarchal culture continues to have a strong influence on the gender dynamics that play out among school administrative teams. All five principals that participated in the study indicated in their perception that the predominant Mormon culture in Utah had an influence on the

educational movement of male and females. This included references to leadership roles, the workplace, and educational opportunities.

Principal Dodge was very aware of the influence of the Mormon culture on his own family, noting

it might say that the value on women in the work force is not where it should be. I look at my sisters. I have two sisters. One got her bachelor's degree and then became a mom and end of story. The other one didn't get her bachelor's degree and became a mom. My wife taught for 5 year and has now been in the house for many years. So I think a lot of it's on our culture and the predominant LDS culture.

Principal Starr concurred with his colleague, but also represented the conflict of values some Utah principals face when he said,

It's partially because of the culture in Utah, the LDS culture where, you know, our mindset is that women are, their place is in the home primarily, and I don't think that statistic is totally accurate. I mean, I support the stand of my religion and church I belong to, but I think women make good administrators, and I think there is a place in the workplace where women do an excellent job.

As the data were examined for the principal's perspectives of leadership, all five principals validated the Fletcher's separate and distinct spheres. The responses included descriptions of males as aggressive, organizers, "I run everything attitude," the "breadwinner," and military type person. Their perceptions of female leadership characteristics included: nurturer, sensitive, emotional, bright, and "something to prove

attitude.” All five principals indicated that Mormon culture, LDS values, Utah culture, and or predominant faith had an influence or impact on their perceptions of gender dynamics in the workplace, education field, and school leadership. This data emerged through questions about their own masculinity. The data indicates that while the principals recognize the impact of external cultural forces, there is a strong belief that leadership is evolving and that one can ascend to leadership roles based on ability and skills.

### **How men treat women & other men.**

Relationships are critical to the effectiveness of administrative teams. Treatment by both sexes towards each other in workplace includes aggression, altruism, influenceability, and nonverbal communication (Howard & Hollander, 1997). In the view of these researchers, individual perspectives along the lines of status and group pressure may impact the way one person treats another. Responses from the principals interviewed for this study show a range of treatment from relationships influenced by very traditional and ideologically driven views of gender and status, to relationships that were more in line with current perspectives of flattened hierarchies and shared leadership, with some individuals who expressed conflicted notions that suggested views of gender and status that were in flux.

For example, one principal did not see himself as chauvinistic as his father was, but clearly based his treatment of his female administrative colleague on the fact that she was “different” and needed “to be treated differently”. He stated, “ I would never approach or deal with a female assistant principal the way I would deal with a male”. Another talked about the importance of “being respectful of girls”. Principal Starr

perceived treatment of men and women as distinct arenas that were separate as well as an important factor in the success of the organization. He noted,

If I had a male assistant principal, and I felt there was something that needed to be done and we had a disagreement, you shut the door and no holds barred and you just went at it until you resolved the matter, and once it was resolved it was put aside and you moved on. With a female member of my staff, I would never be that aggressive in approaching the subject. I would couch it in diplomatic terms to present the problem, but never in an accusatory way, where I might with a guy. With men you just seem to be able to do that and put it aside and move on.

His perspective is not uncommon when women come into a male dominated system where women may be valued, but a women's knowledge is not valued. The place can be foreign where the rules are covert and the values and standards different from what many women hold. Some female leaders find it difficult to experience that system effectively (Gossetti & Rusch, 1995). Therefore, although a woman principal might have great personal intuitive ability to lead, if the institution does not recognize her authority, then the gendered perception hampers her ability to negotiate community acceptance and support (Miller, 2008).

In contrast, another principal discussed the importance of diversity on his team. He welcomed different perspectives, and he stated, "if the emperor is naked, I want to know." Two of the younger principals' responses to questions related to gender dynamics suggested they treated their female administrators as part of a team, with little



distinction related to gender or status. Principal Brooks, described his experience as “I don’t try and teach or work with one of my female assistants any different than a male assistant. To me it’s not any difference if they are male versus female. We visit together and learn together, and grow together.” Principal Dodge stated, “we’re here together to problem solve and work things through.”

Principal Snow shared this perception of treatment as a separate arena, although from a different angle. The treatment of women on his leadership team was filtered through a lens of respect which was connected to women’s roles being less task oriented and more transformative. He stated, “It’s been kind of exciting to see women on the high school end just to exchange ideas with and have the kind of relationship to where you get, like I said, better visual picture of what education has to offer.” Carly, Eagly, Anderson, & Blanchard (1982) suggest that with respect to treatment and communication between mixed gender teams, differences are in task and social behaviors. One behavior contributes strictly to the group’s task, and the other maintains the morale and interpersonal relations among team members.

## **Position Negotiation**

All five principals that participated in the study were articulate about position negotiation and their interactions between themselves and their assistant principals. The interview questions were especially helpful in gathering the principals' grasp on position status and how they negotiate with their team members. Each principal has their own strengths and challenges as they negotiated the tasks and roles of their team members. Each team demonstrated their use of their own leadership inventories that they access to foster success. The principal's talked about a leadership philosophy that was galvanized by lived experiences, mostly coming up through the ranks of teacher, assistant principal, and then principal. Principals discussed the guidance of a mentor that helped them shape their current skill set. They all referenced an experience of apprenticeship at some point in their career. A shared leadership cabinet was viewed as an important administrative tool to inform their practice, and also the value of strong leadership capacity through apprenticeship. How each principal came to their own philosophy appeared to depend greatly on the deep social roots they had been grounded in. Their value systems transferred from childhood into their adult personal and professional lives. For most of the principals these deep roots began in Mormon traditions and values. Those values and separations of the roles of men and women continue to inform the practice in Utah culture (Wheatley, 1992). Words and phrases that emerged in the data that support this value system were, loyalty, respect, discipline, and religious faith.

Consistent with gender in social status and roles, team members evaluated men's task contributions more positively than women's contributions. Some research suggests

women may even devalue their own performance. Moreover team members use a higher standard to judge women (Carli, Eagy, Anderson, & Blanchard, 1982).

One principal shared a traditional view of his team and their responsibilities that would support the above literature. His views were in alignment with how he was socialized as a child.

I feel like my role as principal is to be an example of leadership, to demonstrate through my leadership style, how to organize a meeting, how to deal with administrative matters, how I deal with teachers, and I do a lot of that with the way I treat them, the way they see me treat others. I believe in giving them responsibility, making sure they understand what that responsibility is and what I expect them to do, whether its oversee the building, the master schedule, or whether its dealing with the calendar, or athletics, and then I try to step back and get out of their way. I try to demonstrate to them support and loyalty. I don't micromanage what they do.

Each principal also discussed the importance of teamwork, participatory leadership, and collaboration as factors needed for successful administrative teams. These words and phrases also emerged as invariant. It suggests that principals working in an environment dominated by a certain religious culture, climate, and or ideology must reconcile with the working environment, but also construct their own leadership philosophy and practices that may run counter at some levels with their own value and belief systems.

Principal Dodge stated, “I’m the principal, I have two female assistants and I don’t see myself as any better than they are. I see it, as, hey, we are an administrative team to oversee the needs of 1450 students.” He went to discuss teams in his school. He was excited to show me his teacher teams working. As we walked down the halls from one department meeting to another, he shared with me his passion and conviction for ensuring a collaborative environment. He reflected on his need to evaluate his own practice and trouble shoot the gaps he might have as a leader.

I want people who can work as a team, but everybody does that differently. What I try to do is model and mentor respectful, courtesy, collaborative leadership, and even though we can’t do everyone’s plan every time, that at least we value their input and we can something good from their ideas. I try to include ideas from others as much as I possibly can in moving forward as a group. I don’t have control over how other people act, but what I really have control over is I can help them be more collaborative, more trusting, participatory in their leadership.

As I observed Principal Dodge work with his administrative team, it was evident their focus as a team was on the success of students. I observed meetings in regards to personnel, instruction, curriculum, and management issues. The atmosphere in these meetings was very collaborative. Team members were at ease in sharing their position and feelings about the topic. Principal Dodge was careful to listen and validate each member’s input. They sat relaxed but attentive, their faces were with smiles regardless of the business at hand. There appeared to be great team chemistry. In his view he had

“two assistants who are amazing administrators.” He also spoke about his value for mentoring,

My main focus has always been helping, helping not only my assistants, but the school understand the importance of mission, vision, and values. A lot of mentoring that happens with my assistants happens just in our day to day contact, whether its leadership meetings, personal conversations, or whether it’s them observing how I interact, and how I do things.

That same relationship seemed to exist in Principal Brook’s team. He described “a lot of just collaborative discussion where we talk about things we are doing, and we talk about the issues. We just try and figure out together the best way of doing things. We visit together, and learn together, and grow together.” I observed principal Brooks facilitate a meeting for at risk students that included not only administration but counselors, the school resource officer, student trackers, and other agencies. This was a massive collaborative effort to diagnose and prescribe interventions for at risk students. The discussions were very focused and effective. The atmosphere was very collegial. The team members effectively shared the responsibility with in their realm of influence. I did not see or hear any combative gestures or words. Team members set aside their egos to assist in the cause. Principal Brooks elaborated,

We all willingly accept different assignments and different opportunities and we talk together about why we want to do those things and how they help and then we get together and bounce ideas back and forth from each other, what will work, what’s helping, and you know this isn’t going very well what do we need to

look at. We're together, we are pretty smart, but when we are all alone, we have pretty big lack in areas.

Mentoring was also important to Principal Hall who described his

mentoring style [as] very open door, very relationship based, building relationships of trust and encouraging them when they want to give input. I strongly encourage that personal relationship. I try to help them see ways that they can pursue their goals.

The three principals described above can be articulated through the work of Fletcher (2002) who argues that integration requires that one relax the separation of the two spheres creating "images of excellence" underlying the spheres. Improvement is made by connection. Fletcher (2002) suggests we go even further by describing this connection using "simultaneity" theory (Holvino, 2001; Proudford, 2003; Foldy, 2002). Simultaneity refers to the fact that multiple threads define our social identity. They interact and are lived simultaneously as we respond to our environment and social conditions around us (Fletcher, 2002). Principal Snow exemplified this integration when he described his administrative group.

We are all part of a team. I have worked really hard in this school to put together a staff that makes everybody feel welcome, and cared about. I think that permeates through the whole organization. You ought to have the opportunity to try things and find out what works and what doesn't work. We are all constantly learning.

Position negotiation among mixed gender leadership teams is a complex series of verbal and non-verbal communications. Status and social behaviors by men and women are constructed through many experiences dating back to their early childhood. These factors must all be carefully weighed when examining leadership teams. The ideal team is described through researchers Regan & Brooks (1995) as they suggest there is a cause for hope through the combined efforts of women and men coming sometimes separately, sometimes together, to an understanding. Symbolically this effort is depicted as a double helix representing balance, different facets of life, choice, collaboration, and human bonds. Three of the principals noted above in the study demonstrated a high capability to sustain the Regan's double helix model.

### **Mormon Ideology**

The state of Utah is largely influenced by the Mormon religion across all aspects of life. The church's sphere of influence is undeniable and is moving forward with great momentum. For this study, it is important to understand the culture in Utah and its' relationship to school leadership, specifically the roles of school leaders. Since Mormon theology is so significant in the development of gender roles, it is wise to examine the leadership roles of men and women within the system. The principals in this study were asked to reflect on their own perceptions of the cultural impact the Mormon Church has not only on their own practice, but their respective school communities, districts, and the state's public sector as a whole.

Principal Dodge stated, “mostly there’s an awareness that you know, even though we’re in an LDS predominantly community we still have a good percentage of our students who are non-LDS. So you got to look at both sides.” Principal Brooks offered,

within our district, I know a lot of the leadership have also been leaders in their church, I would say they make better leaders. Certainly we’re all human and so just because you’re serving in a leadership capacity at church doesn’t mean your perfect example or perfect follower of Christianity, but the teachings there should help us look towards working with individuals and caring for individuals, and trying to build individuals to be the best they can be.

To many Mormons, gender is theologically important. D. Michael Quinn (1994) called it “patriarchal priesthood” and indicated that it evolved into the present structure. The Priesthood empowers men to take leadership positions in the LDS Church. All leadership positions require the priesthood except for women’s auxiliary organizations, which still require the approval and oversight by a priesthood holder (Quinn, 1994). One is gendered not only in one’s earthly life, but in the afterlife as well (Cornwall, 1994). Without the power of the priesthood, women do not have ultimate authority in the practice of religion, community, or in social networks. Although religion is only part of the political and social environment in Utah, the power of the LDS Church appears in political ideology that informs societal structure within the state.

Principal Starr exemplified the dilemma Utah school leaders can face when he said, “I’m sure that our religion affects the way we do business in the state of Utah, but sometimes I think we set it aside.” As the discussion went further, he explained the



impact the Mormon culture has on Utah's schools, observing, "it's not our role to liberate these children. That's the parent's role, and to a certain extent we can stimulate thinking and create the ability to question and challenge, but you have to be careful with how far you go with that."

In contrast to Principal Starr, Principal Hall's perception separated from the traditional perspective. He noted that none of his team was from Utah, nor was he from Utah, stating,

First of all, I don't think most people in Utah or most people in the United States understand our system of government. I think one of the biggest problems we have in Utah is the idea that we support our leaders without question. We raise our hand, we support them, no matter what they do and we don't criticize our leaders, period. I think it's why it becomes the way it is in Utah. I think as far as leadership in our state goes, the biggest problems we have are when people believe they're the only one who can possibly be right and they surround themselves with similar voices and they don't listen to anyone else. We've got a lot of naked emperors running around.

Marilyn Warenski (1978), a feminist historian argued that the Mormon culture may be a patriarchal microcosm in which the history of women is one of subtle subversion. She described a unique religious culture, but found little difference for women in the LDS faith and other Christian religions or ways of being that deny women the same opportunities as men. Warenski (1978) that religion was a key part political, economic, and social life of the Mormon community. Miller (2008) describes God's

power in LDS theology that it directs all major ways of being, it is reasonable to assume that schools embody some religious overtones, power, and authority that men have at home. Although this has not been researched specifically, it follows the theoretical tenants of the “ol’ boy network” defined by several researchers of women in educational leadership (Shakeshaft, 1989; Gardiner et al. 2000).

Principal Snow described the Mormon cultural impact on his school, noting

you try and hold very many activities on a Monday night, which is family night for the LDS Church, you’re going to hear about it. You’ll hear it from the people in the community first and then from people with in the district. So you’re very much under the eye of the community on what their value system is.

On a larger scale he described “the LDS Church [as] not there stating to the legislature what to do, but the legislature is very aware of what their value system is and the things they would like, and that’s the direction that they tend to go.”

Mormon ideology spills over into so many ways. There always seems to be as many perspectives on the culture in Utah as there are people. The predominant religious culture is the constant, and the people are the variables. As time moves on, the people of Utah accept, embrace, and even challenge the cultural establishment as they know and perceive it. History has shown that the pioneers who settled the Utah territory were a strong willed bunch willing to overcome all challenges to their way of life. There are challenges in front of their descendants today that are just as substantial. It will be their will that determines our success or failure.

## Summary

Four themes emerged from the data, that became substantial pieces to possible answers to the research questions. These themes emerged through the process of horizontalizing the data through coding every horizon or statement relevant to the topic and question as having equal value. Invariant constituents are labeled into core themes of the experience. There is a final validation check by comparing the invariant constituents against the complete record for each participant. From each individual textural description, a composite of meanings and essence of the experience emerge as a representation of the phenomenon. (Moustakis, 1994). Those themes were gendered experience, masculinity, position negotiation, and Mormon ideology. From these dimensions, I described the principals' collective thematic story. In the final section, I described the essential themes and meanings of their combined experience to paint a landscape that inspires an understanding and meaning.

I focused my interviews and site experience on the gendered experiences of each principal during their younger years, their perceptions of masculine and feminine leadership roles, their leadership practices, and the impact of the Mormon culture on their personal and professional lives. The results of this study are interpreted and analyzed through the relational theory model.

These principals are all very successful and respected among their peers. They offered an in depth view into some of their very personal feelings and attitudes. Each principal gave answers that were articulate and well thought out. Often times the answer to a question became a series of stories. Other times, the principals would answer with direct comments. Most often, the principals were reflective and well prepared to convey

their thoughts. Jordan (2004) states the importance of teasing out what comes from the past and what comes from the present. Many times individuals may be impacted by old patterns or images lead to distortion or relational images that inevitably lead to un-clarity in their current interactions.

The lived experiences of the principals in this study provide extraordinary insights into the arena of school leadership within the state of Utah which has not been fully explored. Their collective perceptions and experiences can become a major benefit to those in the future that choose to pursue this area and further the dialogue for people that are aspiring to be administrators in Utah as well as those already serving. The data discovered many questions as it answered many. The principals in this study proved to be very dynamic individuals. The culture in Utah may suggest that males in school leadership have an advantage over their female counterparts, however the same culture creates problems within the very spectrum of male leaders that serve.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The educational leadership culture in the state of Utah provides a unique opportunity to examine the issues of gender and access to power and privilege in a culture highly influenced by a religious ideology that strictly defines gender relations. . Since I began this study, it has become a passionate journey for me to seek more knowledge and understanding of the unique leadership framework that I live and work in everyday. Every school leader that I discuss my study with instantly becomes interested and curious as to what this all means. Because there has been little research on gender dynamics among educational leaders in the state of Utah, this study offers new insights that may inform the discourse on gender relations. In fact, the only study that specifically addressed this topic was focused on women's perspectives (Miller, 2008). Men and women in Utah, who aspire to be school leaders, face an unwritten set of cultural norms and morays that have a significant role in just about all aspects of their personal and professional lives. My study focused on the perspectives of male principals in order to expand the understandings of gender dynamics in ways that may support the personal and professional growth of school leaders in Utah's unique educational cultural environment.

#### **Summary of Study**

The intent of this research evolved over time as my interests and purpose shifted. In the beginning, my intent was to study the under-representation of female high school principals in Utah and the cultural impact of the Mormon Church on school leadership. As I began to read the literature and discuss gender dynamics and leadership with faculty advisors, I realized that there was another side to this story. Being a male school leader

and a member of the Mormon Church in Utah, I experienced many of the complex choices that influence the practices of public school leaders. This brought me to my current line of thinking. After locating a key study of the experiences of women administrators in Utah (Miller, 2009), I decided to investigate the other side of the story, positing that the masculine side to this story might be even more complex and difficult to understand. Male educational leaders in Utah, no matter what their religious affiliations, face an unwritten expectation to uphold the values and practices of the dominant Mormon culture. One of those values grants priesthood power and privilege solely for men. Therefore it seemed important to examine how male principals in Utah perceive gender relations on administrative teams, particularly when roles for men and women are defined by religious ideology. The original purpose to my study remained the same: to explore the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that male and female education leaders experience with in the context of a predominantly Mormon culture specifically in the state of Utah.

As I researched deeper, I found constructs and frameworks that helped to unpack these leadership issues and leadership dynamics in the state of Utah. The goal of my research was to use this inquiry to locate factors that would support a more effective leadership model for both men and women that could function in the context of a culture dominated by a religious ideology. The underpinnings of this study have been developed through the framework of relational theory, relational leadership, and masculine identity. I have relied heavily the work of Joyce Fletcher (2002), Jean Baker Miller (2004), Judith Jordan (2004), and R.W. Connell (2000).

My approach to the design of the study was informed by the constructivist

approach articulated by Charmaz (1990, 2000). Charmaz focuses on the meanings ascribed by participants, probing more for views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals, rather than gathering facts and describing acts. A constructivist study also highlights the beliefs and values of the researcher and eschews predetermined categories, such as those found in axial coding. The narrative is written to be more explanatory, more discursive, and more probing of assumptions and meanings for individuals in the study.

I chose qualitative research for this study because there is very little academic research of the impact of the Mormon culture on the male and female educational leadership experience in the state of Utah this approach is highly recommended to document understudied phenomenon. Qualitative research also explores a human or social problem in a natural setting where the researcher collects data and interprets individual experiences inductively by focusing on participant perspectives and meaning (Creswell, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). It is “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of people” and is conducted by researchers who “are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 2). Qualitative methods were most appropriate for exploring emergent practices that suggest a more relational leadership model. This process of investigation was messy and complex at best, necessitating a plan of study that was descriptive and exploratory.

In keeping with my constructivist beliefs, phenomenology guided data collection and analysis. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research relies on

participants to identify the “essence” of human experience concerning a phenomenon. Understanding the “lived experiences” marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In the process, the researcher “brackets” his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993). The fact that my own experiences as a school administrator and a practicing Mormon were key to the development of this inquiry, phenomenology was the most credible framework for a study that intended to expand understandings of gender identity and gender dynamics among Utah’s educational leaders.

The primary participants in this study were five male principals from large high schools across the urban Wasatch front in Utah and Salt Lake Counties. The schools they serve in ranged in size from 1200 students to 1800 students and were located in three different districts. The schools in each district were similar in size, student demographics, and community contexts. Each participating principal also had females serving as assistant principals on their administrative teams. When contacted, all five men agreed to participate in all aspects of the study. Following Marshall and Rossman’s (1999) recommendations, I used multiple forms of data collection, including, videoed interviews, direct observations, and document analysis to document and analyze the perceptions and lived experiences of the principals in relation to power, gender, relational leadership, and the Mormon culture.

To create trustworthiness and transferability in my study, I aligned my research design with Miller’s (2008) study of women administrators in Utah. I began with Miller’s



interview protocol and used a three-pronged approach to modify the questions for male interviewees (Seidman, 1998). The first stage focused on background questions in relation to their childhood and socialization, the second focused on career questions in relation to their perspective on their own personal careers, and the third joined these two narratives looking more globally at their administrative practices in relation to their overall perspective of their professional practice (see Appendix D). In keeping with phenomenological traditions, I also wrote a full description (epoch) of my own experience in order to gain clarity of my own preconceived notions.

I piloted the interview protocol with a male school administrator and found that reordering the questions created a better flow and segue from one set of questions to another. During the pilot interview, the participant would pause and ask for clarification, providing me with some red flags for question that were not worded clearly. Smith (1999) states that pilot studies have great use in data collection in foreshadowing research problems and questions, in highlighting gaps and wastage in data collection, and considering broader highly significant issues such as validity, ethics, representation, and researcher health and safety. A key factor in this pilot interview was the personal relationship between myself and the interviewee; a sense of trust between the researcher and interviewee turned out to be a key factor in how the study went forward.

All data were gathered in site visits to each school where I interacted with and observed the respective administrative teams throughout a full day. I focused my videoed interviews and site experience on the gendered experiences of each principal during their early years, their personal understandings of male identity, their perceptions of masculine and feminine leadership roles, their leadership practices, and the impact of the Mormon

culture on their personal and professional lives. Once the videoed interviews were transcribed, I analyzed all data using relational theory constructs. The data provided clear evidence of Fletcher's (2002) gendered divisions of labor, particularly when principals described their childhood experiences with gender. Perhaps the most prominent examples of the two spheres were a childhood recollection that "guys were assigned more of the rough and tough kinds of roles like mowing the lawn. The girls would have simple tasks around the house, laundry, vacuuming, jobs that weren't so rigorous or demanding." that then translated into professional actions that resulted in gendered divisions of interactions with administrative team members. That division ranged from seeing women as an asset because "female students some have issues that would sooner work with a woman" to overtly differentiating between aggression (male) and diplomacy (female) when solving problems with members of the administrative team. Fletcher's (2002) notion that one sphere not only devalues the other, but having skills in one sphere disqualify one from being good in the other, was particularly useful for unpacking the influence of the Mormon ideology on male administrators' view and treatment of women in the workplace. In actuality, Fletcher's theory revealed new complexities in the navigation of gender dynamics in these particular contexts.

All data were reported in ways that gave maximum protection to the identities of each site and principal who participated in the study. Instead of providing a fully detailed individual report of each case, the findings were reported thematically. A rich description of the physical, social, and emotional settings is appropriate to better understand the participants.

## **Critique of Methodology**

Because the nature of this study, I was really anxious to explore my research questions by executing my methodology. After completing my final interview and observation, I realized that I had probably reached a fair level of transferability from Miller's dissertation, but many unanswered questions also emerged as I examined the data. For example, as I compared and contrasted Miller's findings among women administrators to the findings among my participants, there was a marked difference in the ease with which our interviewees would discuss gender and gender dynamics. There were many successes along this journey as well that made this entire experience one that will hopefully be of use for current and future school administrators.

I found the greatest strength in the study's methodology by returning to my constructivist roots. Charmaz (1990, 2000) focus on the meanings informed by views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals coupled with the beliefs and values of the researcher supported a much richer interpretation of the data. My world is defined through creating meaning that is abstract. Observing relationships between humans and their world is a messy proposition at best. This is right where I want to be. As I did my observations and interviews, I thought many times that this is research I could do for a living. Every time I would scratch notes in my reflexive journal, it was almost like a football coach drawing up new plays. The connections between the literature and the research continued to push my thinking to a frenzy about more questions, more connections, and more possibilities. Maybe it only mattered to me, but for a few moments in time, I think I found a small piece of learning utopia. For me, the methodology was really about creating a venue for information to flow freely across

different channels. As I created my taxonomies, theory and practice began to emerge with clear association. The more I learned the more questions would surface. It was almost like craving more of your favorite food.

The strength in the study's methodology is only as good as the researcher's ability to connect to their participants. This relationship is almost a must if the researcher has intentions to find real meaning and value in their study. The fact that I had previous relationships with all of these school and principals was a key factor in this study. Many of the principals, assistant principals, and staff are people I have worked with in my previous positions. This allowed me access to meetings and conversations, because there was an established level of trust. The observation piece to my research was somewhat awkward. Each principal was fully aware of my intent as I sat through different meetings with their team, but the assistant principals and staff were not as aware. Although all present were made aware that I was in the meeting and at their school as part of my dissertation process, I was not sure they had been informed of the actual topic I was researching.

Protecting the participating principal's anonymity was probably the single greatest challenge in the study's methodology. Because the culture in Utah is very sensitive to gender issues, it was a challenge to find a way to report the findings that maintained the integrity of the research process and yet was considerate to the reader' as well the participants in the study. The research in this area specific to the state of Utah is also very limited. This made it difficult to protect their identities as well.

A major factor in gaining access to the data from this study was predicated largely on the level of trust I had established with each participating principal. This relationship

had been forged over many years of working with each principal in different capacities and associations. To maintain their trust, protecting their identities was paramount. Fontana and Frey (2005) suggest that trust is a key element in the interview process which includes assessing the setting and establishing trust.

A final technical issue that arose was the lack of professional video transcription services. I found many services that were willing to transcribe the interviews as long as they were voice only. I found only one that was willing to transcribe video. This became an expensive addition to the project.

### **Summary of Findings and Understandings**

Combined with my review of the literature and research, there were four research questions that guided the research and the findings reported in this section. These questions were more heuristic and did not require explicit answers. I used the following four questions to guide the summary of my findings.

#### **Research Question I: What are the gendered experiences of male administrators in Utah working with female administrators on their team in the context of a patriarchal Mormon culture?**

Social role theory suggests that men and women's behavior is different on mixed gender teams and the way they are evaluated is related to their social roles (Graves & Powell, 2003). Their social roles often reflect gender stereotypes as they are assigned tasks that are expressive of male and female characteristics. Consequently, women on teams may be expected to engage in more subordinate behavior, while the men may be expected to express more dominant behavior (Graves & Powell, 2003).

Of course, Graves and Powell (2003) also assert that gender differences do not occur universally and may depend on overall characteristics of team members and the

nature of their task. If the task is not clearly associated with men or women's stereotypes, team members' perceptions of the relative status and expertise of males and females often is based on societal beliefs concerning the status of two sexes. In Utah, the dominant Mormon culture exercises a high degree of influence on individual values and actions, leading to stereotypical actions and role definitions that are informed more by a theological frame than a societal frame. This lens provides a helpful filter in understanding the gendered leadership dynamics that take place in Utah schools.

The dominant culture surrounding the principals and their administrative teams was a common factor with all five participants. The influence of the dominant culture emerged in the principal interviews as they discussed their value systems and practice. At the same time, each principal had constructed their own meaning of that influence and how it might affect their practice. Each principal displayed their own level of fidelity to their internal value systems and that fidelity was clearly in flux for some of the younger principals. Three of the five principals shared their will and desire to make their adult relationships with their wives and assistant principals a pure collaborative team. This meant a shared effort at home and at school that was equal. These principals often referred to their administration as a team, inclusionary, and participatory. I observed female assistant principals participate in meetings regarding curriculum, personnel, and management. They acted as equal players and their input was valued, which correlated with the importance of respect for women espoused by their male school leaders. In the Mormon ideology, respect has always been a core value for relations between men and women; however, the more current and contemporary perspective among Mormon Church leaders frames that relationship as a shared stewardship. The principals who

described their interactions and working relationship with women administrators and inclusive and participatory reflected this more contemporary perspective. In many ways this cultural shift in Mormon ideology is more in line with the literature related to transformational leadership. The concept of shared stewardship appeared in their professional values and actions that transcended their own self-interests for the better of the entire organization. Their administrative team meetings were designed around principle-based discussions, and always with a single eye towards student achievement. Their conversations focused on instructional practices, viable curriculum, leadership capacity, and markers of effective schools. In this context, shared stewardship is similar to Fletcher's (2001) assertion that relational practice is intentional action carried out with the belief that working this way is better for the project and more effective in getting the job done. There was less discussion of management issues like buildings, grounds, calendars, and schedules. Leadership roles in these discussions did not appear to be associated with gender stereotypes. There was actually very little differentiation between the principal role and assistant principal role. In summary, gendered experiences of the participating principals may be best explained through a complicated process of negotiation, navigation, and reconciliation.

**Research Question 2: How do male administrators in Utah conceptualize and understand their own masculinity and its role in shaping their own professional and personal world as a high school principal?**

The principals that participated in the study understand and conceptualize their own masculinity through childhood and adulthood experiences in a social context. They formed their own assumptions, conclusions, and values through socialization at home and with their peers. I learned the possible answers to this question by exploring each

principal's gendered background as they shared their stories about their interactions with the opposite sex. Much of their context was formed as children with siblings and friends. There was mention of learning about gender in junior and high school. The principals all shared experiences with their mixed administrative teams. All principals shared the common theme of respect. They had learned from their fathers at a young age to respect the female gender. What this looks like exactly is spread across a spectrum. In the leadership arena, respecting colleagues meant that you might differentiate responsibilities based on gender. Connell (2000) asserts masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structure prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in any given social setting. The responses from these school leaders ranged from a simple awareness level of the Mormon cultural values to their administrative decisions being influenced by their personal Mormon beliefs and values. Three of the five principals offered information that they are current members of the Mormon faith and two of the principals indicated that they had served in leadership positions within the church.

To many Mormons, gender is theologically important. One is gendered not only in one's earthly life, but in the afterlife as well (Cornwall, 1994). This perspective has been conceptualized as hegemonic masculinity, which is a configuration of gender practice that embodies the dominant position of men and subordination of women (Connell, 1995). Three of the five principals reflected on their childhood days and the development of their perceptions about female roles and male roles in ways that matched Connell's concepts. These principals identified masculinity markers that were common in Mormon ideology such as, dad is the "breadwinner," and mom is the nurturer and the one



who stays home to take care of the kids. These principals learned early on that boys were to be respectful and honor the women in their lives, but they also learned that gender identity for boys was very different from identity for girls. Those lessons also included a difference in the value for male identity. The themes that emerged were traditional but also very consistent with Mormon theology and roles assigned to males and roles assigned to females.

Although the embedded value perspectives of the Mormon Church were visible in the data, responses from the participants in this study are also indicative of the shift in societal values related to gender relations in the last 40 years. Principals who began their careers in the historically male-dominated profession, plus valued the traditions of the Mormon ideology, tended to sustain views of women that are in line with those embedded traditions—both societal and religious. Principals who entered the profession at a time when societal views of women's access and talent were based more on equality, tended to view and treat women in ways that are more in line with current societal standards. At the same time, it is clear that the younger professionals struggle with the dichotomies between the societal and religious standards, but professional they seem to make conscious choices to adhere to societal standards.

**Research Question 3: How do male administrators in a Mormon patriarchal culture negotiate their own position and role with female administrators who are their subordinates or equal?**

Each principal discussed the importance of teamwork, participatory leadership, and collaboration as factors needed for successful administrative teams. Their words and phrases came across as deeply embedded values, whether specifically connected to their

religious background or not. On one hand their responses suggest that principals working in an environment dominated by a certain religious culture, climate, and or ideology must reconcile with the working environment, but also construct their own leadership philosophy and practices in ways that may run counter at some levels with their own value and belief systems.

The conversation about gender equality is especially prominent in the state of Utah because of the predominant patriarchal theology, which has established gender as an interlocking structure of Mormon life. Yet, as societal standards have changed, those Mormon ideologies have shifted or modernized to accommodate its members. For example, in 1978, as the Civil Rights movement took hold, African American males were finally allowed to hold the priesthood. Today, as a member of the Mormon Church, I have frequently heard church leaders discuss the importance of equality between men and women, especially between a husband and wife. This concept of equally shared stewardship of the family by men and women is relatively contemporary in the Mormon culture and in many ways, a position comparable to shared and participatory leadership in schools. At the same time, the value for separation of the roles of men and women continue to inform the practice in Utah culture (Wheatley, 1992) because, the Mormon ideology still maintains that, in the event a final choice, the decision falls to the father as the male priesthood holder. If the father abuses his priesthood authority and is not worthy of the priesthood, then he has no authority over his family.

The principals in this study are heavily influenced by the modern notion of equal partnership or shared stewardship. A principal's decision to act on this notion and how far they push the envelope depends on many factors, but the data suggest that age and

generational frames, socialization as a child at home and school, and professional contact with mentors were influential factors in the role structures of administrative teams.

The sense of shared stewardship among all members of the administrative teams was less visible in the data. When Miller examined the impact of the LDS religion on women high school principals she concluded that women were successful because they understand and accept the LDS influence over public schools, and adherence to administrative practices that enhance those values. She defined the practices as religious misogyny, observing that women in her study acted autonomously and independently, at the same time that they give credence to masculine authority. Miller's assertion may be supported by the findings of this study at some level. The connection can be inferred from what was not in evidence in the interviews or observations. The principals in this study did not mention or refer to any perspectives that might be considered as understanding their female assistant principal's point of view of the administrative team. The few observations made of women's' perspectives concerned overly assertive personalities, the challenges of home and workplace responsibilities, and the drive to prove themselves. There wasn't any mention of empathy nor did anyone indicate that conversations ever took place about the women's understandings of their place in the organization. In many ways the principals' responses were more reflective of their positions of power and privilege that is derived from the cultural environment that surrounds them.

Actual talk about gender turned out to be a major difference between this study and Miller's dissertation research (Miller, 2008). She found that female principals in Utah felt isolated and were unwilling to talk about gender issues, which she saw as sign of

acceptance of a masculine dominated paradigm. In contrast, the male principals in this study were very open to discussing gender. This difference may be a reflection of Mormon theology related to male priesthood holders that would easily support discussion related to gender because men hold the keys. The dynamics of gender in leadership within a patriarchal society is a complicated culture that neither men nor women truly want to confront. Men might talk around it, while women become silent. The degree to which silence becomes the greatest challenge to growth and development of equal gender relations was described by Rusch (2009), the first woman in a male-dominated organization who reflected on her own silence about the gender dynamics. She noted,

I realize that no one, myself included, risked vulnerability- a state of not knowingness. None of us had the capacity, the wherewithal, or courage to say, 'This is whole new experience for all of us; what do we need to know?' (p. 184)

Miller advanced Rusch's perspective, offering advice to administrators:

In the Utah culture, being a high school principal is about embracing a masculine perspective; aspiring principals must understand the view through masculine prism to progress. They must recognize that they can show little emotion, except strategically placed, no subjectivity, or reveal personal political or social philosophies. Administrators can exhibit no doubt or uncertainty because they are immediately competitive and doubt will destroy the facade of winning. They need to have an overall game plan to achieve a goal, which means that they have power over their communities. Received knowledge emerging from the masculine world predicts truths in this system. If you are emotional, connect with others, share

your ideas including a subjective awareness, you are acting, acknowledged by dominant discourse, out of a feminine perspective (Miller, 2008, p. 272 ).

A new male leader emerging in the ranks of school leadership is one who has the freedom and access to explore their own masculinity, and gendered experience without the fear of the predominant culture. The new male leader today has embraced a more contemporary position by the church simply because they can. There are still many male leaders who will hold on to their traditional mores and culture simply because they can. Church leaders have continued to expound equality between men and women. A shift may be slowly occurring where equality among female and male leaders is present. A place of utopia filled relational awareness. It appears the question of, “How do we get there?” still remains.

**Research Question 4: In what way does a dominant religious ideology that narrowly defines women’s roles influence a male administrator’s approach to gender issues in a public sector organization?**

A Mormon community blends religion into the political, economic, and social life (Warenski, 1978). In the mid 1980’s, 60% to 83% percent of the population along the Wasatch front was members of the LDS faith (Presley et al., 1985). Although the population appears to be changing, the religious community continues to contextualize education and administrative practices (Canham, 2007).

Although the principals in the study are surrounded by the predominant religion, they did not articulate a more global impact of the Mormon culture on their schools or administrations. They acknowledged that there might be district administrators

that are influenced, to some degree, by the culture. One principal stated that his awareness of the community at large was about dress code enforcement. Another principal discussed the importance not scheduling activities on Monday nights. All of the principals recognized that the Mormon Church heavily influenced the Utah State legislature, yet none of the principals seemed eager to address the relationship between large state and religious institutions. Instead the focus was inward, and it was much more intimate. This may suggest that the questions did not place them in a position to reflect more deeply about the public sector. Their lack of response to this question may also reflect how deeply embedded power and privilege can mask the more poignant issues. The lack of responses may also reflect “how easy it is for privileged perspectives to create blinders about diversity and equity (Poplin Gosetti & Rusch, 1995, p.20).

### **Implications**

The findings of this study support the discourse related to gender dynamics among educational leaders within a patriarchal culture. The findings also confirm that men and women experience gender dynamics in very different ways. This includes possible ways men and women live, discuss, and understand their own masculinities and femininity (Blackmore, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1989; Schmuck, 1980; Rusch, 2004). The findings may create as many questions as they answer, however they do provide a glimpse into a unique dynamic that applies to many leadership arenas around the world. All men and women leaders find themselves in circumstances that require them to confront how their own gendered experiences connect to the cultural environment in which they live and work. This study may provide insights into how men and women can

examine the construction of their gender identity and finds ways to establish connection instead of disconnection.

The unique relationship between genders, the workplace, and cultural ideology that narrowly defines their roles in the state of Utah has not been thoroughly explored. Miller (2008) conducted her study with a focus on women's issues, as she examined the phenomenon from a female principal perspective. To create transferability and to examine the other side of the story, I chose to conduct my study with a focus on the male principal perspective. The combination of findings may contribute a brick in the wall of research that surrounds this phenomenon.

The workplace dynamics in these Utah administrative teams were examined using Fletcher's (2002) model of two spheres, split by a gendered division of labor. Her model offered a unique perspective of the dichotomy individuals may experience when the spheres are socially constructed as separate and discrete. As I compared the findings between Miller's study and my study, there was clear evidence that the dual agenda described by Fletcher is prominent among the male principals. The ever-present cultural ideology in the state of Utah has had a strong influence on the construction of the two spheres described by Fletcher. This process is developed and sustained through many years of socialization at school and at home, through gender relationships in the home and the workplace, and through adult mentors in the church and the workplace. Over the years the cultural ideology in Utah has evolved and has increasingly become more aligned with societal positions, however the theological underpinnings still exist as the premise for personal and professional life. Men and women leaders in Utah today

navigate and reconcile their own professional and personal arenas through a lens described by the data as silence or privilege.

Fletcher's (2002) separate sphere model not only devalues the other, but also can disqualify one from being viewed as capable in the other sphere (Fletcher, 2002). The findings in my study indicate that male school leaders in Utah are not devalued by encountering and practicing activities within the sphere described as domestic or relational, suggesting that Connell's vision for a new male leadership approach exists. These younger more contemporary leaders have embraced and taken advantage of the their freedom to expand and explore their own masculinity and leadership attributes. They are able to relax the spheres through leadership practices that are participatory, and collaborative in nature. This process is fostered and supported by traditional and contemporary Mormon theology that expounds not only that males have access to power and privilege through the priesthood, as well as today's ideology that suggests men and women are to be considered equal especially as husband and wife.

However, the findings indicate that women administrators are still viewed through separate and distinct spheres and do not experience equal value when they occupy a sphere other than the one that is stereotypically assigned to them. The difference these findings offer to Fletcher's theory is that the view of women administrators in Utah is mediated by a deeply embedded value for women in general. That intrinsic value may, in fact, support the relaxation of the spheres for men who choose to enact more participatory and collaborative forms of leadership. How women actually interpret and experience that value is an unknown factor in this particular study. However, the findings suggest that



male principals may cope, navigate, and operate from different platforms simply because they can.

A major finding in Miller's study suggests that female principals in Utah do not cope, navigate, and operate from different platforms. The common mechanism shared by the female principals is silence. If silence can be viewed as data, this study adds to Miller's findings. No principal invited me to discuss the dissertation topic with his staff or assistant principals, nor did any team members make any informal attempts to inquire about or discuss the topic of my dissertation. Each team was given a reason why I was attending their meetings and visiting their school, but no individual, other than the principal, attempted to converse with me about my visit. While this observation is not conclusive, one could infer that the silence is in concert with traditional Mormon theology.

Miller found that even as the female principals had risen to a higher professional level, like Rusch (2009), they chose to not engage the conversation about gender. This position confirms Fletcher's dual agenda that suggests men and women are devalued if they venture across the sphere divide. Jordan (2004) contends that human beings are relational beings with a primary energy that flows toward others creating interconnectedness among us. In contrast, humans also have a separate-self paradigm that suggests a disconnection between men and women is the primary state of affairs. At best we reach out to use "objects" that can meet our needs or provide some solace in this lonely journey. In the case of these administrative teams, the shared stewardship or participatory practices may be indicative of reaching out.

The findings of my study suggest that crossing the divide between Fletcher's

spheres is a complicated journey and it may be even more difficult for women to venture outside their sphere. Women may be risking personal and professional capital by doing so. The challenge for both men and women is to explore and create channels of connection that transcend their individual spheres. Again, as Rusch (2009) points out, “This is whole new experience for all of us; what do we need to know? ” ( Rusch, 2009, p. 184).

Jordan, (2004) supports the notion of connectivity through relational awareness, that includes personal awareness, awareness of others, awareness of impact one’s self from others as wells one’s impact on others, and the quality of energy that flows in relationships themselves. It is akin to being “present with” and looking at tones and patterns of relating. Men and women can internalize consequences and sequences of behavior without moving into a paralyzed state. When people increase their relational awareness, they dramatically alter their ability to transform disconnections (Jordan, 2004). Fletcher (2003, p.26) brings this connection together,

Understanding the inner workings of sex and gender linked images of good work, competence and commitment serves as a guide in looking for those particular work practices that might not, on the surface, appear to be linked to work and personal life integration, but if addressed can begin to change a work culture in ways that allow not only integration of the spheres, but multiplicity of work practices and diverse perspectives.

Relational theory requires that Utah administrators begin thinking about a direction that continues to modify the workplace culture among men and women. How can this story

inform and transfer future research that might also add to further discourse about gender dynamics in leadership? How might other perspectives be explored in diverse cultures that are also impacted by defined ideologies?

### **Future Research**

The study became a journey of uncovering new and unique perspectives like I have never experienced before. When one rock was turned over and I discovered the contents underneath, it seemed there were 10 more rocks just ahead waiting for me to unearth. Along the way many questions began to develop of “what if” this or that. This has really given pause to offer possible pathways of study for future researchers.

#### **Mentor leadership.**

Mentor leadership is an area worthy of further exploration in the context of relational theory. There were two questions that touched on this topic, and I got a sense that from the principals that their own mentors played a very significant role in developing their approach to leadership. Along the lines of leadership mentoring, thoughts of exploring leadership preparation programs also emerged through my experience. More questions in my mind surfaced about looking at these principals’ experience prior to entering the administration field. I began reflecting on my own experience, and realizing the insufficient emphasis on gender dynamics and relational theory in leadership preparation programs. With out a systemic plan in place, it may simply be educational lottery for many incoming school leaders depending on whom, if anyone is assigned to them as their mentor and what kind of conversations they are prepared to have with each other.

### **Rural school leadership.**

One issue for me is applying this research to more rural areas of Utah. I found myself in a dilemma of working in a more rural district, yet applying my research to more urban school districts. When I began my dissertation, I was employed in a major urban school district and now I am employed in a more rural district. Do the same dynamics exist in rural areas of Utah? I believe that increasing the number of principals from different settings and contexts would expand the findings. The changing perspective would bring even greater strength to the study. As I did my research in these urban schools, I often asked myself if the same would be true in rural Utah.

### **Assistant principals.**

Another interesting area for further research might be to examine the position of the assistant principal through male and female perspectives. I made assumptions through my site visits about the assistant principals perceptions and lived experiences themselves. Do they experience gender dynamics in the same way? Do they recognize the ideological culture that impacts their work? How do they view their own masculinity and femininity? In what ways, do administrative teams confront the silence around gender dynamics in their workplace?

### **Conclusion**

I couldn't begin to express my deep passion for this odyssey called a dissertation. I have one son and two young daughters that are growing, living, and learning. I can hope that this small contribution to the study of gender dynamics will possibly help make their next step in the world a little easier. As they begin to get older and can understand the context of my study, maybe they will understand others more, maybe they will not be as

quick to judge others, and maybe they will share with others more than they would have before. They can ask themselves if they really do communicate and listen sincerely with their hearts, when they are faced with conflicting value positions. I am certain they will find great challenges, but also great joy along the landscape they travel. What is their contribution going to be?

As a school leader in Utah, and having been raised a Mormon, I fully understand the complex culture we live in. Recently, former Utah Governor John Huntsman Jr. was asked if he is a member of the Mormon Church. He answered with something like there are many different levels of being a Mormon. His Mormon family roots included a saloon keeper and a preacher. This really captures the essence of complexity of the culture in Utah at the highest levels of leadership. Through it all it has taught me to reflect on my own leadership practice as well as my own personal life. Can I say that I am a better school administrator, student, father, husband, and friend? The answer is yes!

## APPENDIX A

### LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FACILITY

#### **Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Facility**

School Letter Head  
Name & Address

Office of Research Integrity-Human Subjects  
University of Nevada Las Vegas  
4505 Maryland Parkway Box 451047  
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1047

Subject: Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at: School Name

Dear Office of Research Integrity-Human Subjects:

This letter will serve as authorization for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (“UNLV”) Researcher/research team, Rick L. Robins/ PI: Dr. Edith Rusch to conduct the research project entitled: The Male Educational Leader in Utah: A New Generation of Relational Leadership is Born in the Arena of Power, Gender, and the Mormon Priesthood. At School’s name

The Facility acknowledges that it has reviewed the protocol presented by the researcher, as well as the associated risks to the Facility. The Facility accepts the protocol and the associated risks to the Facility, and authorizes the research project to proceed. The research project may be implemented at the Facility upon approval from UNLV Institutional Review Board.

If we have any concerns or require additional information, we will contact the researcher/or the UNLV Office of Research Integrity-Human Subjects.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Facility Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX B  
LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

September 10, 2010

Dear Principal,

We hope this letter finds all is well at your school. We are excited to share with an opportunity to participate in my research study. The purpose of this study will be to explore the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that male and female education leaders experience with in the context of a predominantly Mormon culture specifically in the state of Utah. We invite you to participate in this study and would greatly appreciate your contribution to this very important research project.

We will be in touch with you in the next few days to answer any questions you may have. After answering any questions, we will ask that you sign and return the enclosed "Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Facility Form." When we speak, Rick will schedule a convenient time to conduct a video-taped phone interview of approximately 60 minutes to hear your opinions about gender and leadership dynamics, and the impact of our culture on you as a school leader, and to plan Rick's visit to your school. During that visit, he will observe interactions of your administrative team and conduct an interview with you.

We will protect your and your school's identity by using pseudonyms in any of our publications, and we will never reveal the name of your school or any of the participants that we interview. We will not share your comments with anyone else. This consent process will be explained in detail over the phone and email; you will be receiving a letter of consent in the coming weeks. Please keep a copy of anything you send us for your records.

If you have any questions, please email or call us, and we would be happy to discuss anything further with you. We appreciate that you are partnering with us in this effort to explore and further this discourse.

We look forward to talking with you in the coming days.

Thank you,

Rick L. Robins  
Doctoral Student,  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
[rick.robins@juab.k12.ut.us](mailto:rick.robins@juab.k12.ut.us)  
435-623-1764

Dr. Edith Rusch  
Professor of Educational Leadership,  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
[edith.rusch@unlv.edu](mailto:edith.rusch@unlv.edu)  
702-895-2891

APPENDIX C  
PRINCIPAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**University of Nevada Las Vegas**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

**Department of Educational Leadership**

**Title: Gender Dynamics, Power, and Relational Leadership in a Mormon Dominant Culture.**

**Investigator(s): Rick L. Robins & Dr. Edith Rusch**

**Contact: Rick Robins**

**Cell # 435-610-0234**

**Email: [rick.robins@juab.k12.ut.us](mailto:rick.robins@juab.k12.ut.us)**

**Dr. Edith Rusch**

**Phone # 702-895-3491**

**Email: [edith.rusch@unlv.edu](mailto:edith.rusch@unlv.edu)**

Name of participant,

The purpose of this study will be to explore the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that male and female education leaders experience with in the context of a predominantly Mormon culture specifically in the state of Utah.

You are being asked to be part of this study because of your status as a high school principal that is serving along the Wasatch front and your administrative team that consists of male and female members. We hope to learn more about gender dynamics in leadership with in the context of our culture in Utah. The benefits of this study will hopefully further this discourse among educational leaders and foster their future vision of what leadership looks like.



If you volunteer for the study, the procedure for this study will include a video interview of about one hour long with the selected principal as well as two days of observation of the administrative team by Mr. Robins.

The observation will only include note taking. The principal will have the option to not be video recorded, and can choose to stop the recording at any time at their discretion. Once the recordings have been transcribed, a copy of the transcript will be sent to the member principal for verification of accuracy. The original video recording will be returned to the principal after the study has approved by the candidate's dissertation committee. No copies of the interview will be made.

This study may include minimal risks. You may become uncomfortable with some of the questions being asked in the interview. The questions may be sensitive to you on a personal and professional level. There is no financial cost or compensation for your time in this study. It will take approximately one hour to do the interview and approximately two workdays to do the observation.

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or any part of the study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. Please ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research.

All information in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage of the records, they will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Rick Robins. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, and complaints, or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact **the UNLV Office of Research Integrity-Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 or toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.**

I have read the above information and agree to participate in the study. I am at Least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

_____	_____
<b>Signature of Participant as consent to participate in study</b>	<b>Date</b>

_____	_____
<b>Signature of Participant for consent to have interview videotaped</b>	<b>Date</b>

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Please Write Participant Name**

***Participant Note: Please do not sign this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or expired.***

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (PRINCIPALS)

#### **Interview Questions**

##### **Socialization Domain**

How did you learn about gender as a child?

What did you learn about gender as a child?

What did you learn about adults and authority in your family as a child?

How has that affected your life now?

- What is the same?
- What is different?

##### **Gender Dynamics Domain**

From your experience, what is your perception of a masculine model of leadership?

From your experience, what is your perception of a feminine model of leadership?

In your experience, what issues or incidents dealing with gender have connected with your leadership as a high school principal?

In 2006, about 10% of Utah High Schools were lead by female principals. What do you think about this statistic?

Recently in the Salt Lake Tribune:

- Utah women make 69% of Utah's men's median income.
- 26% of Utah women get bachelors degrees compared to 32% of Utah men.
- 62% of Utah women work compared to 60% nationally.

What do you think about these statistics?

The Utah Women and Education Project recently released a study stating that compared with all other states, Utah is last in terms of the percentage of female students enrolled in postsecondary institutions. What is your reaction to these findings?

What does mentoring your assistant principals look like in their preparation to possibly become future principals?

## **Leadership Identity Domain**

What life experiences contributed to understanding your potential for leadership?

- When did you first think of yourself as a leader?

From your experience as a school leader, what are the most important lessons of leadership you have gained?

What does leadership look like in you?

How do you see leadership in others on your administrative team?

How do you balance the demands of your family and personal life with the demands of your professional life?

How do you negotiate the same demands on your assistant principals?

How do you think your entire school community, parents, teachers, staff, and students perceive your leadership practice?

## **Ideology and Leadership Domain**

How have your personal beliefs on authority and power influenced your decision to pursue administration?

How do you negotiate cultural expectations that may impact your administrative decisions working in a state that is dominated by a Mormon culture?

To what extent do you believe LDS beliefs about power and authority affect school leadership in your district?

Do you ever find yourself challenged to meet expectations that do not meet your own beliefs about leading schools?

- Do you find it is walking a fine line? Explain.

In your experience and perception, how has the dominant culture in Utah informed or influenced the highest levels of leadership in state: government, social, and religious structures?

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