Making Women Men: What Female Superintendent Stories Tell Us About the Gender Gap in the North Carolina School Superintendency (Under the direction of Dr. Catherine Marshall)

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14 Interviews & 3,599 miles later...

“It is presumptuous to think that while those we study change, we ourselves—as researchers—remain untouched by the process” (Piotrkowski, 1979 p.288).
## Chapter 4 - Women’s Stories

### The Women

- **Access**
- **Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Total Participant Averages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>93% Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Female Superintendent</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>27.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years as Superintendent</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>21.43% Women of Color; 78.57% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>78.5% Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>71.42% Have Children;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.42% Have School-Aged Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4 - Women’s Stories

Narrative Analysis

By giving each woman time and space to tell her leadership story, each woman’s experiences were valued. While there were many recurring motifs across the 14 superintendent stories, the researcher focused data analysis first using a narrative analysis approach for each individual. Each superintendent story was analyzed for its unique narrative strategy illustrating how each woman understands and makes meaning of her leadership.
Chapter 4 - Women’s Stories

Superintendent 1 – Tired of All the Good-Ole-Boy Crap
Superintendent 2 – Wow! I am a Woman in a Man’s World!
Superintendent 3 – How Do You Break Through That? Is That a Female Thing?
Superintendent 4 – I’m Wearing My Green Thong
Superintendent 5 – The Eye on the Prize
Superintendent 6 – I Leverage My Humanity a Whole Lot
Superintendent 7 – I Really Try to be Who I Am All The Time
Superintendent 8 – I Had to Put on My Big Girl Panties
Superintendent 9 – Why Not Me?
Superintendent 10 – Women Are Promoted for Their Performance
Superintendent 11 – Because We Need an Insider
Superintendent 12 – You Have Got to Force Yourself at the Table
Superintendent 13 – You Don’t Have to Hire Me. I Don’t Need a Job
Superintendent 14 – Women Want to Be All In
Chapter 5 - Making Women Men

Making Women Men:

● Unequal Expectations for Women’s Work
● Discriminatory Working Conditions
● Unachievable Work-Life Balance
● Inequitable Pay
Chapter 5 - Reframing the Superintendency

Instead of requiring women to become men to attain the superintendency, let’s change the role of superintendent such that it does not require women to change their identities to get to the superintendent’s desk.
Chapter 5 - Limitations & Future Study

Limitations:

● Participants have achieved the superintendency;
● Limited focus on various layers of identity, including: gender fluidity, race, sexual orientation.

Future Study:

● Study women ranked immediately below superintendent;
● Study Board of Education’s positions towards women superintendents;
● Study discrimination of race and sexual orientation in superintendent advancement.