

THE SOCIALIZATION OF A FEMALE
SUPERINTENDENT

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This is a single case study of the socialization of a woman in the public school superintendency at the end of the 20th century. It is a description of the forces that come to bear on her behavior as the chief executive of a school system.

Socialization is a continuous process of adaptation to and personalization of one's environment. Further, it is believed to be a process that occurs throughout one's professional career and life and not a fixed, end state; therefore, one's career is embedded within one's socialization for life.

A model is proposed which represents female socialization as dynamic role creation through the responses of accommodation and role personalization as they are affected by the interaction of organizational, community, and personal forces. These forces are communicated through the transmittal processes of formal policies, networking, and mentoring. The unique experiences of this superintendent are explored to see if these forces of influence appear in this situation.

Data collected through interviews and document reviews were coded and then analyzed with a matrix. Seven categories of subjects were interviewed, so this study not only provides the perspectives of the superintendent but also those of her spouse, secretary, current and former colleagues in the central office, a building-level administrator, current and former members of the school board, and community residents. Documents from the news media, records of school board meetings, and division publications provided information about the total experiences of this superintendent.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures	x
Chapter 1 The Problem	1
Context.....	1
Occupational Sociology	1
Socialization in Occupations	3
Socialization of Women in the Public School Superintendency.....	6
Research Questions	8
Theoretical Base	9
Beginning Propositions	19
Chapter 2 Review of Related Literature	22
The Impact of Socialization Forces on the Role of a Female Superintendent	22
Professional Forces	23
Personal Forces of Socialization.....	28
Networking and Mentoring	30
Feminist Theory.....	32
Women in Leadership Positions.....	35
Women in Educational Leadership	38
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	42
Selection of the Superintendent and Informants.....	42
Data Collection	47
Interview Questionnaires	47

	Description and Construction of Interview	
	Questionnaires	52
	Superintendent's Questionnaire.....	52
	Informant's Questionnaire	53
	Spouse's Questionnaire.....	54
	Coding.....	54
	Validity of the Interview Questionnaires	59
	Reliability of the Interview Questionnaires	61
	Documents.....	62
	Methods of Data Analysis	63
	Matrices	64
	Anonymity and Confidentiality.....	64
	Limitations.....	65
Chapter 4	The Results	66
	Personal Forces of Socialization	66
	Background	66
	Her Expectations	72
	Professional Forces of Socialization	73
	Organizational Expectations for Values	75
	Organizational Expectations for Leadership Style	75
	Organizational Expectations for Job Knowledge	76
	Community Expectations for Values	77
	Community Expectations for Leadership Style	77
	Community Expectations for Job Knowledge	78
	Transmittal Processes	79
	Formal Policies.....	81
	Media.....	82
	Mentoring	84
	Networking.....	85
	Female Superintendent's Socialization	87
	Dynamic Role Creation.....	87
	Accommodation	88
	Personalization	89
Chapter 5	Discussion of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Future Research	92

Discussion of Findings	92
Research Questions	92
Beginning Propositions	103
Conclusions	109
Implications for Future Research	111
Retrospective Observations.....	113
References	115
Appendix A Interview Questions	125
Appendix B Role-ordered Matrix	138
Appendix C Thank You Letter	195
Vita	199

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Comparison of the Superintendent in This Study and Typical Women Superintendents	43
Table 2	Crosswalk Table of Interview Questions, Socialization Forces, Informants, and Sources	48
Table 3	Crosswalk Table of Socialization Domains, Definitions, Research Questions, Codes, and Sources.....	55

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Forces Contributing to the Socialization of Female Superintendents	10
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