Minnesota Female Principals From Historically Dominated Cultures In The United States: What Are Their Perceptions Of How Ethnicity, Gender, And Race Have Impacted Their Leadership Identity?

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Minnesota Female Principals from Historically Dominated Cultures in The United States:
What Are Their Perceptions of How Ethnicity, Gender, And Race Have Impacted Their Leadership Identity?

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree in Education

by

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Hamline University
St. Paul, MN

June 2018

Committee:
Dr. Joyce Bell (Chair)
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Dr. Thomas Hoffman
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which ethnicity, gender and race impact the leadership identity of women of color who self-identify as belonging to the one of the four largest racial groups in the United States. A study was conducted on leadership identity survey and intensive interviews to answer the following: “Minnesota female principals from United States historically dominated cultures: What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity?” Fifteen participants completed a leadership identity survey and 13 of the 15 participants completed an intensive interview. Once data was collected grounded theory methods were employed to examine, evaluate and cross examine both data sets. The research process was examined to find the perceptions and real lived experiences of women of color currently working in Minnesota PK-12 principalships and explore how ethnicity, gender and race have shaped and formed their leadership identity.
Acknowledgments

This research study represents an academic journey full of ups and downs, much like my life journey. Many times, I doubted and second guessed my ability to finish this research study. Consequently, I started and stopped this research study more times than I care to detail. I have been magnificently blessed throughout my life with people who inspired, encouraged and supported me throughout my personal and professional career. I fully realize that my current reality is a manifestation of the sacrifices my ancestors made and the seeds they planted within me. However, there is one person that I must acknowledge and extend my deepest gratitude toward. This individual provided me with guidance, support, all along this dissertation journey, my chair Dr. Joyce Bell. From the time she accepted becoming my chair, she believed in me and most importantly in my research study. As I come to the end of this dissertation it is undoubtedly because of her mentorship. She held me to high standards and was not afraid to tell me to get out of my own way. Dr. Bell would often tell me that I needed to trust the process and the research journey. This was not advice I always understood or desired to follow. However, I undoubtedly know that without her mentorship and support I would not be writing this acknowledgement. I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Bell. Your contributions to the field of education are immeasurable. Even in your retirement you continue to exemplify what it means to be an advocate for children and a transformational leader for equity.

I would also like to thank the research participants of this research study. This magnificent group of women who took time out of their busy work lives to contribute to this research study: I express my deepest gratitude. You are the heart and soul of this research study. Your voice and lived experiences brightly illuminate the moral imperative
that drives your leadership. I am inspired by all that you do for our children and our communities. Your leadership and advocacy is needed and we are a stronger community because you persist and continue to challenge the status quo. I humbly thank you for trusting me by sharing your voice and lived experiences. Your insights highlight that there is still much work to be done to support, develop, validate and affirm women of color in the principalship. I am forever grateful to ALL of you.

At this time, I would like to thank Ed.D. Cohort Seven for your support, encouragement and your fellowship along the way. Many of you continued to check in and encouraged me to finish this research study long after our coursework together ended. Each of you have touched me personally and I am better person and leader as a result of our time together. It should be noted that hands down we must have been the most fertile cohort ever to grace Hamline University. Ed.D. Seven, you are ALL forever a part of the fabric of my being.

I would also like to thank all of the amazing principals and district leaders I have had the pleasure to work throughout my educational career. Each of you have had a tremendous influence and impact on my leadership identity. This research study was in large part constructed to honor the wonderful leaders who day in and out work to better the educational outcomes for all students. You are all fierce advocates for children. Thank you for all of your insights and wisdom.

I would also like to acknowledge and recognize my family for all of their support along the way. Samuel and Matias my two beautiful sons—you are my why, you are my everything. This research study is for the both of you. I reached this academic accomplishment as a direct result of hard work and perseverance. Remember, continuous
effort not strength or intelligence is the key to success. To my husband Anthony, since I began my dissertation journey there have been countless weekends and evenings sacrificed to this research study. Many times, you stepped up and in so I could get to this finish line. Thank you for believing in me, for all of your support and the sacrifices made along the way for me and for our family. It did not go unnoticed, and I am here because of you.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother and my grandmother for all of their sacrifices. Abuelita, God called you home long ago but those seeds you and grandfather planted took root. Mom, I would not have the blessings in my life without you. You sacrificed so much for all of us. Con todo Corazon les doy las gracias.
“No one is born fully-formed it is through self-experience in the world that we become what we are.” – Paulo Freire
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Question

Minnesota Female Principals from United States historically dominated cultures:

What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity?

Background and Context

After much thought and self-reflection, I have come to understand that I have been genuinely interested in issues of ethnicity, gender, identity and race most of my academic career. I am drawn to this topic in large part because of my journey as a first-generation Mexican-American immigrant who has managed to achieve some level of academic and professional success in the United States. I am deeply cognizant of the many barriers I have faced to be where I am today. I believe that issues of ethnicity, gender, identity and race have deeply impacted me in both a positive and negative manner. While every individual has their unique story, participants in my research group will have an opportunity to express their perception of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity.

My journey has had a strong influence in choosing this research question. First, I am the oldest of three children and the only sibling who has completed a four-year degree. Growing up, our family shared many of the same challenges that new immigrant families experience when moving to America. There were many barriers: financial, overcoming a language barrier, lack of familiarity with American bureaucracy and the instability caused by the dynamics of my mother's marriages. In spite of those barriers, I will forever be indebted to my mother and my late grandmother for the personal
sacrifices they made for my siblings and me to grow up in the United States. My grandmother and mother were my first role models. They cultivated a strong work ethic within me.

From an early age, I was keenly aware of the different gender expectations they had for my brother and me. My tasks were centered on the caring of our home, while my brother’s tasks were being the protectors of our home. Growing up along the San Diego/Tijuana border, I came of age understanding that Mexicans who did not have legal status, a proficiency in the English language or were not highly educated, faced huge inequities and struggles in many parts of their lives.

My grandmother, who lived with us and helped care for us, used to love watching old black and white American movies at home. Despite living in the United States for many years, she could never remember more than a few phrases of English. Her favorite was, "Do you have one cigarette?" Due to this love of movie watching, I was introduced to many Hollywood icons of that golden era. I became obsessed with the actress Grace Kelly. Each night I would pray, asking God to help me grow up to be just as beautiful as Grace Kelly. When that did not appear to be working, my pragmatic side took over. I began memorizing movie lines and practicing those lines in front of a mirror. This was how I taught myself to speak English. I was determined to speak English without an accent. From a young age, I understood that language was power. When my mother would take me to her appointments to help her with English translations, I saw the looks of disapproval those around us gave my mother. Shouldn't she be at school? They would ask that in a judgmental way. These vivid memories where I can remember the turmoil of feelings as I witnessed my mother's embarrassment, defensiveness and resilience left
deep and lasting impressions. There were two worlds my siblings and I faced each day: home and school. They operated independently of each other and somehow, we were supposed to make sense of it all. I can remember getting disapproving lectures from aunts and uncles when my brother and I chose to speak English with one another; only to face the same disapproval from teachers when my friends and I spoke Spanish at school. I often reflect back and can see clearly there were many times where learning to navigate such vastly different worlds caused me great stress as a child. However, as an adult, I know without a doubt it was a training ground for the skills I would later need to draw on in my role as a teacher and as an elementary assistant principal.

As an educator, I have been very intentional about seeking out school settings that are on the front lines actively working to improve academic achievement for students of color, while concurrently closing the achievement gap. My lived experiences have taught me that our educational system is set up to produce winners and losers. I happened to be one of the lucky ones because school came easily to me. In many ways, school was my escape from the chaos and stress of my home life. Both of my siblings struggled in school. Learning did not come easily to either of them.

My younger brother and I are only eighteen months apart, so it was easy to see that even though we attended the same schools, our experiences were completely different. He very quickly became a disengaged learner because school work was difficult for him. We also lived in a neighborhood where it would never be okay to show such vulnerabilities. Each of us handled the dynamics and instability of our home life differently. I escaped into the world of books which is something that our school system rewarded. My brother was easily frustrated, quick to anger and would often engage in
fights at school, behaviors which our school system has traditionally punished. As adults, my brother and I shared a conversation that continues to haunt me today. He told me that one of the things that he hated growing up was getting placed with the same teacher after me. At first, teachers would be excited to have Alejandra's little brother in their class, until they realized he was a completely different student than I. I will never forget what he said, "I hated that moment, the moment when I could see in their eyes, that they realized I was not as smart as you; I was stupid."

School worked for me, but it did not work for my brother. I was one of the lucky ones in my neighborhood. If I am honest, in my community my brother's experience was more common than uncommon. These experiences fueled me with a need to ensure that our educational system did not create winners and losers based on born circumstances. The issue of educational equity for all students is tremendously important to me and a personal mission. The success of all students of color is important to me. As a Latina educational leader, I would like to engage in research that looks at an issue from multiple perspectives as well as positively contributes to the existing academic body of knowledge for female leaders from historically educationally underserved racial groups, who continue to be an underrepresented voice.

**Description of Topic**

Since the moment I decided to pursue my principal licensure, I have been equally immersed in the academic pursuit of effective and transformational systemic leadership. In our doctoral coursework, I had the opportunity to take a class focused on leadership. The perspective of the female leaders until recent history had largely been left out (Northouse, 2013). I also noticed that much of the female perspective I was reading was
drawing from a White, middle-class perspective. While research in this area has increased, I felt that the perspective of female leaders of color continued to be an underrepresented voice (Northouse, 2013). Currently, I am an elementary assistant principal with future goals of becoming an elementary school principal. I find my research question very relevant to the day-to-day work I am currently immersed in. The thought of interviewing a group of female leaders from underserved educational communities and hearing their perspectives on how they have been personally shaped and molded as a leader is of great personal interest to me.

I also desire to deepen my understanding of leadership frameworks, impacting large system changes and ultimately how to cultivate a learning community of high levels of learning for all students. I seek to explore theoretical frameworks of ethnicity, gender, identity, leadership and race. My interest in exploring all these frameworks is to answer the following research question: Minnesota Female Principals from United States historically dominated cultures: “What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity?” I also seek to answer a secondary question. “How do all of these theoretical frameworks impact leadership identity when they all are found in one leader?” I am a practitioner at heart and seek to learn from those who have blazed a trail before me. “How does this reality manifest itself day in and out?” “Ultimately, how does a leader balance, prioritize and integrate each of these areas within her as she leads.”
Statement of the Problem

W.E.B. Dubois (1970) once wrote:

Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental…The freedom to learn has been brought by the bitter sacrifice. And whatever we may think of the curtailment of other civil rights, we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn, the right to have examined in our schools not only what we believe, but what we do not believe; not only what our leaders say, but what the leaders of other groups and nations and the leaders of other centuries have said. We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be (p. 230-231).

There is nothing new or profound in stating the obvious—educational inequality is the current reality in American education. If we are really honest, this inequality has been a constant fixture-rooted in our country’s troubled and unsettled racial past. We also have an antiquated educational system that is being asked to produce global citizens to compete internationally. Linda Darling-Hammond argues (2010), “The United States needs to move much more decisively than it has in the last quarter century to establish a purposeful, equitable education system that will prepare all our children for success in a knowledge-based society.” (p. 2). Political leaders, business leaders, religious leaders and educational leaders have on many occasions expressed the message that our large race and class achievement gaps are morally unacceptable and contribute to United States
economic decline. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) (2017) for the year of 2016, reports the overall percentage of students graduating from high school in four years was 82.2%

Table 1 *Percentage of students graduating from high school*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Demographics</th>
<th>% of High School Graduating Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-American</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: MDE 201

This is a slight incremental upward trend since 2012. This percentage is slightly lower than the national average of 83% in 2014-15. However, when examining these numbers closer, there is an understanding of why the state of Minnesota has one of the highest disparity rates in the country. The numbers decrease significantly for three of the four non-white racial groups in Minnesota. In 2016, the Minnesota graduating class demographic breakdown was the following: Hispanic (65.3%), African-American (65.1%), Asian (83.6%) and Native-American (52.6%), compared to white students (87%) (MDE, 2017). Educational leaders across the nation are being held accountable for closing this achievement gap.

Schools are only a microcosm of larger societal issues with which our society struggles and has yet to solve. Nevertheless, focusing on the local, in education the game gets played in the classroom. The principal is recognized as the closest formal leader to the classroom. One particular issue most local, immediate and relevant to the reason the research question focused on women of color working in a principalship in the state of Minnesota has to do with racial inequalities. The state of Minnesota is home to one of the
largest racial inequalities between white and African Americans. According to Sauter (2017), a report conducted by the Wall Street Journal, examined the racial inequalities between Caucasians and African Americans on the following social markers: population, median income household, unemployment rate, homeownership rate and incarceration rate. This report found that Minnesota ranked number two in terms of having the largest disparities. This in spite of the state’s history of being a fairly progressive state.

Fullan (2003) posits “Leading schools-as in any great organization[s]-requires principals with the courage and capacity to build new cultures based on trusting relationships and a culture of disciplined inquiry and action.” (p. 45). The responsibility of the principal in today’s educational landscape requires a thick skin, a strong back and very broad shoulders. It makes no difference of the gender and or ethnicity of the individual in the role.

Before exploring what it means to be a principal, I wanted to take a step back and first answer the question: “How have researchers defined leadership?” Researchers have struggled to define leadership because it has multiple meanings to different people and the definition has changed over time (Northouse, 2013). Because leadership has different meanings to different individuals, this is evidence as to why my research question is relevant. Moreover, how does is definition of leadership impacted when dynamics of ethnicity, gender and race are added? Northouse's (2013) research on leadership has led him to declare that leadership contains four components: a process, involves influence, occurs in groups and involves common goals. Thusly, Northouse (2013) defines leadership in the following way, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” (p. 5). The words that
resonate with me after reading Northouse's definition of leadership is ‘whereby individual influences.’ The question that immediately comes to mind is “Who or what influences and/or motivates an individual before that individual decides on the principalship?” “How is this experience different when the leader comes from communities that have historically been underserved by our educational system?” “What motivates an individual to pursue the career trajectory to become a school principal?” After all, becoming a leader or to be perceived as a leader has a very personal dimension. Sergiovanni (2006) suggests that leadership is comprised of three components: heart, head and hand. The heart is connected to personal beliefs, values and a personal vision. The head involves the theories and practices that have come to be developed in each. The hand has to do with the decisions and actions taken. All three are present in every leader and manifest differently even when faced with the same scenario. Sergiovanni (2006) theorizes these three components are the reasons why different leaders behave differently even when faced with similar scenarios. Both Northouse (2013) and Sergiovanni (2006) describe leadership as a dynamic process highly dependent on the individual that leads. In the role of educational leader, specifically in the role of principal, the leader has to find a way to be comfortable with the discomfort of always balancing between what Northouse (2013) and Sergiovanni (2006) call the managerial and the moral. Sergiovanni (2006) has declared that leadership is the moral imperative of a principal. Given the state of American public schools the following question comes to mind. “How does this moral imperative play out when you are a member of a different ethnicity, gender and racial group who has been traditionally underserved by our American public-school system?”
“How does this impact an individual’s leadership identity?” These are questions which I seek to explore in my research.

Purpose of the Study

Currently, there are approximately 80,000 school principals. According to the 2012 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) annual School and Staffing Survey (SASS), 87.5% of school principals are white, 6.83% are Hispanic, 10.72% are Black, 1.12% are Asian, 1.75% are Native American and .21% are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. This is a yearly survey collected by the NCES (Table 1). The reality is although inroads have been made in a more diverse representation of principals, the majority of principals continue to be white. The 2012 SASS reported the most significant inroads had been made in the area of gender. The gender breakdown is that 51% of school principals are female and 48% are male.

Table 2 2012 National Demographic Breakdown of Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>6.83%</td>
<td>10.72%</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>.21%</td>
<td>.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the state of Minnesota, according to those same 2011-2012 SASS results, there are approximately 1,930 principals. The demographic breakdown is 93% white (93%) and the remaining are reported as non-white (7%). The gender breakdown is 52.6% of principals are male (52.6%) and are female (47.4%). My research is focused on female principals who come from dominant cultures in the United States. The rationale for using this terminology is there is a historical connection as to why certain groups have historically semi-structured traditional assessments and measures of academic success.
Also, these groups have been historically underserved by the public-school system. This is the same group of students that we are referencing when we discuss issues like the achievement gap, racial disparity and issues of educational equity.

As both the national and state statistics indicate, the largest inroads in terms of demographics have been the category of gender. Historically, the system of leadership has been male-dominated. Therefore, it is important to separate the gender and examine how gender impacts leadership identity. Moreover, it is essential for me as a researcher to create an opportunity to hear clearly the underrepresented voice of female leaders that come from underserved communities. “How has their leadership identity been formed, changed and transformed as formal leaders of a school?” According to hooks (1994), “There is no education that is politically neutral.” We know this to be true from a teacher perspective because we teach who we are. It is important for all educators to be conscious of their biases because we all have them. A similar analogy can be made of school leaders; we lead and that is largely driven by who we are as individuals. More importantly, a leader draws insight from their core values of how they have come to be. Sergiovanni states (2006) "Each principal must find her or his way, develop her or his approach, if the heart, head and hand of leadership are to come together in the form of a successful principalship practice." (p. 2). A female principal from an educationally underserved racial group offers the larger educational community a different voice and experience. Magan (2017) suggests that, Minnesota is one of the states with the greatest racial disparity. I think it would behoove us to take the time and hear their perspective, voice and understanding of how they have come to be. Their insights will add to a national and state discourse on educational equity from a leadership perspective. This
group of women have maximized their talents to lead a school site. Many times, these women have chosen to lead or have been chosen to lead and stand as role models for their respective communities. Last, it is important to examine how this group of female leaders face continuous demands and pressures promotes their school vision.

**Theoretical Foundations**

Necessary frameworks to be explored to answer the research question will be critical race theory, pedagogy of the oppressed, racial and social identity theory and leadership theory, as potential theoretical frameworks from which to examine leadership identity. By examining each of these theoretical frameworks, I hope to explore how my research group's leadership identity informs their decision making.

I will also be taking a narrower look at educational leadership as that is the focus of my research group. The most critical element in my dissertation will be capturing the voice of the female leaders. “How do they perceive how they have been personally impacted by each of these frameworks and how it has informed their leadership identity?” This is unique insight on an underrepresented group in current leadership research.

To begin, I am aware that the nature of my research question can be approached from more than one qualitative paradigm. The three paradigms that will need further exploration are assumptions of 1) critical realist paradigms, 2) critical theory paradigms and 3) feminist paradigms. My primary and secondary questions contain elements of all three, but I have decided to use assumptions of feminist paradigms because my question is focused on Minnesota female principals from educationally underserved communities.
The first goal is to understand the individual contexts within which participants act and the influence that this context has on their actions. The second goal will be to uncover how the participants make sense of ethnicity, gender and race for themselves. Immediately connections that come to mind are Senge’s (1990) mental models, the constructivism theory of how we construct knowledge and meaning and Northouse (2013) leadership theories. I am deeply aware of the fact that I will need to begin to do some serious work exploring the current body of knowledge.

There is no way to discuss the issues of ethnicity, gender and race without first examining the historical context of these communities and their complex legacy. This research study is focused on individuals who come from racial groups where the educational system was used as a tool to de-culturize and assimilate them into the mainstream culture. In America, we recognize the dominant mainstream culture as historically tied to Anglo-Saxon protestant culture. Cultural and linguistic genocide and educational segregation are still part of the American narrative because educational systems are used as a tool to create a uniform culture (Spring, 2013). In America, the dominant culture is white. Not just any kind of white, but Anglo-Saxon white, which over time has become synonymous with being American.

Exploring all of these frameworks and concepts will be necessary and essential during the literature review conducted in Chapter Two. I believe it will provide me foundational information that will better inform and frame my research. Because my research question has very large themes, it will also be important to find a way to bring and connect everything. One example that comes to my mind is the use of grounded theory or triangulation theory to analyze my data.
Methodology

My primary research question is focused on Minnesota educational, female leaders and their perceptions of how gender and race have impacted their leadership identity. My research methods will, therefore, focus on a qualitative research framework that uses a two-pronged approach. First, the data collection will be conducted using a phenomenological approach. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a phenomenological study, "to describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding a particular event to understand the participants." (p. 346). The rationale for using a phenomenological approach to the data collection is to honor the lived experience of each participant. Participants will be answering intimate interview and survey questions related to issues of ethnicity, gender and race. Therefore, each participant will have constructed an individual lived reality about the degree of impact the three areas of focus that have had on their leadership identity.

Secondly, grounded theory will be explored as a possible framework to analyze the data collected from this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) advance, "Grounded theory study is very specific: to discover or generate theory that explains central phenomena derived from the data." (p. 346). Simply, theory will emerge from the data analysis conducted. Another compelling reason to analyze data from a grounded theory perspective is the socially constructed phenomena(s) are at the core of my research question: ethnicity, gender and race. Charmaz declares (2006), "When you situate your study and let generality emerge from the analysis you construct a safeguard against forcing data into your favorite analytic categories." (p. 181). As a result of this careful
analytic process, once data has been collected a set of patterns and or generalities will emerge.

A constructivist approach to grounded theory design is most appealing. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state, "in a constructivist approach, the focus is on the perspectives, feelings and beliefs of participants." This seems a natural fit for this research question where individual perspectives, feelings and beliefs are at the core of what I seek to answer.

Entry into the field will be conducted in the natural settings of the participants. This may include school, home, office and perhaps other places such as a conference room and or coffee shop. Gaining access to enough participants who can commit to a 60- or 90-minute interview will be the first barrier to overcome. Next, securing a location where the data will be collected and recorded with minimal interruptions and optimal clarity is essential. The selection of participants will have the following established criteria.

First, participants must be Minnesota female principals from underserved groups in our educational system. Current research (Hollie, 2013) has established the most underrepresented groups in our educational system to be the following: Hawaiian, Native American, African-American, Mexican-American and Southeast Asian. Second, participants must be currently employed as principals or have served in that role previously. The goal will be to survey 50 participants and interview 20 participants meeting this set of criteria. My goal would be to interview five leaders from each of the four dominated groups.
Data collection will be conducted through a semi-structured qualitative interview. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define the semi-structured research interview as, "an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the semi-structured of the interviewee to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena." (p. 3). The semi-structured interview was selected as the method of collecting data because the goal is to elicit the individual thoughts of participant's perceptions. This method of data collection also validates the individual's constructed experience and reality. With the participant's permission, the interviews will be recorded. Interview recordings and field notes will be transcribed for each interview. Participants will also complete an electronic survey where they will answer questions about their perceived leadership identity.

**Definition of Terms**

During this chapter and throughout this dissertation I will use terminology that may have multiple meanings. To offer some clarity, I will be listing those terms and defining them, to create a common understanding.

**Assimilation.** Educational programs designed to absorb and integrate cultures into the dominant culture. American schools have primarily used assimilation programs to integrate immigrant groups into the mainstream and American culture.

**Educationally underserved.** Groups of students that have historically been underserved by our educational system. Groups of students where there is racial predictability will not perform as well as students from the dominant culture.

**Culture.** There are two defining aspects. Culture pertains to all humankind and develops as a result of social experience, education and discipline (Meyer, 1966). The
other aspect of culture is recognized as a purposive system of behavior norms, values and attitudes which its members follow by force of habit (Wilson, 1978).

**De-culturalization.** The educational process of destroying a people's culture (cultural genocide) and replacing it with a new culture. Language is an integral part of a culture. In the United States, schools historically have used these methods to eradicate Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Asian Americans.

**Dominated cultures.** Dominated groups in the United States have primarily experienced cultural genocide, de-culturalization and denial of education.

**Opportunity gap.** This term references positional language and reframes the deficit term of achievement gap to opportunity gap. Acknowledging we have school dependent children that may have a gap in access to opportunities. This term seeks to move away from deficit thinking.

In Chapter 2, there will be a review of the literature which will include a brief history of historically dominated cultures in the United States. This will provide a foundational context for an examination of the theoretical framework of critical race theory, a pedagogy of the oppressed and gender frameworks. Next, I will explore educational leadership and the role of women from the United States. They historically dominate cultures in educational leadership. Finally, I will examine the literature on women in the principalship and women from dominated cultures in the principalship.

**Latinas.** Before one can begin to examine the historical experience of Latinas in the United States, one must first recognize that individuals of this dominated group represent a very ethnically, linguistically and racially diverse demographic of women.
First, women in this group can belong to any racial classification. Second, the historical legacy of colonialism was experienced in the United States, but it should also be noted that it was simultaneously occurring in the Caribbean and other Latin American countries. For this study, we will focus on the historical experience of Latinas in the United States from a feminist framework. However, a core component of this group, similar to Asian women, are the historical immigrant waves of migration to America that were a direct result of global economic demands. Latina/Chicana feminism seeks to include the voices of the recent immigrant and also the voice of the Latinas whose families have been in the United States for many generations. Chicanas are the largest group of feminist Latinas with the majority living in the southwest region of the United States. As a result, their large representation ended up with their designation.

Latina/Chicana feminism has always been intentional about seeking solidarity with all Latin American women and third-world feminists, constructing a framework that is representative of their diverse individual nationalities. While Latinas have always had a physical presence in the history of this country, their lived experiences and voices has been largely excluded and/or absent from the historical and feminist frameworks. They serve as a counter-narrative to the traditional narrative of belonging to the dominant culture. According to Perez, Huber and Cueva (2012), Latina/Chicana feminism was born out of the Civil Rights movement, the Chicano movement and the Women's Right movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Perez writes (2012), "Chicana feminist theorize that it is important to create a [feminist oriented] research practice that critiques oppression within a history of colonialism, patriarchy and white privilege." (p. 395). It is necessary to expand our understanding of how this group of women have been able to mediate race,
gender, immigration status and class within the context of American history and join other female of color scholars who use the framework of testimony and lived experience to give voice to a narrative of struggle, survival and resistance which ultimately seek to reject social inequities.

After examining multicultural feminism perspectives of African American women, Native American women, Latina/Chicanas women and Asian American women, or consolidating them to a broader umbrella under the term women of color, in the United States all four ethnicities have been marginalized as a direct result of our racialized history and that marginalization has been further shaped by their gender. A second tension must also be recognized which is that each of these four groups is so diverse that often one questions if it makes sense to talk about them as a racialized group. Shah (1997) offers her rationale for why it does make sense by stating that white people are a group equally diverse, consisting of Irish Catholics, Jewish American, Polish, English and others. However, it is their race, their whiteness that joins them together as a group because they all share the same place in the racial hierarchy. Moreover, the historical constructs of the United States, kept in place by social and political institutions, in service of a hierarchical, racially biased society are a significant determiner of social status. Shah (1997) made a case and perhaps validated and/or challenged the scholarship of why it makes sense to write about Asian American women as a group. However, given the historical deculturalization of the four largest dominated cultures in the United States, it becomes clear that their shared experiences and political marginalization that validate the need to explore the experience of women of color in the United States needs to be studied. Hill Collins (2010) states the following: "I have come to see how it is possible to
be both centered on one's own experiences and engaged in coalitions with others." (p. xi).

This is especially important in the institution of education where the legacy of de-culturalization continues to produce an inequitable outcome for students from dominated cultures.

How does a female leader from a historically dominated culture construct her leadership identity while simultaneously leading in one of the primary institutions which have been used to de-culturize her racial affinity? How does all this intersect in one individual? How does this impact their leadership? What perspectives can be utilized to further the scholarship? These are all question this body of research hopes to explore during the field research.

**Intersectionality.** Exploring a critical framework that examines the female perspective of the four dominated cultures is a tremendous endeavor. As a researcher, one must acknowledge there is no way this historical summary can capture each unique voice and human experience of individuals belonging to any of the four groups highlighted in this study. Instead, the researcher's goal is to focus on the collective experience of women of color as being part of the non-dominant culture. It needs to be shown how their gender and racial identification allows them to experience this differently rather than a male from a non-dominant culture. These four groups of women share the experience of inequality and intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term coined by Crenshaw in 1989 (Crenshaw, 1991). A scholar of law, critical race theory and Black feminist thought, Crenshaw used intersectionality to explain the experiences of Black women who, because of the intersections of race, gender and class, are exposed to exponential forms of marginalization and oppression. Intersectionality complicates identity (Dill & Zambrana,
2009) because it highlights the intricacies of individuals' experiences when they embody multiple identities simultaneously. Linking personal identity narratives to more extensive systems of domination helps individuals understand the connection between the social groups they inhabit and their day-to-day experiences within society, as well as concepts of privileged and marginalized positions. Jones and Abes (2013) noted that "identity models informed [emphasis added] by intersectionality offer better ways of capturing the complexity of identity and portraying the full range of factors, contextual influences, social identities, lived experiences and structures of power that contribute to a holistic interpretation of identity." (p. 154). Intersectionality centers the voices of people and groups previously overlooked or excluded, especially in the analysis of inequality and efforts to remedy specific social problems.

Crenshaw (1991) is recognized as the first scholar to name and theorize the term intersectionality. She used intersectionality to conceptualize the intersections of race and gender in her analyses of anti-discrimination in legal cases, for example, cases where Black women and non-English-speaking immigrant women of color were plaintiffs. Crenshaw (1991) criticized the courts for forcing Black women and non-English-speaking immigrant women of color to articulate discrimination along only one category of identity. Crenshaw (1991) argued that "the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism" and that "any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated." (p. 58). The experience of racism and sexism is neither discrete nor summative for women of color. Women of color do not experience racism in the same
ways that men of color do, nor do they experience sexism in the same ways that white women do.

Crenshaw (1991) postulates that intersectionality is a powerful framework for understanding, constructing and deconstructing the experience of identity, the complex and mutually constituting nature of social identities, the relationships between identity and larger social systems and the interwoven nature of manifestations of social oppression. While centering the interconnections inherent in an intersectional analysis, we also must honor the unique aspects of various social identities, systems of inequality and efforts to enact social justice. In a society where groups of people have been treated differently, as is the case of the United States, advocates for the idea of color blindness deny the histories of exploitation, oppression and disenfranchisement and their historical impact over time. Moreover, they silence interpretations of the world that center the relationship of ontology to epistemology. The ways one is located and positioned in the world and the ways one is classed, gendered and raced affect one’s way of experiencing and knowing the world (Crenshaw, 1991b).

Many researchers have wrestled with how the intersectionality of identities of socially constructed groups can capture and highlight the shared commonality and differences within non-homogenous groups. Researchers such as Pearson (2007) have explored the value of examining frameworks from a multicultural feminist framework, which at its core seeks to validate, legitimize and give voice to the shared experiences and uniqueness of the four-disenfranchised female ethnic groups in the United States by bringing solidarity under the term of women of color. Pearson (2007) writes about the tension that exists in feminist frameworks between the generality of sisterhood common
to all women in the United States and the distinct characteristics and shared experiences of women of color. According to Pearson (2007), "multicultural feminism recognizes the varied circumstances of women's lives and the need to include all women in the women's movement and looks beyond stereotypes and misconceptions to develop truly informed opinions about feminism and its meaning in individual's lives and in a society." (p. 88)

Multicultural feminism is focused on articulating the interests of women of color by examining the structures of inequality and discrimination that have perpetuated inequitable outcomes. The commonality is not that they exist in another socially constructed group but rather one which derives as a direct result of their socialized and historical experiences in the United States.

American feminist scholars continue to challenge the foundations and methods of previously established feminist scholarship by examining those same frameworks through the lens of critical race theory and intersectionality to be inclusive of all women (Chavez and Griffith, 2012). However, intersectionality remains a new approach to the field. Scholars such as Hills Collins (2008), believe that intersectionality is still in its infancy as an area of inquiry to be explored. Chavez and Griffith (2012) write, "intersectionality becomes an important tool because it requires that scholars identify and give voice to the interconnected nature of being silenced, in multiple ways and the lived (bodily) manifestations of those silencing." (p. 7). Another added benefit to doing intersectional scholarship is that scholars come to understand their privilege and how their biases may impact their research analysis. Most importantly, an intersectional lens is necessary to the research because it is a tool that seeks to address the complexity of being racialized, gendered, classed and sexualized in their relationship to themselves and the
larger society. As a Latina researcher, I understand that focusing and/or narrowing a research topic make it easier to examine things separately creates fragmentation and at times can result in a fragmented analysis of how that experience is different from academia. Intersectionality provides a framework to comprehensively tackle issues of race, gender and social class while honoring the individual and diverse experience of all.

In the post-civil rights era, there existed commonality of experience amongst the four racial minority groups who continued to experience the consequences of living in a country whose historical foundations were built on imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. One way this was experienced by people of color is through microaggressions. Webster's Dictionary defines microaggressions as follows, "A comment and/or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudicial attitude toward a member of a marginalized group such as a racial minority group." According to Sue (2010), it is the constant and continuing everyday reality of slights, insults, invalidations and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned individuals. Sue (2010), declares microaggressions have a significant impact on the recipient who has been threatened or demeaned by an individual who does not recognize or see their behaviors as negative. Sue (2010) states how microaggressions influence our schools and the curriculum’s historical roots in our white Western European perspective, omitting, distorting or demonizing the history of non-White groups in America.

Solidarity as women of color might be an especially beneficial lens to use when the research group attempts to answer the question of how Minnesota female principals from the United States historically dominated cultures have come to construct their own
leadership identities while working and leading an educational system that has not yet been successful in producing equitable outcomes for all students. On the contrary, Minnesota is a state who leads the nation in the greatest disparity of learning outcomes between white students and students of color and overall stagnation in academic achievement results (Magan, 2017).

**Women and Leadership**

"When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is male or female? and you are accustomed to making the distinction with unhesitating certainty."

-Sigmund Freud

This research study is to understand how female leaders in the principalship who originate from the four historically dominated cultures in the United States came to form their leadership identity. To focus in on the leadership identity part of the research question, one must first have an academic understanding of leadership as a field of study. The purpose of the study is to define leadership, a leader and what compels a person to seek leadership. There are a massive number of leadership books written using a broad lens and many fall into the business world category. It is also important to distinguish that research groups are leaders in the field of public education and as such, are crucial to establishing what it means to be an educational leader today. This will give insight into the charge and responsibility of each of the research participants. The rationale for examining leadership within the specific context of the principalship is twofold: First, the principalship is a formal leadership position in the public-school organization. Each participant has experience as a principal in Pre-K-12 or is currently in the role of the principal in the state of Minnesota. The research is seeking to address specifically how
the leadership of women of color is experiencing their roles differently and how leadership identity shaped, formed and was initially started.

Leadership as a field of study has been going on for close to one hundred years. Moreover, scholars in that time have struggled to come up with a definition that captures leadership and all of its complexity while concurrently capturing the many aspects that it encompasses (Northouse, 2013). Leadership is like other abstract terms such as freedom and democracy. Everyone has an idea of what the word leadership means to him or her individually which has contributed to multiple revisions to the definition of leadership. According to Northouse, (2013) in that time scholars have agreed on one thing, they cannot come up with one universal definition. Northouse (2013) goes on to offer that when one thinks about leadership four components are present: a) leadership is a process, b) leadership involves influence, c) leadership occurs in groups and d) leadership involves common goals. Based on these four components Northouse (2013) offers the following definition, "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." This research will use Northouse's definition of leadership to establish a common understanding to an abstract word that over time has had multiple definitions. Northouse (2013) also makes a distinction between individuals that are formal leaders because of a position they hold which he terms assigned leadership contrasted with new leadership as an informal leader. According to Northouse (2013), "leadership is established when others perceive an individual as the most influential member of a group or organization." (p. 8). Understanding emergent leadership is especially important when we examine our research group, which is women of color in the principalship and its connection to the social identity theory and the
historical framework. According to Hogg (2001), the social identity theory in leadership is how well an individual fits the identity of the group as a whole. This presents another variable to consider because most of the scholarship around leadership has been focused on white males. In the sixties, the narrative in leadership expanded to include women in leadership, but women of color in leadership remains a quiet voice. According to Northouse (2013), male scholars have not been interested in this research. Northouse believes that leadership as a field of study still has an overrepresentation of male researchers that largely ignored gender issues in leadership until the 1970s (2013). However, with the increase of women in leadership positions this field has been transformed from early research questions: Can women lead? to research questions such as: Are their leadership style and effectiveness different between women and men? Most recently, research questions have shifted to "Why are women underrepresented in elite leadership roles?" However, leadership researchers in recent years across research studies and meta-analyses have found empirical evidence to suggest that differences do exist in leadership style and effectiveness between men and women (Northouse, 2013). According to Northouse (2013), women use a democratic or participatory style of leadership more often than men. Women are also more likely to utilize transformational leadership behaviors and contingent reward styles (Northouse, 2013). The rationale for using Northouse's leadership theory is a direct result of his analysis of the academic body of leadership theory and his focus on application. His research has done a nice job of capturing an overview of the different leadership theories and approaches, highlighting the strengths and criticism of each approach. This information will become more relevant
as the researcher selects research methodologies to get at the leadership identity of each of the research participants.

There has been an increase in women leadership and an increasing interest in the field of study between women and leadership, but there still exists what has been termed a leadership gap between men and women in elite positions of leadership. There are many factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership. According to Rhode (2014), there are some gender-specific trends that women make in not choosing leadership roles. This includes life choices, a reduction in paid employment for childrearing and opting for lower pay and responsibility for work/life balance. However, these trends are only some of the pieces in a puzzle. Rhodes writes, "women's choices are an incomplete explanation of women's underrepresentation in leadership positions."

Rhodes (2014) notes a study where both men and women declare the desire to reach top management. Rhodes (2014) makes a case that women's choices are based on socially constructed expectations within the different gender roles (Rhodes, 2014). Women's disproportionate family responsibilities and a workplace unwilling to accommodate them have an impact on a woman's decision to not lead. If women are not choosing to lead it is because men are not choosing to share in the running of the household equally (Rhodes, 2014). The reality is that even if women do choose to enter the leadership realm, they advance at a much slower pace than men. According to a 2016 Catalyst Report (Catalyst, 2017), a statistical overview between men and women in the workforce in the United States shows that:

- 56.8% of women were in the workforce vs. 69.2% of the men.
• Women held 51.5% of management positions but only 5.8% of CEO Fortune 500 positions.

• As of Fortune’s 2017 list, there have been 64 women CEOs roles in total.

• Minority women made up 3.8% of the board seats of Fortune 500 companies.

This pattern of underrepresentation of women and leadership continues when one examines the statistics of women representation in government. According to a Rutgers report on Women of Color in elective office in 2017:

• In the 115th Congress, women of color (7.1%) hold 105 seats of the 535 seats.

• There are currently four women serving as governors and one of those four is a woman of color.

• In the largest 100 cities of the United States, seven women of color serve as mayors.

Ironically, this persistent underrepresentation of women continues to exist despite the fact that more people today believe there is no significant difference between leaders based on gender. Whether it is known as the glass ceiling or an invisible barrier keeping women from elite leadership positions, there is indeed a leadership gap between women and men (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Leadership Gap Between Men and Women</th>
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<tr>
<td>Educational and Work Attainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Managerial/Professional Positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>50.8%</td>
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In U.S. Labor Force
To understand the contemporary role of the principalship one must first examine the historical evolution of teaching as a profession from a feminist framework lens. This is essential because many of the complex issues in education today are a direct result of the feminization of teaching (Lagemann, 2010). Langemann (2010) writes that teaching was once a predominantly male profession. It was not until the era of common schools (1830-1865) where the demographics of the profession began to shift. Lagemann explains this was a result of the fact that women were willing to work for significantly less money than men. One example that Lagemann provides comes from the state of Massachusetts which paid women 60 percent less than their male counterparts. Lagemann (2010) makes a case that this shift in the demographics was born from a tension that continues to exist in the study of education, practice and public opinion. According to Lagemann (2010), when one examines the history of education and specifically the feminization of education, the historical evidence points to a tension born during this demographic
change. This tension is alive and well today and present in every dimension of education in the United States including but not limited to the study of education, practice and public opinion. Today, this legacy shows up as anti-intellectual leaning that fails to look at education from a comprehensive lens and underestimates the deep complexities at play in educational issues. Lagemann (2010) writes that in the mid-1800s the idea that teaching was women's work became a prevailing thought. Educational leaders such as Horace Mann perpetuated this trail of thinking. According to Horace Mann (1837-48), "the female school teacher holds her commission from nature." It is important to note that while there was an increase in female representation in teaching jobs, the number of supervisory roles also expanded. Langemann (2010) notes that these supervisory roles were filled by men with the idea that positions such as the principal and superintendent could assist female teachers with classroom management issues, instructional frameworks and community outreach.

Race was not the only oppressed and excluded tool used by dominator culture. Gender was also used to exclude and limit the opportunities for women. Women were excluded from attending colleges until after the Civil War (Lagemann, 2010). Therefore, as the demand for female teachers increased so did the need for what was termed normal schools and academies (Lagemann, 2010). By the end of the Civil War women held the majority of teaching jobs. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2015) reports that 3.6 million women were employed as elementary and secondary teachers. In the 2011-2012 school year, 76% of all teachers were female. The teaching field is dominated by female teachers. However, when one compares this to the leadership demographics the pattern of elite leadership positions being held by males, they continue to dominate. The
American Association of School Administrators (2011-2012) reports that of the 13,728 superintendents, 14% are women compared to 76% of all K-12 educators who are women. Although, there has been a continued increase of representation of women in the superintendent positions, 87% of them are still held by men (Glass, 2017). Moreover, Holland (2011) argues that while the number of female superintendents has increased at the current rate, it will take three decades for before women have equal representation. Holland (2010) writes that "there is still a gender bias between men and women. Often men and women have different careers pathways to the top." Holland (2010) notes female superintendents tended to be older and have a more formal education. Also, female superintendents had twenty plus years of classroom experience before becoming administrators.

**Educational Leadership: The Principalship**

The school leaders of today wear many hats and balance many responsibilities which are furthered complicated by an era of underfunded school improvement mandates that demand the highest student learning outcomes for all students in the history of American public education (Brill, 2008). Challenging and overwhelming are two words that come to mind as one begins to analyze the list of roles and responsibilities that today's instructional leaders are expected to execute on a day-to-day basis. The principal is on the frontlines leading individual school learning communities. Within the learning organization of public schools, the principal holds the formal leadership role at the individual school level. Fullan (2003) suggests:

Leading schools-as in any great organization-requires principals with the courage and capacity to build new cultures based on trusting relationships and a culture of
disciplined inquiry and action. That school leaders with these characteristics are in short supply is the point. Leading schools through complex reform agendas require outstanding leadership that goes far beyond improving test scores. Admittedly, developing trust and discipline in an organization that doesn't have it is a considerable challenge. However, there are cases where it has been done. We need to learn from these schools, focus on the right things and create the conditions under which new leaders can develop and flourish.

For Fullan, overcoming this challenge is the moral imperative of school leadership. Sergiovanni declared (2006) “Leadership is a personal thing. It is comprised of three important dimensions-one's' heart, head and hand." (p. 2). Sergiovanni (2006) goes on to state that leadership has its origins in the heart, head and hand of each. This is primarily the reason why leaders end up with such varied approaches when individuals are in similar scenarios. Sergiovanni (2006) suggests that leaders are products of their context. Sergiovanni's metaphor of the heart, head and hand of leadership capture is the context of each's personal vision. Sergiovanni (2006) defines the heart of leadership as what a person believes, values, dreams about and is committed to. Moreover, he declares the head of leadership has to do with the theories of practice, the body of knowledge an individual has developed over time and the ability to reflect on the situations faced in light of these theories (Sergiovanni, 2006). He further declares the hand of leadership is the actions leaders take, the decisions leaders make and the exhibited leadership and management behaviors used by leaders that over time become school programs, policies, protocols and eventually institutionalized (Sergiovanni, 2006). Individuals seeking to lead a building and hold the position of principal must find his or her way, develop their
unique approach or style to bring in harmony the heart, head and hand into a successful principalship practice (Sergiovanni, 2006). Growing in the principalship is a very organic process that must be shaped and molded over time. It requires reflective practice and a continuous commitment to self-improvement. The principalship is similar to teaching because both are positions that are simultaneously a science, an art and a craft (Marzano, 2007). Sergiovanni declares (2006) "in the principalship, the challenge of leadership is to make peace with two competing imperatives: the managerial and the moral." (p. 13). The school has to run effectively and efficiently. However, a school must make the shift from being an organization to a learning community. Senge (1990) "defines a learning organization as follows: “a learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. Moreover, how they can change it.” (p. 13). He further explains that in our current society there is a surface level understanding of what it means to learn. According to Senge (1990), learning is not just a process of taking in new information, rather learning is a process where we become able to do something we never were able to do. It is in this space of learning that individuals extend their capacity to create. This is the art of being a principal, a certain creativity in leading, shaping and cultivating a strong learning environment for students. According to Whitaker (2012)

Any principal can fill a bookshelf with books about educational leadership. Any principal can study a list of guidelines, standards, principles and theories. The best administrators and the worst administrators can ace exams in their graduate classes. The difference between a more effective principal and their less effective colleagues is not what they know. It is what they do (p. xi).
This is critical because it is the actions that set apart good leaders from great leaders and from schools that close the opportunity gap and schools that do not. According to a 2004 report, the Wallace Foundation found that leadership ranked second only to teaching improving student achievement (Leithwood, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Leadership has a significant impact on student achievement. Effective principals have an enduring effect on the selection, growth and development of a school and its faculty. After all, if you are efficiently leading, then your teachers are teaching effectively which will result in higher levels of learning. Those foundations are built with the relationships that the principal cultivates with his or her teachers. The quality of the relationships determines the quality of the school. Principals work to provide the conditions, resources and support for teacher learning to increase student achievement (Sergiovanni, 2006). Therefore, it is fundamentally important that the principal be the number one instructional learner and leader in the building because they lead by example.

The principalship is one of the most exciting roles in the educational learning organization. Every day looks a little different and there is never a dull moment. One day a person is leading a professional development training with their staff and ten minutes later they could be handling a medical emergency, helping to resolve a conflict between two students, meeting with a teacher after an observation having dialogue around effective instructional or de-escalating an irate parent. It is one of the most rewarding jobs in education because leading and facilitating the site level decision making is crucial. According to Brill (2008), "the position of school principal requires an ability to recognize and understand the causes of the challenges of the field." The leadership style of a leader is critical because they have to be willing to have those critical conversations
with their school staff such as issues of the achievement gap to move beyond surface level symptoms and get to the root issues. To understand the root issues the principal must be directly involved in the teaching and learning life of a school.

The quality of a teacher's planning, delivery and assessment significantly affect student learning (Tucker & Stronge, 2005) and student success increases when teachers use specific instructional strategies. However, what is often overlooked is the influential role that every principal can play and effectively play in improving supervisor-teacher communication, instructional efficiency and ultimately student learning (Pollock & Ford, 2009). Principals play a pivotal role in communicating and setting the values and beliefs that are meaningful in their lives. Creating learning communities that are focused on learning, collaboration and a positive and caring community are foundational areas of focus. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) found the following characteristics were strong determinants of effective and successful principals. Principals create opportunities that have a school-wide impact.

Those leaders have long term goals but also day-by-day actions they implement. They have a strong sense of her or himself and feel secure in who they are as leaders. Effective leaders stay focused on the goals and do not get distracted by problems and situation. According to Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), most successful principals understand that a positive school climate is essential for an effective school.

If a new principal is in a school building that is underperforming, there is a strong likelihood that the principal will need to restructure and change things that will stimulate school improvement. According to Sergiovanni (2006), resistance to change occurs when one's primary work needs are threatened. Every time something is changed ambiguity can
occur. Therefore, it is essential that change must lead to improvement. According to Fullan (2003), to sustain change and sustainable leadership is a moral purpose. "Moral purpose means raising the level of all while closing the gap. This is the only way for large-scale, sustainable reform to occur and it is the moral purpose of the highest order." This means that school principals must act with focused intention. As Whitaker (2012) writes, "Great principals never forget that it is people, not programs, who determine the quality of the school." (p. 5). However, it is important that principals and teachers are products of their context.

Teacher and principal perceptions of students are grounded in their location in social categories of race, class and gender. They make sense of their interactions with pupils and the conditions of their work from these social locations. Teachers and principals bring differences and knowledge of racial structures into schools that provide a framework from which to interpret, organize information and act. (Ferguson, 2000)

The decisions that principals make are guided and rooted from their location in social categories of race, class and gender. According to Brill (2008), principals on a daily basis find themselves in diverse situations where decision making, core values and emotions intersect. Consequently, how do individuals in these roles go about their decision-making process? How do personal values and external pressures guide their decisions? In their role, they must have a decision-making process, and expert school leaders can articulate a high level of awareness of the processes they are using to inform and guide their decisions and the steps necessary before making a decision (Brill, 2008). Moreover, it is important to point out that most decision-making is not happening in a controlled environment, rather it is an atmosphere where multiple things are occurring.
concurrently. According to Brill (2008), school leadership and strong emotions are intertwined. Often principals are working with and through varying emotionally intense scenarios. The day-to-day job responsibilities call on principals to have difficult conversations, coach, evaluate, develop intervention strategies and provide discipline (Brill, 2008). One question that comes to mind about our research group of female principals from historically dominated cultures is the following: What identity do they connect most closely with these moments of disequilibrium and high-pressure situations? One of the primary reasons I was motivated to explore this research question is the high complexity of the role of the principalship. Growing as a school leader is impacted by many variables, but it is a position where one has to be confident in who they are as an individual to understand what is permissible and impermissible under their leadership. According to Brill (2008), who you are as a school leader is defined by where you have been and your lived experiences. It is a position where one must work in tandem with others while cultivating the most conducive environment for learning outcomes. Most importantly, a school leader is shaped by their ability to reflect, adapt and remain committed to growing.

In summary, the goal of this chapter was to provide a historical context on the history of dominated cultures in the United States. Specifically, the goals were to show how race was used by the state and how the institution of school was used as a tool to deculturalize the four dominated groups. Providing a critical feminist race perspective on how this experience was different for women of color and how individual and group identity is formed as a result of these historical experiences was explored. Intersectionality and micro-aggressions were explored as frameworks to help the
researcher and reader come to understand the research participants. The secondary topics explored leadership theory, leadership identity and the principalship as related topics critical to answering the research question: Minnesota female principals from historically dominated groups in the United States: What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race has impacted their leadership identity? It is the goal of this researcher to learn from the lived experiences of the research participants. In the next chapter, the researcher will declare the literature that was reviewed to explore the historical foundations of primary and secondary sources.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Female principals from Minnesota are historically part of the dominant cultures in the United States. Their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity has not been completely explored. Research in each area will frame and support the scholarly pursuit of this study. However, because the participants are Minnesota female principals (MFP) from the United States historically dominated cultures, there is also a need to review the historical context from a societal perspective as well as from an educational, historical perspective. The literature review will begin with a summary of the history of dominated cultures and how that history was experienced by women from dominated cultures. The content themes that will be explored include feminist critical race theory, intersectionality, leadership theory and role of the principal. Each of these content themes is essential to understanding the research participant group.

Summary of the History of Dominated Cultures in the United States

The history of the United States is a complex story that until recent times has failed to include the voices and stories of all the groups who have helped create this country. According to Takaki (1993), “the history of America has been painted like a single portrait instead of a rich mosaic.” (p. 2). The reality is that the United States has been racially diverse from the beginning. Nevertheless, the dominant voices belonging to the dominant culture, which is Anglo-Saxon, has come to be referred as White (Takaki, 1993). While it is impossible to write, and include all of the ethnic groups, which have helped, form and shape America, it is possible to examine its origins from a multicultural perspective. According to Takaki (1993), “race has been a social construct that has
historically set apart racial minorities from European immigrant groups.” (p. 10). Race in America is not the same as ethnicity. Rather it is a social construct and a tool to dominate. This summary will focus on the ethnic groups where race was used as a strategy to dominate, de-culturalize and assimilate them into the dominant culture. The four largest racial minority groups are as follows: Native American, African American, Hispanic and Asian Americans.

**Native Americans-The Racialization of Savagery and De-culturalization**

When the English began to encounter other people and started using some of the same verbiage it was simultaneously happening in three places: Ireland, Virginia and New England. The commonality between these three places was that all three areas were being colonized by the English. The Irish were described a lazy, idle, barbaric, living like beasts and wicked (Takaki, 1993). The English began developing laws to reinforce a social separation between the English and the Irish. There was also a permissive culture of violence against the Irish where, for example, the heads of slain Irish were considered trophies (Takaki, 1993).

When the English reached the shores of Virginia and New England, they noted that the Native Americans reminded them of the Irish. When the English arrived, they transferred this notion of savagery onto the Native Americans (Takaki, 1993). As the English began colonizing the eastern shores of America, they perpetuated their ideas of Native Americans to justify the taking of their land and waging violence against them (Takaki, 1993). What was born was the racialization of the Indian as savage. "Indian heathenism and alleged laziness came to be viewed as inborn group traits that rendered them naturally incapable of civilization.” (Takaki, 1993, p. 38). Thus, began the process...
of dehumanizing the Indian and associating the Indian with the devil (Takaki, 1993). American Indian identity became a racial marker forever bound to the characteristics of savagery. The possession of Indian land became easier when the English also brought with them diseases that helped decrease and decimate large Indian populations (Takaki, 1993). Moreover, the English interpreted these Indian deaths as divine permission to continue to take lands (Takaki, 1993).

Native Americans had a different interpretation of what was occurring. "We see plainly that their chief desire is to deprive us of the privilege of our land and drive us off to our utter ruin.” (Takaki, 1993, p. 45). As the colonies began to grow and a new nation emerged, the founding fathers had to redefine the role of the Indian in this new republic. Thomas Jefferson said, "Whites and Native Americans were both American, born in the same land and we hope the two peoples would long continue to smoke in friendship together.” (Takaki, 1993, p. 47). The reality is that to civilize the Indian meant systematically making them less Indian and more like a white Anglo-Saxon farmer.

Individuals like Jefferson perpetuated a narrative that the Native Americans were victims of their own culture (Takaki, 1993). Instead of the brutal reality that Native Americans were casualties of a game meant to satisfy the voracious fur trade, the appropriation of their lands and the brutal warfare waged against them (Takaki, 1993). This narrative permitted the legal institutions of this new country to disown blame and accountability, allowing the dominant culture to construct a narrative that colonizing the United States was all done fairly and legally (Takaki, 1993). Whatever casualties resulted were all in the name of progress and modernization. There were two narratives concurrently happening. Publicly, Thomas Jefferson stated the following message to
native people (Takaki, 1993), "Your lands are your own; your right to them shall never be violated by us; they are yours to keep or to sell as you please." (p. 48). Takaki (1993) posits,

privately, behind the closed doors of Congress, Jefferson had another strategy in mind. Motivated by his concern for white expansion Jefferson sent a confidential message, ‘First, encourage the Indian to become a farmer, the farming land will eventually overtake the woods for hunting. Second, sell more manufactured goods to the Indians, by increasing the number of trading houses.’ (p. 48).

The hope was to drive the Native Americans into debt forcing them to sell their lands at bargain prices (Takaki, 1993). The westward expansion continued when these strategies failed and the Native Americans resisted. Then war was waged and lands were seized by the state (Takaki, 1993). Modernization and progress were the rationales and justification made by the elected leaders at that time. The casualty of this progress was the Native American Indian traditions, their land and the thousands who perished along the way.

Spring (2012) advances, "Unfortunately, violence and racism are a basic part of American history and the history of schools." (p. 2). This legacy of racism was woven into the fabric of every legal institution including school. Spring (2004) states, "from colonial times to today, educators have preached equality of opportunity and good citizenship, while engaging in acts of religious intolerance, racial segregation, cultural genocide and discrimination against immigrants and nonwhites (p. 2)." Spring (2004) also puts forth that the world inherited the word civilize from the Romans during their western expansion. Individuals who abided by the laws of the state were considered
human. Those existing outside the law were considered less than human (Spring, 2012). Spring further declares (2012), "that to civilize meant to bring a people under the control of the law." (p. 3). To control people with laws meant changing their culture to Roman culture. Hence, de-culturalization has long been a tactic used by a state power when bringing conquered people under a new rule of law. De-culturalization is another word for assimilation into the dominant culture (Hollie, 2010). Hollie (2010) writes, "There is a major difference between those immigrants that came to the United States voluntarily and those whose move was involuntary as a result of colonization, enslavement, conquest, or less than legal means." The implication is that American history has been experienced differently by ethnic groups and/or individuals that come as a result of a voluntary or involuntary the immigration process. How this affects schools is the successful path for the voluntary immigrant as a result of successful assimilation. The path for involuntary immigrant has been a forced process or unsuccessful assimilation (Hollie, 2012). Ogbu (1978) theorizes the American school experience and outcomes were very different for voluntary and involuntary immigrants. Hollie (2012) explains, "there is a basic formula to achieve academic success that must be followed one must assimilate from one's home culture and language into mainstream culture and many ethnic groups achieved great success in pursuing the American dream."

It is important to distinguish that this has not been the pathway for the four dominated groups. For these four groups, assimilation was not a choice. This resulted in a way that did not provide access to the same tools that would allow them to easily assimilate into the mainstream culture and society (Hollie, 2012). This different historical experience of the four dominated groups will be carefully examined as it has a direct
connection to the deficit lens that continues to prevail towards cultural and linguistic differences students bring into the classroom (Hollie, 2012).

Europeans and later Americans, had a belief system that they were doing good as they conquered the Native Americans. According to Said (1994), “there was a commitment which allowed decent men and women to accept the notion that distant territories and their native peoples should be subjugated and there was an almost a metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior or less advanced people.” (p.10). As America and its institutions emerged as a beacon of hope and democracy, there was also a legacy of superiority, subjugation and domination that was an ever-present (Spring, 2004). It remains incomprehensible how de-culturazation and democratic values should be able to coexist. Spring argues (2012), "It is important to understand that for some Americans, racism and democracy are not conflicting beliefs, but they are part of a general system of American values.” (p. 19). Spring (2012) references a study conducted by Smith where he determined that for over 80 percent of U.S. History American laws declared two-thirds of the domestic adult population not able to receive U.S. citizenship due to race, original nationality and gender. The attitudes of English colonist were not in favor of a multicultural society instead of a unified American culture. This attitude was also consistent with the ideas of many of our founding fathers (Spring, 2012). For example, the Federalists had a preference for native-born citizenship v. naturalized citizenship of immigrants. Ultimately, the founding fathers' hope was for peaceful assimilation of the Native American tribes into the United States (Spring, 2012).

The institution of the public school by design would play a pivotal role in ensuring the successful assimilation to Anglo-Saxon values and their definitions of good
citizenship. Public schools in the 19th Century existed primarily to protect the ideology of the Anglo-American Protestant culture (Spring, 2012). According to Spring (2012), when English colonists and later educators and officials of the U.S. government considered deculturalization of Native Americans, they included replacing cultural values related to family structures, gender roles, child-rearing practices, sexual attitudes, economic relationships and government. Native Americans had to endure the process of deculturalization while also being denied U.S. citizenship. Spring writes (2012), "The Naturalization Act of 1790 excluded Native Americans from U.S. citizenship and instead were classified as domestic foreigners." (p. 22). Native Americans were also excluded from seeking naturalized citizenship because they were not white. This law remained in effect until 1924 when Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act (Spring, 2012).

After the forced removal of native tribes and the creation of Indian Reservations, the dominant theme continued to be de-culturalization. The goal was to replace native languages with English, to eliminate Indian customs and to teach allegiance to the U.S. government (Spring, 2012). According to Spring (2012), one critical educational policy implemented by the government was boarding schools. Boarding schools were designed to remove children from their families at an early age, isolate them from their language, the customs of their parents and tribes (Spring, 2012). Spring explains (2012) there was strong opposition to these practices by Native American tribes.

In the late 20th Century Native American tribes were advocating for a return to traditional tribal cultures. Spring (2012) writes these requests were only agreed to by the federal government only when Native Americans no longer posed a military threat to their state. Moreover, the struggle of Native American Civil Rights to education
dominated the 20th century alongside the other identified dominated cultures. According to Schnaiberg (2000), the struggle for equality and equity was long a multi-cultural struggle.

The responsibility of educating the majority of Native Americans fell to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Spring writes (2012), “in the 1940s and 1950s federal Indian policy was termination of tribes and reservations and assimilate the Native American to large urban areas. The termination policies were similar to the federal policies that placed Native Americans in Indian Territories and reservations.” (p. 116). According to Spring (2004), the goal was still to civilize the Native Americans by integrating them into the general population. Resistance to these policies helped perpetuate a collective drive for self-determination during the civil rights era. Spring (2012) cites a 1969 U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare Report, Indian Education: A National Tragedy-A National Challenge. The opening statement of this report was a damming of previous federal Native American education policies: "A careful review of the historical literature reveals that the dominant policy of the Federal Government toward the American Indian has been one of forced assimilation…because of a desire to divest the Indian of his land."

According to Spring (2012), the report made two significant recommendations 1) maximum participation and control of Native Americans to establish Indian education programs and 2) maximum participation and development of educational programs in federal schools and local public schools. This was important because this report also placed a high value on creating bilingual and bicultural education programs. Spring (2012) credits this report for being the catalyst that led to the passage of the Indian Education Act in 1972 and the 1975 Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.
Both acts were critical in granting tribes the power to direct their education and health programs. Furthermore, the federal government also protected the religious freedom, the preserve, protect, promoted native languages and an overall commitment to strengthen Indian culture (Spring, 2012).

**African Americans: African Diaspora and Slavery**

Historical economic patterns connect the origins of enslaved Africans to the Americas directly to globalization (Spring, 2012). Spring (2012) also intentionally uses and applies the term ‘diaspora’ to all Africans who were forced or induced to leave their homeland. Africans were imported from many diverse cultures and spoke a variety of languages. Consequently, de-culturalization and assimilation manifested differently dependent on the structure of the labor system (Spring, 2012). For example, in the northern states of the United States slaves were small in number and usually worked alongside other white servants and farmhands (Spring, 2012). As a result, there was more opportunity for cultural contact and exchanges which increased opportunities for assimilation. However, in the southern states the plantation system required a larger number of slaves and often they were excluded from white society (Spring, 2012). Therefore, cultural exchanges between whites and Blacks were limited (Spring, 2012).

According to Takaki (1993), to manage their slave, labor masters used and implemented a variety of discipline strategies. Many masters yielded to the belief system that in order to maintain power they had to instill fear (Takaki, 1993). As a result, many masters used harsh discipline strategies. Masters also lived with the constant fear that their slaves would revolt (Spring, 2004). Moreover, between 1800 and 1835 many laws were passed in the South making it illegal to educate slaves (Spring, 2012).
In the beginning, the institution of religion was used as a tool to differentiate racial groups (Takaki, 1993). American colonists viewed themselves as Christians and Africans as heathens. However, when Africans began to convert to Christianity this delineation was no longer applicable (Takaki, 1993). Laws began to explicitly exclude based on race. One begins to see language such as no Negro or Indian (Takaki, 1993). De-culturalization was a method implemented to strip and de-humanize Africans. According to Takaki (1993), one of the first things plantation owners did after purchasing a slave was to take away the slave's name and rename them. Owners also isolated newly arrived slaves who were unable to speak the language of the owner or other slaves (Takaki, 1993). This resulted in slaves developing their language to communicate because African slaves came from many different cultures and spoke different languages (Spring, 2012).

Assimilation of slaves occurred over time. The newly arrived slaves maintained closer ties to their ancestral land (Spring, 2012). With each generation of slaves, this waned and cultural gestures and language were adapted to meet the needs of their environment. According to Spring (2012), "slaves developed a cultural style of interacting with their white owner who held the power of life and death." (p. 52). This is key because slaves have no institutional protection creating a context for complete domination. Because of this domination, a vibrant oral tradition emerged in the African American culture along with a strong distrust and dislike of whites (Spring, 2012). Spring (2012), cites the oral stories and religious slave songs as evidence of this dynamic.

Unlike Native Americans, where education was used as a method to control a conquered people, slaves were excluded and their educational opportunities were
intentionally limited by the state (Spring, 2012). According to Spring (2012), in the South, literacy was a punishable crime. African-Americans faced discriminatory policies regardless of what geographic region they lived in. Blacks were denied U.S. citizenship and the political rights of the Constitution (Spring, 2012). However, allegiance to the state and the United States was required of all Blacks while they could not exercise any political rights (Spring, 2012).

This changed after the Civil War and the passage of the Naturalization Act of 1870 declaring all persons born in the United States to be citizens (Spring, 2012). In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment passed and called for equal protection under the law. According to Spring (2012), this amendment had immense implications for public schools. Unfortunately, the application of equal rights was dependent on the interpretation of the law. Spring (2012) declares after the 1896 Supreme Court case ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) it established the 'separate but equal doctrine.' Establishing that segregation did not create a caste system of inferiority if facilities were equal and laws were reasonable (Spring, 2012).

Two systemic issues arose after the Plessy ruling. First, the court did not define what constituted equal facilities and what was reasonable (Spring, 2012). Second, the citizenship rights of African Americans disappeared in southern states laws and limited the rights of Black citizens to vote (Spring, 2012). It would take another landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education Topeka* (1954) to overturn the separate but equal doctrine. It was not equal until the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s before Black Americans had their full citizenship rights fully implemented.
The legacy of Jim Crow and segregation had a tremendous impact on the access and quality of education that Blacks were afforded. According to Spring (2012), African Americans belonged to a public-school system that limited funds provided to segregated schools. The per pupil expenses for white students were four to five times higher than for Blacks (Spring, 2012). There was political pressure to limit the educational opportunities of Blacks because they posed a threat to the usage of Black children as farm labor (Spring, 2012). The struggle for equality was a long and arduous struggle. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), fought against the segregation of schools, for the ability to participate in the economic system and for the recognition of African American culture (Spring, 2012). The struggle to end segregation and the end of legal discrimination against minority groups took over 50 years to achieve. In 1954 the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka brought an end to the doctrine separate but equal. However, it took a systematic and organized political struggle to make desegregation a reality (Spring, 2012).

Organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equity (CORE), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used nonviolent strategies to force the passage of the national civil rights legislation signed by President Johnson (Spring, 2012). According to Takaki (1993), the Civil Rights Revolution no longer permitted discrimination but it did not erase the poverty that many African Americans lived in (Takaki, 1993). Takaki further writes (1993), "African Americans won the right to sit at the lunch counter, but many did not have money to pay for their meals." (p. 400).
These historical tensions continue to manifest themselves in schools today. Schools are a microcosm of our larger society. Our current events continue to make one thing clear, America has not come to terms with its racialized past. This legacy and tension continues to show up in the discussion of issues of local control vs. federal control, access for all students, equitable resources, academic tracking, racially isolated school demographics, disproportionate identification of students coming from the four dominant groups into special education and the persistent academic underperformance of those students when compared to their white peers. Differential experiences of students belonging to the dominant group and those from the four dominant groups are critical issues facing our nation and schools today.

**Hispanic/Latino Americans: Exclusion and Segregation**

The words Latino and Hispanic are terms that generally group together people from a variety of distinct cultures and linguistic backgrounds. However, both conditions have flaws because they group such a variety of diverse groups of people that both conditions fall short of meeting their intended goal. The terms are trying to capture people whose geographic origin comes from Latin America or those that originate from Spanish speaking countries (Spring, 2012). However, this summary will highlight the historical and educational struggles of Mexican Americans and Puerto Rican Americans for two specific reasons. First, according to the 2010 U.S. Census (2010), the two largest groups within the category of Hispanic are Mexican Americans represent 63% and Puerto Rican American at 9.2%. Second, Spring (2012) declares the following, "European Americans considered Mexican and Puerto Ricans culturally and racially inferior. The
U.S. government felt justified in its invasion and conquest of Mexican and Puerto Rican lands." (p. 83).

There was strong American interest in both Mexican and Puerto Rican lands that justified de-culturalization programs that would keep the conquered populations from further uprising. Spring declares (2012), "the Mexican American War was among other things a race war." (p. 86). During this time Mexicans were considered an inferior race because they were descendants of what was then considered an inferior European race (Spanish) and Native Americans. The westward expansion prompted by ‘manifest destiny’, a belief that it was preordained that the United States would one day extend from eastern sea to western sea, soon brought Americans into Mexican territories (Takaki, 1993). Those individuals coming and settling came with goals of overthrowing the Mexican government and seizing the land for the United States. According to Takaki (1993), a key goal of the Mexican-American War was the annexation of California. The California ports were a coveted asset and part of a larger economic and military strategic plan of President James Polk. Takaki states (1993) the start of the Mexican American War aligns with the start of the Bear Flag Rebellion in California. Immigrants from the United States began arriving and settling on California lands with a premeditated plan to oust Mexican authorities and take over the land. American immigrants came with a strong a sense of entitlement and superiority.

The actual start of the Mexican American War began in Texas after Mexico outlawed slavery in 1830. According to Takaki (1993), this action angered American settlers who were settling in Texas in droves. Jose Maria Sanchez, a Mexican government official at the time, wrote the following in his diary (Weber et al., 2004),
The Americans from the North have taken possession of practically all eastern part of Texas, in most cases without the permission of authorities. They immigrate constantly and take possession of the location that best suits them without either asking leave or going through any formality other than building their homes. (pp. 46-47).

The war came in 1836 in Texas when a small group of Americans began a rebellion against the Mexican government which resulted in Texas becoming an independent state (Takaki, 1993). However, it was not until Texas was annexed into the United States seven years later that Mexico broke off all diplomatic ties (Takaki, 1993). There was strong disagreement about where the border between Mexico and Texas was located (Takaki, 1993). Americans contended that it began at the Rio Grande and Mexicans believed the natural border was at the Nueces River (Takaki, 1993). According to Takaki (1993), a military scuffle erupted on May 11th which gave the U.S. the excuse that it needed to declare war on Mexico.

Takaki examined written accounts from soldiers who participated in the military campaign against Mexico. It was a brutal onslaught of military force that resulted in innocent civilians being murdered, pillaged and women raped (Takaki, 1993). Mexico lost the Spanish American War and as a result, ceded the land from Texas to California now known as the American Southwest.

A critical issue for Mexican-Americans has its first historical ties to the end of this war and the issue of citizenship. According to Spring (2012), when both governments were ratifying the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the question of U.S. citizenship for Mexicans residing in these territories was one of key negotiating point for the Mexicans.
They were concerned about the racial attitudes held by Americans. The treaty ended with a provision for citizenship that would be implemented when the U.S. Congress deemed Mexicans ready for full citizenship (Spring, 2012). According to Spring (2012), from the start restrictions and limitations were placed on citizenship rights which included limits on voting rights, segregation and schooling. After the war Mexicans who inhabited these territories became foreigners in their land as more Americans settled and dominance of the English language took root (Spring, 2012). Takaki (1993) recounts that a second critical issue emerged, political vulnerability and powerlessness. Spring argues (2012), that the racial classification of Mexicans varied from state to state. For example, in California, they were considered Caucasian until 1930 and in Texas, they were considered not white. This nebulous approach to the Mexican American citizenship rights led to civil liberty violations like the mass repatriation program where it is estimated more than 400,000 Mexican Americans were sent back to Mexico (Gonzales, 2009). According to Gonzales (2009), many of those deported were natural U.S. born citizens.

The end of the Spanish American War resulted in Puerto Rico becoming a colony. Similar to the Mexican American War the motivation to wage war against the Spanish was strategic and focused on reducing the political influence of Spain while providing the U.S. economic and military advantage in the Caribbean (Spring, 2012). According to Spring, “as a conquered people, Puerto Rican Americans have been divided over issues of independence and citizenship.” In 1917, the Jones Act gave Puerto Rican American citizenship rights with restrictions and stipulations. For example, Puerto Ricans were made to serve in the military without being allowed to vote in national elections. African Americans, Mexican Americans and Puerto Rican Americans share a commonality which
is that until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 they did not have full citizenship rights. Furthermore, it was not until the 1975 Amendment of the Voting Rights and the 1968 Bilingual Education Act that access to full citizenship came into being for Latinos (Spring, 2012).

Discriminatory policies initiated by local, state and federal government were common toward Mexican Americans and historically happened in two phases. The first phase was the strategic domination of the conquered Mexican inhabitants that remained on ceded land after the Mexican American War. The second was in the late 19th and early 20th century when there was an influx of Mexican immigrants that was encouraged by U.S. farmers who were in need of cheap labor (Spring, 2012). Spring declares (2012, p.90), “The attitude of racial, religious and cultural superiority…was reflected in the treatment after that toward Mexicans which resulted in discriminatory practices. The institutions of government which included schools perpetuated a policy of segregation similar to African Americans during Jim Crow. According to Spring (2012), after a war the victor was faced with two choices when dealing with the conquered people, either eliminate them or assimilate them. In the case of Mexicans in the Southwest, both policies were implemented. In many parts of the southwest whites physically drove out as many Mexicans as possible out of their communities. Those individuals that remained faced a hostile environment that made assimilation difficult.

Spring (2012) declared, there are two ways that the institution of school can also be used as a tool of oppression. First, deny and exclude the dominated cultures from knowledge to protect political and economic control. U.S. farmers had economic and political motivation to keep Mexican children away from school because they were a
cheap part of their labor force. According to Spring, (2012, p.94) "one of the most discriminatory acts against the children of Mexicans was the non-enforcement of compulsory school laws." Mexican students who attended school faced a school experience similar to that of Native Americans where the goal was to negate their native language and cultural customs. The second was to separate the superior culture from the inferior culture. Spring (2012) stated, the term used to de-culturalize was called ‘Americanization.’ However, Americanization for Mexican children was different from other European immigrants. Their process was further complicated by their active participation in the farm labor because they needed to contribute to the family household income. According to Spring (2012), children struggled to access the opportunity even to attend school. The state was also complicit because it failed to enforce child labor laws when it came to Mexican children (Spring, 2012). Racist attitudes and discriminatory policies toward Mexican Americans during the great migration to El Norte between the 1900s and 1930s were woven into the American fabric.

At first, a large number of Mexicans were fleeing impoverished conditions fueled by the Mexican Civil War. During this time Mexico's infrastructure, economic and political systems were decimated entirely after so many years of war (Takaki, 1993). Economic opportunities available in the United States began to spread. U.S. farmers also encouraged their migration to America (Spring, 2012). This steady influx of new immigrants into Mexican communities and ironically segregation policies helped preserve and keep intact cultural and linguistic norms. According to Spring (2012), attempts were made to escape these anti-Mexican views by placing their children in parochial or nonsectarian private schools. Mexican Americans were interested in their
children preserving their cultural and linguistic heritage while concurrently learning English and American values. However, the majority of Mexican Americans were locked in a perpetual cycle driven by the economic forces of farm work. This did not prevent whites from passing and instituting a variety of laws making it illegal and a crime to speak anything but English in public schools (Spring, 2012). These policies fueled many individuals from the Mexican American community to organize and protest school segregation and the quality of education their children were receiving. Similar to segregated schools for African-Americans in the south, separate did not mean equal. Facilities were poor, books were handed down, discarded from the more affluent white schools and they were excluded from white athletic leagues (Spring, 2012). Children were intentionally put in deculturalization programs that devalued their cultural and linguistic heritage (Spring, 2012).

Puerto Rican children faced a similar fate as Native Americans and Mexican Americans. Spring (2012) wrote that the institution of school as a domination tool is directly evidenced in the U.S. government colonization plan of Puerto Rico. Colonization carried out by the institution of school was cheaper than with military force. According to Spring (2012), the educational policy in Puerto Rico was rooted in building loyalty to the United States similar to the Americanization programs implemented for Native Americans. Spring (2012, p.99) also declared, "It is important to understand that the Puerto Rican people did not ask to become part of the United States. The Puerto Ricans independence movement was independence from Spain not annexation to the U.S."

Spring (2012) further noted, that Puerto Rico had achieved this goal and was an independent country for one year; however, they were transitioning from Spanish
colonial rule to a newly independent government taking power in July 1898. This independence occurred before American soldiers arrived in Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico did not welcome Americans on their soil and their anger was furthered fueled when they were placed under the control of the U.S. War Department. Until the Puerto Rican Commonwealth Bill was signed in 1950 which gave the Puerto Rican people back more control of their schools, the U.S. government implemented a particular plan to supplant Spanish with English (Spring, 2012). Furthermore, strict patriotic policies were implemented such as a Pro-American curriculum, favoritism to American rather than local teachers and U.S. patriotic exercises to instill a love for all things American including the celebration of U.S. holidays (Spring, 2012). After the Commonwealth Bill was signed by President Harry Truman, the people of Puerto Rico voted to reinstate Spanish as the language of instruction in their school system (Spring, 2012).

Americanization for both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans was a strategic tool implemented by the government to obtain and secure further political and economic power. According to Spring (2012, p.105), "the methods implemented by the U.S. government were as follows: segregation/isolation forced a change of language, the curriculum that reflected the story of the dominant culture, denial and usurping the cultural and religious expressions from the dominated culture." However, in the case of Native Americans, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans resistance to de-culturalization remained strong for each group. According to Spring (2012, p. 90), segregated schools, housing and discrimination in employment became the Mexican American heritage. Spring noted (2012, p. 90), "the Americanization process for Mexicans should not be confused with the Americanization programs encountered in schools by children of European
immigrants." Enforced assimilation occurred in a segregated school system. Spring wrote (2012) that Mexicans received similar treatment of Native Americans where negative attitudes regarding their culture, values and language were discouraged in their schooling. Organizations such as League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the NAACP worked to desegregate schooling and provide equal access (Spring, 2012).

Another area of great concern that inspired activism was the preservation of culture and language (Spring, 2012). The organization La Raza Unida advocated for workers for bilingual education and language training for equal opportunity in public schools and eventually the greater economy (Spring, 2012). However, the language debate in schools manifested itself in the form of English only. Bilingual education, access to English language acquisition and multicultural education continues to be highly politicized issues (Spring, 2012). It should be noted that Latinos experienced desegregation efforts very differently than African-Americans. According to a 1999 Harvard National study of Resegregation, Latinos' rights to desegregate occurred almost two decades after Brown v. Board of education. Recognizing the Supreme Court ruling in Lau v. Nichols (1974), a concerted effort to offer bilingual education emerged from the Nixon administration. However, there was never any enforcement of desegregation rights for Latinos. However, bilingual education efforts came the 1980s and substantial attempts were made in the 80s and 90s to outlaw bilingual education and replace it with English language acquisition reforms and school policies.

According to Spring (2012), "the problem is rooted in the fact that nation-states use their educational system to create uniform culture and language usage as a means of maintaining social order and control." Furthermore, Spring (2012, p.141) writes, "since
the enactment of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there has been a shift to equality of educational opportunity based on a uniform set of standards, closing failing schools and replacing the goals of bilingual education with language acquisition." However, while the goals of this law were to achieve equal opportunity for all students via uniform state standards and assessments, what has occurred is a trend toward resegregation of American schools (Orfield, 2004). According to Orfield (2004), "The most recent statistics reveal that America's schools are now in their 12th year of a continuing process of racial resegregation." In 1999, a national study found a trend to re-segregate began in the 1980s (Orfield, 2004). The impact of resegregation impacts African American students and Latino students with a high concentration of poverty disproportionately.

According to Orfield (2004) the fastest resegregation is occurring with the percentage of African American students in majority white schools in the South falling from a peak of 43.5% in 1988 to 34.7% in 1999. Increasing segregation in states with substantial a African American enrollment with the largest increases occurred in Rhode Island (20%), Wisconsin (13%), Florida (12%), Delaware (9%) and Massachusetts (9%). The most severe segregation occurred in Latino communities with 74.8% of Latinos attending schools with over 50% minority student population. This was an increase from 64.3% in 1968-69. 35.4% of Latinos attended schools with over 90% minority population, an increase from 23.1% percent from 1968-69. A strong link existed between segregation by race/ethnicity and poverty, with almost nine-tenths of segregated African American and Latino schools experiencing concentrated poverty. Whites remain the most isolated racial group and are the only group that attends schools where the overwhelming
majority of students are of their race. White students attend schools with classmates were 81 percent were white.

According to Spring (2012), racial segregation has the potential to create and perpetuate the historical legacy of inequalities. Furthermore, he noted that language and culture have largely disappeared from the current educational landscape of common core standards. Spring wrote (2012, p.161), "Equality now means equal treatment where all students are taught the same curriculum and evaluated on the same tests. No Child Left Behind spawned a new era of separate but equal and inequality of cultures and languages." According to Darling Hammond (2010), this legacy of inequity continues to be perpetuated and exacerbated by the unequal allocation of school funding which has a direct correlation to the resegregation of schools occurring nationwide.

**Asian Americans: Exclusion and Segregation to Model Minority**

The immigration of Asians to America began in the early 1800s (Takaki, 1993). A large number of Chinese workers were brought to California and other western states to meet a demand for cheap labor in mining, railroad construction and farming. California becoming a state gave the United States access to ports on the Pacific Ocean which propelled economic opportunity on many fronts (Takaki, 1993). This economic opportunity was exacerbated once gold was discovered in California (Takaki, 1993). Chinese immigrants began arriving were fleeing harsh peasant conditions began arriving in America, a place where fortunes could be made (Takaki, 1993). Similar to Mexican Americans they provided a cheap source of labor. According to Takaki (1993), racist feelings and attitudes toward Chinese labor led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred Chinese immigration to the United States until it was repealed in 1943. The
significance of this law is that it was the first federal law passed to prevent an ethnic group from immigrating to the United States. According to Spring (2012), Hawaii planters in a continued need of cheap labor turned to importing laborers from countries such as Japan, Philippines Islands, Korea and Indian. Spring (2012, p. 70) stated, "Asian Americans represented a small percentage of U.S. foreign-born population. In the years 1850-1930 Asian American population grew from .0005% to 1.9%." However, this did not prevent American whites who believed themselves to be culturally and racially superior to Asian Americans to implement discriminatory policies of exclusion and segregation. According to Spring (2012), like other dominated groups citizenship was denied to Asian Americans until the passage of the 1866 Civil Rights Act. Spring further wrote (2012, p. 74), "the combination of court rulings such as the Chinese Exclusion Acts were policies used to deny Asians ownership of land." Furthermore, there was confusion about how to designate racial status to Asian immigrants that began to arrive after 1853 Spring (2012). This was particularly true in California when the Supreme Court ruled in a murder case that testimony that testimony from African Americans, mulattos and Native Americans Spring (2012) was prohibited. This law was extended to all Asiatics based on the belief that Native Americans were originally Asians who crossed the Bering Strait allowing their testimony to be excluded from court Spring (2012). The Chief Justice argued that the ban on testimony applied to "the whole of the Mongolian race." The result is that court rulings such as this and exclusionary and restrictive citizenship laws were used to prohibit Asian immigrants from land ownership (Spring, 2012).

Until World War II American whites included all ethnic groups from Asia as Asians (Spring, 2012). This changed when Japan became an enemy of the state and China
as a U.S. ally. Chinese began to be portrayed as hardworking and brave while the Japanese were treacherous and cruel (Spring, 2012). The Japanese internment camps are a vivid and dark manifestation of institutional racism. Question were asked as to why Japanese descendants placed in camps but not Italian and/or German descendants. According to Spring (2012), the U.S. Justice Department argued that unlike German and Italian immigrants "the Occidental eye cannot rapidly distinguish one Japanese immigrant from another." The Japanese were given the status of the enemy race. However, there was a main thread of the American population that saw all Asian Americans as the same and that physical characteristics made it impossible to distinguish one Asian ethnic group from another (Spring, 2012). Asian stereotypes began to be further perpetuate through popular media of the times which included radio, newspapers and magazines. Lee (1999, p.145), "identifies five major images of Asians in the United States: the coolie, the deviant, the yellow peril, model minority and the gook." The coolie reflects the image of the hard-working Asian who will work long hours for low wages. The deviant image is connected to the Chinese opium den and Asian sexual freedom. Yellow peril refers to the fear of American whites of being overrun by Asian immigrants. According to Spring (2012), the model minority came into existence during the Civil Rights era. It was used by civil rights opponents to compare and criticize African Americans and Latinos for not pursuing this image. Furthermore, Spring (2012) noted the practice was born during the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese soldiers were often called gooks by American soldiers (Spring, 2012). Gooks were the enemy who would use any means necessary to destroy the American soldier.
Asian Americans’ struggle for education and citizenship were similar to Mexican Americans and Native Americans (Spring, 2012). Spring (2012) declared that citizenship concerns did not come to an end until 1952 when the McCarran-Walter Act did away with racialized restrictions as a basis for determining the naturalization law. According to Spring (2012), confusion and variations of race classification from state-to-state made education a complex and upward road. In California, where the largest population of Asian Americans resided, they were segregated attending school with Mexican Americans (Spring, 2012). In Mississippi, they were required to attend school with African Americans (Spring, 2012). In Hawaii, the struggle over Japanese language schools became a highly debated issue because it usurped the Americanization, otherwise known as de-culturalization of Japanese American children (Spring, 2012).

Access to an equitable education was highly diminished when English, which is the dominant culture language in the United States, is not spoken. The inability to access the language of instruction meant poor performance in school. Most school districts were aware of the problem. however little support was given to students whose home language was not English. This existed until Chinese parents brought a suit against the San Francisco School District (Spring, 2012). This lawsuit resulted in the historic Supreme Court landmark case of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). The U.S. Supreme court ruled guaranteed equal opportunity for non-English speaking students by requiring schools to provide appropriate assistance to these students to learn English with the purpose of equal access and participation (Spring, 2012). The Supreme Court ruled and stated, "there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively
foreclosed from any meaningful education." Unfortunately, much like Brown v Board of Education, this historic ruling did not alleviate the educational struggles of Asian Americans or other dominated groups whose home language was not English. Instead, conflict continued to ensure that Lau v Nichols was fully implemented Spring, (2012). While Asian Americans were able to achieve a level of success in public schools, often this success did not follow in the workplace (Spring, 2012). Contrary to the model minority image, newer immigrant groups such as Cambodians, Laotian and Hmong have been faced with many of the economic and educational struggles as earlier Asian Americans (Spring, 2012).

At the heart of the Civil Rights Movement were issues of school segregation, cultural and linguistic issues. According to Spring (2012), "The great civil rights movement confronted traditional opposition to integration and the protection of minority cultures and languages" (p. 110). The civil rights legislation was an intentional struggle fought on many fronts by many different leaders and organizations (Spring, 2012). While great strides were made during this intense era of reform, problems continued. “What is the purpose of education?” becomes a fundamental question for all. Especially when there is an inherent tendency to form a state to use schools as a primary vehicle to teach the dominant culture and language.

Darling-Hammond (2012) wrote the following, "The United States is founded on the idea of educational equality." (p 27). To date, this is an idea that has yet to be realized. Historical evidence points to a legacy of discrimination, exclusion and segregation for the four dominated groups: Native American, African American, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans. These four groups were not intended
members and, therefore, did not receive the opportunity to access this educational ideal. Rather, there were specific methods of deculturalization and Americanization that were strategically and intentionally used by the state and legal institutions to assimilate African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans (Spring, 2012). According to Spring (2012), these methods include segregation and isolation, forced change of language, curriculum content that reflects the culture of a dominant group, denial of cultural and religious expression by dominated groups and the use of teachers from dominant groups. However, these methods have proven over time not to be effective or help achieve the desired outcomes. Spring argues (2012) when groups of people are being stripped of cultural traditions and language it creates resistance. Spring (2012) believes that these culturalization methods become self-defeating, creating a lack of trust in things like educational programs and policies.

Post-civil rights, these four dominated groups were all demanding significant reforms and a place for their cultures in public school curriculum. According to Spring (2012), the multiculturalism approach to education was born. However, also born on that day were opponents who argued that there should be one single culture taught, traditional Anglo-American culture Spring, (2012). This is a tension that continues to exist in our country today. Moreover, these lived histories were not only experienced differently by different ethnic groups but also between men and women.

Identity

“We are the victims of our History and our Present. They place too many obstacles in the way of love. And we cannot enjoy even our differences in peace.” (Aidoo, 1997)
The issue of how this historical legacy is played out by individuals within the construct of the four U.S. dominant ethnic group chosen for this research topic is an important topic to explore. This lens is furthered narrowed when we examine it from a frame of gender. Regardless of the lens, what must be acknowledged is how identity is intertwined within the social constructs of such historical legacies. Based on the selected research group of this study, it is essential to understand how identity plays a key role in our search to understand how individuals and ethnic group experiences are shaped and the lenses by which we see and experience the world. Furthermore, how this experience is formed and impacted when one does not belong to the dominant group whose norms and cultural values become a norm for a country such as the United States. DuBois (1970) argues African Americans are, gifted with second-sight in this American world, a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (pp. 230-231).

While DuBois is approaching this from an African American male perspective, he captures the emotional struggle of any individual who has experienced being marginalized and seen as the other. Rojas states (2009), “it is from this group that the marginalized receive cues about how to behave or fit in. It is also herein the struggle for subjectivity begins.” (p. 3). The very things that identify us as belonging to one group or another also bring with them inherent expected behaviors that inform who we are, not just as individuals but also as groups. Smith (1993) writes, "identity is the bane of subjectivity existence." As a result, it makes it difficult for an individual to be seen or
understood outside of these social constructs. This struggle becomes more complicated when an individual such as a woman of color has to balance multiple identities. Rojas explains (2009), "Each identity carries us along a predestined path where we are met with fixed assumptions, prejudices and limitations." (p. 3). This study is attempting to understand and learn how the histories and issues shape the leadership identity of women principals of color. Women of color that lead to an institution that historically has been used as a tool to assimilate and de-culturalize the very ethnic groups from which they came to be and exist. According to Rojas (2009),

The term ‘women of color’ helps us define a group, however diverse, of female individuals who collectively experience disempowerment because they lack access to these privileges as a result of their race/ethnicity, class and gender. The term is also helpful in identifying similarly sustained patterns of resistance to and subversion of these barriers." (p. 149).

For this study, I have focused on the women belonging to the four largest ethnic groups recognized in the United States: African American, Asian American, Latino(a) and Native American. This researcher acknowledges the complexity of this undertaking because in highlighting this voice of the other, one needs to remain vigilant to perpetuating and further generalizing issues of race, class, gender and sexuality. According to Rojas (2009), it is important to realize the impact and power of naming and identity markers hold for all individuals. This approach allows us to seeks to understand and examine things from multiple perspectives as a means of construct new ways of thinking for the researcher conducting the research and the reader.
**Gender and Dominated Cultures**

When the lens is narrowed, we begin to examine how this historical domination of cultural groups plays out when we consider gender, we find conflicting information regarding definitions of feminist theory and what it means to be a feminist. However, more often we find silence the absence of participation when it comes to the female voices of the four U.S. historically dominated groups. This is because the movement and the narrative around feminism or culture have predominantly been the narrative voices of privileged white females (hooks, 1984). Similarly, our U.S. history focused on the dominant cultural narrative for much of our country's history. hooks (1984) further writes, "these privileged feminists have largely been unable to speak to, with and for diverse groups of women because they either do not understand fully the interrelatedness of sex, race and class oppression or refuse to take this interrelatedness seriously." (p. 15).

To understand this interrelatedness, you have to examine the foundations of our country. hook (2009) argues, "that our historical foundations were built on imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. These phrases all interlock and function together in unison to maintain the dominant culture in place and other cultures in dominated status." (p. 4). While hooks primarily writes from a Black feminist perspective, she offers insight and gives voice to what it means to be a female in America from a dominated culture. hooks (1984) passionately writes, “Black women are in an unusual position because we are collectively at the bottom of the occupation ladder but our overall social status is lower than that of any group." (p. 16). Black women and nonwhite women are often on the receiving end of sexist, racist and classist oppression. The reality is white women and men from dominated cultures can be both oppressor and oppressed dependent
on the context (hooks, 1984). Issues of dominant culture, race and gender are important because in U.S. society women are still largely responsible for teaching our children. According to hooks (2010), "women teach what they know and what they have learned." (p. 37). Hooks (2010) declares that regardless what race or cultural background, if you are a female in U.S. society working in education whether conscious or subconscious you teach white supremacist thoughts and practices. Many people today are offended by this idea and hook's use of the term white supremacist. It is often perceived as inflammatory and divisive language and, it makes people uncomfortable. Hooks (2010) writes, "When I first began to use the phrase imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to characterize the interlocking systems that characterize the dominator culture we live within, individuals would often tell me it is too harsh a phrase." (p. 37). However, individuals committed to exploring themes through a critical lens would have to be willing make evident the brutal facts even when they make us feel uncomfortable. In the Power of Partnership, Eisler writes (2002), "In the domination model, somebody has to be on top and somebody has to be on the bottom. Those on top control those below them. People learn, starting in early childhood, to obey orders without question. They learn to carry a harsh voice in their head that tells them they are no good, they don't deserve love, that they need to be punished." When a society is built on such a model, there is no escape from emotional and psychological impact regardless of your role in the society. Hooks (2010) expands further, "Meaningful resistance to dominator culture demands all of us a willingness to accurately identify the various systems that work together to promote injustice, exploitation and oppression." (p. 37). By naming it, we can move into space where something new can be created. Critical to combating dominator culture is
closely tracking the foundations which gave birth to such thinking. The purpose of examining beginnings is not to place blame, rather hold us accountable that with knowledge and insight comes a more informed action.

“Individual Black people who straighten their hair because they have been taught to believe their natural hair texture is ugly are perpetuating a white supremacist aesthetic even as they may hold strong beliefs against racism. These contradictions reveal the myriad ways dominator culture shapes our thoughts and actions in ways that are completely unconscious. It is precisely because dominant thinking is so deeply embedded in our psyches that efforts to decolonize minds through the cultivation of critical consciousness need to be an essential aspect of resistance struggle.” (hooks, 2010, p. 33)

Thus, patriarchy becomes a critical ingredient that fuels dominator culture. For patriarchy to take root much like racism, all of the institutions have to align to promote this system. According to hooks (2010), patriarchy was uniquely positioned because patriarchal teachings begin with individual families. These teachings were inspired and reinforced by organized religion. In the same way, the church made it permissible to uphold slavery as an institution. However, patriarchy is something still upheld by religion and even if families no longer attend church, it remains in place in the DNA of most family structures today. Hooks declares (2010), "Patriarchy is a political and social system that insists males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females and endowed with the right to dominate through various forms of psychological abuse and violence." One of the primary reasons hooks' thoughts on race and gender continue to be relevant is her large body of scholarship grounded in a deep commitment to examine from a Black context. Gender and race are
not exclusive but rather intersect daily in the world of women of color who come from dominated cultures. In her book, *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks write about her encounters with race and gender from a young age that resonates with the authenticity of lived experiences. She writes (1994, p.119), "

Like many precocious girls growing up in a male-dominant household, I understood the significance of gender inequality at an early age. Our daily life was full of patriarchal drama—the use of coercion, violent punishment and verbal harassment, to maintain male domination. As small children, we understood that our father was more important than our mother because he was a man. This knowledge reinforced by the reality that any decision our mother made could be overruled by our dad's authority. (p. 119).

This experience rings eerily familiar to my experience as a young Mexican-American girl growing up on the border. Similar to hooks’ experience, gender roles in Mexican families were constructed to maintain Mexican male authority even if these realities were not the same as white families. When hooks began to engage in scholarship that challenged the feminist community to engage in a deeper examination of issues of feminism and race, there was an unwillingness in the Black community to call out imbalances of power. According to hooks, “sexism and institutionalized patriarchy indeed provide Black men with forms of power, however relative, that remained intact despite of racist oppression.” Much of hooks' writings discuss her drive to make sure that the Black female experience was validated as a legitimate scholarship with value. The oppressed sought a voice and legitimacy in another dominant culture institution, academia.
Hooks grounds her ideas on the foundational work of Freire's process of critical consciousness. According to Freire (2001), oppressed communities construct self-reflective movements to mobilize through critical pedagogies of empowerment. Freire (2001) states this need is an innate trait in humans to reason and engage in the process of becoming. Freire suggests (2001) that humans have the cognitive capacity to shape, seek and achieve individual and collective self-actualization, thus developing into their full humanity. There is a strong thread of commonality of women from dominated cultures because the narrative of each of the four dominated cultures has mostly been the voice of a white male patriarchy. After the Civil Rights Movement, we began to hear and experience the voices of Native Americans, African Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans but often from a male perspective (hooks, 2010). However, because antiquated narratives continue to persist, the voices of the women from each of these ethnic groups fail to be recognized and included in a larger more complex and contemporary narrative.

**Critical Race Feminism**

Early feminist frameworks claimed to represent the voice of all women, but the reality is, the lens was very narrow and a race was superficially examined. Feminism did not resonate with these four groups because the experience was predominantly the experience of white women. Feminists, such as hooks, recounted spending a large part of their early careers trying to prove that their pioneer work of gender and race had validity and merit (hooks, 2010). Women of color often felt invisible, missing, without a voice. They did not need a book or a white female scholar to tell them they were oppressed and that patriarchy was at the root. According to hooks (2010), the fact that white feminist
scholars did, only highlights their privilege. Feminist frameworks today do a much better job of examining gender, race and the voices of females from dominated cultures. However, representation and voice alone have not solved the barriers for women from dominated cultures. Women of color are uniquely positioned to offer a different perspective because their lived experiences are intersected by race and gender.

A strong rationale for selecting to study and research women from dominated cultures is rooted in the fact that too often their voices are also missing in the world of K-12 public education, even though teaching is one of the few fields where women are overrepresented. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), 76% of all public-school teachers in the United States were women. An analysis from the National Center for Education Statistics (2012) showed that teachers of color, which included both male and female teachers, was 17.5%. This statistic dramatically reduces when we look at the demographics of female principals of color in the state of Minnesota. According to the SASS (2011-12), in Minnesota 7% of all school principals are non-white, which included both male and female gender. This in the face of an increasingly more diverse student demographic. Wideman (1994) writes,

Suddenly, the mist cleared. Below the people, the earth had changed. It had grown into the shape of the stories they'd told—a shape as wondrous and new and real as the words they'd spoken. However, it was also a world unfinished, because not all the stories had been told. (pp. 177-178).

It is essential to examine and analyze issues from multiple perspectives to achieve new ways of thinking and knowing. According to Rojas (2009), this exchange can take place, however, only when we switch up the standard order in which we are used to
receiving information. Educational leadership like our country's history has largely been dominated by the voice of one dominant culture and gender. Roja contends (2009) by decentering the centers of our society and the dominant stories that our culture tells create an opportunity to shift our perspectives and gain a whole new insight, challenging ideas that often as time goes by can become entrenched and perceived as absolutes. By intentionally ‘decentering’ our approach we can push against those entrenched and traditional frames and lenses from which we view the world.

Hill Witt (1993) writes that many of the stereotypes surrounding Native American women are outdated images of the past. The modern Indian women of today are faceless. According to Hill Witt (1993), “Native Americans reside below the national consciousness, certainly fifty percent of them are females are all the more nonentities.” Before we can begin to examine the status of Native American women one must first examine the status of both genders. The National Indian Education Association statistics report 560 registered Native American tribes in the United States today.

- The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates that in 2012, there were 5,226,034 American Indian (AI)/American Native (AN) (alone or in combination), comprising 1.7% of the total U.S. population of 313.9 million. Among these AI/ANs, 2,563,505 (0.8%) were AI/AN alone and 2,288,331 (0.7%) were AI/AN in combination.
- In 2012, the median age of American/Native was 31-years-of-age, compared to the median age of 37-years-old for the overall United States population (2012 American Community Survey).
• In 2012, 29.1% of AI/ANs (alone) lived in poverty, which was the highest rate of any race group compared to 15.9% for the entire nation (2012 American Community Survey).

• National Dropout Rate for AI/ANs ages 16-24 is 15% compared to the national average of 8%.

• The states with the lowest AI/AN graduation rates were: Colorado (52%), Nevada (52%), Oregon (52%), Alaska (51%), Wyoming (51%), South Dakota (49%) and Minnesota (42%). These statistically reinforce the obvious, which is that Native Americans regardless of gender have not been treated equitably in this country. Centuries of domination have devastated Indian culture and community. Even with these troubling statistics, there is a noticeable difference on how these statistics manifest themselves in the lives of Native American women.

• Native American Indian women residing on Indian reservations experience domestic violence and physical assault at rates higher than any other ethnicity and location. The Department of Justice estimates 50% higher than other ethnic groups.

• According to the United States Department of Justice, at least 70% of violent crimes against Native Americans are committed by persons, not of the same race. This is a substantially higher rate of interracial violence than experienced by white or Black victims.

• Studies conducted by the federal government have consistently shown that Native American women experience much higher levels of sexual violence
than other women in the United States. Data gathered by the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that Native American and Alaskan Native women were more than 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than women in the United States.

Bubar and Thurman (2004), identified four factors that may be perpetuating the high number of Native American women being victims of violence. Colonization, violence and historical trauma are unfortunately the cornerstones of modern Native American culture. First, forced de-culturalization changed the family and support structure before colonization and was further perpetuated by U.S. Federal Indian policy. Policies that included removal, relocation and assimilation all helped to create an environment where violence became permissible (Bubar & Thurman, 2004). Burbar and Thurman (2004) write, "inter-generational grief and trauma are the psychological fallout from federal policies that demeaned Native cultures and used violence for assimilation." The most devastating of these policies were taking Native American children away from their families and placing them in boarding schools. This miseducation of Native American children was the policy for over a century.

Second, according to Bubar and Thurman (2004), the adoption of the dominant culture's view of women has contributed to the damaged psyche of Native American women. In the case of the United States, this results in adopting a patriarchal view of gender roles. This adoption of values of the dominant culture resulted in creating an environment that made Native American women more vulnerable to violence (Bubar & Thurman, 2004). Third, economic oppression has played a critical factor because it transformed gender roles. According to Bubar and Thurman (2004), violence is an issue
present in all cultures. However, economic distress serves as an accelerator that increases the possibility that violence will occur. It is no coincidence that Native Americans with incomes less than 10,000 dollars a year have the highest rate of violent victimization (Bubar & Thurman, 2004). Bubar and Thurman (2004) declare, "tribal community has a dominant role in determining whether [N]ative [American] women will be valued, protected and empowered in their respective community. Isolation and distrust of government institutions are also determining factors of whether women may be victims of violence." (p. 6).

Over five hundred years of domination policies have transformed the traditional gender roles of both men and women. The patriarchal system of gender roles prevalent in Europe undermined the conventional role of Native American women. Violence against Native American women has been linked to the arrival of Christianity and the introduction of alcohol into first nation communities. The legacy of historical trauma is often directly connected by scholars to what is occurring today in modern Native American communities. Weaver (2009) describes how the legacy of colonization manifests in current native communities. According to Weaver (2009), "The effects of colonization have been internalized in many Native [American] communities, thus leading Native [American] people themselves to continue devaluing indigenous women." (p. 1553). As the systematic de-culturalization of indigenous communities occurred, individuals took on and adopted the qualities of the dominant culture. Weaver (2009) states that, "Colonization of the First Peoples has not been random but is firmly grounded in an infrastructure that has disempowered and marginalized indigenous peoples." (p. 1554). Colonization was a violent endeavor that resulted in government institutions
sanctioning violence against Native American people and/or removing them from ancestral lands. This part of American history is indisputable, however, what has gone untold is how this legacy of violence and institutional racism plays out in the lives of modern Native American people. Weaver (2009) states, "Colonization has developed into internalized sexism and a type of trickle-down patriarchy found in contemporary Native communities and tribal politics." (p. 1554). During different periods in history, this manifested itself in a variety of examples. During colonization, violence against women was a key component used by U.S. settlers (Weaver, 2009). Federal policy divided reservation land into parts which were then designated to the male heads of households (Hill Witt, 1993). Sending First Nation children to boarding school was a federal policy that forever transformed gender roles because boys and girls received gender-specific training in farming and domestic skills (Hill Witt, 1993). Native American children were socialized into gender-specific norms of the dominant culture. It is not an accident that after 500 years of de-culturalization Native American communities today have adopted the practices coined by hooks (2010), ‘imperialistic white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.’ Like layers of sediment that result in a canyon or rock over geologic time, historical legacies become embedded into a people’s being.

**Asian/Pacific American Women Focus**

Similar to African Americans, Hispanic and Native American women, Asian American women have joined white women in the feminist movement. As with other dominated ethnic groups, Asian Americans have participated in the Civil Rights Movement as a racial minority and as women. However, Asian American women have mostly gone unnoticed and not present in political activism by the dominant culture.
Asian/Pacific women have actively fought for equality, yet their narrative remains missing mainly and is based on outdated ideas. One example of this can be found in the work of Chow (1992), who wrote the following on Asian/Pacific women, "Their relative lack of political activism stems from cultural, psychological and social oppression which historically discouraged them from organizing." For Asian American women to become politically active, they must overcome many internal and external barriers. According to Chow (1992), "Although Asian American women may benefit from and contribute substantially joining this movement puts them in a double-bind because it pits ethnic identity against gender identity." Asian American women fall victim to the stereotypes of being subservient, obedient, passive, hardworking and exotic. According to Chow (1992), "all stereotypes whether positive or negative serve as self-fulfilling prophecies that lead to internalizing them as part of a larger reality." There are also four cultural dilemmas for Asian American women: obedience vs. independence, collective family vs. individual interest, fatalism vs. change, self-control vs. self-expression. The root problem for Asian American women is how to maintain a bicultural existence by selecting appropriate elements of both cultural worlds especially when ethnic cultures and American cultures are at odds with one another. According to author Karin Aguilar-San Juan (Shah, 1997), the second problem is that within Asian American politics gender bias continues to dominate and there exist unspoken tensions around gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality. There remains a belief that gender within the power structures of relationships exist only when inequalities about gender are explicitly teased out. As a result, Aguilar San Juan declared (1997), "Asian American feminism is an articulation of many social and historical processes involving hierarchy and injustice." (p. ix) There are
commonalities and solidarities with other women of color in that while in theory one can separate race and gender and highlight different components. In actuality, women of color always live and exist in a racialized and gender paradigm.

Asian American women group together a highly diverse people who represent different nationalities, speak different languages, come from a variety of religions, ethnicities, economic classes and various immigration statuses. Asian American women are as different as they are the same. Much like African American women, Latinas and Native American women, they exist in a group as a result of the racial and gender hierarchy that American society uses to identify groups of people. According to Shah (1997), "this group is shaped by three forces in the United States society: racism, patriarchy and imperial aggression toward Asia." (p. xiii). Asian women represent a broad demographic of backgrounds that include many countries of origin such as: China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand and Laos, Hmong etc. It becomes critical to examine how the forces of racism, patriarchy and imperialism impact Asian women and how Asian women have worked to counter and resist such forces (Shah, 1997). Like Latinas, U.S. immigration policy towards Asians has primarily been shaped by labor trends and perceived labor needs.

Latinas

Before one can begin to examine the historical experience of Latinas in the United States, one must first recognize that individuals of this dominated group represent a very ethnically, linguistically and racially diverse demographic of women. First, women in this group can belong to any racial classification. Second, the historical legacy of colonialism was experienced in the United States, but it should also be noted that it was
simultaneously occurring in the Caribbean and other Latin American countries. For this study, we will focus on the historical experience of Latinas in the United States from a feminist framework. However, a core component of this group similar to Asian women are the historical immigrant waves of migration to America that were a direct result of global economic demands. Latina/Chicana feminism seeks to include the voices of the recent immigrant and also the voice of the Latinas whose families have been in the United States for many generations. Chicanas are the largest group of feminist Latinas with the majority living in the southwest region of the United States. As a result, their large representation ended with their designation.

Latina/Chicana feminism has always been intentional about seeking solidarity with all Latin American women and third world feminists in constructing a framework that is representational of their diverse individual nationalities. While Latinas have always had a physical presence in the history of this country, their lived experiences and voices has been largely excluded and/or absent from the historical and feminist frameworks. They serve as a counter-narrative to the traditional narrative of belonging to the dominant culture. According to Perez Huber and Cueva (2012), Latina/Chicana feminism was born out of the Civil Rights Movement and the Chicano movement and the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Perez writes (2012), "Chicana feminist theorize that it is important to create a [feminist oriented] research practices that critique oppression within a history of colonialism, patriarchy and white privilege." (p. 395). It is necessary to expand our understanding of how this group of women have been able to mediate race, gender, immigration status and class within the context of American history and join other female of color scholars who use the framework of testimonies and lived
experiences to give voice to a narrative of struggle, survival and resistance which ultimately seek to push against social inequities.

After examining multicultural feminism perspectives of African American women, Native American women, Latina/Chicanas and Asian American women, or consolidating them to a broader umbrella under the term ‘women of color’ in the United States, all four ethnicities have been marginalized as a direct result of our racialized history and that marginalization has been further shaped by their gender. A second tension must also be recognized which is that each of these four groups is so diverse that often one questions if it makes sense to talk about them as a racialized group. Shah (1997) offers her rationale for why it does make sense. According to Shah (1997), white people are a group equally diverse, consisting of groups such as Irish Catholics, Jewish American, Polish and English. However, it is their race, their whiteness that joins them together as a group because they all share the same place in the racial hierarchy. Moreover, the historical constructs of the United States, kept in place by social and political institutions, in service of a hierarchical, racially biased society are a significant determiner of social status. Shah (1997) makes a case and perhaps validates and/or challenges the scholarship of why it makes sense to write about Asian American women as a group. However, given the historical deculturalization of the four largest dominated cultures in the United States, it becomes clear that their shared experiences and political marginalization validate the need to explore the experience of women of color in the United States. Hill Collins (2010) states the following, "I have come to see how it is possible to be both centered on one's own experiences and engaged in coalitions with others." (p. xi). This is especially important in the institution of education where the
legacy of de-culturalization continues to produce an inequitable outcome for students from dominated cultures.

How does a female leader from a historically dominated culture construct her leadership identity? While simultaneously leading in one of the primary institutions which have been used to de-culturalize her racial affinity. How does this impact their leadership? What perspectives can be utilized to further the scholarship? These are all question this body of research hopes to explore during the field research.

**Intersectionality**

Exploring a critical framework that examines the female perspective of the four dominated cultures is a tremendous endeavor. As a researcher, one must acknowledge there is no way this historical summary can capture each unique voice and human experience of individuals belonging to any of the four groups highlighted in this study. Instead, the researcher's goal is to focus on the collective experience of women of color as being part of the non-dominant culture. To shed light on how their gender and racial identification allows them to experience this differently than a male from a non-dominant culture. These four groups of women share the experience of inequality and intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term coined by Crenshaw in 1989 (Mitchell, 2014, et al.). A scholar of law, critical race theory and Black feminist thought, Crenshaw used intersectionality to explain the experiences of Black women who, because of the intersections of race, gender and class, are exposed to exponential forms of marginalization and oppression. Intersectionality complicates identity (Dill & Zambrana, 2009) because it highlights the intricacies of individuals' experiences when they embody multiple identities simultaneously. Linking personal identity narratives to more extensive
systems of domination helps individuals understand the connection between the social
groups they inhabit and their day-to-day experiences within society, as well as concepts
of privileged and marginalized positions. Jones and Abes (2013) noted that “identity
models informed [emphasis added] by intersectionality offer better ways of capturing the
complexity of identity and portraying the full range of factors, contextual influences,
social identities, lived experiences and structures of power that contribute to a holistic
interpretation of identity.” (p. 154). Intersectionality centers the voices of people and
groups previously overlooked or excluded, especially in the analysis of inequality and
efforts to remedy specific social problems.

Crenshaw (1991) is recognized as the first scholar to name and theorize the term
intersectionality. She used intersectionality to conceptualize the intersections of race and
gender in her analyses of anti-discrimination in legal cases, for example, cases where
Black women and non-English-speaking immigrant women of color were plaintiffs.
Crenshaw (1991) criticized the courts for forcing Black women and non-English-
speaking immigrant women of color to articulate discrimination along only one category
of identity. Crenshaw (1991) argued that "the intersectional experience is greater than the
sum of racism and sexism" (p. 58) and that "any analysis that does not take
intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which
Black women are subordinated." (p. 58). The experience of racism and sexism is neither
discrete nor summative for women of color. Women of color do not experience racism in
the same ways that men of color do, nor do they experience sexism in the same ways that
white women do.
According to Crenshaw (1991), intersectionality is a powerful framework for understanding, constructing and deconstructing: the experience of identity, the complex and mutually constituting nature of social identities, the relationships between identity and larger social systems and the interwoven nature of manifestations of social oppression. While centering the interconnections inherent in an intersectional analysis, we also must honor the unique aspects of various social identities, systems of inequality and efforts to enact social justice. In a society where groups of people have been treated differently, as is the case of the United States, advocates for the idea of color blindness deny the histories of exploitation, oppression and disenfranchisement and their historical impact over time. Moreover, they silence interpretations of the world that center the relationship of ontology to epistemology. That is to say, the ways one is located and positioned in the world and the ways one is classed, gendered and raced, affect one’s way of experiencing and knowing the world (Butler, 1999; Hill Collins, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; Freire, 2000; hooks, 1992; Noblit, 1999; Noddings, 1992; Scott, 1999).

Many researchers have wrestled with how the intersectionality of identities of socially constructed groups can capture and highlight the shared commonality and differences within non-homogenous groups. Researchers, such Pearson (2007), have explored the value of examining frameworks from a multicultural feminist framework, which at its core seeks to validate, legitimize and give voice to the shared experiences and uniqueness of our four-disenfranchised female ethnic groups in the United States by bringing solidarity under the term of women of color. Pearson (2007) writes about the tension that exists in feminist frameworks between the generality of sisterhood common to all women in the United States and the distinct characteristics and shared experiences
of women of color. According to Pearson (2007), "multicultural feminism recognizes the varied circumstances of women's lives and the need to include all women in the women's movement and looks beyond stereotypes and misconceptions to develop truly informed opinions about feminism and its meaning in individual's lives and in a society." About multicultural feminism, it is focused on articulating the interests of women of color by examining the structures of inequality and discrimination that have perpetuated inequitable outcomes. The commonality is not that they exist in another socially constructed group but rather one, which derives as a direct result of their socialized and historical experiences in the United States.

American feminist scholars continue to challenge the foundations and methods of previously established feminist scholarship by examining those same frameworks through the lens of critical race theory and intersectionality to be inclusive of all women (Chavez and Griffith, 2012). However, intersectionality remains a new approach to the field. Scholars such as Hills Collins, believe that intersectionality is still in its infancy as an area of inquiry to be explored. Chavez and Griffith (2012) write, "intersectionality becomes an important tool because it requires that scholars identify and give voice to the interconnected nature of being silenced, in multiple ways and the lived (bodily) manifestations of those silencing." (p. 7). Another added benefit to doing intersectional scholarship is that scholars come to understand their privilege and how their biases may have an impact their research analysis. Most importantly, an intersectional lens is necessary to the research at hand because it is a tool that seeks to address the complexity of being racialized, gendered, classed and sexualized in their relationship to themselves and the larger society. As a Latina researcher, I understand that focusing and/or
narrowing a research topic make it easier to examine things separately creates
fragmentation. At times this can result in a fragmented analysis of how that experience
plays out away from academia. Intersectionality provides a framework to
comprehensively tackle issues of race, gender and social class while honoring the
individual and diverse experience of all.

In the post-civil rights era, there exist a commonality of experience amongst the
four racial minority groups who continue to experience the consequences of living in a
country whose historical foundations were built on imperialist white supremacist
capitalist patriarchy. One way people of color experience this is through
macroaggressions. Webster's Dictionary defines macroaggressions as, "A comment
and/or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudice
attitude toward a member of a marginalized group such as a racial minority group."
According to Sue, it is the constant and continuing everyday reality of slights, insults,
invalidations and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned
individuals. Sue declares (2010) macroaggressions have a significant impact on the
recipient who has been threatened or demeaned by an individual who does not recognize
or see their behaviors as negative. Sue states (2010) how macroaggressions play out in
our schools and the curriculum taught has historical roots in our white western European
perspective omitting, distorting or demonizing the history of non-White groups in
America.

Solidarity as women of color might be especially a beneficial lens to use when the
research group attempts to answer the question of how Minnesota female principals from
the United States historically dominated cultures have come to construct their own
leadership identities while working and leading in an educational system that has not yet
been successful in producing equitable outcomes for all students. On the contrary,
Minnesota is a state who leads the nation in the greatest disparity of learning outcomes
between white students and students of color and overall stagnation in academic
achievement results (Retrieved from ww.twincities.com/2017/08/18/15-years-later-mn-
schools-are-more-segregated-and-achievement-gap-has-barely-budged/).

**Women and Leadership**

"When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is male or female?
and you are accustomed to making the distinction with unhesitating certainty."

_Sigmund Freud_

The heart of the research question is to understand how female leaders in the
principalship who originate from the four historically dominated cultures in the United
States came to form their leadership identity. To focus on the leadership identity part of
the research question, one must first have an academic understanding of leadership as a
field of study. My personal goal in researching leadership was to answer a few
foundational questions regarding leadership. I narrowed my search to answer some of the
following questions: How do you define leadership? What is a leader? What compels an
individual to seek a leadership position? I found that there was a massive number of
leadership books written using a broad lens and many fell into the business world
category. Secondly, it is also important to distinguish that our research groups are leaders
in the field of public education and as such, it is crucial to establish what it means to be
an educational leader today. This will give insight into the charge and responsibility of
each of the research participants. The rationale for examining leadership within the
specific context of the principalship is twofold: First, the principalship is a formal leadership position in the public-school organization. Second, each of my research group participants has experience as a principal in Pre-K-12 or currently in the role of the principal in the state of Minnesota. The research is seeking to narrow and address specifically, how are these leadership dynamics experienced differently when you are a woman of color? How is your leadership identity shaped, formed and come to be?

Leadership as a field of study has been going on for close to one hundred years. Moreover, scholars in that time have struggled to come up with a definition that captures leadership and all of its complexity while concurrently capturing the many aspects that it encompasses (Northouse, 2013). Leadership is like other abstract terms such as freedom and democracy. Everyone has an idea of what the word leadership means to him or her individually, which has contributed to multiple revisions to the definition of leadership. According to Northouse (2013), in that time scholars have agreed on one thing; they cannot come up with one universal definition. Northouse (2013) goes on to offer that when one thinks about leadership four components are present: a) leadership is a process, b) leadership involves influence, c) leadership occurs in groups and d) leadership involves common goals. Based on these four components Northouse (2013) offers the following definition, "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." This research will use Northouse's definition of leadership to establish a common understanding to an abstract word that over time has had multiple definitions. Northouse (2013), also makes a distinction between individuals that are formal leaders because of a position they hold which he terms assigned leadership contrasted with new leadership is an informal leader. According to Northouse
(2013), "leadership is established when others perceive an individual as the most influential member of a group or organization." (p. 8). Understanding emergent leadership is especially important when we examine our research group, which is women of color in the principalship and its connection to the social identity theory and the historical framework. According to Hogg (2001), the social identity theory in leadership links to how well some individual fits the identity of the group as a whole. This presents another variable to consider because most of the scholarship around leadership has been focused on white males. In the sixties, the narrative in leadership expanded to include women in leadership, but women of color in leadership remains a quiet voice. According to Northouse (2013), male scholars have not been interested in this research. Northouse believes that leadership as a field of study still has an overrepresentation of male researchers that largely ignored gender issues in leadership until the 1970s (Northouse, 2013). However, with the increase of women in leadership, positions this field have been transformed from early research questions: “Can women lead?” to research questions such as: “Are there leadership style and effectiveness differences between women and men?” Most recently, research questions have shifted to: "Why are women underrepresented in elite leadership roles?" However, leadership researchers in recent years across research studies and meta-analyses have found empirical evidence to suggest that differences do exist in leadership style and effectiveness between men and women (Northouse, 2013). According to Northouse (2013), women use a democratic or participatory style of leadership more often than men. Women are also more likely to utilize transformational leadership behaviors and contingent reward styles (Northouse, 2013). The rationale for using Northouse' leadership theory is a direct result of his
analysis of the academic body of leadership theory and his focus on application. His research has done a nice job of capturing an overview of the different leadership theories and approaches, highlighting the strengths and criticisms of each approach. This information will become more relevant as the researcher selects research methodologies to get at the leadership identity of each of the research participants.

While there has been an increase in women leadership and increasing interest in the field of study between women and leadership, exists what has been termed a leadership gap between men and women in elite positions of leadership. (Appendix G). Many factors contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership. According to Rhode (2014), there are some gender-specific trends that women make in not choosing leadership roles. This includes life choices, a reduction in paid employment for childrearing and opting for lower pay and responsibility for work/life balance. However, these trends are only some of the pieces in a puzzle. Rhodes writes, "women's choices are an incomplete explanation of women's underrepresentation in leadership positions."

Rhodes (2014) notes a study where both men and women declare the desire to reach top management. Rhodes (2014) makes a case that women's choices are based on socially constructed expectations within the different gender roles. Rhodes (2014) writes that women's disproportionate family responsibilities and a workplace unwilling to accommodate them have an impact on a woman's decision to not lead. According to Rhodes (2014), if women are not choosing to lead it is because men are not choosing to share in the running of the household equally. The reality is that even if women do choose to enter the leadership realm, they advance at a much slower pace than men.

According to a 2016 Catalyst Report (Retrieved from Catalyst. Quick Take: Statistical
Overview of Women in the Workplace. New York: Catalyst, May 11, 2017), this a statistical overview between men and women in the workforce in the United States:

- 56.8% of women were in the workforce vs. 69.2% of the men.
- Women held 51.5% of management positions but only 5.8% of CEO Fortune 500 positions.
- As of Fortune’s 2017 list, there have been 64 women CEOs roles in total.
- Minority women made up 3.8% of the board seats of Fortune 500 companies.
- This pattern of underrepresentation of women and leadership continues when one examines the statistics of women representation in government. According to a Rutgers report on Women of Color in elective office in 2017:
  - In the 115th Congress, women of color (7.1%) hold 105 seats of the 535 seats.
  - There are currently four women serving as governors and one of those four is a woman of color.
  - In the largest 100 cities of the United States, 7sevenwomen of color serve as mayors.

Ironically, this persistent underrepresentation of women continues to exist despite the fact that more people today believe there is no significant difference between leaders based on gender. Whether one calls it the glass ceiling or an invisible barrier keeping women from elite leadership positions, there is indeed a leadership gap between women and men (Appendix F).

To understand the contemporary role of the principalship one must first examine the historical evolution of teaching as a profession from a feminist framework lens. This
is essential because many of the complex issues in education today are a direct result of the feminization of teaching (Lagemann, 2000). Langemann (2010) writes about the fact that teaching was once a predominantly a male profession. According to Lagemann (2010), it was not until the era of common schools (1830-1865) where the demographics of the profession began to shift. Lagemann explains this was a result of the fact that women were willing to work for significantly less money than men. One example that Lagemann provides comes from the state of Massachusetts which paid women 60 percent less than their male counterparts. Lagemann (2010) makes a case that this shift in the demographics was born from a tension that continues to exist in the study of education, practice and public opinion. According to Lagemann (2010), when one examines the history of education and specifically the feminization of education, the historical evidence points to a tension born during this demographic change. This tension is alive and well today and present in every dimension of education in the United States including but not limited to the study of education, practice and public opinion. Today, this legacy shows up as anti-intellectual leaning that fails to look at education from a comprehensive lens and underestimates the deep complexities at play in educational issues. Langemann (2010) writes that in the mid-1800s the idea that teaching was women's work became a prevailing thought. Educational leaders such as Horace Mann perpetuated this trail of thinking. According Langemann (2010) who cites to Horace Mann’s first annual report as the first education secretary of education where he writes the following; "the female school teacher holds her commission from nature. In the well developed female character there is always a preponderance of affection over intellect." (p. 6). This was a report that was read and often cited. It is important to note that while there was an increase in female
representation in teaching jobs the number of supervisory roles also expanded. Langemann (2010) notes that these supervisory roles were filled by men with the idea that positions such as the principal and superintendent could assist female teachers with classroom management issues, instructional frameworks and community outreach.

Race was not the only oppressed and excluded tool used by dominator culture. Gender was also used to exclude and limit the opportunities for women. According to Langemann (2010), women were excluded from attending colleges until after the Civil War (Lagemann, 2010). Therefore, as the demand for female teachers increased so did the need for what was termed normal schools and academies (Lagemann, 2010). By the end of the Civil War women held the majority of teaching jobs. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2015), 3.6 million women were employed as elementary and secondary teachers. In the 2011-2012 school year, 76% of all teachers were female. Female teachers dominate the teaching field. However, when one compares this to the leadership demographics of the pattern of elite leadership positions being held by males, they continue to dominate. According to the American Association of School Administrators (2011-2012), of the 13,728 superintendents 1,984 are women compared to 76% of all K-12 educators who are women. Although, there has been a continued increase of representation of women in the superintendency, 87% of the superintendent positions are still held by men (Glass, 2017). Moreover, according to Hollande (2011), while the number of female superintendents has increased at the current rate, it will take three decades for before women have equal representation. Hollande writes (2011), "there is still a gender bias between men and women. Often men and women have different careers pathways to the top." Hollande notes (2011) female superintendents tended to be
older and have a more formal education. Also, female superintendents had twenty plus years of classroom experience before becoming administrators.

**Educational Leadership: The Principalship**

The school leaders of today wear many hats and balance many responsibilities which are furthered complicated by an era of underfunded school improvement mandates that demand the highest student learning outcomes for all students in the history of American public education (Brill, 2008). Challenging and overwhelming are two words that come to mind as one begins to analyze the list of roles and responsibilities that today's instructional leaders are expected to execute on a day to day basis. The principal is on the frontlines leading individual school learning communities. Within the learning organization of public schools, the principal holds the formal leadership role at the individual school level. According to Fullan (2003) the following is suggested:

> Leading schools—as in any great organization—requires principals with the courage and capacity to build new cultures based on trusting relationships and a culture of disciplined inquiry and action. That school leaders with these characteristics are in short supply is the point. Leading schools through complex reform agendas require outstanding leadership that goes far beyond improving test scores.

Admittedly, developing trust and discipline in an organization that doesn't have it is a considerable challenge. However, there are cases where it has been done. We need to learn from these schools, focus on the right things and create the conditions under which new leaders can develop and flourish (p.8).

For Fullan, overcoming this challenge is the moral imperative of school leadership. Giovanni declared (2006), “Leadership is a personal thing. It is comprised of
three important dimensions—one's heart, head and hand." (p. 2). According to Sergiovanni (2006), leadership has its origins in the heart, head and hand of each individual. This is primarily the reason why you end up with such varied approaches when individuals are in similar scenarios. Sergiovanni (2006) suggests that leaders are products of their context. Sergiovanni's metaphor of the heart, head and hand of leadership captures the context of each individual's personal vision. Sergiovanni (2006) defines the heart of leadership as what a person believes, values, dreams about and is committed to. Moreover, he declares the head of leadership has to do with the theories of practice and the body of knowledge an individual has developed over time and our ability to reflect on the situations we face in light of these theories (Sergiovanni, 2006). He further declares (Sergiovanni, 2006) that the hand of leadership as the actions leaders take, the decisions leaders make and the exhibited leadership and management behaviors used by leaders that over time they become school programs, policies, protocols and eventually become institutionalized (Sergiovanni, 2006). Individuals seeking to lead a building and hold the position of principal must find his or her way, develop their unique approach or style, to bring in harmony the heart, head and hand into a successful principalship practice (Sergiovanni, 2006). Growing in the principalship is a very organic process that must be shaped and molded over time. It requires reflective practice and a continuous commitment to self-improvement. The principalship is similar to teaching because both are positions that are simultaneously a science, an art and a craft (Marzano, 2007). Sergiovanni declares (2006), "in the principalship, the challenge of leadership is to make peace with two competing imperatives, the managerial and the moral." (p. 13). The school has to run effectively and efficiently. However, a school must make the shift from being an
organization to a learning community. Senge (1990) "defines a learning organization as
“a learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they
create their reality. And how they can change it." (p. 13). He further explains that in our
current society there is a surface level understanding of what it means to learn. According
to Senge (1990), learning is not just a process of taking in new information, rather
learning is a process where we become able to do something we never were able to do. It
is in this space of learning that individuals extend their capacity to create. This is the art
of being a principal, a certain creativity in leading, shaping and cultivating a strong
learning environment for students. According to Whitaker (2012, xi), "Any principal can
fill a bookshelf with books about educational leadership. Any principal can study list of
guidelines, standards, principles and theories. The best administrators and the worst
administrators can ace exams in their graduate classes. The difference between a more
effective principal and their less effective colleagues is not what they know. It is what
they do." This is critical because it is the actions that set apart good leaders from great
leaders and from schools that close the opportunity gap and schools that do not.
According to a 2004 report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation found that
leadership ranked second only to teaching improving student achievement (Leithwood
Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Leadership has a significant impact on student
achievement. Effective principals have an enduring effect on the selection, growth and
development of a school and its faculty. After all, if you are efficiently leading, then your
teachers are teaching effectively which will result in higher levels of learning. Those
foundations are built with the relationships that the principal cultivates with his or her
teachers. The quality of the relationships determines the quality of the school. Principals

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work to provide the conditions, resources and support for teacher learning for the purpose of increasing student achievement (Sergiovanni, 2006). Therefore, it is fundamentally important that the principal be the number one instructional learner and leader in the building because we lead by example.

The principalship is one of the most exciting roles in the educational learning organization. Every day looks a little different and there is never a dull moment. One day you are leading a professional development training with your staff and ten minutes later you could be handling a medical emergency, helping to resolve a conflict between two students, meeting with a teacher after an observation having dialogue around effective instructional or de-escalating an irate parent. It is one of the most rewarding jobs in education because you are leading and facilitating the site level decision making in your building. According to Brill (2008), "the position of school principal requires an ability to recognize and understand the causes of the challenges of the field." The leadership style you identify as a leader is critical because you have to be willing to have those critical conversations with your school staff such as issues of the achievement gap to move beyond surface level symptoms and get to the root issues. To understand the root issues the principal must be directly involved in the teaching and learning life of a school.

The quality of a teacher's planning, delivery and assessment significantly affect student learning (Tucker & Stronge, 2005) and student success increases when teachers use specific instructional strategies. However, what is often overlooked is the influential role that every principal can play and effective principals do play in improving supervisor-teacher communication, instructional efficiency and ultimately student learning (Pollock & Ford, 2009). Principals play a pivotal role in communicating and
setting the values and beliefs that are meaningful in their lives. Creating learning communities that are focused on learning, collaboration and a positive and caring community are foundational areas of focus. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) found the following characteristics were strong determinants of effective and successful principals. Principals create opportunities that have a school-wide impact.

Those leaders had long term goals but also day-to-day actions they implement. They have a strong sense of her or himself and feel secure in who they are as leaders. Effective leaders stay focused on the goals and do not get distracted by problems and situations. According to Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), most successful principals understand that a positive school climate is essential for an effective school.

If a principal is new to a school building that is underperforming, there is a strong likelihood that the principal will need to restructure and change things that will stimulate school improvement. According to Sergiovanni (2006), resistance to change occurs when one's primary work needs are threatened. Every time something changes, ambiguity can occur as well. Therefore, it is essential that change must lead to improvement. According to Fullan (2003), sustaining change and sustainable leadership is a moral purpose. "Moral purpose means raising the level of all while closing the gap. This is the only way for large-scale, sustainable reform to occur—and it is moral purpose of the highest order." (p. 5). This means that school principals must act with focused intention. As Whitaker (2012) writes, "Great principals never forget that it is people, not programs, who determine the quality of the school." (p. 5). However, it is important that principals and teachers are products of their context.
Teacher and principal perceptions of students are grounded in their location in social categories of race, class and gender. They make sense of their interactions with pupils and the conditions of their work from these social locations. Teachers and principals bring differences and knowledge of racial structures into schools that provide a framework from which to interpret, to organize information, to act (Ferguson, 2000).

The decisions that principals make are guided and rooted from their location in social categories of race, class and gender. According to Brill (2008), principals on a daily basis find themselves in diverse situations where decision-making, core values and emotions intersect. Consequently, how do individuals in these roles go about their decision-making process? How do personal values and external pressures guide their decisions? In their role, they must have a decision-making process and expert school leaders that can articulate the high level of awareness of the processes they are using to inform and guide their decisions and the steps necessary before making a decision (Brill, 2008). Moreover, most decision making is not happening in a controlled environment; instead it is an atmosphere where multiple things are occurring concurrently. According to Brill (2008), school leadership and strong emotions are intertwined. Often principals are working with and through varying emotionally intense scenarios. The day to day job responsibilities call on principals to have difficult conversations, coach, evaluate, develop intervention strategies and provide discipline (Brill, 2008). One question that comes to mind about our research group of female principals from historically dominated cultures is the following: “What identity do they connect most closely within these moments of disequilibrium and high-pressure situations?” One of the primary reasons I was motivated to explore this research question is the high complexity of the role of the principalship.
Growing, as many variables, impact a school leader, but it is a position where one has to be confident in their individuality to understand what is permissible and impermissible under leadership. According to Brill (2008), who you are as a school leader is defined by where you have been and your lived experience. It is a position where a school leader must work in tandem with others while cultivating the most conducive environment for learning outcomes. Most importantly, a school leader is shaped by the ability to reflect, adapt and remain committed to growing.

In summary, the goal of this chapter was to provide a historical context on the history of dominated cultures in the United States; specifically, how the state used race and how the institution of school was used as a tool to de-culturalize the four dominated groups. A critical feminist race perspective on how this experience was different for women of color and how individual and group identity was formed is a result of these historical experiences. Intersectionality and macroaggressions were explored as frameworks to help the researcher and reader come to understand the research participants.

The secondary topics explored leadership theory, leadership identity and the principalship as related topics critical to answering the research question: Minnesota Female Principals from historically dominated groups in the United States: What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race has impacted their leadership identity? It is the goal of this researcher to learn from the lived experiences of the research participants. In the next chapter, the researcher will declare the research methods that will be implemented to conduct field research.
Chapter 3
Research Methods

Research Question

Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States: What are the perception of Minnesota female principals from historically dominated of how ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity?

Introduction to Research Methods

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the research methodologies selected to answer the research question. Also, the research frameworks that have shaped the decisions to leading up to the conducted research will be discussed. A qualitative methodology was selected to answer the research question, “What are the perception of Minnesota female principals from historically dominated of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity?” The rationale for utilizing a qualitative study was shaped mainly and influenced directly by the research question itself. This chapter will provide a rationale for the study design. It will also describe the proposed selected methodology used to conduct this study which will include research participants, data collection, data organization and data analysis.

The goal of the researcher was to explore social constructs of race, gender and the perceived impact of each research participant making a qualitative research design appropriate. Moreover, the questions sought to collect data about their individual perceptions and also the collective perceptions of the group as a whole. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “Qualitative research is based on more on
constructionism, which assumes multiple realities are socially constructed through the individual and collective perceptions or views of the same situation.” (p.12).

Consequently, the methods selected have been influenced by the goals of the research question which tends to be a design where themes emerge throughout the research process. The proposed plan was to use constructivist grounded theory as the research methodology. Arriving at these decisions was in large part because the researcher was hoping to capture the voices and lived experiences of each of the research participants. Another goal was to create conditions where the selected research methodology would maximize a deeper understanding of the research participants’ leadership journeys. The participants were permitted the space to detail their perceptions, recollections and interpretations of their leadership identity journey. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2012), “grounded theory examines phenomenon as related to theory that uses a comparative method, the data analysis simultaneously employs techniques of induction, deduction, and verification.” (p.24). Furthermore, it is a highly rigorous set of procedures that lead to substantive theory. According to Charmaz (2006), this will allow for the opportunity to mold and remold the collected data. By selecting grounded theory as the research methodology, allowed for the collected data to drive the emergent theory constructed by the research participants themselves. They provided the researcher tools to shape, reshape the collected data and ultimately refine the collected data.

The first goal was to highlight the stories and provide space for the voice of female principals from U.S. historically dominated cultures in the United States. Those four groups were identified as Native American, African-American, Hispanic American and Asian American. This is an underrepresented voice and a limitation in the body of
research centered on educational leadership as a whole and more specifically the principalship. A second goal, was to explore how leadership identity was formed when multiple identities and experiences around ethnicity, gender and race all met within the context of one individual. How is their leadership identity formed and shaped by those lived experiences? At its core my research question sought to understand the lived experiences from the research participants' perspectives. Therefore, selecting a qualitative research approach was what made logical and research-based sense.

The research used interviews of research participants and a survey to explore the experiences of Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures. The research captured the perceptions of each research participant of how ethnicity, race and gender have impacted their leadership identity. Creswell (1998) has positioned qualitative inquiry as a legitimate mode of human and social science exploration. This study design takes the reader into multiple dimensions of a problem or issues and displays it in all of its complexity. The qualitative research design was selected to capture the complexity of how each research participant lived experience shaped their leadership identity as a principal. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) declare, there are three types of grounded theory applications: systematic, emerging and constructivist. By utilizing Charmaz’s (2006) approach to constructing grounded theory, the researcher was able to employ a methodology that integrated the theoretical and methodological developments of the last forty years. Charmaz (2006) cites Glaser and Strauss (1967; 1978; 1987) foundational work to define the components of grounded theory practice to include 1) simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis; 2) constructing codes and categories from data itself, not from pre-conceived logically deducted hypotheses, 3) using a comparative
method, which involves making comparisons at each stage of the analysis, 4) advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis, 5) memo-writing elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories and identify gaps and 6) conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis (p. 5).

Charmaz further notes (2006) employing grounded theory increases the flexibility in following the leads that emerge from the data and while concurrently providing structure and focus as woven in a comparative analysis approach throughout methods of data gathering.

**Research Participants**

The research participants were invited and selected to participate in the research if the following two criteria were present. First, participants must be Minnesota female principals who were currently serving in the role of principal in a Pre-K-12 setting or who had served in the role of principal previously in the past five years. Second, research participants must have self-identified as belonging to at least one of the U.S. historically dominated racial groups; Native American, African American, Hispanic American and Asian American. The research participants were intentionally selected to address the following question categories:

- “What was the participant’s own personal school experience?”
- “How does one lead in an institution that historically has been used to de-culturalize your own racial and ethnic identity?”
- “How does ethnicity, gender, and race intersect and impact leadership identity?”
“What identity does the participant identify with more closely when there is conflict present?”

A substantial rationale for selecting this particular research participant group was because the voices of women of color continue to be an underrepresented voice in the educational leadership body of research. The specified criteria were established to recruit participants that could offer their unique lived experience as a woman of color currently serving as a principal or previously serving in that role but still actively working in a Pre-K-12 school setting. The proposed plan was to reach out to the Minnesota Board of School Administrators, Minnesota Elementary School Principal Association and the Minnesota Secondary School Principal Association to recruit research participants for the survey. Second, the plan was to reach out to MN districts to recruit interview candidates that met criteria and be placed on their email distribution list.

**Explanation of Research Methods**

My research methods were focused on a qualitative research framework that used a two-pronged approach. First, the data collected was done from a grounded theory approach. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a grounded theory study “to discover or generate a theory that explains central phenomena derived from the data.” (p. 346). The rationale for using grounded theory study was the specific experience of the research participants collected in the field data was used to ground the interpretations and conclusions within the field research results being conducted. By selecting such an approach, it was a process by which the researcher could honor the lived experiences and perspectives of each participant. Charmaz’s (2006) research methods allow us to zoom in and see the world from an insider perspective. Research participants answered intimate
interview and survey questions related to issues of ethnicity, gender and race. This was critical because the experience of women of color in a principalship was not the common focus of study. As was established in the historical literature review in Chapter 2, the under-represented voices specific in a critical and pivotal formal leadership position in school leadership lent itself to qualitative research methods and in large part what drew research participants to decide to be part of the research. By selecting grounded theory, it was the goal of the researcher to understand identified phenomenon as expressed by the research participants and be able to identify emergent common themes of each participants’ voiced experience. Therefore, each participant had the opportunity to respond to questions where they constructed their individual lived reality about the degree of impact the four areas of focus have had on their leadership identity. Second, research participants completed a survey centered around their leadership identity and their leadership style as a principal. The methods employed were constructed to address the following questions:

- “How does each research participant define their leadership identity?”
- “In what ways, does ethnicity, gender, and race influence their leadership style?”
- “What processes or strategies do research participants employ complex challenges as leaders?”
- “What motivates each of the research participants to remain in a principalship?”

The goal was to interview a minimum of 20 participants in the study. Ideally there would be five interview participants representing each of the four demographic groups. However, based on the ability to recruit research participants it would have been
permissible to have higher numbers of interview candidates representing the two largest racial groups which would be African American and Hispanic American.

Data collection was conducted through a semi-structured qualitative interview. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) defined the semi-structured research interview as, "an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena." (p.3) The semi-structured interview was selected as the method of collecting data because the goal was to elicit each participant's individual thoughts. This method of data collection also validated the individual's constructed experience and reality. The duration of the interviews were approximately 60 minutes but no more than 90 minutes. With each participant’s permission, the interviews were recorded. Interview recordings and field notes were transcribed for each individual interview. Participants also completed an electronic survey where they answered questions about their perceived leadership identity. As stated by Fink (2009), “Surveys are information collection methods used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences and behavior.” (p. 1) The survey was a self-administered questionnaire that was designed to only be taken once by each participant. The criteria was based on the participant self-identifying as belonging to one of the four dominated groups. Also, participants had to hold an active principal license and be currently in an administrative role requiring licensure, and/or have been in that role in the last five years. One of the questions in the survey was to gauge their interest in being selected to be part of the interview participant group.

The researcher had a plan to select a minimum of 20 participants to be interviewed. The goal was to have five candidates from each of the four dominated
groups to get equal representation. A letter of collaboration was sent to each interested participant. (Appendix A). If they agreed, then a letter of informed consent was signed by all research participants. (Appendix B). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), surveys help surface respondents’ attitudes, beliefs and opinions relative to their leadership philosophy and practice. The survey was utilized to create context and deepen the understanding of the interviewee’s thoughts, reflection and overall perspective. Specifically, the survey questions were grounded in Northouse’s (2013) leadership theory to establish the research participant’s leadership style. (Appendix C). The researcher grounded the creation of the survey based on Fink’s (2009), foundational text on conducting surveys.

An interview guide was created and used. (Appendix D). Additionally, the interview guide underwent an interview pilot test to ensure that a qualitative interview was conducted with fidelity. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), "The proficient craftsman does not focus on the technique, but on the task and on the material object.” (p.87). Specific detail was placed on crafting an interview study that elicited a depth of response.

**Data Collection Procedures and Strategies**

Entry into the research field was conducted in the natural settings of the participants. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), this may include school, home, office and perhaps other places such as a conference room and or coffee shop. Gaining access to enough participants who could commit to a sixty or ninety-minute interview was the first barrier to overcome. Next, securing a location where the data collected and recorded with minimal interruptions and optimal sound clarity was essential. Creating
access and opportunity to respond to the online survey became the first variable. I explored research-based leadership style surveys as well to ensure validity. Due to the rate of participation and completion, the plan was to get 50 participants to respond. Next, the framework and themes that emerged during the literature review was created from a Google online survey form. (Appendix E) This survey was emailed out to local Minnesota Principal organizations with distribution list as well as various local metro school districts.

The interview guide was created and utilized throughout the field research. An interview script was created and shared with each participant. The proposed plan had each research participant receiving the same protocol, including a review of the study letter, notification that the session was being recorded and assurance of data privacy. An interview study guide will leadership style approaches. When appropriate, the interviewee was asked probing and/or clarifying questions based on Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) Interview Guide. At the end of the interview the interviewer asked each research participant if there were any additional questions and/or comments they wished to share with the interviewer. Finally, the interviewer summarized how their research would be used and shared.

Interviews were digitally recorded and the interviews transcribed. The researcher used elements of the transcription protocols following Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) post-interview stages of transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting the knowledge produced by the interview conversations. However, for the purposes of this study, the theory ultimately emerged out of the data collection methods. Analyses was applied by
the researcher and coding and memo-writing were consistent with the use of grounded theory design model.

**Data Analysis**

Grounded theory was used to analyze the data collected from this study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “Grounded theory study is very specific: to discover or generate theory that explains central phenomena derived from the data.” (p. 346). Simply, a theory will emerge from the data analysis conducted. Another compelling reason to analyze data from a grounded theory perspective was the socially constructed phenomena(s) which were at the core of the research questions: ethnicity, gender and race. Charmaz (2006) declares, “When you situate your study and let generality emerge from the analysis you construct a safeguard against forcing data into your favorite analytic categories.” (p.181) As a result of this careful analytic process once data was collected a set of patterns and or generalities emerged. A constructivist approach to grounded theory design was an appropriate method to answer the research question. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue, “in a constructivist approach the focus is on the perspectives, feelings, and beliefs of participants.” (p. 24) This seemed a natural fit for this research question where individual perspectives, feelings and beliefs were at the core of what the researcher sought to answer. Using grounded theory methods in data analyses required particular attention to the coding that occurred while analyzing the transcripts of the recorded interview. This methodology required an intentional effort to connect the personal experiences of each of the research participants with the broader historical, social and cultural environments of each principal. This included focused coding and memo writing, sorting and reconstructing the data. For the purposes of this study, the
interviews were recorded. Each of the interview recordings were then transcribed. The researcher formatted the transcripts with numeric lines to help identify and sort during the coding process. This method also allowed the researcher the possibility of completing a comparative analysis based on the line by line patterning of each research interview. Charmaz (2006) believes the coding processes and the manner in which the data is sorted, analyzed, resorted and finally synthesized by the researcher will be the determinant factor as to what theory will emerge from the data.

One of the reasons grounded theory was selected, is the ongoing process from onset of data collection of continuous revision throughout the data collection and the analytic phase. Consequently, coding was a critical component of the work making a comparative analysis and reviews of data lay the foundation from which an emergent theory could arise. Another added benefit to transcribing each of the interviews was that it provided an opportunity for the researcher to concurrently begin to analyze the data. It also provided the researcher a consistent protocol that could be implemented for each of the interviews. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), transcription is an interpretative process, where the differences between oral speech and written texts give rise to a series of practical and principal issues.” (p.177). This is where the researcher can immediately begin to see themes emerge. The collection of data loosely assembled and reassembled into preliminary categories is based on the data itself (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) refers to this process as initial coding. Initial coding allows the researcher to organize and identify recurring themes, recurring language or keywords or emergent emotional responses repeated by the participants. Next, the researcher began to synthesize and explain emergent themes from large datasets. The researcher elected to
use the Nvivo 12 software to aid in the process of analyses and synthesize to ensure accuracy and alignment of the research findings.

**Criteria for Interpreting Findings:**

The Nvivo software was used to transcribe, code and create visual representations of the data summaries. The benefit of using this software was that it allowed the researcher to look at multiple and large data sets like results of an online survey and the transcripts of the recordings concurrently. The researcher was looking for patterns and themes that emerge from the two data points. Finally, the researcher examined ways to visually represent the data gathered via the Nvivo 12 software. It also assisted the researcher in identifying emerging categories and themes. Using the Nvivo 12 software, the researcher was able to interpret multiple data sets simultaneously to see across analysis around both data sets, being mindful that the interviews were living conversations. The researcher used Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) narrative approach and six step interview analysis was used to avoid being hampered by the process of transcribing. Instead the researcher focused on the meaning and ensured that grounded theory coding protocols were followed in order to construct themes from the rich data collected.

The researcher also implemented the use of Coding Memos to assist in identifying the emergent theory. The use of research memos helped the researcher make sense of the multiple ways the data was desegregated and examined. It also helped the researcher keep a running record of how the research analysis was shaped and constructed and how meaning was constructed.
The proposed research methods that were used to answer the research question: “What are the perceptions of Minnesota female principals from U.S. historically dominated cultures on ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity?” was a qualitative research design. The methods proposed in this chapter were derived from the research question itself which is focused on social constructs such as race and the perceptions of the research participants.

The qualitative research design had a three-pronged approach. First, the data collection was conducted from a phenomenological approach via grounded theory methodology. Second, participants answered intimate interview and survey questions related to issues of ethnicity, gender and race. Third, research participants completed an online survey identifying their leadership identity characteristics. This study employed a qualitative mixed method of research inquiry. The data collected was triangulated using grounded theory throughout the qualitative analysis. Grounded theory was selected as a research methodology because it allows for theories to be constructed from the data provided by the research participants themselves. This is an essential and critical because the goal of the researcher was to give voice to the lived experiences of each of the research participants and the relationship to the forming of their leadership identity. The data collection occurred via interviews and the completion of an online survey. Grounded theory was utilized to collect data, code and analyze while concurrently allowing for themes to emerge.
Chapter 4

The purpose of this research study was to examine how Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States have come to form their educational leadership identity. Therefore, the following research question was constructed: “Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States: What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender and race have impacted their leadership identity?” The researcher also explored two secondary questions: “How is leadership identity impacted when all of these socially constructed identities meet in one individual?” “How does a leader balance, prioritize and integrate each of these areas within her as she leads?” This study asked research participants to identify how ethnicity, race and gender impacted and shaped their leadership journey and current practice as leaders. Participants were invited to identify challenges and barriers and the strategies they utilized to overcome institutional sexism, racism, and to what degree their ethnicity, gender and racial identity influenced their responses. At the conclusion of the research, participants were asked to share what keeps them motivated to remain in the principalship.

This chapter represents the comprehensive research findings that resulted from interviews and a leadership identity survey of Minnesota female principals who self-identify as African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and Native American. As established in previous chapters, the perspective of women of color continues to be an underrepresented voice in educational leadership. This chapter will also provide an overview of the data collection process, the stages of data analyses using grounded theory methodology and a summary of the research findings. Furthermore, this
chapter will discuss how grounded theory and the Nvivo software was used to assist and arrive at the themes and major theory from both the interviews and leadership identity survey data.

**Participants of Leadership Identity Survey**

From the start of this research design study a core component was to carefully select the research methods that would not only answer the researcher’s primary and secondary questions but also capture and honor the voices of women of color who agreed to be part of this study. Careful consideration was given to the constructed research questions that would be asked both in the leadership identity survey and the interview protocol. Research participants were also asked to complete the online survey first before completing the interview. The rationale for this decision was to get research participants thinking and reflecting about their leadership identity and to what degree their ethnicity, gender and race influenced and shaped that same identity. The researcher was also trying to ensure that there was correlation between the survey questions and the interview protocol questions. The intent was to be able to make connections and to ground the data in the literature review previously established. This would assist the researcher in being able to analyze both data sets while being able to desegregate emergent themes as the data was collected as well as when coding occurred.

The catalyst of this research was the actual participants themselves. According to Northouse (2006), the voice of women of color is an underrepresented voice in leadership and specifically in educational leadership. The subjects in this research included eight African-American Minnesota principals who met the research criteria established and agreed to be research participants. Seven of the eight self-identified as African American
and one of eight self-identified as a bi-racial adoptee raised by a Caucasian family. Three Asian American Minnesota principals met the research criteria established and agreed to be research participants. Two of the three self-identified as ethnically Korean and were also adoptees raised by Caucasian families. One of the three self-identified as ethnically Hmong. Three Hispanic American Minnesota principals met the research criteria established and agreed to be research participants. One of the three self-identified ethnically as Mexican American. One of the three self-identified ethnically as a bi-racial Mexican American. One of the three self-identified ethnically as Puerto Rican. Only one Native American Minnesota principal met the research criteria established and agreed to be a research participant. Unfortunately, her data is only represented in the leadership identity survey data set. The researcher made multiple efforts to encourage the participation of Native American female principals but this demographic was extremely small. The researcher was only able to identify four current principals that would potentially self-identify as Native American and meet the research criteria. Given that this study was focused on principals working in the state of Minnesota and the historical trauma that has been experienced by Native Americans as a result of state domination, it was extremely disappointing to not to include the Native American female voice in the interview data set. The researcher was cognizant and respectful that individuals who identify and belong to indigenous first nations first and foremost can and do speak for themselves. However, one of the goals of this research study was to gather the perspectives of women from the four largest racial groups within the historical back drop of the United States. One of the eight African American participants participated in the online leadership survey but was not able to complete the interview. Two research
participants were unable to participate in the one-to-one interview due to time constraints. One other participant agreed to be part of the study but ultimately was not able to participate in either the online survey or interview.

Thirteen of the fifteen research participants completed the interview and the leadership identity survey. A total of fifteen research participants completed the leadership identity survey. Because the research participants in this study featured an underrepresented demographic in the state of Minnesota, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. The majority of the research participants are employed in a variety of urban, urban-suburban, suburban and rural districts in the state of Minnesota.

**Descriptions of the Survey Instrument**

The researcher selected an online survey as one instrument to gather information directly from the research participants. The rationale for using a survey was a first data gathering point that would quantify what the research participants believed, knew and thought about their leadership identity. Also, the online survey could be self-administered at the discretion of the research participant’s schedule. The survey would provide the researcher an opportunity to gather background and demographic data that would be relevant during the data analyses. Furthermore, the survey was designed to elicit specific responses from research participant focused on their perceptions on their leadership style and identity. Careful consideration was given to whether the researcher should use a more formal commercial survey tool to determine the research participant’s leadership identity. However, the length of those survey instruments was a big deterrent. Given the professional time constraints that principals are under, it did not seem like a feasible
option and the researcher did not move forward with this option. The researcher was mainly looking to get insight to how the participants saw their leadership.

The questions focused on in the survey were based in part on the sample item questionnaires found in Northouse’s (2013) *Leadership: Theory and Practice for Authentic Leadership*. One of the reasons this was selected was because the survey results quantified four specific areas: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. Participants used a scale to respond to the answers. The survey questions allowed assessment for the four components and whether a strong and/or weaker authentic leadership existed. The survey began with demographic questions 1-12. Questions 13-15 requested the survey participant to identify their motivation for becoming a principal and if their gender or race was an influence in that decision. Questions 16-18 requested the survey participant to identify their strongest character trait as a leader and if their gender or race was an influence. Questions 19-24 focused on the attributes of transformational leadership. Questions 25-39 focused on the authentic leadership attributes survey. These questions used Likert-style questions to assess the research participant’s authentic leadership. Question 40 asked participants to identify three words to describe themselves as a principal. Questions 41-45 asked participants to identify if they would be interested in participating in an interview and details on how they would be preferred to be contacted. Due to the data privacy of the research participant’s, questions 41-45 were omitted from the findings. Below is a visual representation of survey research participant demographic data (Figures 1-8). The researcher excluded some of the questions to ensure data privacy of survey research.
participants. However, including those questions was helpful information for the researcher to take into account during the data analyses of the data set.

Visual Representation of Research Participant Demographic Data

Figure 1. Question #2 Gender demographic (15 Responses)

Figure 2. Question #3 Racial demographic (15 Responses)
Figure 3. Question #4 Age of research participants (15 Responses)

Figure 4. Question #6 Current Position (15 Responses)
Figure 5. Question # 8 School setting (15 responses)

Figure 6. Question #10 Highest education degree completed (15 Responses)
Figure 7. Question #11 Began career as a teacher (15 responses)

Figure 8. Question #13 Years of teaching experience (11 responses)
The data collected from questions 1-12 provides the researcher and reader insight into who this group of diverse women of color represent. Research participants belonged to the four largest racial groups in the United States. They are working assistant principals, principals and district leaders from the state of Minnesota working in PK-12 schools. Although the total number of participants fell short of the goal of the desired 50, this demographic data is an indicator that this was still a very diverse group of research participants. The diversity was found in the following categories: age, ethnicity, race, years of teaching experience and where in the PK-12 spectrum they work. Two themes that emerged for the researcher was the level of education and years of teaching experience prior to becoming a principal the participants possessed. First, 60% of the participants surveyed held a professional degree, over a quarter of them held a doctoral degree. This is clear evidence that this is a highly educated group of female leaders. Second, 73.3% of survey participants reported starting their career as a teacher. Four participants reported that this was a second career for them and were not required to answer question 12. The eleven responses collected reported having 54.6% eleven plus years of teaching experience. This data set is evidenced that this is a seasoned group of leaders with strong classroom and instructional experience (Figure 9).
Survey question 13 requested survey participants to identify their motivation to become a principal. Question 14 asked them to identify if their decision to become a principal was related to their being female. The response was as follows; no (66.7%), yes (26.7%) and yes (6.7%). Question 15 asked them to identify if their decision to become a principal was related to their race. The response was as follows: no (46.7%) yes (46.7%) and yes (6.7%) answered partially. The emergent theme is that the survey participants are very much motivated by their personal and core values. Question 16 asked survey participants to identify their strongest character trait. The top three character traits were: diligent, hardworking and persistent (33.3%), trustworthy (20%), authentic and inspired confidence and taking a firm stand acting with certainty (13%). Question 17 asked participants to identify if their selected character trait was related to their gender. The participants responded as follows: no (46.7%), partially (33.3%) and yes (20%). Question 19 asked participants to identify if their selected character trait was related to their race. The participants responded: yes (46.7%), no (33.3%) and partially (20%). In both
questions 13 and 15, survey participants more closely aligned their responses to their racial identity than their gender identity.

**Rating Questions for Leadership Attributes**

Questions 19-24 asked survey participants to use a four-point scale (where 4 is frequently if not always and 0 is not at all) to determine transformational leadership attributes consistent with transformational leadership theory.

**Table 4 Attributes of Transformational Leadership Style**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. As a principal, I can go beyond my personal interest and defer to the will of the group</td>
<td>0=Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. As a principal, my decision making is guided by moral and ethical consequences</td>
<td>0=Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. As a principal, the future and possibilities is something that I discuss frequently with my team.</td>
<td>0=Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. When faced with complex issues, part of my practice involves analyzing and challenges when appropriate.</td>
<td>0=Not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions 25-39 asked survey participants to use a five-point scale (where 5 indicates strongly agrees and 0 indicates strongly disagree) to determine authentic leadership attributes.
Table 5 Attributes of Authentic Leadership Style

26. As a principal when conflict arises, I am usually willing to adjust my priorities to reach a resolution.

27. I am a decision maker, but I make a point of listening to others to find the best solution possible.

28. I can list my three greatest weaknesses.

29. My actions and decisions reflect my core values.

30. I openly share my feelings with others.

31. I do not allow group pressure to control me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>32. I listen closely to the ideas of those that disagree with me.</th>
<th>33. When pursuing my priorities I am usually firm and not swayed by others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5=Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4=Agree</td>
<td>4=Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=Neutral</td>
<td>3=Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=Disagree</td>
<td>2=Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1=Strongly Disagree</td>
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<th>34. I seek feedback as a way to understand who I am as a leader.</th>
<th>35. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues.</th>
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<tr>
<td>5=Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>4=Agree</td>
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<td>3=Neutral</td>
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<th>36. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others.</th>
<th>37. I rarely represent a false front to others.</th>
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<td>5=Strongly Agree</td>
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Significant Survey Responses Commonality and Differences

The purpose in asking research participants to rate themselves on the attributes of transformational leadership and authentic leadership was to key in on their perceptions of their leadership qualities. As established in the literature review, there are a variety of leadership theories and specific attributes associated with each leadership style. However, transformational leadership and authentic leadership were selected because those attributes provide the researcher and the reader with a general sense about how participants self-assessed themselves on these attributes. Also, by using attributes while employing a survey provided a rich data set could be quantified for further analyses. The responses were reported as a group provided an overall picture and representation of the group of female leaders of color. The emergent theme of this data set was that these leaders had strong self-awareness about their strengths and weaknesses as leaders as evidenced by the results from questions 28, 39 and 40. The data set from questions 20, 29, 31 and 35 provide evidence that this research participant group has a strong internalized moral compass that drives their work as educational leaders. Data results
from questions 22, 33, 36 and 38 provide insight that the research participant group has a balanced approach in seeking multiple perspectives, decision making and carefully listening to the voices of others. Furthermore, the data results from questions 19, 30 and 37 suggest that this research participant group has strength in establishing relationships and being transparent.

The researcher, in examining and analyzing the data set from questions 19-39, noticed that there was a strong thread of similarities in the overall responses to each of the questions posed. However, it was important to examine what questions demonstrated the largest variances in responses. Five questions stood out to the researcher; questions 19, 26, 30 and 34. Question 19 asked the responder the following: “As a principal I can go beyond my personal interest and defer to the will of the group.” Using a five-point scale where 5 represents strongly agree and 1 represents strongly disagree, the responses were as follows: 5=2, 4=6, 3=5, 2=2. Question 26 asked the survey participant the following: “As a principal, when conflict arises I am usually willing to adjust my priorities to reach a resolution.” Using a five-point scale, the responses were as follows: 5=1, 4=5, 3=6, 2=3, 1=0. Question 30 asked the survey responder the following: “I openly share my feelings with others.” Using a five-point scale, the responses were as follows: 5=2, 4=8, 3=4, 2=1, 1=0. Question 37 asked the survey responder the following: “I seek feedback as a way to understand who I am as a leader.” Using a five-point scale, the responses were as follows: 5=6, 4=6, 3=2, 2=0, 1=1.

In examining these five questions and trying to determine why they manifested the greatest variance, what was noted is the personal nature of each of these questions. Given the many complexities found in schools today and the many challenges principals
manage daily, one inference is that the responses might vary depending on the situations and contexts of the scenarios. Sometimes as a leader it is appropriate to share personal feelings and sometimes represent the larger organization; therefore, personal feelings might not be expressed. However, in a survey and with the use of a Likert scale rating a goal is to capture in general terms what a survey responder replies and answers at the time they are taking the survey. Question 40 was intentionally constructed to have survey participants write in the three words what they would use to describe who they are as principals. Below is a visual representation using a word cloud of that data set. The top three words that emerged were as follows: passionate, strategic and listener. For the purpose of this study, the word passionate is defined as expressing intense feelings, being enthusiastic or ardent. Strategic is someone who employs a plan, acts with intention and works to achieve goals. A listener is one who finds value in making time to listen to multiple perspectives.

*Figure 10. Three-word description of Survey Results*
Survey Instrument and Subcategories Used to Collect Survey Data

Once all of the research participants had submitted their responses to the online survey the researcher began to read each of the participant’s responses. This occurred several times so the researcher could get a sense of how each participant perceived their leadership identity. The researcher took copious notes and created a case memo for each participant. Another strategy employed during the analyzing and categorizing of the data set was guided by the methods of grounded theory. Charmaz (2006) provides a metaphor of a camera with many lenses in describing the process of how grounded theory methods help analyze rich sets of data. Charmaz (2006) states, “first you view a broad sweep of the landscape. Subsequently, you change your lens several times to bring scenes closer and closer into view.” (p. 14). The categories which emerged were demographical data of research participants, attributes of transformational leadership and attributes of authentic leadership. When examining the entire data set a clarity can be seen about who and what this group of female leaders of color represent. However, in analyzing this data set it became clear to the researcher that this data set would construct the background knowledge necessary to create the interview protocol.

Initially, the survey was going to provide the researcher an opportunity to identify participants who would be interested in taking part in the interview. However, the researcher discarded this idea because both of the data sets would be important in the emerging of themes and theory emergence. The goal was to set up the conditions where data could be arranged in categories and be able to compare ideas between the data set from the survey and the data set collected from the interviews. Although grounded theory is associated with the interview and ethnography, the researcher wanted to embrace the
holistic experience of collecting and analyzing data to move beyond the quantitative analyses that are numbers and Likert scale ratings. The researcher, at the start of this research, felt that collecting this survey data would help quantify data and could be used to inform the interviews protocol. During the data analyses the data set collected came alive and began to paint a mosaic of who these women are and what they represent. Every time the researcher examined the survey data a new idea, feeling and insight would occur. This new insight was a springboard for the next data source which was an interview.

**Intensive Interview Instrument**

The second method that was selected for collecting data was the intensive interview. Grounded theory was selected as the qualitative method because it gives a role both to the researcher and the participant. This method provided the researcher a pathway to enter into the lives of each of the research participants and see their views through their perspective. This was critical and essential in order to successfully answer the research question of this study. Charmaz (2006), asserts “Neither observer nor observed come to a scene untouched by the world.” (p. 15). The interviewer’s questions were framed in such a manner that participants were asked to describe and reflect on the construct of their leadership identity and the ways that ethnicity, gender and race have impacted that identity. The questions were constructed to be open-ended with the interviewer focused on listening, observing and probing for more details when appropriate. This study was framed so that the themes and theory would emerge via data collection, intensive interviews, coding and memo-writing, which are consistent with the method of grounded theory. One of the primary motivations the researcher selected intensive interviews was
because it allowed a space to capture the lived experience of this underrepresented voice in educational leadership today.

**Description of Intensive Interview Settings**

The interviews were conducted over phone, in person and via Google Chat. Prior to their interview, research participants were given the IRB letter of informed consent (Appendix A) and were asked to complete a leadership identity online survey prior to scheduling an interview (Appendix B). Originally, the goal was to get 30 participants to participate in intensive interviews. However, the target fell short with 15 participants meeting criteria and consenting to be part of the study. However, only 13 interviews were collected at the close of the data gathering window. The setting of where the interview took place was driven by the research participant’s preference and what their schedule would permit. Some of the interviews took place during office hours via phone. One participant opted to meet at a coffee shop while another opted to be interviewed over a lunch date at a local Vietnamese restaurant. A digital recorder and a microphone were purchased to accommodate any situation. Other interviews took place in the evening and/or weekends on the phone. The researcher was flexible because she wanted her research participants to be as comfortable as possible and to be in a mindset to really engage with the interview. A total of 13 interviews were conducted and completed. As previously stated, two participants that completed the online survey were not able to complete the interview during the research gathering timeframe.

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit open-ended responses from the research participant’s perspective as African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and Native American women who were all working in the formal leadership
role of a principal, assistant principal and/or recently district leadership. Specifically, the interview protocol was designed and constructed to elicit information regarding their experiences as leaders in schools. The researcher’s goal was to connect this to the established historical framework of this study. The interviews conducted were relaxed and intended to be conversational in nature. However, the interview protocol was shared with research participants prior to the interview to provide participants time to gather their thoughts on the questions. By providing this information prior to the interviews, the researcher tried to create the conditions where participants would give more in-depth responses to the questions. Once interviews were completed, a transcription was created for each of the interviewees. Once all of the interviews were transcribed, the researcher began the coding process using grounded theory. The researcher also utilized the Nvivo 12 Qualitative data software as a tool to assist in the data mining, coding and memo-writing. Rich data was collected throughout the thirteen interviews. Each of the interviews lasted 40- to 70-minutes in length. Consequently, there was significant data mining that had to occur in order to arrive at the emergent themes and theory.
**Intensive Interview Research Participant Profiles**

**Interviewee 1-Mary.** Mary is a principal in a large metro district in the Twin Cities. She has served as principal in three different schools. She self-identifies as Asian American and her ethnicity is Korean. Mary was an adoptee raised by a Caucasian family in the state of Minnesota. Growing up in Minnesota, Mary recalls feeling isolated and sticking out like a sore thumb. She did spend a few years in her early adult life on the East Coast which provided her with insights about regional cultural norms. As a principal, she described her leadership style as being very student-centered and a highly collaborative. The three words that Mary used to describe herself, “I’m certainly compassionate. I’m probably idealistic and hopeful and have high expectations for myself.”
**Interviewee 2-Maya.** Maya is a principal in a large metro district in the Twin Cities. This was a second career for Maya. She had excelled in her previous career but decided she wanted to do something different and ended up getting her master’s degree and becoming a teacher. Maya self-identified as being an African American female. She grew up on the west coast in a multi-cultural setting. Both of her parents were college educated and they put her on a trajectory to be successful. This meant she was placed in schools where African Americans were not a large demographic. She recalls having two sets of friends; school friends and neighborhood friends. Growing up she recalls struggling to find where she fit. “Because I just wanted to be me, but it was just like I wasn't Black enough, because I didn't do the slang. I wasn't a partier and all that. And then, of course, looking at me, no, I'm not white, so you don't fit in that. So, I kind of like was just in between, and I just made friends with whomever. And I didn't care.” As a principal, she described her leadership style, “I try to be collaborative in nature. I try to listen, and then just talk about relationships and be cognizant of what people need and being able to provide that for them.” The three words that Maya used to describe herself were, “I try to be collaborative in nature. I try to listen, and then just talk about relationships and be cognizant of what people need and being able to provide that for them.”
Interviewee 3: Jennifer. Jennifer is a principal in a metro school district. This is her first year at her current school. She has served in a principal role for five plus years. Jennifer had a traditional pathway to the principalship. She was a teacher, dean of students, assistant principal and was promoted to principal. She self-identified as Asian American and her ethnicity is Korean. Similar to Mary, she was a Korean adoptee who was raised by a Caucasian family in Minnesota. While growing up in Minnesota, she felt like she stuck out like sore thumb and had very unique experiences growing up as a result. Jennifer also spent a few years of her early adult life living in another mid-west state. Her work experience is diverse, having spent time in and out of the PK-12 system. Jennifer described her leadership style as follows: “Very collaborative. I very much want to make sure I am understanding the organization, that I use the resources I have and the strengths that we have within the system. I am a systems person but I also believe there are times you can be that collaborative person and that it is a conversation or it's a dialog and then there are times that I just need to be a manager or I need to be directive around that.” The three words that Jennifer used to describe herself were, "I would say collaborative. I think we had talked about one of the words being visionary. And I would say a learner.”
**Interviewee 4- Candace.** Candace is an assistant principal in a metro school district. She self-identified as an African American female. Candace has had a traditional pathway to the principalship. She has served as a teacher, program coordinator and now as an assistant principal. She has had a diverse work experiences she can draw from having worked in multiple metro districts. Candace was born and raised in Minnesota. She describes her leadership style as follows: “I'm a quiet leader, but I collaborate a lot. I sit back and I observe, and I really try to think about what's best for the kids and putting the right people in the right spots. You have to lay everything out on the table and you have to collaborate with people. You have to hear other perspectives; you really have to just put it all together for the benefit of the kids and put the right people in the right spots to make things work for our kids.” The three words that Candace identified to describe herself were passionate, collaborative and innovative.
Interviewee 5- Gloria. Gloria has recently been promoted to a district leadership position after spending over fifteen plus years in the principalship in a large metro district. She was raised in another mid-west state. Although this was a second career for Gloria, after her corporate experience and while raising a family she made the decision to enter the education field. Once in education, she had a traditional pathway having spent time as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and her most current position in district leadership. Gloria self-identified as an African American female. Gloria described her leadership style as follows: “I am a transformational leader. There’s no ifs, ands or buts about it. I influence and I motivate the staff to work towards a common goal. I'm highly collaborative; I believe in gathering multiple perspectives from others and voices from others. I believe in innovation and being a risk-taker, and the only way you can do that is by motivating others to help solve the problems together. So, I'm definitely a transformational leader. I do change; I do change well. I'm a change agent, but you don't just change for change. But I can influence staff and motivate staff so that we're all working towards that common goal to reach where we need to go.” The three words that Gloria identified to describe herself were change agent, collaborative and empathetic.
Interviewee 6- Donna. Donna is a principal in a large metro school district who has 15 plus years of experience in the principalship. Prior to her being a principal she worked as a teacher, teacher leader, instructional coach and assistant principal. She has worked in a variety of districts as an administrator and teacher leader, as well as administrative experience in another mid-west state. Donna self-identified as an African American female. She described her leadership style as follows: “Collaborative (emphatic), I think I would definitely say that it is collaborative in that it is intentional, um that I listen before making decisions. I try to get as much information as possible, um I am intentional about making sure that I build relationships with people and that I always let them know that I am here a) for the children and b) to support the children’s success. And that it is an all hands-on deck approach that we are all working for a common goal and for the best effort of the children.” The three words that Donna identified to describe herself were knowledgeable, supportive and youth-centered.
Interviewee 7- Grace. Grace spent fifteen plus years as a principal before being promoted to district leadership. She has worked in a variety of large metro school districts in the Twin Cities as well as an administrator in another midwest state. This was a second career for Grace, who began her career in another public service sector. Once she entered the education field she followed a traditional path to the principalship having served as a teacher, teacher leader, assistant principal and principal, her most current district leadership position. Grace self-identified as an African American female. She described her leadership style as follows: “I think my leadership style is transformational. It depends. I think it goes back and forth depending on the situation, to be very honest with you. I consider myself a servant. If that needs to be it, if I need to be a servant, I'm okay with that. Most importantly, I'm about kids, because kids! Kids do not get a second chance. I'm about transforming the environment to be positive for all scholars. I consider myself a transformational leader.” The three words that Grace identified to describe herself were, “I would say courageous would be one again, because you got to have courage to walk this walk. I would say tenacious and caring.”
Interviewee 8- Rachel. Rachel is currently an assistant principal in a large metro district. Her career path to the principalship has been non-traditional. Her first career was in another public-sector field. This experience gave her tremendous insight into identifying causes and often this circled back to a failed educational experience. She entered the education field in a student support services role. However, she had an opportunity to merge her public-sector work experience and student support services role. She left her metro district position. She worked in this position for a few years where she continued to work with a variety of districts. Once again, Rachel had the opportunity to re-enter the education field. At the time, she re-entered the field she had just completed her administrator licensure program. She was quickly promoted to assistant principal. She has been in this position less than five years. Rachel self-identified as an African American female. She described her leadership style as: “I would describe my leadership style as collaborative, relational and a racial equity leader that employs a servant leadership mindset. There's nothing that I do that doesn't have equity in the forefront of what I'm doing. But to serve, or be in service, too, is also incredibly important to me, and I'm really good at collaboration. It's just a natural part of what I do and how I do what I do as a leader.” The three words that Rachel identified to described herself were collaborative, supportive and equitable.
**Interviewee 9- Victoria.** Victoria is an assistant principal working in a metro school district. She had a traditional pathway to her current administrator position. She began her career as a teacher, teacher leader, instructional coach and her most current position of an assistant principal. Victoria self-identified as a bi-racial African American woman. Similar to Mary and Jennifer, she was an adoptee and was raised in Minnesota by a Caucasian family. Victoria described her leadership styles as: “A servant leader. Relationships are the foundation for everything. Relationships with staff, relationships with students, being out and about, your office is really the hallways. You have a pulse on the building and if there is something people are struggling with that servant leadership piece is where you figure out what is going and you find ways to support them. You find whatever resources are needed to make sure that teachers are able to do the job and that students are able to learn…and so for me as a leader, it is about relationships.” The three words that Victoria identified to describe herself were strategic, student-centered and empathetic.
Interviewee 10-Julia. Julia is an assistant principal working in a metro school district in the Twin Cities. Julia had a traditional pathway to her most current administrative role. She began her career as a teacher, teacher leader and her most current role as an assistant principal. Julia self-identified as a bi-racial Mexican American who was raised in a largely Caucasian community in Minnesota. Julia described her leadership style in the following way: “I lead a lot by example, and I model. I model for the students. I model for teachers. I'm trying to do what we expect our teachers to do within their lesson. I also model in the hallways for the kids what we expect to see. I don't take my cellphone out. I don't talk on my phone. I mean all those things that I expect they're doing, I make sure that I am doing too.” To summarize, Victoria does her best to lead by example and to be support for her teachers. The three words that Julia identified to describe herself were compassionate, fair and systematic.
Interviewee 11- Elizabeth. Elizabeth has been a principal in a large metro district for 15 plus years in a career that spans almost three decades. She had a traditional career pathway starting her career as a teacher, program coordinator and then was promoted to principal. Her work experience includes teaching experience in Minnesota and a southwest state. She self-identified as Mexican American and was born and raised in Minnesota in a bilingual home. Elizabeth described her leadership style as follows: “So, I guess I'm really high energy, really intense and very driven would probably be my leadership style, and it's like if you're not going to be doing the work then get out of my way, you know what I mean? Because it's going to be done, you know? I think it's really important to hear everybody's voice. I really try to include as many voices as possible. So, you know, yes, being collaborative and hearing as many voices from my staff as possible is important to me. I consider myself to be a collaborative leader. I try to create a family feel environment.” The three words that Elizabeth identified to describe were: “I guess I'm driven. High expectations for my staff and for my students. High expectations for myself, you know? Just have real high expectations. And I would say I'm compassionate.”
**Interviewee 12-Maribel.** Maribel is a principal working in a large metro district for less than five years but her educational career spans two decades. She self-identified as Puerto Rican female who emigrated to Minnesota not knowing the language. Upon entering the field, her career pathway was a bilingual paraprofessional, teacher and her most current position as a principal. Maribel described her leadership style as follows: “One of my strength’s is being a good listener. I like to always go in with best intentions. I like to seek to understand where decisions are coming from and offering people a different lens to see things. I say my leadership style is more of a community, as a team effort. I strongly believe everyone has a key role. Everyone has a key piece of the puzzle that we're trying to put together, and if one of those pieces is not in place, that puzzle's not going to look the same, so trying to get everyone who wants to be a part of that puzzle, it's my ongoing challenge. I'm not a 'my way or no way' principal. I like to find middle ground as long as it does not impact the students. I also know that we each come to the table with different beliefs, and our beliefs are so aligned with how we grew up, and it's so personal that I want to be respectful when I make decisions, but what I have always in mind is students. Whatever decision we make, it has to be with students in mind.” The three words that Maribel identified to describe her were: thoughtful, centered and committed.
Interviewee 13-Anne. Anne is a principal in a metro school district. She has been in her position five years. She followed a traditional career path as a teacher, teacher on special assignment, district program manager, district supervisor to her most current position as a principal. Anne self-identified as Hmong. She described her leadership style as follows: “I would say my leadership style, I'm very collaborative, and actually, if I really thought about it, I think I lead authentically. I think a lot of my staff would say that about me is they can always tell that I'm leading based on my values, or that if I make a decision, that I've also thought through all the other options. And that the decision is made based on core values.” The three words she identified to describe herself were: leading with integrity, humility to seek out other people who can help, caring and vision oriented.

Response to Research Questions

The purpose of this research study was to examine the ways that leadership identity is constructed, shaped and formed when you belong to one of the four largest non-dominant groups in the United States. Because this is an underrepresented voice in educational leadership, the researcher tried to invite a detailed discussion around leadership, leadership identity, cultural identity and gender identity intersection in one individual in their respective leadership journey.

Research Question 1

“Walk me through the progression of your education and professional career leading up to your most current position as principal and/or assistant principal?”

This question was constructed by the researcher for the purpose of establishing a conversational rapport with the interviewee. The intent behind this question was also to
gather some background knowledge to provide context for the researcher. The majority of responders went into great detail and specificity about their educational and career pathways. Due to the fact that much of the data collected was sensitive in nature and the participants represented such an underrepresented demographic in Minnesota, the researcher focused the summary on the probing responses that occurred during the interviewee’s response to RQ1.

The probing that occurred specifically was on identifying what influenced them to ultimately choose the principalship as a career path. There was a range of answers from each of the participants. The following six categories were constructed to help the researcher organize the data collected: 1) influential persons, 2) background experiences, 3) influential experiences, 4) personal values and 5) personal energy. The majority of responders fell into three categories: influential people, influential experience and personal energy, interest, drive categories.

The results to the survey data and the interview data differ slightly because 40% of responders listed their core values as being an influence. This did not surface in the interview data. One possible reason is that interviewees attributed their rationale for entering education as being more driven by their core values. Their interpretation about what was that moment they started to view becoming a principal a possible career path as a different event are different. Interviewees were able to articulate that it was a series of events that lead them the leadership pathway and definitely could attribute a specific person or experience that first planted that seed for them. In Table 4, the reader can see a sample of some of the different responses from principals. It should be noted that there was a nuance to the probing. The researcher chose to focus on the word influence versus
motivation, which was the language found in question three. (Appendix A for interview excerpts). However, all thirteen participants during the response used language that directly connected them becoming a teacher and/or principal to a specific person and or experience in their childhood or adulthood that contributed and influenced their decision to become a principal. It is possible that the language of the survey and survey responses did not allow participants to provide contextual language.

**Research Question 2**

The interview protocol asked research participants to identify what strengths they bring to the principalship (Appendix F). One of the most interesting things for the researcher was the variety and diverse strengths and leadership attributes that each individual identified as strengths. A feeling that emerged as the data responses for RQ2 was being mined was that each interviewee had a very strong sense of self. The participants had a strong self-awareness of who they are as individuals and who they are as leaders. One of the observations that the researcher was able to note was how readily participants could provide a response. Moreover, their responses overwhelmingly came from a thoughtful and reflective space. All thirteen participants were able to provide three words to describe their strengths. When comparing the results from RQ2 to the survey data results, there was alignment between these findings.

**Research Question 3**

“What motivated you to pursue the principalship? “Was that motivation related to being female?” “Was that motivation related to belonging to a dominated culture (African American, Asian American, Latina and Native American).”

Many of the participants felt that they had answered this question when they
provided their educational and work history leading up to their current position as principal. Therefore, the interviewer focused on the strands related to gender and race. One of the themes that emerged was that the participants at times struggled to tease out gender and race. One interviewee stated the following: “Well that is hard to say for me to answer that. This is all I have ever been. I don’t know what it is like to be white.” Another participant stated that she never saw gender as an obstacle in education because the majority of teachers were female. However, she did see being Latina as an obstacle to getting a quality education.

As the researcher completed more interviews, a theme began to emerge which was identified as intersectionality. It was the intersection of being both female and a woman of color. Gloria’s response captured the essence of that emerging theme (Appendix F). In analyzing Gloria’s response one of the phrases she referenced emerged for the researcher. The words she referenced were double-edged. In academia, this has come to be known as the double-bind. Lempinen (2011) states, “The double-bind: The price of being a minority woman in science.” Since this report, the struggle for women of color has evolved and changed. Lempinen (2011) declares the double-bind daughters find themselves with different challenges. The struggles he identifies are less about right versus wrong; instead it is about support versus neglect. It is less focused on overt wrong behaviors and the established culture that accepted inequality to the responsibilities and action or inaction of institutions. Charmaz (2006) asserts, “studying your data prompts you to the nuances of your research participant’s language and meaning.” (p. 34). As a result, the language that Gloria used in her response stood out for the researcher because it manifested a phenotype unique to women of color. They experienced otherness not just
as a result of their racial identity but also their gender identity; the intersection of both of these identities. All thirteen participants could provide at least one example where they experienced otherness either during the childhood, school and or professional experience as a result of the racial category.

**Research Question 4**

“How would you describe your leadership style? How does it relate to your gender and/or race?”

Similar to RQ3, many research participants felt like they had touched on this when they responded to RQ1 and RQ3. Therefore, the researcher probed more specifically to the relationship between their leadership style and their gender and/or race. One of the illuminating things that began to emerge connecting back to the theme of strong self-awareness was a strong awareness to stereotypes that existed about each of the women of color and their racial identification. One term that was repeated by a majority of the African American participants was the stereotype of the angry, Black woman (Appendix F). Another example where the researcher probed the interviewee more specifically about their gender and/or race and the impact on their leadership style is found in (Appendix F). What struck the researcher as she began to examine the data sets and the audio recordings was the tone of nostalgia that emerged for each of the participants when they would reference influential individuals. The majority of the interview participants could identify members in their family and/or community that influenced their development and their self-identity attributes. This feeling of nostalgia increased when participants referenced specific family members, i.e., Maribel and Anne who identified them as foundational not only to their personal identity but also their
leadership identity. All thirteen participants used language during their response that highlighted their student-centered focus. Eight of the thirteen participants used specific language to articulate their roles as a woman of color in leadership saw one of their primary roles of their leadership role to be an advocate for students of color and work to eliminate the achievement gap.

**Research Question 5**

“In your opinion, how has your personal identity influenced you as a principal/assistant principal?”

By the time the interviewees got to this point in the interview protocol there was a significant ease and comfort in the way they responded to the questions. One of the rationales the researcher had by employing grounded theory was the active role and often reflective experience that occurred as a result of the intensive interview (Appendix F). Julia provided some insight by stating, “I think we always bring ourselves into what we do.” The idea that we teach who we are and therefore by extension we lead by who we are was definitely an emerging theme. There was a feeling of an emerging theme that started out as not important but as the researcher began to complete the initial review of the data collected. However, after several analyses of the data, a theme became stronger. Seven of the participants used language to describe being a few of or the only person of color in the school and/or district. All three of the Asian participants explicitly used language to describe looking around the room and knowing they were the only Asian woman in the room. All three of the district leaders used language to describe they were not only the only person of color in the room but often times the only woman in the room. The theme that emerged was isolation. This theme manifested itself in a few forms.
The first example was a connection by three of the participants who identified being adoptees and raised by white families in Minnesota. Mary states, “...You know, like when I was growing up, I was isolated. So, I stuck out like a sore thumb,” and the way that is experienced by this principal as a child. A second way was the inverse of this same experience which occurred to Maya. Her parents were African American educators and they wanted to place her in the pathway for maximum success, so they opted not to send her to her neighborhood school. She recalled having school friends and neighborhood friends. However, that feeling of isolation continued to manifest itself for this group of research participants. Several principals identified experiencing a feeling of isolation present their work environment because women of color in educational leadership continues to be an underrepresented demographic in schools today. Many times, they are one of a few people in their building and/or district that is a person of color. Leadership can be an island for many individuals regardless of race and gender but how is this feeling magnified when you are a woman of color? How is the institution of school supporting these female leaders? These were some the questions that emerged as the data was being examined and analyzed for the researcher.

**Research Question 6**

“What three words would you use to describe who you are as a principal?”

Those three words were also highlighted in the created research participant profiles. However, there was a secondary probing question that was asked by the researcher when appropriate, which was, “How do those three words compare to your personal identity?” Jennifer responded in the following way, “I mean, I would definitely say who I am at work is who I am all the time. I don't see a discrepancy in that.” Seven of
the participants said that who they were as leaders was directly connected to their personal identity. The top three words that emerged from all thirteen participants were passionate, strategic and listener. These three words emerged using the Nvivo Software to examine the patterns of the most repeated words used throughout the thirteen transcripts recorded.

**Research Question 7**

“What challenges or constraints have you experienced as a principal and/or assistant principal? How is this related to your gender and/or race?”

The data gathered from this question was extremely rich (Appendix F). From excerpts of the texts included for the types of responses the interview participants provided, some themes emerged. The participants expressed having to navigate politics; often alone. The theme of isolation continued to surface. Tokenism, being invited to the table but not really being heard, culture and inter-personal conflict, institutional racism and institutional sexism occurred. Another theme that began to emerge when the researcher examined the data set of transcripts and recordings was the theme of micro-aggressions. The response gathered from Donna is an example of some of the language participants used to describe the theme of tokenism.

A problem that I have had is especially in this district. I mean any district in Minnesota, um where people that don’t know who I am don’t assume that I am the one in a leadership role. And so, I know that just community events here that um … some community people that may not know me or who have not seen my face, um will direct their attention to a white male who is in the vicinity or a white female who is in the vicinity. Um, before they direct their attention to me because
that is just something that is, um that I guess is common for them. I don’t think that is more about me. I think it is more about them. Because in my life as a student most of the people that I saw in leadership positions were people of color. So, that is not my experience but I can see where that might be an experience for someone else.

This example speaks to the experiences of women of color with educational leadership experience. What struck the researcher about this specific example was the matter of fact tone in which Donna recounted this challenge. For the researcher, it meant this was indicative that was something that was a common occurrence that she has come to expect. One of the interesting reflections Donna had in her interview was how much more she aligned to her racial identity versus her gender identity. On the one hand, she found that extremely bizarre as race is a social construct. On the other hand, her skin color is the first thing people see so she must respond accordingly. To navigate this dominant Caucasian culture, she is constantly checking herself, her language and her body language because she does not want to be misconstrued. She is also cognizant of racial stereotypes that people have of African American women and she works to challenge those stereotypes. Table X provides 7 excerpts from participants where they use language to describe the challenges and constraints as a result of race and gender. All thirteen participants could identify at least one challenge or constraint as a result of their racial identity. One interesting pattern was that all three adoptees could identify a specific constraint as a result of their gender identity.

Research Question 8

RQ8 was a second scenario based on a challenge and/or constraint. Interestingly,
the researcher placed this question here in the event that participants did not disclose significant experiences while answering RQ7. This was not a problem. Therefore, RQ8 was omitted from almost all interviews.

**Research Question 9**

“In times of conflict or high stress/emotion what identity would say you more closely align to, your gender identity or your racial identity? Why?”

“In times of conflict or high stress/emotion what identity would say you more closely align to, your gender identity or your racial identity? Why?” (Table 5)

Five of the interview participants identified with their rational identity during times of conflict and/or high stress. Four of the interview participants identified with their gender identity in times of conflict/high stress. When examining and analyzing their responses, all four participants made associations that emotions are a strong attribute under gender identity. Three of the survey participants connected to both gender and ethnic/racial identity which the researcher called intersectionality, the integration of both identities equally. Mary was an outlier because she attributed her identity during times of conflict or high stress being related to her core values as opposed to her gender and/or racial identity. One of the observations that the researcher made when collecting these responses was the reflective space it put many of the participants under. The researcher heard language like: “That’s a good question.” “I never thought about this before.” “Let me think.” Many wanted to provide context as part of their response.
Research Question 10

“What motivates you to remain in the principal position?”

One of the things noticed when this question was posed to research participants was the quick response and the tone of participants which often conveyed a strong sense of conviction. The answers were overwhelmingly student-centered and driven by their moral imperative to contribute to their respective communities in a way that helped the world be a better place. Below is an example of a response gathered from Gloria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participants</th>
<th>Racial Identity</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Intersectionality</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maya</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maribel</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 *Alignment to Gender or Race*
It's the hope, the hope that I am able to give to staff and kids of color. That's what keeps me here. After so many years in leadership, there are definitely times when it gets too tough, when it gets too hard and when you're fighting the battles for equality and for people to be seen and not to be isolated; that there's times you just want to give up and you're saying you're done. But on the flip side then there's so many people like, "Thank you so much and thank you for listening." Times where I am meeting and mentoring staff of color and other people and just listening to them and helping them grow, so that's what it is for me, its staff and kids of color.”

All thirteen participants identified students as the motivation as to why they were motivated to remain in the principalship. All thirteen participants used language to identify eradicating the achievement gap between white and students as central work from them as leaders of color.

**Research Question 11**

“How is your leadership identity impacted by the fact that you live and work in the state of Minnesota?”

The intent behind the construction of this question was to capture their experience working in the capacity of educational leadership in the state of Minnesota (See Table 12 found in Appendix A for interview excerpts). This question was designed to elicit the experience of women of color as principals and assistant principals currently working in the state of Minnesota. The researcher was interested in exploring how women of color leadership identity was impacted by where they lived and worked. Minnesota is a state has some of the largest academic disparities for students of color and very
underrepresented demographics of a diversity in the principalship. One of themes that emerged was the concept of Minnesota Nice and how it was at odds with the communication style of women of color in the principalship. Another theme that emerged was that living and working in the state of Minnesota did impact their leadership identity. There was a theme for eight of the research participants that was driven by a moral imperative to eradicate the academic achievement gaps for students of color. Seven of the eight were not born or raised in the Minnesota. The data suggests that there is a tension between the institution of school and Minnesota Nice culture that creates a perfect breeding ground for the achievement gap because it permits an aversion to addressing issues of institutional racisms with transparency and an unwillingness to experience discomfort. For principals who were born and raised in Minnesota, the theme of isolation continued to manifest. However, most leaders who experienced this isolation also saw this experience in a positive light because as a result of these experiences as children, it helped them grow stronger in character and become more resilient. All experience is relative; this was their reality and really did not know anything else. Consequently, you learn to adapt and navigate complex situations.

**Research Question 12**

“What recommendations do you have for other women of color who might be considering the principalship?”

One of the observations of the researcher after posing this question was the reflective tone in their cadence as they discussed these recommendations. It was evident after interviewing 13 female leaders of color that some of these recommendations were lessons learned along their leadership journey.
Rachel said,

I think to work hard to have mentors and know yourself outside of the work that you're doing. To know where your systems of support are going to come from and make sure that you always have some balance. Just your own personal balance between the work and the work experiences. The support in kind of how you, how you break apart from that. Then I think, I think assessing really the environment that you're going into, to ensure that as you are clear about articulating what your needs are that they have, that the conditions are set for you to be able to ... for the organization to be able to meet those needs, what they are. So, whatever those components are that you think you need to be successful in the principalship, make sure that you're looking for those, right? That it's not just about getting positioned, but that it's about getting a certain level of alignment between what the organization can do and what your needs are to help you to be able to be successful in the environment.

**Research Question 13**

Given that the primary purpose of my study was to examine how leadership identity is formed when you are a female self-identifying as belonging to one the four major racial minority groups. “What would you want to be sure others heard or read or understood after reading the findings from this study?”

Gloria gave voice to what occurs in the absence of not being seen. How that shapes and molds you and creates an internal drive to succeed and to break up those mental models that people have for women of color. Gloria stated,

Well, sometimes leadership identity is formed through the lack thereof and an
invisibility. So sometimes you become a leader because you're not seen. It's not always because, ‘I can correct this. I can do that,’ but there's so many times as a person of color that you're invisible. So, a lot of us become and respond to that with: yes, there are Latinos and yes there are African American and Asian people that can be in this role. So, your leadership identity, as I keep coming back to, is your culture and who you are and how it comes about. And it comes, for me personally, it's internal. It's who you are. I came into this because I had to fight for our kids. I had to fight for our kids of color and I had to show the other people that no, you're not going to tell me what I can't do. Sometimes it's from being invisible and sometimes it's from people going, what you can't do, and your perspectives. Oh, people of color, they're low. Oh, they can't read. Oh, their behavior things. Hm, gonna show you. So sometimes it's fighting against those perceptions and stereotypes that's out there that helps you identify as a leader, going, ‘No, I'm not that.’ or, ‘No, look at me, this is who I am. This is what I can do.’ So, those would be my main two.

Research Question 14

Question 14 asked the following: “Is there anything else you would like to add to help me understand your experience as a principal and specifically, the ways in which being a woman of color affects you as a principal?”

Only two participants answered this question. By the time the interviewees reached this point of the interview protocol, eleven out of the thirteen felt that they had covered their thoughts and reflections in the previous questions. The two participants that answered RQ14 briefly restated and summarized their previous answers.
Description of Coding and Categorizing Emerging Themes

After completing all of the transcribing for each of the 13 interviews conducted, the data set from the leadership identity survey and the data set from the 13 interviews completed was examined. An initial coding was used using the interview protocol. In that initial coding, the codes that emerged were: ethnic identity, gender identity, racial identity, leadership identity and personal experience. Sub categories which also served as a tool to probe during the interviews included: influential persons, background experiences (child, adult), influential experiences, personal values and personal energy. = Charmaz (2006) maintains, “Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain this data.” (p. 46). A fundamental component when using grounded theory as a research methodology is to remain open to all possible directions. The researcher made the decision to employ the usage of the Nvivo 12 software which is a qualitative data analysis tool that allows one to sort very text rich data and different types of files such as transcripts, audio, video and spreadsheets. Once the researcher learned to manipulate the different tools, it expedited the memo writing and coding process. This was extremely important because it allowed the researcher to remain open and flexible in the coding and memo writing that was occurring simultaneously. The researcher than employed several line-by-line codings for each of the 13 transcripts and began to organize the codes and code classifications. Using this software tool the researcher was also able to cross analyze data between survey and interview data collected. Every time the researcher looked at the data it became a continuous process of refinement. Reflecting on this process one of the things the researcher did not recognize prior to engaging in examining the data was the constant stream of consciousness. The
researcher is constantly asking questions about the data, decisions that should be made and ultimately even if trust and commit can be made to each decision as the themes begin to emerge. The researcher also employed comparative methods during the coding and examining of the data. Part of this decision was initially because there were two data sets to examine. However, because the 13 research participants represented such a diverse group experiences and demographics, the interview data was compared to the survey data. Each question in the interview protocol was examining by questions and finding similarities and differences in the way participants responded to each of the questions. Participants unique and special terms are labeled in Vivo codes (Charmaz, 2006). A series of NVivo codes began to emerge. For example, angry Black woman, white fragility, dragon mom, emotional quadrant and thinking quadrant.

Next, a series of continuous data analysis allowed the research to employ a more nuanced focus coding and sub coding. Memo writing and a creation of a case file emerged for each research participant. There were also memos written about codes, sub codes, across questions and across the four racial categories that were being examined. The researcher opted for free writes after examining data and tried to capture the stream of consciousness that the researcher was having each time she came into contact with the data. By using comparative methods of analyses across the two data sets and the researcher’s observation notes during the interviews the data was triangulated. Emergent themes were then sorted and classified and will be discussed in the next chapter in the summary of the findings.
Summary of Findings

There were four themes that emerged after the coding and categorizing was completed. The identified four themes were: Theme 1-ethnic, gender and racial identity, Theme 2-personal experience, Theme 3-leadership style and Theme 4-challenges and constraints in the principalship. This next section will provide a summary of the four major themes that emerged after the use of grounded theory methods were employed to analyze and examine each of the data sets collected via the leadership identity online survey and the 13 interviews completed. Based on these four themes the researcher was able to identify an emergent theory. The researcher was able to identify shared experiences for women who self-identified as African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and Native American. While it is true that no one individual’s experience is monolithic, there was enough consistency and shared experiences which emerged that provided an insight as to how the principalship was being experienced by women of color in the state of Minnesota.

Theme 1: Ethnic, gender, and racial identity. This theme identified research participants self-identifying their ethnic, gender and racial identity. A key component of this theme was participants constructed understanding and meaning of their ethnic, gender and racial identity and its relationship to their leadership identity as a principal. The questions from the survey and interview protocol focused on exploring and identifying the perceptions of how each of those identities influenced and shaped their leadership identity. All thirteen participants who participated in the interview and survey had a firm understanding of who they were as individuals in relationship to their ethnic, gender and racial identity. All thirteen participants expressed that their constructed
identities were influenced by varied personal experiences, influential people and influential experiences. All thirteen participants, to some degree, had positive and negative experiences in their journey they could identify and recount as formative in nature. The majority of participant’s perception of what it meant to live in their skin evolved over time. These formative and often challenging experiences as they came of age helped them navigate a variety of situations that upon reflection helped them build a skill set that they draw from as leaders. In the coding, one word that emerged and kept being repeated was the word; stronger. Twelve of the thirteen participants could identify and recall struggles they had as students during their school years because of their racial identity. Moreover, these identified struggles in their formative years due to their ethnic and/or racial identity over time evolved and they learned to be comfortable and have a strong sense of self. Mary described this experience. “As a leader, I think because of that access and because of my experiences, it has grown me. Even the struggles I've had as an Asian person, Asian woman, it's made me very resilient. It's made me very strong.”

Gloria described her experience as in another manner. “But also, as I've grown older, I've gotten ... I won't say more in touch with my blackness, but I would say I have grown to be comfortable in my skin. So, it's kind of like that book, The Skin I'm In. It's like that. I'm comfortable with that.” There was a growing understanding of who they are as individual and why they lead in the manner that they do.

The first subcategory that emerged while collecting and examining the data was intersectionality. Eight of the thirteen research participants identified with their gender, ethnic and racial identity simultaneously. Because all of these identities coexisted and overlapped within an individual and were so ingrained into their sense of self, it was
difficult to just examine something through the lens of gender or the lens of race for some of the participants. Elizabeth, in particular, struggled to separate gender and race because she identified as Latina and saw the world through this lens. This lens simultaneously included both her racial, ethnic and gender identity. Mary stated,

I guess I've never really split hairs to think. ‘Well, I would be doing this because I'm a woman,’ or ‘I'd be doing this because I'm a Latina.’ I guess I just do it because it's me, and my experiences of how to work within the system, and what's going to get me what I need to get. You know what I mean? I guess I don't know. To tell you the truth, I don't know how to answer that.

Intersectionality is a powerful framework for understanding, constructing and deconstructing the experience of identity, the complex and mutually constituting nature of social identities, the relationships between identity and larger social systems and the interwoven nature of manifestations of social oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). In a society where groups of people have been treated differently, as is the case in the United States, how you are classed, gendered and raced affect one’s way of experiencing and knowing the world. Gloria stated, “I bring my culture. I bring that there. It is always a part of me. I cannot take my skin color off; it doesn't go away. I can't do equity work from 7 am to 9 am or a meeting on cultural relevant teaching and then I'm done.” These identities and these ways of seeing the world are ever present.

A second subcategory that emerged connected to Theme 1—Ethnic, gender and racial identity was the double-bind. The double-bind manifests a phenomenon unique to women of color. They experience otherness not just as a result of their racial identity but also their gender identity, the intersection of both of these identities. The marginalization
for women of color in the United States did not just occur because of their gender and/or ethnic/racial identity. According to hooks (2010), this marginalization is directly connected to the historical legacy of the United States and the history of dominated cultures. To understand this interrelatedness, you have to examine the foundations of our country. hook (2009) argues, "that our historical foundations were built on imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. These phrases all interlock and function together in unison to maintain the dominant culture in place and other cultures in dominated status." (p. 4). As previously cited in the literature review Crenshaw (1991) declares racism is not the same experience for men of color and women of color. In the workplace, how this manifests is that women of color are encountering institutional racism and institutional sexism concurrently. Gloria captured this theme.

It's the intersectionality of race and of being a female. So, it's a mixture of both because at the same time that I'm real strong in representing race because we were seen at times as an underdog because of our skin color, we also have seen that as a woman. So, as a person of color that's a woman, that's a double edge there. I also recognize that being in the same room, and as a woman, you've been ignored where a male would be listened to. So it's even that intersectionality of that race and that female. It's just doubly hard to be heard, so you just really have to push hard.

The language that Gloria used in her response stood out for the researcher because it manifests a phenomenon unique to women of color. They experience marginalization not just as a result of their racial identity but also their gender identity. The intersection of both of these identities resulting in a double-bind.
Theme 2: Personal experience. The interview protocol used a variety of questions to elicit the research participant’s personal experience to understand the context of how they came to form their leadership identity. By focusing open-ended questions from each participant, the researcher was able to capture each participant’s individual perceptions and reflections of their own understanding of how different experiences have shaped who they are as individuals, but also who they are as a leader. There were five sub coding categories that the researcher used to help organize what was being collected and used to probe in follow up questions. The five sub categories were: 1) influential persons, 2) background experiences (child, adult), 3) influential experiences, 4) personal values (core, educational, spiritual) and 5) personal energy (mental focus, physical fuel, and emotional mastery). All of the research participants were able to identify key personal experiences as children and as adults that contributed to their interest in becoming a teacher and/or in seeking the principalship. All 13 participants had a clear understanding of their struggles to construct a sense of self. Furthermore, as a result of not belonging to the dominant group, participants could articulate how this experience was formed and shaped differently. This directly connects to the literature review which examined how identity comes to be constructed. Smith (1993) writes, "identity is the bane of subjectivity existence." As a result, it makes it difficult for an individual to be seen or understood outside of these social constructs. This struggle becomes more complicated when an individual such as a woman of color has to balance multiple identities. Rojas (2002) explains, "Each identity carries us along a predestined path where we are met with fixed assumptions, prejudices and limitations." (p. 3). Moreover, part of their self-actualization came to recognize and understand how this increased complexity of multiple identities
was intertwined within the social constructs of a larger historical context and legacy.

Spring (2012) postulates that hybridity is a word used to describe the intersection of two differing cultures. Hybridization involves the melding of cultural lenses or frames when influenced by more than one cultural context in such a way that women of color inherently experience the construction through this hybridization, not just as a result of their cultural, ethnic and racial frames but also due to their gender lens. Each participant could identify and attempt to make meaning, connection and/or reflection of how their individual journey was a part of the larger context of their ethnic and racial identity group experiences. The very things that identify us as belonging to one group or another also bring with them inherent expected behaviors that inform who we are not just as individuals but also as groups (Rojas, 2009). Constructing meaning from those reflections all shaped and influenced the lenses by which participants see and experience the world around them. Personal experiences emerged as a theme for all 13 participants in constructing their leadership identity. This idea was different when one of the participants added an additional identity that conflicted with gender identity by self-identifying as gay. One of the struggles this participant had was answering questions through a gender lens.

I don't know if I'm coming from a gender identity lens, one thing that I think I have not mentioned in this whole in all of my responses is I don't necessarily fit into a gender personality that we're used to in our society. That, in itself, right there is very different. When I speak about gender, I see myself very differently than maybe another Latina female. As gay and female, again, I'm challenging a lot of stereotypes, so I struggle a little bit with the gender piece as I'm responding
to these questions, but something I want people to really see is that, as a Latina female, it is my moral imperative to make sure that all children receive the message of being talented and gifted, and that, as a Latina female, I need to disrupt the narrative that our children are hearing every day. It's almost like I have to take the hits for them because they deserve better.

Two subthemes emerged under personal experience, stereotypes and resilience. Each of the thirteen participants were keenly aware of the negative stereotypes connected to their gender, ethnic and/or racial group. Novelist Adichie (2009) stated the following, “The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” One pattern that emerged for the participants that self-identified as African American was they all made a reference to the stereotype of the angry Black woman. Part of their leadership identity was to be cognizant of this negative stereotype and ensuring that as leaders they present themselves in a way that they will be heard and understood. African American principals saw one of their responsibilities as leaders was to offer a counter story to this negative stereotype. Participants disclosed how they went through great lengths to ensure that they conducted themselves in a manner that was opposite of this stereotype. This feeling was evoked by all 13 participants that even though they possessed strong educational credentials and years of experiences. This group of leaders is constantly negotiating who they are and their multiple identities against the historical and contemporary struggles of living in a racialized society. According to Spring (2006), these historical tensions continue to manifest themselves in schools today. Schools are a microcosm of our larger society. Our current events continue to make one thing clear, America has not come to terms with its
racialized past.

A second subtheme that emerged as the data was examined was resilience. The data revealed a creative tension that existed and had propelled mobilized participants to be comfortable in their ethnic and racial identity while concurrently working to transcend and reject these negative stereotypes. For many participants, this has been a life-long struggle to fight labels and stereotypes. Greene (2002) suggests, resilience is defined as an individual’s ability to successfully cope with adversity. Resilience is something developmental that occurs over time that leads to strengthening a person’s competence. All thirteen participants had navigated very complex and challenging situations as a result of a variety of personal experiences. Each could recount how navigating complex situations specific to their gender, ethnic and racial identity made them stronger individuals and enhanced their skill set to deal with difficult and complex situations. This enhanced their competencies to deal with complex situations and work with a variety of people which are skills that prepared them to meet the demands of a principal. The researcher noted each of the thirteen participants brought their lived experience into their leadership identity. The cognitive dissonance that was experienced as each participant formed their identities made each participant resilient but also gifted them with immeasurable strengths and skills that propelled them to be leaders in their field.

Theme 3: Leadership style. The core of my research question was to identify and understand who these leaders are and the leadership style they represent. Moreover, how are these leadership dynamics experienced differently when you are a woman of color? How is your leadership identity shaped, formed and come to be? What drives them to lead in an institution that has historically de-culturized their respected ethnic and/or racial
identity? Especially when principals today juggle many responsibilities which are further complicated by an era of underfunded mandates that demands all students achieve high learning outcomes. Two themes that emerged while examining and analyzing the data was transformational leadership for equity and authentic-servant leadership attributes. Participants identified being strongly motivated to ensure equitable outcomes for all learners. However, the majority of participants articulated that as female leaders of colors, they perceived that one of their roles as leaders is to continuously advocate for students of color and eradicate the achievement gap. The majority of participants identified that as leaders they are continuously looking for opportunities to serve and maximize positive outcomes for students, families, teachers and the larger community. They intentionally construct their leadership identity as one that directly addresses and intentionally works to interrupt systems and practices that continue to perpetuate the racial predictability of students of color underperforming. The leadership attributes that all participants were describing aligned Fuller’s (2018) work who constructed and named this leadership dynamic as transformational leadership for equity. Fuller (2018) defines transformational leadership for equity as leaders who engage at the level of interruption, strategically plan for positive change and act intentionally to provide access, opportunity and high quality educational experiences, which generate equitable outcomes. Equitable practice is differentiated in such a way that acceleration from multiple entry points becomes a reality and disparity and predictability of underachievement by any sub-population is eliminated. As educational leaders within their respective communities overwhelmingly there were also several authentic servant leadership attributes present in the language research participants used to describe their leadership identity. Research
participants see part of their work to ensure that they contribute and actively lead this work at their building level and district level. This leadership identity was very much driven by core values, strong work ethics and an unwavering sense of efficacy to ensure the adults under their leadership were prepared and effective in meeting the needs of all students. Secondly, they perceived themselves as strong advocates for children. While much of their day is to work was with the adults in front of children at the forefront, every decision was made putting students first, actively working to disrupt the adult culture that exists in schools today.

**Theme 4: Challenges and constraints.** Three challenges and constraints emerged after collecting and analyzing the data from all research participants. The three challenges and constraints that the researcher was able to identify after theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting was concluded were: isolation, tokenism and the Minnesota Nice culture. The first challenge that was expressed and identified by a majority of the research participants was the feeling of isolation. Many times, these women of color are one of a few principals in their individual school site and/or district. It is something that women of color identified as making their work as principals more challenging, especially when the majority of the staffs they lead are overwhelmingly white and female. Many participants reported being adept at navigating these political waters. However, the principalship is already difficult work made more challenging by the isolation. The second challenge that emerged from the data was tokenism (“Tokenism,” 2018), the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to be inclusive of minority groups. Interestingly enough this tokenism was experienced differently by women of color. Many reported experiencing this tokenism based on their ethnic and/or
racial identity. This was especially true of research participants who found themselves working in school districts where the demographic of principals largely remained predominantly white and male. Women of color principals in these districts expressed that this tokenism occurred when they were offered a seat at the table but were not always being heard and in some cases dismissed. Their experience and skill sets in transformational equity work were under-utilized even when it was clear to the research participants the issues being discussed were around systemic inequities. This made it difficult for women of color to know when to interject their voices into the conversation. Principals expressed they feared that their voices would be diminished and negatively stereotyped as the individual always bringing up race. Nevertheless, they persisted and continued to engage in these difficult moments because they take seriously their role of being advocates for students. Tokenism was also experienced by women of color principals when they were invited to represent diverse perspectives around district and/or school initiatives to address inequities, but that work resulted in very minimal changes in practices. The feeling from principals is they were invited to promote the image that they are inclusive and diverse. The leaders identified that pandering to white fragility often times is the barrier to address systematic issues that result in the underachievement of students of color. DiAngelo (2011) defines white fragility as a state where racial stress is not tolerable and invokes a defensive stance. Whites invoke the power to decide when, how and how much to address to challenge institutional racism. This creates an internal tension that can cause women of color in leadership to feel isolated and not heard. Many female women of color principals express that a misalignment occurs between their core values, their drive to be change agents and what the organization is willing to change.
However, women of color in leadership are also concurrently experiencing these feelings not only along the lines of ethnicity and/or racial group but also specific to their gender, the double-bind. According to three research participants, after being promoted to district leadership they experienced a different kind of tokenism the higher they progressed. The tokenism was not just being experienced due to the ethnic and/or racial identity but specifically elements specific to gender inequities emerged for these participants. They identified not only being the only person of color at the table but often the only female at the table.

A final challenge that Minnesota female principals of color identified was strictly grounded in the fact that they live and work in the state of Minnesota. Shin (2016) advice’s people of color are the fastest growing segment of Minnesota’s population. A majority of research participants, specific to those participants that did not grow up in Minnesota, identified Minnesota Nice culture as a challenge to navigate and overcome in their current role as leaders. Shin (2016) and essayist Mura write about a forum conducted by the Wilder Foundation where the central topics were examining why such disparities continue to persist in Minnesota education. Three points were discussed and captured Minnesota Nice culture and its relationship to race. First, there is a regionalism to being white that differentiates what it means to be white in Minnesota as opposed to a white in the south. The issues of race simply do not exist in Lake Wobegon and that is the way white Minnesotans want to think of their state. Second, Shin (2016) and essayist Mura notes Minnesota Nice is rooted in Minnesotans aversion to conflict and confrontation. Certain topics are not allowed for public discussion because they evoke tension. The only time racial tension surfaces are when the issue of race is discussed
therefore race is not discussed. Consequently, this also means that racism no longer exists. Shina (2016) and essayist Mura note, most white Minnesotans have forgotten that they were strangers here once or that they are not native to this land. Third, Shina (2016) and Mura details that white people living in Minnesota like to believe that they are nice people. The idea that this self-image might not be entirely true is not a mental model presently found when whites discuss Minnesota Nice. For example, there have been past state tourism campaigns expounding the welcoming and happy people in Minnesota. This is not the way people of color have experienced Minnesota Nice culture. One noticeable behavior that accompanies Minnesota Nice is a strong dose of passive aggressiveness. It is a very understated an indirect way of communicating. This is often a polar opposite communication style for many of the research participants who self-identify as very direct and to the point communicators. This inter-cultural communication style difference can result in a divide between the often mostly white staff that the participants lead.

Many participants were able to identify that they were perceived as intimidating and/or aggressive by staff. Participants identified this as a challenge but also a constraint because it prevents them from being their authentic selves in their interactions with their staff and/or receiving repercussions for being themselves. They reported having to constantly prove themselves. Maya stated, “I feel like I am always trying to prove myself, even though I already have the job. People say every day is an interview. I honestly believe every day is an interview right now. And it shouldn't be that way at all. Unless I do something egregious, every day should not be an interview.” This theme, threaded throughout; women of color are not allowed to make mistakes like their white colleagues or even men of color. For example, Grace detailed how there has been a personnel issue
that had been known for many years. The previous leader who was white and male never addressed the issue. However, she was the one who was expected to fix this issue. Her strengths of being a direct communicator were an asset in this situation but not when it involved issues of instruction, equity and/or race. However, in spite of these challenges and constraints all research participants remained committed to their educational leadership role of principal. A driver for that persistence was a hope that their commitment to equitable outcomes would result in accelerated positive outcomes for all students.

Early on in the data analyses it became very evident that the research participant group in this study were an incredibly diverse sample of the women of color in the principalship in the state of Minnesota. These women were highly educated with two-thirds of participants holding a professional degree and a quarter possessing a doctoral degree. They stood out as leaders in their respective field of education. They are driven by a mission grounded in their core values that contained several servant and authentic leadership attributes. They are driven to remain in the principalship to make a difference in the lives of their students and families. Due to the underrepresented demographic in the position of principal there was a strong rationale to examine the pattern of marginalization that occurs for the four largest racial groups in the United States from the lens and the coalition grouping of women of color.

**Emergent Theory**

Female principals who represent the non-dominant groups provide a meaningful voice and perspective in leadership that can assist in identifying and transforming systems and interrupting practices that continue to promote the under
achievement of students of color. As a result of experiencing marginalization along ethnic/racial, and gender identity and the intersection of being both a woman of color and an educational leader, produces a leadership identity that is student-centered, adaptive and results in transformational leadership for equity. Using constructivist grounded theory research methods, a new theory emerged from the data collected from the leadership identity survey data along with the interview data provided by the research participants. This emergent theory can be used to answer the primary and secondary research questions established for this research study.

**Research question 1:** Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States; what are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity?

**Research question 2:** How is leadership identity impacted when all of these socially constructed identities meet in one individual and how does a leader balance, prioritize and integrate each of these areas within her as she leads?

The historical legacy of marginalization that has occurred in the United States toward the four largest racial groups: African Americans, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American continue to manifest in many of the contemporary societal conflicts that exist today which include the continued underperformance of students of color in schools in comparison to their white peers. Women of color experience this marginalization differently as a result of the gender identity and ethnic/racial identity. Therefore, the way women of color become and experience the world is through the intersectionality of each of the identities. The participant self-identifies concurrently as she learns to navigate the world around her. Her abilities to
manage these complexities are developmental in nature and evolve over time. This intersectionality of multiple lenses results in increased competencies and resilience to navigate complex situations. Moreover, how one self identifies and experiences the world become formative experiences that construct and influence an individual’s leadership identity.

In conclusion, the purpose of this research study was to examine how Minnesota female principals who belong to one of the four largest racial minority groups in the United States, have come to form their educational leadership identity. The following research question was constructed, Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States; What are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity? The researcher also wanted to explore two secondary questions, how is leadership identity impacted when all of these socially constructed identities meet in one individual and how does a leader balance, prioritize, and integrate each of these areas within her as she leads. This study asked research participants to identify how ethnicity, gender, and gender impacted and shaped their leadership journey and current practice as leaders. Participants were also invited to identify challenges and barriers and the strategies they utilized to overcome institutional sexism, racism, and to what degree their ethnicity, gender, and racial identity influence their response. This chapter represents the comprehensive research findings that resulted from interviews and a leadership identity survey asked of Minnesota female principals who self-identify as African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. According to Northhouse (2006), the perspective of women of color continue to be an underrepresented voice in educational leadership. There was a total of 15 participants
who responded to the online leadership identity survey and 13 participants that completed intensive interviews.

When reflecting on the research and data analyses process although each of these women represent different racial groups and ethnicities their emerged a common thread in their shared experiences as women of color in the principalship. However, it should be noted that each participant brought their own unique lived experience and voice to this study. It is not the intent of this research findings to generalize and be representative of all women of color. Rather offer a collected sample of the thoughts, perceptions, and reflections on their experience working in the Principalship in Minnesota today. After all, there is not a monolithic experience for a group of people rather it is each individual journey much like the process of a mosaic that brings a unique piece of glass or stone to create a unified whole image. Instead the findings were intentional about including the voices of women of color and the relationship to leadership identity impact their role as principals. Specifically, to examine how the principalship might be experienced differently when you are a woman who self identifies as African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American and the reasons why this experience might differ.
Chapter 5

My interest in pursuing this research study was based on the complexities and competency that an individual must possess in order to lead a learning organizational effectively. The position of principal has been a formal leadership position in PK-12 education system that has a historical legacy of being held by white males in the United States history of education. Since the civil rights movement there has been significant advancement in diversifying the demographics of principalship but the most significant advancement has come from an increase participation of white females entering the field. Although inroads have been made the perspective of women of color in the principalship continues to be an underrepresented voice. In Minnesota, according to the 2012 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) annual School and Staffing Survey (SASS) Survey approximately 8% of the current principals are male and females of color with the majority of those individuals being concentrated in the Twin Cities metro area. Due to the marginalization that can occur as a result of being a woman of color and the underrepresentation of this demographic in current educational leadership research, a qualitative research study was constructed to capture the voice and lived experience of current principals working in the state of Minnesota. The researcher wanted to capture how a female principal belonging to one of the largest racial groups might experience constructing their leadership identity as a result of their gender and/or ethnic or racial identity. The final chapter of this research study will provide a summary of the study found in the previous four chapters. The researcher will revisit the four resulting themes and the emergent theory that was constructed as a result of the collected and examined data found in chapter four. Next, the researcher will also explore the implications of the
four resulting themes and emergent theory have on principal development, principal practice, and future research. Moreover, the researcher will also discuss the limitations of this research and make recommendations for future study. Finally, the researcher will explore final reflections on this research study.

The purpose of this study was to examine and answer the following two research questions;

Research question 1: Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States; what are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity?

Research question 2: How is leadership identity impacted when all of these socially constructed identities meet in one individual and how does a leader balance, prioritize, and integrate each of these areas within her as she leads?

Summary of Study

In summary, the goal of the first chapter of this study was to provide a historical context on the history of dominated cultures in the United States. Specifically, how race was used by the state and how the institution of school was used as a tool to deculturalize the four dominated groups. Providing a critical feminist race perspective on how this experience was different for women of color and how individual and group identity is formed as a result of these historical experiences. The secondary topics explored Leadership theory, leadership identity, and the principalship as related topics. In the second chapter, the researcher declared the literature review and explored the historical foundations of primary and secondary sources. The goal was to provide a historical context on the history of dominated cultures in the United States. Specifically,
how race was used by the state and how the institution of school was used as a tool to de-
culturalize the four dominated groups. Also, providing a critical feminist race perspective 
on how this experience was different for women of color and how individual and group 
identity is formed as a result of these historical experiences. The frameworks of 
intersectionality and macroaggressions were explored to help the researcher and reader 
come to understand the research participants.

In chapter three, the researcher declared the research methods that were 
implemented to conduct field research. The qualitative research design had a three-
pronged approach. First, the data collection was conducted from a phenomenological 
approach via grounded theory methodology. Second, participants participated in 
interviews where they answered a variety of questions related to their leadership identity 
and the relationships of ethnicity, gender and race. This study employed a qualitative 
mixed method of research inquiry. The data collected was triangulated using grounded 
theory throughout the qualitative analysis. Grounded theory was selected as a research 
methodology because it allows for theories to be constructed from the data the research 
participants provided. Grounded theory was utilized to collect data, code and analyze 
while concurrently allowing for themes to emerge. (Charmaz, 2006). This was essential 
because it was the goal of the researcher to give voice to the lived experiences of each of 
the research participants and the relationship to the forming of their leadership identity.

Resulting Themes

In chapter four the findings of this study were intended to provide insight and 
understanding of the lived experience and voice of the fifteen-online leadership identity 
survey participants and the thirteen interview research participants. The research study
was constructed using grounded theory research methods which involved multiple data dives into the collected data where line by line coding occurred. The researcher selected two data collection methods for this research study. Much thought and consideration was given to the data collection methods and what would best capture the voice and perspective of the research participants. The primary and secondary questions were ultimately the reasons why the researcher chose these two methods. The first data collection method was an online survey focused on the leadership identity of the fifteen research participants. The second data collection method was one to one interviews with thirteen research participants. Case memos were created for each of the thirteen interviews. By examining both collected data sets, cross examining the data, the case memos against the literature review, the researcher was able to triangulate the findings and gain a greater understanding the perspective of Minnesota women of color in the principalship and how their perspectives in how gender and their ethnic/racial identification have impacted their leadership identity. The findings of this study were intended to gather the perspectives of women of color and how their leadership identity has been impacted by their ethnicity, gender, and race. Many themes emerged from the interviews with the female women of color currently in the principalship in the state of Minnesota. As each of the participant groups shared the experience of being a woman of color self-identifying as belonging to the four largest racial groups in the United States many similarities between the survey data, interview data, and the current research literature emerged across all interviewees. The researcher engaged in theoretical sampling, which reduced emergent themes from six to four. According to Charmaz (2006), theoretical sampling is conducted to elaborate and refine the categories
constituting your theory. You engage in this process until no new categories emerge. However, as each of the women also belong to different ethnic groups and possesses their own unique voice and lived experience there were also some distinct differences that emerged.

Four themes emerged after the coding and categorizing and theoretical sampling was completed. The four themes are; ethnic, gender, and racial identity, personal experience, leadership style, and challenges and constraints in the principalship. Grounded theory research methods were employed to analyze and examine each of the data sets collected via the leadership identity online survey and the thirteen interviews completed. The heart of this research was research participant group themselves because it is a small and specialized demographic. However, because of their formal role as building school leaders in schools they play a key role in the educational outcomes for all students. The total of thirteen survey participants and fifteen survey participants represented a varied and diverse sample of women of color currently working in the principalship in Minnesota. This rich diversity of perspectives and experiences allowed the researcher to deeply analyze and sift through the rich data set collected to arrive at the emergent themes. Arriving at four themes was an arduous and messy journey full of scribbled notes, post its, and the use of Nvivo software to cross examine the data. The researcher was able to identify shared experiences for women who self-identify as African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American.

**Theme 1: Ethnic, Gender and Racial Identity**

This theme identifies research participants self-identifying their ethnic, gender, and racial identity. A key component of this theme was participants constructed
understanding and meaning of their own ethnic, gender, and racial identity and its relationship to their leadership identity as a principal. All thirteen participants who participated in the interview and survey had a firm understanding of who they were as individuals in relationship to their ethnic, gender, and racial identity. All thirteen participants expressed their constructed identities were influenced by varied personal experiences, influential people, and influential experiences. To some degree, all thirteen participants had positive and negative experiences in their journey they could identify and recount as formative in nature. The majority of participant’s perception of what it meant to live in their skin evolved over time. These formative and often challenging experiences as they came of age helped them navigate a variety of situations that upon reflection helped them build a skill set that they draw from as leaders. Many could identify and recall struggles they had as students during their school years because of their racial identity. Moreover, these identified struggles in their formative years due to their ethnic and/or racial identity over time evolved and they learned to be comfortable and have a strong sense of self. Two subcategories also emerged under the theme of ethnic, gender, and racial identity.

The first subcategory that emerged while collecting and examining the data was *intersectionality*. A majority of the research participants identified with their gender, ethnic, and racial identity simultaneously. That all of these identities coexisted and overlapped within an individual and were so ingrained into their sense of self it was difficult to just examine something through the lens of gender or the lens of race for some of the participants.

A second subcategory that emerged connected to the theme of ethnic, gender,
and racial identity was the *double-bind*. This term the double-bind manifests a phenomenon unique to women of color. They experience otherness not just as a result of their racial identity but also their gender identity. The intersection of both of these identities. The marginalization for women of color in the United States did not just occur because of their gender and/or ethnic/racial identity. It occurred because of both identities. Racism is not the same experience for men of color and women of color. In the workplace, how this manifest is that women of color are encountering institutional racism and institutional sexism concurrently.

**Theme 2: Personal Experience**

The researcher focused open-ended questions during the interview to gain an understanding and context from each participant, including how they came to form their leadership identity. By engaging interviewees in this manner, the researcher was able to capture each participant’s individual perceptions and reflections of how different experiences have shaped who they are as individuals but also who they are as leaders. All of the research participants were able to identify key personal experiences as children and as adults that contributed to their interest in becoming a teacher and/or in seeking the principalship. Each could identify and attempt to make meaning, connection and/or reflection of how their individual journey to form their own identity played out in the larger context of their ethnic and racial identity group experiences. According to Rojas (2009), the very things that identify us as belonging to one group or another also bring with them inherent expected behaviors that inform who we are not just as individuals but also as groups. Constructing meaning from those reflections all shaped and influenced the lenses by which participants see and experience the world around them. Personal
experiences emerged as a theme for all 13 participants in constructing their leadership identity. During the theoretical sampling two subthemes emerged under personal experience they are, stereotypes and resilience.

**Sub Theme One Stereotypes.** Each of the thirteen participants were keenly aware of the negative stereotypes connected to their gender, ethnic and/or racial group. Part of their leadership identity was to be cognizant of the negative stereotypes connected with their racial identity. For example, the angry Black women or the ‘Dragon Mom’ ensured that as leaders they presented themselves in a way that they will be heard and understood and offer a counter story to this negative stereotype. Participants disclosed how they went through great lengths to ensure that they conducted themselves in a manner that was opposite of this stereotype. This feeling was evoked by all thirteen participants that even though they possess strong educational credentials and years of experiences in the field of education. This group of leaders is constantly negotiating who they are, their multiple identities against the historical and contemporary struggles of living in a racialized society.

**Subtheme Two Resilience.** A second subtheme that emerged as the data was examined was resilience. The data revealed a creative tension that existed and had propelled mobilized participants to be comfortable in their ethnic and racial identity while concurrently working to transcend and push against these negative stereotypes. For many of the participants, this has been a life long struggle to push against labels and stereotypes. All thirteen participants had navigated very complex and challenging situations as a result of a variety of personal experiences. As a result, it enhanced their competencies to deal with complex situations and work with a variety of people whose
skills prepared them to meet the demands and many hats of a principal. The cognitive
dissonance that was experienced as each participant formed their identities making each
participant resilient but also gifted them with immeasurable strengths and skills that
propelled them to be leaders in their field.

Theme 3: Leadership Style

The core of my research question was to identify and understand who these leaders are and the leadership style they represent. Moreover, how are these leadership dynamics experienced differently, when you are a woman of color? How is your leadership identity shaped, formed and come to be? What drives them to lead in an institution that has historically de-culturalized their respected ethnic and/or racial identity? Especially when principals today juggle many responsibilities which are further complicated by an era of underfunded mandates that demands all students achieve high learning outcomes. Two leadership styles that emerged while examining and analyzing the data was transformational leadership for equity and authentic-servant leadership style attributes. Participants identified being strongly motivated to ensure equitable outcomes for all learners. However, the majority of participants articulated that as female leaders of colors, they perceived that one of their roles as leaders is to continuously advocate for students of color and eradicate the achievement gap. The majority of participants identified that as leaders they are continuously looking for opportunities to serve and maximize positive outcomes for students, families, teachers, and the larger community. Intentionally constructing their leadership identity as one that directly addresses and intentionally works to interrupt systems and practices that continue to perpetuate the racial predictability of students of color underperforming. As educational leaders within
their respective communities overwhelmingly there was also several authentic servant leadership attributes present in the language research participants used to describe their leadership identity. A subtheme that emerged under leadership style was student advocacy. Research participants articulated that student advocacy a strong attribute of their leadership identity and at the forefront of every decision they make as leaders. All participants viewed that part of their essential work is to ensure that they contribute and actively lead this work at their individual building level and district level. Identifying that much of their day to work was focused on capacity building the adults in front of children for the purpose of ensuring the highest learning outcomes possible. Participants actively working to disrupt the adult culture that often exists in schools today.

**Theme 4: Challenges and Constraints**

Early in the data analyses it became very evident that the research participant group in this study was an incredibly diverse sample of the women of color in the principalship in the state of Minnesota. A challenge that Minnesota female principals of color identified is strictly grounded in the fact that they live and work in the state of Minnesota. A majority of research participants, specific to those participants that did not grow up in Minnesota, identified Minnesota Nice culture as a challenge to navigate and overcome in their current role as leaders. Shin (2016), essayist Mura noted Minnesota Nice is rooted in Minnesotans aversion to conflict and confrontation. Certain topics are not allowed for public discussion because they evoke tension. The only time racial tensions surface are when the issue of race is discussed; therefore race is not discussed. Consequently, this also means that racism no longer exists. White people living in Minnesota like to believe that they are nice people. The idea that this self-image might
not be entirely true is not a mental model present found when whites discuss Minnesota Nice. This is not the way people of color have experienced Minnesota Nice culture. One noticeable behavior that accompanies Minnesota Nice is a strong dose of passive aggressiveness. It is a very understated an indirect way of communicating. This is often a polar opposite communication style for many of the research participants who self-identify as very direct and to the point communicators. This inter-cultural communication style difference can result in a divide between the often mostly white staff that research participants lead. Many participants were able to identify that they were perceived as intimidating by staff and/or aggressive. Participants identified this as a challenge but also a constraint because it prevents them from being their authentic selves in their interactions with their staff and/or receiving backlash for being themselves. However, in spite of these challenges and constraints all research participants remained committed to their educational leadership role of principal. A driver for that persistence was a hope that their commitment to equitable outcomes will result in accelerated positive outcomes for all students.

The four themes that emerged during the data analyses that was constructed using grounded theory are as follows; ethnic, gender, and racial identity, personal experience, leadership style, and challenges and constraints in the principalship. The researcher was able to triangulate the findings and gain a greater understanding the perspective of Minnesota women of color in the principalship and how their perspectives in how gender and their ethnic/racial identification have impacted their leadership identity. The findings of this study led the researcher to identify an emergent theme.
Emergent Theme

Female principals who represent the non-dominant groups provide a meaningful voice and perspective in leadership that can assist in identifying and transforming systems and practices that continue to promote the under achievement of students of color and all students. As a result of experiencing marginalization along ethnic/racial, and gender identity; and the intersection of being both a woman of color and an educational leader, it produces a leadership identity that is student centered, adaptive and results in transformational leadership for equity.

According to Fuller (2018), she defines transformational leadership for equity as follows; leaders who engage at the level of interruption, strategically plan for positive change and act intentionally to provide access, opportunity, and high quality educational experiences, which generate equitable outcomes. Equitable practice is differentiated in such a way that acceleration from multiple entry points becomes a reality and disparity and predictability of underachievement by any sub-population is eliminated.

Implications

Research participants were able to engage in reflection about how those experienced impacted and influenced their leadership identity. This aligned with the findings of the literature review. According to Sergiovanni (2006), he describes that leadership is comprised of three components: heart, head, and hand. The heart is connected to personal beliefs, values, and a personal vision. The head involves the theories and practices that have come to be developed in each. The hand has to do with the decisions and actions taken. All three are present in every leader and manifest differently even when faced with the same scenario. Sergiovanni (2006) noted, these
three components are the reasons why different leaders will behave differently even when faced with similar scenarios. One of the most interesting observation was examining the connection found in the leadership review that Rojas (2009) explores when examining how the identity of an individual is constructed and impacted by the simultaneously social constructs of group identity and the associated behaviors that come with each group association. The perceptions of how we come to see ourselves in context to the world around us. There is a constant struggle to assert who we are as individuals while balancing how the world perceives us based on socially constructed group identities such as ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexuality, etc. Furthermore, how this constant tension is experienced in a historically racialized society such as the United States as established by Spring (2004) and Takaki (1993) during the literature review of this study. The poet Whyte (2002) captures this tension of identity of finding our place in the world with the following; we shape ourselves to fit this world, and by the world we are shaped again. Each of us wishes to become visible, wishes to be heard, wishes to be seen. There is a complexity that emerges when you do not belong to the dominant culture and when the institution of education has worked to deculturalize you. A similar struggle emerges for principals who construct much of their leadership identity based how they define their personal beliefs, values, and a personal vision. The experiences that shape and inform our learning, and the decisions that are made as a result. Covey (1989) stated the following; “Each of us tends to think we see things as they are, that we are objective. But this is not the case. We see the world, not as it is, but as we are—or, as we are conditioned to see it. When we open our mouths to describe what we see, we in effect describe ourselves, our perceptions, our paradigms.” The intersectionality of multiple cultural, ethnic, and racial
identities concurrently co-exists and frame our perspective of how we come to experience and see the world. All thirteen interview participants, could identify and make connections to the historical legacy that has come to form the perspective of how the world sees them specific to their ethnic and/or racial identity. This is consistent with the findings in the literature review in relationship to identity and intersectionality.

**Implications for Principal Development.** Twelve of the thirteen interviewees who participated in this study experienced traditional advancement to the principalship. However, it should be noted that for four of the thirteen participants this was a second career choice. Once the participants entered the field of education their trajectory advancement was considered traditional for three of the four participants. All thirteen participants saw their career path whether traditional or nontraditional as formative in nature and allowed them to gain competencies which they draw on as leaders. Each of the thirteen interview participants were asked to respond to a question where they identify a challenge and/or a constraint as a result of being a woman of color. All thirteen participants had several experiences to choose from. In retelling their experiences principals could identify the problem, how being a woman of color influenced this experience, and the strategies they employed to respond to the situation. One implication for principal development is to address how personal identity and personal experiences impact how we come to see the world. It would be important for principal candidates to have a clear understanding of how this impacts how they form their leadership identity. Considering the many complex and challenges principals face it would be important for principals to understand what identities we revert to in times of high stress and conflict.
may impact relationships with others. From an equity lens, it would be important to address how this might be experienced differently when you are someone that is not part of the dominant culture. Providing a space within a principal preparation program to discuss and actively listen and engage in conversation that seek understanding.

Implications for practice. One of the most pervasive themes that emerged during this study was the isolation that was experienced by the research participants. One participant disclosed that this isolation was the biggest contributing factor to why she was leaving the principalship. She was not abandoning the work but seeking a different venue from which to evoke change. As the data from this study demonstrate, this group of leaders is highly educated and experienced in the field of education. If they have risen to the position of principal it is because they demonstrated strong leadership capacity. It is not enough to recruit and hire diverse leadership. School district leadership also have to be intentional about creating systems of support to continue to build and grow the leadership capacities of their leaders of color. The final question in the interview protocol asked interviewees the following; What would you want to be sure others understood after reading the findings of this study? Participant Gloria gave voice to what occurs in the absence of not being seen. Identity is formed as a reaction to show others—yes women of color can lead. This group of female leaders is asking to be seen, supported, and heard. They are committed transformational leaders for equity and their skills should be leverage to help address the many complexities facing schools today and to eradicate the racial academic disparities that exist.

Idea One: presented by Participant Rachel was a professional network for women of color principals for the state with regional chapters. A place where female
principals of color could engage in sisterhood bonding experiences and potentially discuss and strategize ways to embrace leadership challenges. This could potentially create a coalition of administrators of color engage in more personalized professional develop and perhaps create a space for advocacy group toward relevant and important issues. This could be an independent network or perhaps a sub network within the principal associations that currently exist.

**Idea Two:** Currently in my own practice as an Assistant Principal my district is revamping how it is organizing the professional learning for its principal leadership. Schools are being organized in a cohort model for the upcoming school year. My school will be aligned to two other elementary schools to increase collaboration and leverage the talents, skills, ideas, and resources. This cohort model will allow me to remain connected to other administrators of color working in the two other elementary schools. Without this cohort model my new school assignment would leave me isolated. All elementary schools will work in groups of three. Our three middle schools will be one cohort and our two high schools will work as a cohort. When we gather as school leaders we will be working collaborating and engaging in conversation throughout the upcoming year. According to Block (2008), the key to creating or transforming community, then, is to see the power in the small but important elements of being with others. The small group is the unit of transformation.” (p. 31) The power of the cohort model is in the relationships and community that it fosters. This collaboration is essential for continuing to grow, build leadership capacity and avoid isolation.
Limitations

Upon reflection, there were several limitations that occurred and impacted this study. The researcher had very clear intent and rationale why women from the four largest racial groups in the United States was selected as a research participant group. It allowed multiple perspective and voices and a shared experience in how those groups have been marginalized in this country. However, given time limitations of my research study perhaps a more in depth study of one particular racial group might have offered a different outcome. Another limitation was the number of participants that ultimately participated in the study. The researcher was able to get 15 research participants for the online survey and 13 interviewees. However, this study would have benefited from more participant studies. For example, this study was only able to get one female native American to participate and her data is part of the online survey data. The researcher was not able to collect the interview data. This added viewpoint could offer a different voice and lived experience, especially when the studies focus was on the state of Minnesota. Although the interview protocol went over multiple revisions before landing on the fourteen questions one can certainly wonder if these questions posed a limitation in the data that was ultimately collected. Finally, with a longer timeline and removing the barrier of time for participants this study might have benefitted from a focus group or a portraiture methodology. The researcher definitely debated this idea before settling on the survey and interview.

Recommendations for Further Study

In thinking beyond this study there are several variations from this study that could be potentially explored. One obvious recommendation to the researcher is to broaden the
scope of the research question from Minnesota Principals to include larger participant groups across the United States. Additionally, it would be interesting to employ a focus group. Further studies need to be done on educational leadership as a field in general and that research needs to include multiple perspectives. Another possible area of studies would be to compare the differences in the construction of leadership identity in relationship to regional identity for example how those regional differences play out across the United States. By opening up your participant group you have the ability to increase the research participant group. For example, the researcher had 15 participants for the online survey and 13 participants who agreed to interviews. While this research study was able to draw a small and very diverse participant group there is great value in increasing the number of participants and comparing seeing how those themes persist and/or change as result of increased participants. Another possibility would be to do a comparison analyses between leadership identity from a racialized society such as the United States and a non-racialized society. This would allow the researcher to explore how identity the differences that impact leadership identity in the absence of a racial classification. In general, more research needs to be inclusive of diverse perspectives that include a global perspective. Another possibility would be to broaden the scope from the principalship to include all educational leadership positions. The researcher had a very specific rationale for focusing across the four largest racial groups as a point of context but another possibility would be to take each one of these and examine things more deeply from each of those respective lenses.
Final Reflections

_Needless to say, dreaming is not only a necessary political act, but also a connotation of men’s and women’s socio-historical form of being. There is no change without dreams, just as there are no dreams without hope. Belief is what generates hope; hope generates possibilities; possibilities generate options; and options generate dreams._ –Pablo Friere

I have learned many lessons along my dissertation journey. Embarking on this journey started as a dream for me and to be typing my final reflections means I am bringing this journey to a close. I am not the same person who started this journey, I have been challenged, stretched and my perspective widened on what it means to lead a learning organization. My commitment to the hopes and possibilities of a brighter future for all students has only deepened. One of the primary goals at the beginning was to learn from the principals who would be part of this research participant group. I came of age in a border town and had to navigate two very different worlds; Mexican and American culture. This journey had a profound impact on my identity and while it was far from smooth much like the research participants found in this study; it made me stronger, it made me resilient, and wiser. This dissertation journey has achieved the same result; it has made me stronger, more resilient, and wiser. One of my greatest challenges as an educational leader has been to find my voice and clearly articulate what it means to instill belief and hope in the lives of the children we touch. The insights and reflections shared by these courageous and strong women with me are immeasurable in nature. My most fervent hope and desire is that I have honored their voices and perspectives in this research study. A realization I came to understand that I did not know at the beginning is
that to lead; one must first look inward, to declare and define for oneself, how you came to be, in order to lead with conviction and purpose. One must clearly know one’s heart before one can manage the head and the hand successfully. Research participants were asked what motivated them to remain in the principalship? Overwhelmingly, each of the thirteen participants responded without pause that students were the reason they got up every morning. Even in times of adversity they drew their strength from students and the limitless possibilities that access to a high-quality education provided them. Belief, hope, and dreams. (Appendix F).
Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions

My interest in pursuing this research study was based on the complexities and competency that an individual must possess in order to lead a learning organizational effectively. The position of principal has been a formal leadership position in PK-12 education system that has a historical legacy of being held by white males in the United States history of education. Since the civil rights movement there has been significant advancement in diversifying the demographics of principalship but the most significant advancement has come from an increase participation of white females entering the field. Although inroads have been made the perspective of women of color in the principalship continues to be an underrepresented voice. In Minnesota, according to the 2012 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) annual School and Staffing Survey (SASS) Survey approximately 8% of the current principals are male and females of color with the majority of those individuals being concentrated in the Twin Cities metro area. Due to the marginalization that can occur as a result of being a woman of color and the underrepresentation of this demographic in current educational leadership research, a qualitative research study was constructed to capture the voice and lived experience of current principals working in the state of Minnesota. The researcher wanted to capture how a female principal belonging to one of the largest racial groups might experience constructing their leadership identity as a result of their gender and/or ethnic or racial identity. The final chapter of this research study will provide a summary of the study found in the previous four chapters. The researcher will revisit the four resulting themes and the emergent theory that was constructed as a result of the collected and examined data found in chapter four. Next, the researcher will also explore the implications of the
four resulting themes and emergent theory have on principal development, principal practice, and future research. Moreover, the researcher will also discuss the limitations of this research and make recommendations for future study. Finally, the researcher will explore final reflections on this research study.

The purpose of this study was to examine and answer the following two research questions. Research question 1: “Minnesota female principals from historically dominated cultures in the United States; what are their perceptions of how ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity?” Research question 2: “How is leadership identity impacted when all of these socially constructed identities meet in one individual and how does a leader balance, prioritize, and integrate each of these areas within her as she leads?”

Summary of Study

In summary, the goal of the first chapter of this study was to provide a historical context on the history of dominated cultures in the United States. Specifically, how race was used by the state and how the institution of school was used as a tool to deculturalize the four dominated groups. Providing a critical feminist race perspective on how this experience was different for women of color and how individual and group identity is formed as a result of these historical experiences. The secondary topics explored Leadership theory, leadership identity, and the principalship as related topics. In the second chapter, the researcher declared the literature review and explored the historical foundations of primary and secondary sources. The goal was to provide a historical context on the history of dominated cultures in the United States. Specifically, how race was used by the state and how the institution of school was used as a tool to de-
culturalize the four dominated groups. Also, providing a critical feminist race perspective on how this experience was different for women of color and how individual and group identity is formed as a result of these historical experiences. The frameworks of intersectionality and macroaggressions were explored to help the researcher and reader come to understand the research participants.

In chapter three, the researcher declared the research methods that were implemented to conduct field research. The qualitative research design had a three-pronged approach. First, the data collection was conducted from a phenomenological approach via grounded theory methodology. Second, participants participated in interviews where they answered a variety of questions related to their leadership identity and the relationships of ethnicity, gender and race. This study employed a qualitative mixed method of research inquiry. The data collected was triangulated using grounded theory throughout the qualitative analysis. Grounded theory was selected as a research methodology because it allows for theories to be constructed from the data the research participants provided. Grounded theory was utilized to collect data, code and analyze while concurrently allowing for themes to emerge. This was essential because it was the goal of the researcher to give voice to the lived experiences of each of the research participants and the relationship to the forming of their leadership identity.

**Resulting Themes**

In chapter four the findings of this study were intended to provide insight and understanding of the lived experience and voice of the fifteen-online leadership identity survey participants and the thirteen interview research participants. The research study
was constructed using grounded theory research methods which involved multiple data dives into the collected data where line by line coding occurred. The researcher selected two data collection methods for this research study. Much thought and consideration was given to the data collection methods and what would best capture the voice and perspective of the research participants. The primary and secondary questions were ultimately the reasons why the researcher chose these two methods. The first data collection method was an online survey focused on the leadership identity of the fifteen research participants. The second data collection method was one to one interviews with thirteen research participants. Case memos were created for each of the thirteen interviews. (Charmaz, 2006). By examining both collected data sets, cross examining the data, the case memos against the literature review, the researcher was able to triangulate the findings and gain a greater understanding the perspective of Minnesota women of color in the principalship and how their perspectives in how gender and their ethnic/racial identification have impacted their leadership identity. The findings of this study were intended to gather the perspectives of women of color and how their leadership identity has been impacted by their ethnicity, gender, and race. Many themes emerged from the interviews with the female women of color currently in the principalship in the state of Minnesota. As each of the participant groups shared the experience of being a woman of color self-identifying as belonging to the four largest racial groups in the United States many similarities between the survey data, interview data, and the current research literature emerged across all interviewees. The researcher engaged in theoretical sampling, which reduced emergent themes from six to four. According to Charmaz (2006), theoretical sampling is conducted to elaborate and refine the categories
constituting your theory. You engage in this process until no new categories emerge. However, as each of the women also belong to different ethnic groups and possesses their own unique voice and lived experience there were also some distinct differences that emerged.

Four themes emerged after the coding and categorizing and theoretical sampling was completed. The four themes are; ethnic, gender, and racial identity, personal experience, leadership style, and challenges and constraints in the principalship. Grounded theory research methods were employed to analyze and examine each of the data sets collected via the leadership identity online survey and the thirteen interviews completed. The heart of this research was research participant group themselves because it is a small and specialized demographic. However, because of their formal role as building school leaders in schools they play a key role in the educational outcomes for all students. The total of thirteen survey participants and fifteen survey participants represented a varied and diverse sample of women of color currently working in the principalship in Minnesota. This rich diversity of perspectives and experiences allowed the researcher to deeply analyze and sift through the rich data set collected to arrive at the emergent themes. Arriving at four themes was an arduous and messy journey full of scribbled notes, post its, and the use of Nvivo software to cross examine the data. The researcher was able to identify shared experiences for women who self-identify as African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American.
Theme 1: Ethnic, gender and racial identity. This theme identifies research participants self-identifying their ethnic, gender, and racial identity. A key component of this theme was participants constructed understanding and meaning of their own ethnic, gender, and racial identity and its relationship to their leadership identity as a principal. All thirteen participants who participated in the interview and survey had a firm understanding of who they were as individuals in relationship to their ethnic, gender, and racial identity. All thirteen participants expressed their constructed identities were influenced by varied personal experiences, influential people, and influential experiences. To some degree, all thirteen participants had positive and negative experiences in their journey they could identify and recount as formative in nature. The majority of participant’s perception of what it meant to live in their skin evolved over time. These formative and often challenging experiences as they came of age helped them navigate a variety of situations that upon reflection helped them build a skill set that they draw from as leaders. Many could identify and recall struggles they had as students during their school years because of their racial identity. Moreover, these identified struggles in their formative years due to their ethnic and/or racial identity over time evolved and they learned to be comfortable and have a strong sense of self. Two subcategories also emerged under the theme of ethnic, gender, and racial identity.

The first subcategory that emerged while collecting and examining the data was intersectionality. A majority of the research participants identified with their gender, ethnic, and racial identity simultaneously. That all of these identities coexisted and overlapped within an individual and were so ingrained into their sense of self it was difficult to just examine something through the lens of gender or the lens of race for some
of the participants.

A second subcategory that emerged connected to the theme of ethnic, gender, and racial identity was the *double-bind*. This term the double-bind manifests a phenomenon unique to women of color. They experience otherness not just as a result of their racial identity but also their gender identity. The intersection of both of these identities. The marginalization for women of color in the United States did not just occur because of their gender and/or ethnic/racial identity. It occurred because of both identities. Racism is not the same experience for men of color and women of color. In the workplace, how this manifest is that women of color are encountering institutional racism and institutional sexism concurrently.

**Theme 2: Personal experience**

The researcher focusing open ended questions during the interview gain understanding and context from each participant, and how they came to form their leadership identity. By engaging interviewees in this manner, the researcher was able to capture each participant’s individual perceptions and reflections of how different experiences have shaped who they are as individuals but also who they are as leaders. All of the research participants were able to identify key personal experiences as children and as adults that contributed to their interest in becoming a teacher and/or in seeking the principalship. Each could identify and attempt to make meaning, connection, and/or reflection of how their individual journey to form their own identity played out in the larger context of their ethnic and racial identity group experiences. According to Rojas (2009), the very things that identify us as belonging to one group or another also bring with them inherent expected behaviors that inform who we are not just as individuals but
also as groups. Constructing meaning from those reflections all shaped and influenced the lenses by which participants see and experience the world around them. Personal experiences emerged as a theme for all thirteen participants in constructing their leadership identity. During the theoretical sampling two subthemes emerged under personal experience they are; stereotypes and resilience.

Sub Theme One Stereotypes: Each of the thirteen participants were keenly aware of the negative stereotypes connected to their gender, ethnic and/or racial group. Part of their leadership identity was to be cognizant of the negative stereotypes connected with their racial identity. For example; the angry black women or the dragon mom and ensuring that as leaders they present themselves in a way that they will be heard and understood and offer a counter story to this negative stereotype. Participants disclosed how they went through great lengths to ensure that they conducted themselves in a manner that was opposite of this stereotype. This feeling was evoked by all thirteen participants that even though they possess strong educational credentials and years of experiences in the field of education this group of leaders is constantly negotiating who they are, their multiple identities against the historical and contemporary struggles of living in a racialized society.

Subtheme Two Resilience: A second subtheme that emerged as the data was examined was resilience. The data revealed a creative tension that existed and had propelled mobilized participants to be comfortable in their ethnic and racial identity while concurrently working to transcend and push against these negative stereotypes. For many participant, this has been a life long struggle to push against labels and stereotypes. All thirteen participants had each navigated very complex and challenging situation as a
result of a variety of personal experiences. As a result, it enhanced their competencies to
deal with complex situations and work with a variety of people which are skills that
prepared them to meet the demands and many hats of a principal. The cognitive
dissonance that was experienced as each participant formed their own identities made
each participant resilient but also gifted them with immeasurable strengths and skills that
propelled them to be leaders in their field.

**Theme 3: Leadership style**

At the core of my research question was to identify and understand who these
leaders are and the leadership style they represent. Moreover, how are these leadership
dynamics experienced differently, when you are a woman of color? How is your
leadership identity shaped, formed and come to be? What drives them to lead in an
institution that has historically de-culturalized their respected ethnic and/or racial
identity? Especially when principals today juggle many responsibilities which are further
complicated by an era of underfunded mandates that demands all students achieve high
learning outcomes. Two leadership styles that emerged while examining and analyzing
the data was transformational leadership for equity and authentic-servant leadership style
attributes. Participants identified being strongly motivated to ensure equitable outcomes
for all learners. However, the majority of participants articulated that as female leaders of
colors, they perceived that one of their roles as leaders is to continuously advocate for
students of color and eradicate the achievement gap. The majority of participants
identified that as leaders they are continuously looking for opportunities to serve and
maximize positive outcomes for students, families, teachers, and the larger community.
Intentionally constructing their leadership identity as one that directly addresses and
intentionally works to interrupt systems and practices that continue to perpetuate the racial predictability of students of color underperforming. As educational leaders within their respective communities overwhelmingly there was also several authentic servant leadership attributes present in the language research participants used to describe their leadership identity. A subtheme that emerged under leadership style was student advocacy. Research participants articulated that student advocacy a strong attribute of their leadership identity and at the forefront of every decision they make as leaders. All participants viewed that part of their essential work is to ensure that they contribute and actively lead this work at their individual building level and district level. Identifying that much of their day to work was focused on capacity building the adults in front of children for the purpose of ensuring the highest learning outcomes possible. Actively working to disrupt the adult culture that often exists in schools today.

**Theme 4: Challenges and constraints**

Early on in the data analyses it became very evident that the research participant group in this study were an incredibly diverse sample of the women of color in the principalship in the state of Minnesota. A challenge that Minnesota female principals of color identified was strictly grounded in the fact that they live and work in the state of Minnesota. A majority of research participants, specific to those participants that did not grow up in Minnesota, identified Minnesota Nice culture as a challenge to navigate and overcome in their current role as leaders. Shin (2016) and essayist Mura noted, Minnesota Nice is rooted in Minnesotans aversion to conflict and confrontation. Certain topics are not allowed for public discussion because they evoke tension. The only time racial tension surfaces are when the issue of race is discussed therefore race is not
discussed. Consequently, this also means that racism no longer exists. White people living in Minnesota like to believe that they are nice people. The idea that this self-image might not be entirely true is not a mental model present found when whites discuss Minnesota Nice. This is not the way people of color have experienced Minnesota Nice culture. One noticeable behavior that accompanies Minnesota Nice is a strong dose of passive aggressiveness. It is a very understated an indirect way of communicating. This is often a polar opposite communication style for many of the research participants who self-identify as very direct and to the point communicators. This inter-cultural communication style difference can result in a divide between the often mostly white staff that research participants lead. Eight participants were able to identify that they were perceived as intimidating by staff and/or aggressive. Participants identified this as a challenge but also a constraint because it prevents them from being their authentic selves in their interactions with their staff and/or receiving backlash for being themselves. However, in spite of these challenges and constraints all research participants remained committed to their educational leadership role of principal. A driver for that persistence was a hope that their commitment to equitable outcomes will result in accelerated positive outcomes for all students.

The four themes that emerged during the data analyses that was constructed using grounded theory are as follows; ethnic, gender, and racial identity, personal experience, leadership style, and challenges and constraints in the principalship. The researcher was able to triangulate the findings and gain a greater understanding the perspective of Minnesota women of color in the principalship and how their perspectives in how gender and their ethnic/racial identification have impacted their leadership identity. The findings
Emergent Theme
Female Principals who represent the non-dominant groups provide a meaningful voice and perspective in leadership that can assist in identifying and transforming systems and practices that continue to promote the underachievement of students of color and all students. As a result of experiencing marginalization along ethnic/racial, and gender identity: and the intersection of being both a woman of color and an educational leader, it produces a leadership identity that is student centered, adaptive and results in transformational leadership for equity.

According to Fuller (2018), she defines transformational leadership for equity as follows; leaders who engage at the level of interruption, strategically plan for positive change and act intentionally to provide access, opportunity, and high quality educational experiences, which generate equitable outcomes. Equitable practice is differentiated in such a way that acceleration from multiple entry points becomes a reality and disparity and predictability of underachievement by any sub-population is eliminated.

Implications
Research participants were able to engage in reflection about how those experienced impacted and influenced their leadership identity. This aligned with the findings of the literature review. According to Sergiovanni (2006), he describes that leadership is comprised of three components: heart, head, and hand. The heart is connected to personal beliefs, values, and a personal vision. The head involves the theories and practices that have come to be developed in each. The hand has to do with
the decisions and actions taken. All three are present in every leader and manifest differently even when faced with the same scenario. Sergiovanni (2006) noted, these three components are the reasons why different leaders will behave differently even when faced with similar scenarios. One of the most interesting observation was examining the connection found in the leadership review that Rojas (2009) explores when examining how the identity of an individual is constructed and impacted by the simultaneously social constructs of group identity and the associated behaviors that come with each group association. The perceptions of how we come to see ourselves in context to the world around us. There is a constant struggle to assert who we are as individuals while balancing how the world perceives us based on socially constructed group identities such as ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexuality, etc. Furthermore, how this constant tension is experienced in a historically racialized society such as the United States as established by Spring (2012) and Takaki (1993) during the literature review of this study. The poet Whyte (2002) captures this tension of identity of finding our place in the world with the following; we shape ourselves to fit this world, and by the world we are shaped again. Each of us wishes to become visible, wishes to be heard, wishes to be seen. The complexity that emerges when you do not belong to the dominant culture and when the institution of education has worked to deculturalize you. A similar struggle emerges for principals who construct much of their leadership identity based how they define their personal beliefs, values, and a personal vision. The experiences that shape and inform our learning, and the decisions that are made as a result. Covey (1989) stated the following; “Each of us tends to think we see things as they are, that we are objective. But this is not the case. We see the world, not as it is, but as we are—or, as we are conditioned to see it.
When we open our mouths to describe what we see, we in effect describe ourselves, our perceptions, our paradigms.” The intersectionality of multiple cultural, ethnic, and racial identities concurrently co-exists and frame our perspective of how we come to experience and see the world. All thirteen interview participants, could identify and make connections to the historical legacy that has come to form the perspective of how the world sees them specific to their ethnic and/or racial identity. This is consistent with the findings in the literature review in relationship to identity and intersectionality.

**Implications for Principal Development**

Twelve of the thirteen interviewees who participated in this study experienced traditional advancement to the principalship. However, it should be noted that for four of the thirteen participants this was a second career choice. Once the participants entered the field of education their trajectory advancement was considered traditional for three of the four participants. All thirteen participants saw their career path whether traditional or nontraditional as formative in nature and allowed them to gain competencies which they draw on as leaders. Each of the thirteen interview participants were asked to respond to a question where they identify a challenge and/or a constraint as a result of being a woman of color. All thirteen participants had several experiences to choose from. In retelling their experiences principals could identify the problem, how being a woman of color influenced this experience, and the strategies they employed to respond to the situation.

One implication for principal development is to address how personal identity and personal experiences impact how we come to see the world. It would be important for principal candidates to have a clear understanding of how this impacts how they form their leadership identity. Considering the many complex and challenges principals face it
would be important for principals to understand what identities we revert to in times of high stress and conflict. Being cognizant that this may inform the decisions that we make and ultimately how it may impact relationships with others. From an equity lens, it would be important to address how this might be experienced differently when you are someone that is not part of the dominant culture. Providing a space within a principal preparation program to discuss and actively listen and engage in conversation that seek understanding.

**Implications for Practice**

One of the most pervasive themes that emerged during this study was the isolation that was experienced by the research participants. One participant disclosed that this isolation was the biggest contributing factor to why she was leaving the principalship. She was not abandoning the work but seeking a different venue from which to evoke change. As the data from this study demonstrate, this group of leaders is highly educated and experienced in the field of education. If they have risen to the position of principal it is because they demonstrated strong leadership capacity. It is not enough to recruit and hire diverse leadership. School district leadership also have to be intentional about creating systems of support to continue to build and grow the leadership capacities of their leaders of color. The final question in the interview protocol asked interviewees the following: What would you want to be sure others understood after reading the findings of this study? Participant Gloria gave voice to what occurs in the absence of not being seen. Identity is formed as a reaction to show others—yes women of color can lead. This group of female leaders is asking to be seen, supported, and heard. They are committed transformational leaders for equity and their skills should be leverage to help address the
many complexities facing schools today and to eradicate the racial academic disparities that exist. One idea presented by Participant Rachel was a professional network for women of color principals for the state with regional chapters. A place where female principals of color could engage in sisterhood bonding experiences and potentially discuss and strategize ways to embrace leadership challenges. This could help administrators of color feel less isolated.

**Limitations of This Research**

Upon reflection, there were several limitations that occurred and impacted this study. The researcher had very clear intent and rationale why women from the four largest racial groups in the United States was selected as a research participant group. It allowed multiple perspective and voices and a shared experience in how those groups have been marginalized in this country. However, given time limitations of my research study perhaps a more in depth study of one particular racial group might have offered a different outcome. Another limitation was the number of participants that ultimately participated in the study. The researcher was able to get 15 research participants for the online survey and 13 interviewees. However, this study would have benefited from more participant studies. For example, this study was only able to get one female native American to participate and her data is part of the online survey data. The researcher was not able to collect the interview data. This added viewpoint could offer a different voice and lived experience, especially when the studies focus was on the state of Minnesota. Although the interview protocol went over multiple revisions before landing on the fourteen questions one can certainly wonder if these questions posed a limitation in the
data that was ultimately collected. Finally, with a longer timeline and removing the barrier of time for participants this study might have benefitted from a focus group methodology. The researcher definitely debated this idea before settling on the survey and interview.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

In thinking beyond this study there are several variations from this study that could be potentially explored. One obvious recommendation to the researcher is to broaden the scope of the research question from Minnesota Principals to include larger participant groups across the United States. Additionally, it would be interesting to employ a focus group Further studies need to be done on educational leadership as a field in general and that research needs to include multiple perspectives. Another possible area of studies would be to compare the differences in the construction of leadership identity in relationship to regional identity for example how those regional differences play out across the United States. By opening up your participant group you have the ability to increase the research participant group. For example, the researcher had 15 participants for the online survey and 13 participants who agreed to interviews. While this research study was able to draw a small and very diverse participant group there is great value in increasing the number of participants and comparing seeing how those themes persist and/or change as result of increased participants. Another possibility would be to do a comparison analyses between leadership identity from a racialized society such as the United States and a non-racialized society. This would allow the researcher to explore
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Final Reflections

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I have learned many lessons along my dissertation journey. Embarking on this
journey started as a dream for me and to be typing my final reflections means I am
bringing this journey to a close. I am not the same person who started this journey, I have
been challenged, stretched and my perspective widened on what it means to lead a
learning organization. My commitment to the hopes and possibilities of a brighter future
for all students has only deepened. One of the primary goals at the beginning was to learn
from the principals who would be part of this research participant group. I came of age in
a border town and had to navigate two very different worlds; Mexican and American
culture. This journey had a profound impact on my identity and while it was far from smooth much like the research participants found in this study; it made me stronger, it made me resilient, and wiser. This dissertation journey has achieved the same result; it has made me stronger, more resilient, and wiser. One of my greatest challenges as an educational leader has been to find my voice and clearly articulate what it means to instill belief and hope in the lives of the children we touch. The insights and reflections shared by these courageous and strong women with me are immeasurable in nature. My most fervent hope and desire is that I have honored their voices and perspectives in this research study. A realization I came to understand that I did not know at the beginning is that to lead; one must first look inward, to declare and define for oneself, how you came to be, in order to lead with conviction and purpose. One must clearly know one’s heart before one can manage the head and the hand successfully. (Sergiovanni, 2012) Research participants were asked what motivated them to remain in the principalship? Overwhelmingly, each of the thirteen participants responded without pause that students were the reason they got up every morning. Even in times of adversity they drew their strength from students and the limitless possibilities that access to a high-quality education provided them. Belief, hope, and dreams.
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Appendix A: Research Letter of Invitation

Principal Investigator: Alejandra Estrada-Burt, aestrada01@hamline.edu

Research Title: Minnesota Female Principals how their ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership Identity?

January 14, 2018

Dear [PRINCIPAL]:

I am currently a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education at Hamline University. Under the guidance of Dr. Joyce Bell, my dissertation chair and my faculty director. I am conducting a study on Minnesota Female Principals who self-identify as African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American. I am interested in the ways they perceive how their ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity.

Current educational leadership literature inadequately addresses the experiences of leaders from the four largest minority racial groups. Often the educational leadership literature represents white males and women in general experiences as representative as the dominant experience and voice. Minority racial groups are usually highlighted from the experience of both males and females with a strong focus on a racial lens. However, my study specifically examines the underrepresented voice of women belonging to African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American from both from a gender and racial perspective.

I am inviting you to participate in this study. By participating you have an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base about the actual experience of Minnesota female principals from the four largest minority racial groups. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

To assist with understanding the expectations for participating in this study, I have outlined the general expectations below:

i. Complete an online survey which will last between 30-45 Minutes.
2. An audio-taped interview which will last between 1–2 hours in length (any follow up may require additional time).

3. You commit to complete this survey and interview between January 2018 and April 2018.

After the audio-taped or Skyped/Google Chat interviews have been transcribed, you will have an opportunity to review the transcripts and my interpretations of the information prior to submission of the final draft of my study. This will ensure that I have accurately represented your comments as well as to correct any direct quotes. This draft will also be reviewed by the members of my dissertation committee prior to final publication. It is also feasible that parts of this research study may appear in educational publications and/or related presentations.

If you accept this invitation to participate in this research study in the following ways:

1. Please complete and return the consent form in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope no later than February 28, 2018. For your convenience, a signed consent form can also be scanned or a digital photo can be submitted.

2. Please complete and scan/photo the signed consent form and email it to the following email address: aestrada01@hamline.edu

For your convenience, I will also email the letter of invitation as well as the consent form. Due to the small size of the research participant group, I will make follow up calls to determine your interest in participating in the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout this process. Data collated as a part of the interview process will be kept private and no names will be reported or disclosed in this study. Furthermore, records will be stored in a securely and accessible only to the researcher. The anticipated risks of this study are minimal. If you have any additional questions regarding your participation in this study, please feel free to contact me or my faculty director, Dr. Joyce Bell at (651) 503-0560 or via email: belljoyce01@gmail.com

I sincerely hope that you will agree to participate in this exciting research that will contribute to the knowledge base and expand the presence and research of African American, Asian American, Latina, and Native American female leaders in Pre-K–12 school working as principals. As a current Assistant Principal, I fully recognize the many
complex demands on your time. I thank you in advance for your support and attention. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,

Alejandra Estrada-Burt

Doctoral Candidate, Hamline University
Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

You are invited to be in a research study of Pre-K–12 Minnesota female principals self-identifying as; African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently working as a Principal and/or Assistant Principal or have served in the position of Principal in the past three years and you are still actively working in the Pre-K -12 field. You also self-identify as female and belong to one of the four minority racial groups; African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by: Alejandra Estrada-Burt, doctoral candidate at Hamline University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study: To identify how Minnesota female principals perceive how their ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following;

1. Complete an online survey. The survey duration will take from 30 to 45 minutes to complete.
2. Participate in an audio-taped, one-to-one interview with me. It is expected that the interview would extend between one to two hours.
3. Participate in a follow-up communication with me for the purpose of clarifying, elaborating, or checking for understanding. It is not likely that a follow-up communication would be requested, but in the event that it seems necessary, I must inform you of the possibility.
4. Consider reviewing the transcript of your interview so that you can choose to add, edit, or delete portions as you see fit. Such a review will not be required. You will be sent the transcript, then be provided with a two-week period to respond or not. If I do not hear from you within that period, I will assume you are satisfied with the transcript.
Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

Participation in this study is not associated with any significant risks, however, you should be aware that although your responses are anonymous (meaning, your name would never be used), findings that emerge from the study will be identified as having come from African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American female principals. Due to the relatively small numbers of women of color in the principalship in the state of Minnesota, and the focus of the research, readers of this research may assume that you were either one of the principals interviewed or that you subscribe to the majority view of the respondents who participated in the study. Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym that will ensure anonymity. Each interview will be audio-taped. The interviews will be conducted via Skype/Google Chat or in person in order to collect data and to ensure validity and reliability of information collected. The audio-taped recordings will be transcribed for coding by the researcher and shared with the study participants to allow the opportunity for additions, deletions or edits to be made. After the completion of the dissertation the data will be destroyed.

The Primary Investigator will terminate the study if she is unable to identify participants for the study or if all individuals who agreed to participate in the study become non-responsive to requests for interviews.

The benefits to participation: There continues to be minimal educational leadership research representing women from the four largest minority racial groups in the United States. This research study seeks to contribute to the literature base that will assist aspiring and current principals. You may not benefit personally from being in this research. Other women of color, however, will benefit from having access to the experiences of successful Principals. One additional consideration for you, it is typically the case that the interview process itself provides an opportunity to reflect on and make sense of one’s own leadership experience. This, itself often is viewed as a useful, if not positive experience.

Compensation

You will not receive any form of compensation from participation in this study. You will, however, be provided with an executive summary of the findings.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report or future article I
might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible for you to be specifically identified. Research records will be stored securely and only the primary researcher (Alejandra Estrada-Burt) and her faculty Chair (Dr. Joyce Bell) will have access to the records. The raw data from the recordings will be destroyed after the research study is completed.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Hamline University or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions**

The researcher conducting this study: Alejandra Estrada-Burt. You may ask any questions you have now before the research begins. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me at (612) 718-2751 or (763) 504-7802 or aestrada01@hamline.edu You may also contact my faculty chair, Dr. Joyce Bell at (651) 503-0560 or via email: belljoyce01@gmail.com

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher or faculty director, you are encouraged to contact Hamline University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair: Matthew Olson at (651)523-2430 or via email at mholson@hamline.edu, 1536 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55104.

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

_____ Yes, I consent and volunteer to participate in this research study.

_____ No, I do not consent to participate in this research study.

Print Name: _______________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________
Date: ____________________ Phone: __________________

Email: ____________________________________________

Respectfully,

Alejandra Estrada-Burt

Doctoral Candidate

Hamline University
# Appendix C: Northouse Leadership Approaches

## Northouse Leadership Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How does the approach work?</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trait Approach</td>
<td>Certain people are born with special traits that make them great leaders. The following are consistent traits: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability.</td>
<td>Organizations use personality assessment instruments to identify how individuals will fit into their organization.</td>
<td>Contributes to the idea that leaders are special people who are out front. It provides benchmarks which individuals can evaluate their personal leadership attributes.</td>
<td>Does not provide a definitive list of leadership traits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader-member Exchange Theory</td>
<td>Conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered on the interaction between leaders and followers. The relationship between leaders and followers is the focal point of the leadership process.</td>
<td>It describes leadership and prescribes leadership. A focus on the existence of in-groups and out-groups.</td>
<td>It is a strong descriptive theory. It makes sense to describe work units regarding those who contribute more and those that do not. Only theory that focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers.</td>
<td>It gives an impression that there is a preferential group. Our culture has many examples where groups have been intentionally discriminated against and this framework lends itself to perpetuate this discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>A leadership process that changes and transforms</td>
<td>In general, it describes how leaders can initiate, develop</td>
<td>Widely researched from many perspectives in</td>
<td>It lacks conceptual clarity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals. Assessing follower's motives and satisfying their need.

Transformational leadership sets out to empower followers and nurture them in change. Large, well-known organizations. It has intuitive appeal. Leadership is a process that occurs between followers and leaders.

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**Servant Leadership**

Leadership from the point of view of the leader and his or her behaviors. Servant leaders put followers first, empower them and nurture them. A focus on the behaviors that leaders should exhibit to put followers first, to support followers’ personal development and the outcomes that are likely to emerge.

A leader should share control and influence. It is the only leadership approach that has uses the leadership process around the principle of caring for others. A leader should share control and influence. It is the only leadership approach that has uses the leadership process around the principle of caring for others.

**Authentic Leadership**

Leadership about the authenticity of leaders and their leadership. It is an interpersonal process and something that can be nurtured in a leader. Authentic leadership works when leaders and followers come together to define their real concerns and determine what the right thing to do about them is. It provides an answer to people who are searching for good and sound leadership in an uncertain world. It provides guidelines for individuals who want to be authentic leaders.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Leadership</th>
<th>Places leadership in the driver’s seat of team effectiveness. The model provides a mental road map to help the leader diagnose team problems and take appropriate action.</th>
<th>Effective team performance begins with the leader’s mental model of the situation. The leader develops a model of what the team problem is and what solutions are possible in this context, given the environmental and organizational constraints.</th>
<th>It is designed to focus on real-life organizational group work and the leadership needed.</th>
<th>It does not include all possible leadership skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychodynamic Approach</td>
<td>Personality types are emphasized and evidence is presented that suggests that various personality types are better suited to particular leadership situations.</td>
<td>Responses to subordinates are predictable and are within some range of behaviors. Personality characteristics of individuals being deeply ingrained, are very difficult to change in any significant way.</td>
<td>It results in an analysis of the relationship between the leader and the follower. Based on a theory searching for truth in human existence. Emphasizes awareness on the part of the leader.</td>
<td>The framework does not provide on the spot answers to specific problems facing the team leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

limited because it focuses primarily on the personalities of the leader and followers that dictate the relationship between them. Does not lend itself to training in a conventional sense.
Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Principal Investigator: Alejandra Estrada-Burt
aestrada01@hamline.edu

Research Title: Minnesota female principals; How their ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity?

1. Walk me through the progression of your education and professional career leading up to your most current position as a principal and/or assistant principal?

Probe as needed with the following:

a. Influential persons

b. Background experiences (child, adult)

c. Influential experiences

d. Personal values (core, educational, spiritual)

e. Personal energy (mental focus, physical fuel, emotional mastery)

2. What strengths do you bring to the Principalship?

b. Probe as needed with (a-e)

3. What motivated you to pursue the Principalship?

Probe (a-e)

i. Was that motivation related to being female?

ii. Was that motivation related to belonging to a dominated culture (African American, Asian American, Latina, and Native American)

4. How would you describe your leadership style?
b. Probe as needed (a-e)

i. Related to being a female?

ii. Related to being African American, Asian, Latina, or Native American?

5. In your opinion, how has your personal identity influenced you as a Principal/Assistant Principal?

Probe (a-e)

6. What three words would you use to describe who you are as a Principal?

i. How do those three words compare to your personal identity?

7. What challenges or constraints have you experienced as a principal and/or assistant principal?

b. Probe as needed

i. Related to being female?

ii. Related to being African American, Asian, Latina, or Native American?

8a. Identify a situation that was particularly challenging for you as a Principal/Assistant Principal.

Describe the situation

i. Share the ways in which you responded

ii. As you think about your responses...

a. Do you think that being female influenced how you responded? If so, in what ways?

b. Do you think that being African American, Asian, Latina, or Native American, influenced how you responded? If so, in what ways?
8b. Is there another situation that was also particularly challenging for you as a Principal/Assistant Principal? [follow same protocol above]

1. Probe as needed

9. In times of conflict or high stress/emotion—what identity would say you more closely align to—your gender identity or your racial identity? Why?

10. What motivates you to remain in the Principal position?

11. How is your leadership identity impacted by the fact that you live and work in the state of Minnesota?

   Probe: Positively or Negatively

   i. Related to being female?

   ii. Related to being African American, Asian, Latina, or Native American?

12. What recommendations do you have for other women of color who might be considering the Principalship?

CLOSING WORDS

13. Given that the primary purpose of my study is to examine how leadership identity is formed when you are a female self-identifying as belonging to one the following four major racial minority groups; what would you want to be sure others heard or read or understood after reading the findings from this study?

   i. Probe: why is this message so important to you?

14. Is there anything else you would like to add to help me understand your experience as a principal and, specifically, the ways in which being a woman of color affects you as a Principal?
Appendix E: Online Survey

I've invited you to fill out a form:

Leadership Identity Online Survey

The purpose of this study: To identify how Minnesota female principals perceive; how their ethnicity, gender, and race have impacted their leadership identity?

Email address *

1. Name: Last name, First Name *

2. Gender Identity *
   Male Female Prefer not to say

3. Ethnic/Racial Identity *
   African American Asian Hispanic/Latino Native American Multi-Race Caucasian Other

4. Age *
   25-34 years old 35-44 years old 45-54 years old 55-64 years old 65 or older

5. Are you currently a Principal/Assistant Principal in the state of Minnesota? *
   Yes No

6. Current Position *
   Principal Assistant Principal Former Principal/Assistant Principal (w/in last 3 years) but currently employed in Pre K-12 Setting Other

7. Current Leadership Position is in the following; *
   Public PreK-12 Charter Pre-K - 12 Private Pre-K - 12 Other

8. Current Leadership Position is in the following; *
Elementary Secondary-Middle School Secondary-High School Alternative School Setting Early Childhood District Leadership Other

9. MDE Geographic Regions *


10. Highest Education Level Completed *

Bachelor's Degree Masters Degree Professional Degree Doctorate

11. Did you begin your education career as a Teacher? *

If you answer No please skip to question #13

Yes No

12. If yes, years of teaching experience prior to moving toward leadership

3-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years 21 to 25 years more than 25 years

13. What motivated you to pursue becoming a Principal? *

a. influential person b. background experiences (child, adult) c. Influential Experiences d. Personal values (core, educational, spiritual) e. Personal energy (mental focus, physical fuel, emotional mastery) f. Other

14. Was your decision to become a Principal related to being a female? *

Yes No Partial

15. Was your decision to become a Principal related to being a African American, Asian, Latina, or Native American? *

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16. What is your strongest character trait as a leader? *


17. Is your identified character trait as a leader related to you being female? *

Yes No Partial

18. Is your identified character trait as a leader related to you being African American, Asian, Latina, or Native American? *

Yes No Partial

19. As a principal, I can go beyond my personal interest and defer to the will of the group? *

Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

0 1 2 3 4

20. As a principal, my decision making is guided by moral and ethical consequences. *

Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

0 1 2 3 4

21. As a principal, the future and the possibilities is something I discuss frequently with my team. *

Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always
22. When faced with complex issues, part of my practice involves analyzing presuppositions and challenge whether they are appropriate. *
Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

23. As a principal, one of my key priorities is to develop the strengths of individuals on my team. *
Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

24. As a principal, I clearly communicate performance expectations to my team. *
Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

25. As a principal, when I am faced with conflict, I usually stand on my principles. *
Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

26. As a principal, when conflict arises I am usually willing to adjust my priorities to reach a resolution. *
Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always

27. I am a decision maker, but I make a point of listening to others to find the best solution possible. *
Key: 0=Not at all, 1=Once and a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly Often, 4=Frequently if not always
28. I can list my three greatest weaknesses. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

29. My actions and decisions reflect my core values. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

30. I openly share my feelings with others. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

31. I do not allow group pressure to control me. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

32. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

33. When pursuing my priorities, I am usually firm and not swayed by others. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

34. I seek feedback as a way to understand who I am as a leader. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

35. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

36. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

37. I rarely present a false front to others. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

38. I listen carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions. *
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

39. I am comfortable admitting my mistakes to others. *
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

40. What three words would you use to describe who you are as a Principal? *

41. I would be interested in participating in an interview. *

Interview would be via: Skype/Google Chat or in person during February-April 2018

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

42. Please list your preferred way to be contacted by the researcher. *

Interview would be via: Skype/Google Chat or in person during February-April 2018

43. Best phone number to be reached at: *

Interview would be via: Skype/Google Chat or in person during February-April 2018

44. Best Time of the Day to Reach you *

Interview would be via: Skype/Google Chat or in person during February-April 2018

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening: 6:00 pm -8:30 pm

45. I prefer to be reached via: *

Interview would be via: Skype/Google Chat or in person during February-April 2018

- Email
- Phone Call
- Text

Send me a copy of my responses.

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Appendix F: Interview Excerpt Tables

**Question #1 What influenced them to become a principal?**

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<th>Participant</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<td><strong>Participant:</strong> Mary told a story about how she never wanted to be a principal. However, moving up the career path in teaching often involved more schooling. Therefore, as a result of her interest she was steered in that direction.</td>
<td>“So, I went through leadership, and I really enjoyed their program. And then, I started playing with the idea of getting my admin license again, for more credits. But also, to think, okay, how can I move outside the classroom and be a leader. I never, ever, ever wanted to be a principal. I'm gonna say that flat out. My goal was, maybe I could be, like a dean of students or an assistant principal behind a really good head principal. Because I'm a doer. I like to work. And I thought I could provide leadership with teachers and kids. And that's why I went for the principalship and the specialist degree.”</td>
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| Category: Personal Energy, Interest |

| Participant: Julia also never saw herself going into teaching because her mother was a teacher. She actually started down a different career path. However, in college she realized that she loved working with kids. She credits a formal principal as an influence for becoming a principal. | “Through working there I was working with a principal that told me I should get into a leadership program. Which I did. I moved ... I started getting my degree for that license for educational leadership administration.” |

| Category: Influential Person |

| Participant: Gloria comes from a family of educators. She recalls she always possessed the desire to teach and give back to her community through education. She credits a mentor a former principal for influencing her decision to become a teacher | “I think it was the influence of people. Um and one of the people who is still my mentor to this day was a former principal. And she saw something in me. She would always say that I would be a great instructional leader.” |

<p>| Category: Influential Person |</p>
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<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Mary:</strong> one of the things that I feel I bring is the focus on kids. It is not about my ego. It is not about my making decisions and making people live with it. Everything in my power is to make sure that we are doing the best for our kids.</td>
<td>Student Centered</td>
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<td><strong>Anne:</strong> I really feel like part of it is just kind of a wider lens, I feel like. One is a wider lens and more of an equity lens, but then I think also ... I mean, I find myself to be a pretty strategic person ... if I'm going to plan to get a certain result, you know, I'm also thinking of okay, begin with the end in mind, right. What do I want at the end? And so, part of it is that, where I feel like I'm pretty strong in that skill, but and I think the strength that I really do bring is really that equity lens and just having that caring approach, you know, to be able to build up other people.</td>
<td>Strategic Thinker</td>
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<td><strong>Jennifer:</strong> I would say I think I have an eclectic background of experiences just from a working lens in the educational and other areas that bring some strength of understanding organizational systems.</td>
<td>Systems Thinker</td>
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**Candace:** I sit back and I observe, and I really try to think about what's best for the kids and putting the right people in the right spots. Really looking at, like right now we're going through things in the district and you really gotta sit back and you can't, for me personally, you can't react quickly. You have to lay everything out on the table and you have to collaborate with people. You have to hear other perspectives; you really have to just put it all together for the benefit of the kids and put the right people in the right spots to make things work for our kids.

**Grace:** Yep. I would think my strengths are ... I think in today's society, you have to have courage. I would say courage, for sure. Being willing to have transparent and courageous conversations with staff. I would say of course being able to serve. Meeting the basic needs of students and staff. Not just students, but and staff, because it's important. That is actually one of my biggest strengths, and I would say because I care, right?

**Maya:** I think my ability to transcend cultural lines, my relationship skill building. When you are a black
person in an all-white situation, you have to get some skills. I mean, you do. You have to know how to talk to people. You have to know ... I don't know. It's that journey of code switching. It's that journey of, "Okay, these people don't understand you. And these people don't like you. Okay, so what do I do?"

And getting people to understand and like you and help them get past the color of your skin, you have to be okay with sometimes not changing, but showing there's nothing wrong with you just because we don't come from the same space. And you have to show that differently.

**Gloria:** I bring my culture. I bring that there, it is always a part of me, I cannot take my skin color off, it doesn't go away. I can't do equity work from 7-9am or a meeting on cultural relevant teaching and then I'm done. So, that is what I bring to this field, I bring ... I'm passionate about this. They know I'm there to support, they know I'm there to fight. So, that and I bring in the empathy and a sense of listening, and just being highly collaborative and working with each other, and a sense of humor. But I honor people, I value people, I honor voice, but my diversity is with me all the

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time, strong, and I recognize diversity in others and value it in others, but I am here in particular to help our students, families, and staff of color.

**Rachel:** Well, I think that I'm ... I bring a strong sense of collaboration and the importance of collaboration. The ability to work truly from a strengths perspective. I found that educators ... I find that that is a core piece to a student support field and that ... that so there's an authenticity around working from a strengths perspective, that I think I bring ... that sometimes I think my colleagues look at that in a different way. So, having gone through a Teacher Licensure Program, and it was in Special Ed, it's not talked about in the same way. Again, like I said, it felt much more technical than adaptive. I would say that student support field is more in an adaptive space.

**Donna:** I think that (thinking) I am very collaborative, I have an open-door policy, I listen attentively, I am always willing to admit when I am wrong or when I need a thought partner on certain things. I think that communication is a strength of mine because although I
do a lot of electronic communication I try to do face to face communication when at all possible. Which has been a plus from what I can understand. I will also say that that my follow up is good. I am good on following up with people and checking in on people so if there are timelines that I have set for myself or set for others that I am always following up with them. I am not a task master or someone who is very rigid as far as um micromanaging but I am very clear on the outcomes that I expect to see. And I am following up with those people.

**Victoria:** I am a very strategic planner. I think that kind of goes back to that shared decision making model that I was indoctrinated into…. Really having a clear mission and vision statement that are student centered and ….also and a really big culturally responsive teaching aspect in there. That mission and vision and then having those as your guidelines and in everything that you do in every decision, that you make has to be for the advancement of that vision. And so, that’s one of my strengths is creating that mission and vision with staff and then that part of
the vision are your steps to get to that mission those goals….so really creating those goals and getting buy in from all stakeholders. And you know focusing your efforts on that vision. I (pause/thinking) bring high levels of empathy in a way that can see there are perspectives of all sides and then can work together to create a common ground and show those perspectives to others that is another one of my strengths. I hated data when I first started …. I hated it with a passion…but now I use data in a way that really creates a sense of urgency for staff and makes it personal for them. And so, that I think is one of my strengths…showing data in a different way. Trying to figure out what it is that people value that teachers value…people value showing them the data around those values also giving student voice and letting all stakeholders, teachers hear what the students are feeling and really know where the students are coming from and what they need.

**Julia:** One of the things I learned early on that kids see in me is that I'm fair. And I see every kid with what they bring in with them. We all come to the table with different things
and what works for one person might not work for someone else. I always look at that quietly failing kid. Like, "Am I making sure I catch them? What am I using to really make sure I'm catching all our kids? I'm able to observe a lot. And note things. And I try to make people think about things that maybe aren't obvious. Maybe aren't ... I think a lot of the times we talk about problems and we forget what's underlying. And I try to bring that up. I'm a very ... I'm very good at logistics and seeing how things work. And so, that piece and how a building runs and functions is something that I bring to the table too.

**Elizabeth:** I think I'm really good at knowing what teachers have really good skills to work with my students. I'm really good at knowing if a person is going to be a good teacher or not, you know? It sounds like it's a don, you know what I mean? It sounds like it's a don, you know what I'm saying? That I can just read people like right away, and just know if they're going to be a good teacher or not, you know?

**Maribel:** For sure, I'm a great listener. I'm a team player. I like to see, and I think it speaks about my background in

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Anthropology, I like to see how everything that we do is connected, and everyone that we work with has a reason for what they're doing what they're doing, so I take my time to understand people. I take my time to understand where they're coming from, and not build any mental models on who they are, and why they're acting the way they are, and I think, as a leader, that's so important for you to be able to listen and understand everyone around you in order to move forward, in order to make anything happen. I'm a very trustworthy person. I consider myself very organized and structured.

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<td>Participant Gloria</td>
<td>It's the intersectionality of race and of being a female. So, it's a mixture of both because at the same time that I'm real strong in representing race because we were seen at times as an underdog because of our skin color, we also have seen that as a woman. So, as a person of color that's a woman, that's a double edge there. I also recognize that being in the same room, and as a woman, you've been ignored where a male would be listened to, so it's even that intersectionality of that race and that female, it's just doubly hard to be heard, so you just really have to push hard. So, as a woman, particularly as you get higher into the field of education and higher roles,</td>
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you have a tendency, you have less women. Even going into the district leadership, there's less women the higher you go up and there's definitely less women of color the higher you go up in the position.

**Question 4 Part 1**

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<td>Participant Maya</td>
<td>I would say, I try to be collaborative in nature. I try to listen, and then just talk about relationships and be cognizant of what people need, and being able to provide that for them. It's kind of like there's three types. There's your instructional coach, there's that coach that was able to give you your resources, and then there's that coach that's an emotional support. I think I try to do the social emotional piece for the adults, alongside the instructional piece. But there's times where I always try to stay in the middle and not come off saying, &quot;Boom, boom, boom.&quot; And I think part of it is I don't want to come off as being that angry black woman and being a dictator. So, I find myself pulling back, versus I know what I believe, and I know what is right, but I figured out, &quot;How do I lead people down that path, versus forcing that upon them?&quot; So, it's about building consensus in a manner that individuals can come to it on their own comment, knowing that this is a route I need to go and how are you going to get there, but I'm not going to badger you into that.</td>
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**Question 4 Part 2**

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<td><strong>Researcher:</strong> Would you say that your leadership style is influenced at all to you being female and/or Latino, and/or both?</td>
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| **Researcher:** Would you say or not that your leadership style is impacted to you either being female and/or Hmong? | **Anne:** I think part of it is. Actually, it's funny because I remember in my doctorate courses there, I think I wrote a piece on leadership styles. And I remember writing a piece about servant leadership, and being a servant to the community, and how being Hmong and watching ... within the Hmong community, watching my dad as a servant leader, you know, serving the community and always being kind of the conflict mediator for everybody or he was always the one that everybody came to for help with every conflict or every situation within the clans and within the families. I think I would say a large part of my leadership style probably comes from that piece of my background and my culture of always having to be of service to other people, and to always be thinking collectively and not just individually. So, I would say, yeah. Some I would attribute it to you know, being Hmong. And, of course, in being female in a Hmong community, is always being of service, right. But I think here is being of service in a way where the service doesn't
mean you're ... it's not the same kind of service. Like my mom serving ... if a guests or family members, but it's that being of service in terms of you want to have person, but you want to have voice to influence those around you. So, that then that service is seen as ... so that service is not just as your serving blindly, but you're serving with a purpose, and you're serving based on the values and beliefs that you have.

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<td><strong>Participant Responses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Researcher:</strong> How has your personal identity influenced you as a principal? <strong>Mary:</strong> Well, I think, I feel like I'm always for the underdog, maybe. I feel like I am always cheering on those kids with the greatest needs. I feel like I can relate to kids that are struggling, because I struggled. Especially, kids that are dealing with racial identity, you know, trying to break down some of those barriers of how kids talk to each other and educate kids about how important our differences are, versus making ... You know, like when I was growing up, I was isolated. So, I stuck out like a sore thumb. No, but I never want kids to feel like they stick out like a sore thumb.</td>
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| **Researcher:** I keep coming back to this because of the research questions that I am seeking to find in this research...and so I wanted to ask you is in your leadership style related to being female and/or related to your racial group? **Rachel:** um...well let’s see so (pause).... related to my racial group my leadership style is looking out for kids of color.... I mean it is my moral imperative to do that...I mean if I am there just to make sure you know.... I have to look out for the kids of color because I am one...(giggling) you know what I mean. I am one...so um.... I definitely feel that this impacts my leadership style. Unfortunately, because I am isolated ...um in buildings I have to go about it
Researcher: All right. Talk to me a little about, like, in your opinion how has your personal identity and your kind of touching on it right now, influenced you as an assistant principal?

um...being that voice...I feel a little differently...I want to make sure that my voice and my message is heard....so I choose to use allies to do much of the spreading of the message to the rest of the group....I don’t want it to appear that because I am a person of color that I am just going to champion the kids of color. And there she is......and I don’t want that to happen and I feel...(chuckle) as if you know ....there have been instances in my career where I have felt...as that’s what it has looked like to some. I am really careful with that...because I don’t want that to backfire...I don’t want to be that token person...um so definitely my leadership style...is influenced by being a person of color.....um and being a female ...I feel...like being the feeling in wanting to provide harmony...to me and I know it borders on being sexist...but in my experience the males that I have encountered I mean that’s more of a female role of bringing harmony....in being sure that everyone is taken care of.

Julia: I think we always bring ourselves into what we do. And that's important for kids to see that. It's important for other adults to see that. I think some of the central tenants to my morality of what I expect. I make sure I do and show that.
Researcher: Can you identify a situation that was particularly challenging for you as either a principal or as an assistant principal? Describe the situation and share the ways in which you responded. And then as you think about your response, do you think that the way you responded to the situation was influenced by either you being female, Asian and/or both.

Jennifer: I would say that one of the really tough situations I dealt with this year was I had three female staff report to me that they felt uncomfortable about a male staff member so I had to do a formal sexual harassment kind of investigation around that, which is always challenging. I would say that it was very tough as an administrator to hear the accounts of how the females felt in the work environment. I think that was the hardest piece about it. I think being a female hearing fellow female colleagues feel afraid and feel just levels of anxiety because of a man. I think most definitely that me being a female had an impact and also I think how he responded to me through the investigation. It was an interesting situation. I think to some extent he dismissed some of what I was saying to him because I was a woman.

Gloria: At times, it's having your voice heard. So, there's times that sometimes a white colleague, specifically a white male colleague, may get their needs met first and may be listened to more than you as a woman and specifically a woman of color. That has been a challenge. Intersectionality is all over this. As a woman.

Rachel: I don't consistently feel supported in terms of my ... yeah. I don't feel supported with the work all the time. I think that in a large comprehensive school, like I'm in, that one of the sort of constraints, if you will, is I operate a little bit hesitant on some of the things that probably should or could happen, because I know that that support isn't there always.

Researcher: what challenges or constraints have you experienced as a principal, as a leader, specifically as a woman of color?
**Researcher**: Do you feel like people ask you to, they want you to prove your credentials?

**Researcher**: What challenges or constraints have you experienced as a principal and/or assistant principal?

I think that when tough conversations come up about things that need to be done, I think that's really hard for my white colleagues. So, as a result, I think sometimes there are sort of this illusion of inclusion. I've learned where my ... where I might be sitting at the table, but the perspective isn't one that they want because it's hard for them to hear. So, I ... I do the pick and choose thing, right?

**Grace**: Being the first African-American, person of color, period, and female in this role. They've only had white men in my position in this district. It has been hard because I heard that the person before me didn't have to go through all that foolishness like modeling. If he said it was blue, it was blue. For me, not only do I have to say what I think it is, give you the bigger picture, but I have to model. I have to go above and beyond just to prove myself.

Absolutely! Again, just talking to different people who have been here, the person before me never had to do that. He was white and he was a male.

**Elizabeth**: When someone doesn't like you. Like they may just put obstacles in the way for your goal or your students, you know what I mean? And then it's trying to know how to work around it. I think you have to know when to push things, and you have to know when to go around things, you know what I mean? So being able to know the situation, know what's going on politically, and you have to have all kinds of different ways to solve a problem.

**Maribel**: I am not a principal that has a default to emotions, and oftentimes, when I work with individuals that default to emotion, it becomes a barrier, it becomes a challenge, so I need to center myself, I
Researcher: When you say you need to be checking yourself, is there a reason why you feel that that's something that you have to do as a woman of color in leadership?

need to make sure that I let others be who they are, but also, as a person of color, I need to be checking myself into not going into one quadrant all the time.

Oh, yeah. Like I said, when you function in an environment where you are a minority, you are also working in an environment that people are not understanding where you're coming from, therefore, if you really truly want others to see you, you need to be very cautious with the unintended of things that you're doing, so allowing others to really see yourself, and explain yourself, which is not comfortable. Having to check yourself consistently is not comfortable. It should not be the situation, and I think that's what our children go through. My work is to, again, educate and I can't- There's something I want to articulate but I-(pausing, thinking) If people don't know where you're coming from, they're easy to jump into judgments, and they're easy to assume things, so I need to make sure, and in the process of me getting the work that I need to get done, people are understanding where I'm coming from. Hopefully, there'll be more of us so that consistently educating wears off because it's pretty tiring.

Maya: So, as a woman of color, I'm always checking myself, of what can I and cannot say. Always, always, always, always. And I shouldn't have to do that, but I think they have been groomed towards that, because it doesn't matter, you get backlash for speaking your mind, you get backlash for bringing up race, you get backlash if you get angry. It's like, "You know what? You get backlash for just being you."
Victoria: umm (thinking) uhh..well let's see...I've only ever lived here so that's something I feel like as I really learned more and know more that whole more that whole Minnesota Nice phenomenon is frightening. I mean because you know you never really know where you stand really. Because people don't like conflict and so they are not going to um they'll just quietly you know have their ideas and do whatever they can to get out of the situation. This is my experience and then go talk in the corner and chit chat and gossip and those kinds of things. So, that's difficult. being in a state with one of the highest achievement gap I mean that is a concern. I think that is kind of entwined in the fact that people aren't willing to isolate race or not willing to have those conversations as part of that whole thing, as part of that Minnesota Nice thing. There's a lot of those things going on. Obviously because we have those senses of urgency that are within the state I mean that does impact my leadership identity because it gives me more of a sense of urgency you know. To do the work and look at the gaps and the kids that are under my care make sure that their voices are heard and that that they feel confident when they walk through the door you know people are not going to swipe them aside. That they see themselves in the curriculum and they see themselves and they see a purpose for them being there. Their identities are honored, you know in the building.

Julia: I think for me it's not just live and work, it's I grew up here. And I've seen Minnesota change. Or at least

Mary: I had access to a great educational system. I have opportunities of engaging in the Korean culture around here. There's a large Korean adopting network here. As a leader, I think I had access and because of my experiences, it has grown me. Even the struggles I've had as an Asian person, Asian woman, it's made me very resilient. It's made me very strong. But, like, last night at my leadership meeting, I look around. There's no other Asian person, Asian women. So, I still feel a little isolated in terms of the fact that I'm the only Asian principal.

Anne: And so, I think part of ... that part of my upbringing was probably a positive for me, even though that I didn't know that there were so many Hmong kids, until I got to high school. I think that kind of helped me. But like, my best friend was Nigerian. So, it was kind of one of those, "Hmm." I just thought that was how it was, right. That that's how all the schools were until I got to high school and I realized, wow, there are so many Hmong kids here. But then that was when I realized, you know, that I could really be proud of being Hmong and I could share that I was Hmong and that there were other people who spoke Hmong. And so, I really felt like I could actually just be who I was instead of trying to fit in, too.

Candace: I don't know, I haven't worked anywhere else so it's kind of difficult to compare. But when I talk to other people, or like my family members who have left the state and came back, it's different. So, I guess, a lot of passive aggressive I just gotta sort out. Because that's a Minnesota thing from what I understand. I just think that I'm always having to be able to read between the lines with people. As a black woman, I've gotta be able to read between the lines because people are
coming from southern Minnesota where the only immigrants we had and the only people of color we had came to work for a corporation. And there weren't very many. So, like I said before, I think I was ... I learned how to navigate the system better than most people. Because I didn't have that ... I didn't ... that's what I was expected to do every day. When I started kindergarten the kindergarten teacher told my parents to only speak English at home because I had an accent. And I was difficult to understand. Which is what we did. And now I have an accent when I speak Spanish. Which is, I think, funny. But I had to learn to work a system and part of that is now how do I change the system to work with our kids instead of the other way around.

Participants raised out of state

Maya: All right. So just the fact that whole "Minnesota Nice" thing drives me crazy. People don't want us to be direct. People want us to make them feel good. Like, "Well, you don't do anything to make me feel good, so why should I do something to make you feel good? Why do you get the luxury of that, when I don't?" So, I think that that's ... Yeah, (trailing off) Minnesota's a trippy place. They just don't know how to be real. People don't believe in honesty and being straightforward. And when you are straightforward ... And I also, just from a leadership style, I will always be direct, but I'll do it with a voice, and tone, and cadence that's like, "Okay, I'm going to sound nice, but here's the deal." You know?

Maribel: I think I mentioned some of it before. Minnesota, it's well known for Minnesota Nice, which there's a lot to unpack in terms of Minnesota Nice, but I think that with that, coming from Puerto Rico, which when we think about countries and Latinos, there's a great difference between every one of them. People that come from Venezuela, people that come from Colombia, Peru, Mexico. We are all conditioned differently based on our political experiences, based on many experiences, poverty, etc. As a Puerto Rican female who has lived political oppression for over 100 years, who has been part of the battle and the struggle, at an early age, I learned how to be a fighter. I learned how to challenge the system. I needed to challenge the system. Puerto Rico is a colony, and that is not a secret to anyone, so I've been political since a very early age. Then, I come to Minnesota, and the conversation changes. I have to be passive. I need to be subtle and like, hahaha and they'll smile in your face. Then they'll turn around and it's something totally different. So, you just always gotta be aware, you always gotta be a good listener, you always gotta watch peoples body language, you just have to always kinda be on your Ps and Qs to make sure that you're understanding what is being presented to you.
**Gloria:** Who I am is a product of how I was brought up, too. So, there is not a Minnesota Nice in me. It's a part of, I love you, but it's straight up, we're gonna deal with this. I'm here to listen to you but we're going to make this better. So even being here in the state of Minnesota, I do understand Minnesota Nice. I do understand the need to pull back when you do need to pull back. But, I do also have, from my upbringing and hometown, my strong pride in my culture and my strong pride of being black. I think that's what makes me strong as a black woman and that's what comes out as an administrator for me. So, my hometown played an influence, but I know how to navigate Minnesota Nice.

**Grace:** It's impacted because there's not many of us here. I just came from a training in out of state two weeks ago, and it was called XXXX, and its focus was on trying to figure out how could we get more students of color in advanced placement classes and on the trajectory of majoring in a science field when they go to college. It was just wonderful sitting in a room with nothing but people of color. I was like a kid in a candy store, Because you very seldom experience that. When you come back home to Minnesota, and you sit in these meetings, and you're the only one ...