The Impact Institutional Culture has on Women's Political Leadership Efficacy Development

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THE IMPACT INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE HAS ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP EFFICACY DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational and Organizational Leadership

by
Laura McMaster
May 2016

Accepted by:
Dr. Russell Marion, Committee Chair
Dr. Michelle Boettcher
Dr. Kristin Frady
Dr. James Satterfield
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore how institutional culture impacts women’s political leadership efficacy development. By utilizing a constructivist design and a methodology rooted in feminine inquiry that included an interview and document (photo) analysis, a group of traditionally aged (18-24 year old) college women shared their lived experiences at one public land-grant research institution. The themes that emerged were based on multiple photo-elicitation interviews conducted with the participants throughout a semester. The data gathered was analyzed using a constant comparative method. Interpretation was done, in part, based on a leadership efficacy development framework.

The students’ sagas explored perceptions, interpretations and experiences related to political leadership efficacy development. They recognized the institution as still heavily male dominated and shared lived experiences that reinforced their perception that women were held to higher standards than men throughout campus. By examining these findings through the context of leadership efficacy development, it was determined that the mixed messages received by participants from the institution impacted their interest, perception and experience engaging in political leadership. The research indicated that reinforcement and enhancement of positive political leadership experiences throughout campus might increase women’s political leadership efficacy. The integration of political leadership learning within the curricular and co-curricular systems highlighted how students envisioned a campus culture more focused on political leadership efficacy development for women.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this labor of love to Emma, Mason, Blake, Parker and Reese. You are the reason and the motivation for everything. It is my wish that the places you will inhabit as you grow will be better because of the work we are doing today. Always remember that your voices matter, that you can make a difference and that your dreams are only limited by your imagination. I love you all!
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After writing an entire dissertation, I find myself still unsure how to find adequate words of gratitude for those that have been a part of this process with me. A thank you seems too simple, but as I have learned, sometimes simplicity is best. To everyone who has ever offered me words of encouragement, motivation to keep going or a friendly face when I needed it, thank you.

I first want to offer my sincerest of thanks to Dr. Marion and my committee members. Throughout this long process there have been many faculty members that have worked with me, challenged me and supported me. This would not have been possible without each and every one of you along the way. To my final four, thank you for seeing me to the end. You all took a risk on me. You invested your time, energy and talent into helping me find the finish line and for that I’ll be eternally grateful.

To the participants who I worked with throughout this project I want to say how amazed I was by your ability to share your experiences so poignantly. Our time together will always be something that I treasure. I learned much more from you than the pages in this dissertation could ever express.

Finally, I am so grateful for my family. You are my core, my center of gravity. It is our shared lives and experiences that I treasure most in my life. I know I would not have been able to accomplish this without you. Mom and Dad, your generosity, unwavering support, and love have made all the difference. Eli, there simply are no words that capture how you have helped me through this experience. I share this accomplishment with you.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

“Let us slow down. Let us really live in our places and become advocates for their conservation to preserve our own sanity, protect a sense of context and continuity for our own lives, and be good stewards of those resources that are really the property of those who will follow us…Our most sacred obligation is to care for our places and exercise good stewardship and take advantage of their power to remind us of where we came from and sometimes even to discover who we are” (Archibald, 2004, p. 59).

The nature and definition of place, as described above is the true catalyst for social research. Gaining a greater understanding of place, which is the exact element that shapes and constructs our realities, is paramount in qualitative research such as this one (Archibald, 2004). The essence of this concept produces culture, and in turn, creates tradition, experiences and human connections (Schein, 2010). The intent of this qualitative study is to explore how higher education’s institutional culture, which is created through the development of place, impacts women’s political leadership efficacy through the perceptions, interpretations and experiences of female students. This chapter will serve as an introduction by articulating the problem, purpose and significance of this research. I will introduce the theoretical framework, provide an overview of the research site and finally define concepts and terminology that are paramount to understanding this study.
**Statement of the Problem**

The quest for women’s equality in the United States has been a long fought battle. It was less than 100 years ago when women were considered second-class citizens, unable to enjoy the same freedoms and liberties as their male counterparts. This inequality was not just cultural, but imbedded into the fabric of laws and policies governing the United States of America. Women’s suffrage movements in the early 1900’s resulted in conventions, rallies and a call for change that ultimately led to the 19th amendment in the United States Constitution, ratified August 26, 1920, granting women the constitutional right to vote (Conway, Steuernagel & Ahern, 1997).

As women began to enter into the political scene, granted in small numbers at first, the culture of the United States began to shift. While not immediate, the 19th Amendment, along with global and national events including World Wars I and II began to slowly change our understanding of place in the United States. One such shift was women’s fluid participation in higher education (Solomon, 1985). In large numbers, colleges and universities opened their doors to women in the early to mid 1900s, throughout World Wars I and II along with the Korean War. When the men returned from World War II, especially, most institutions continued to allow women to attend classes and obtain degrees, however there was a significant decrease in female enrollment (Solomon, 1985). Post World War II until 1980 saw a sharp drop off in female enrollment in higher education and a steep increase in younger marriages, resulting in the Baby Boom Generation (Solomon, 1985). For the purposes of this research we will
assume that these shifts in higher education, no doubt brought on by catalysts such as the passing of the 19th Amendment, wars and other policy development, continued to change the fabric of place within both the United States political scene and the institution of higher education in this country. All of this reinforces the idea that to understand place today, we must take into consideration the past.

The empowerment of women that started early in the 1900’s continued to increase in strength and understanding over the course of the 20th century. Gender equality, due to advances in education and policy reform, is much more within reach today, than on August 26, 1920. However, despite all of the advances, especially in relation to higher education, there still exists a pervasive gap regarding gender equity in the United States’ political system. This study will explore this gap by examining how the culture of higher education, rooted in patriarchy, may play a role in the development of women’s political leadership efficacy, and therefore allowing inequality to persist.

At South Eastern University (SEU; a pseudonym), the location of this study, there is a rich history and tradition of patriarchy. Founded as a land grant institution, focused on agriculture and steeped in military tradition, SEU did not open its doors to women until the middle of the 20th century. SEU was then, and remains to this day, an important institution for the state in which it resides. Graduates of SEU continue to serve the state in various influential ways. Opening in the late 1800s, the culture of the institution was strongly rooted by the time women joined the fold more than 60 years later. It was not until 1967, 12 years after the first women were admitted to SEU, that a woman received
an engineering degree from the school. This fact highlights the power of culture and the time and effort it takes to change it. SEU’s strong and rich traditions were created with men in mind, and therefore, it was up to the women to fit into the already developed culture.

Today, after only first admitting women less than 60 years ago, SEU’s population boasts almost half its enrollment as women. This dramatic increase in female enrollment is a tribute to those first women admitted to SEU in 1955. SEU is following national trends regarding their gender enrollment and graduation rates, with women matching or exceeding men in both regards (U.S. Census, 2011). Yet, despite women entering and graduating from these “places” in large numbers, there still exists a great divide in political equity, pre and post graduation.

According to the US Census Bureau in 2009, 58.9% of all degrees for higher education earned in the U.S. were awarded to women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). And yet, despite these figures, in 2013 women held only 18.5% of seats in the U.S. Congress and the state in which SEU resides was ranked 49th out of 50 in regards to female participation in the state legislature (Center for American Women and Politics, 2014). The problem that this study will attempt to address is that the rich patriarchal culture of SEU, imbedded years before women joined the fold, may still be negatively impacting the political leadership efficacy of current women of SEU today, resulting in low and stagnate numbers regarding political participation, specifically in state and national platforms.
Assumptions

There are several assumptions that I will make while conducting this study. First and foremost, there is an assumption that enhanced levels of women’s political leadership efficacy is important and is a valid question of research. Facts and numbers show that women are not engaged in the political process at equitable rates to men (Tarr-Whelan, 2009). This research is based upon the assumption that these numbers should be more equitable and that this gap is, in part, related to their experiences within the higher education system of the United States.

The second assumption is that institutional culture matters, especially as it relates to the development of students. Higher education has long been regarded as one of the foremost platforms for the development of young adults (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). It is during this timeframe and within the constructs of the system of higher education that young adults develop mentally, emotionally, spiritually, academically and politically. Student development theory provides insight into how students develop an awareness of self and how they can and do impact their surroundings (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This development is, in part, related to the institutional culture that the student joins. Throughout this study, I will review literature that supports the idea that culture is a powerful force. Imbedded within culture are widely held beliefs and values about gender roles. These beliefs are often times so ingrained within the culture, that they are not questioned, but instead accepted as reality. Because these beliefs are so imbedded within a culture, it can be assumed that they would impact a students’ developmental process.
make no assumption that this impact is positive or negative, but instead make the argument that the assumption can be made that institutional culture is intentionally and unintentionally critical to the development of the student.

The third assumption is that higher education is directly related to formal and informal political involvement. While not a pre-requisite for any elected position, including President of the United States of America, over 75% of the U.S.’s approximately 7,400 elected positions hold at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education (Hu, 2011). SEU’s state falls above the national average at 80% of the elected officials boasting at least a bachelor’s degree (Kelderman, 2011). Elections of at least the last decade indicate that there is a correlation between attainment of further education and the likelihood of voting, let alone running for office. In the 2008 election, the voting rate of citizens with at least a bachelor’s degree was 79% while those with only a high school degree was 55% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). This data reinforces the assumption that there is a link between furthering one’s education and the likelihood of engaging in politics, on any level.

The fourth and final assumption is that men and women lead differently. One is not better than the other, but it is important to note that leadership from a gendered lens does provide some differences. As chapter two will show, the evolution of leadership, both as a discipline and a practice, has been impacted by gender. This assumption, further dissected, relates to the first assumption, that better representation of women engaged in the political leadership process enhances the totality of politics and
government. More women are needed in these leadership roles if the government is truly
going to be representative of the people.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

There is a plethora of research available on culture theory (Marion & Gonzales, 2013; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1996; Schein, 2010; Tierney, 1988; Trowler, 2008). Similarly there is a great deal of research that has been done on the development of women’s leadership (Bass, 1997; Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Chin, 2004, 2007; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly & Karau, 1991; Fine, 2008; hooks, 1994; Hoyt, 2005; Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). Facts and figures are available in great detail dictating the current status of women in politics. However, after an exhaustive search, there appears to be no research on the impact institutional culture within higher education has on the development of women’s political leadership efficacy. This study will attempt to bridge that gap. The purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of how the development of traditional aged college women’s political leadership efficacy may be impacted by the institutional or organizational culture that they are a part of as a member of their university. The secondary purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the female student experience and discover new avenues of support concerning the development of their political leadership efficacy.
Theoretical Basis

Culture theory seeks to understand how organizational cultures develop, change, sustain and/or end. It will be used as a primary theoretical framework for understanding the development of women’s political leadership efficacy at institutions of higher education, specifically, South Eastern University. By utilizing culture theory as a lens, the research will distinguish any deep-rooted assumptions about gender roles within the target organization. Culture theory will also allow for the context of the environment to be present and accounted for in the research. Culture theory provides a strong foundation for gaining insight into how an organizational culture may impact members’ perceptions, beliefs and values. It is appropriately used for qualitative research such as this one.

Furthermore, to better understand the development of leadership efficacy, this study will focus on McCormick’s (2001) social cognitive model of leadership. This model focuses on the interconnectedness of leadership experiences, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities and leaders’ behaviors. This model illustrates that through personal experiences within a culture, a leader is able to create goals and assess her efficacy to goal attainment (McCormick, 2001). By utilizing this model in conjunction with culture theory, a basis for the development of women’s political leadership efficacy will be determined.

Overview of Research Site

South Eastern University is an example of an institution that values its history and traditions. From Saturday football rituals to traditional myths around how one might
tempt their fate and fail to graduate, tradition permeate the culture. There are buildings and statues throughout campus and the surrounding community that highlight its history. Members of SEU take pride in wearing their school colors and rooting for their Division I athletic teams. Students are proud to receive their college ring and often wear it with pride throughout their lifetime. It is a Research I institution with a strong emphasis on academic performance.

The institution often refers to itself as the SEU family. This terminology is important in understanding the culture of the institution. By referring to themselves as a family, they are identifying and claiming their institutional culture. A family is a strong unit, and as such there are strong basic assumptions that are passed down from generation to generation. As new members join the institution, they too are taught the same values and beliefs as those that came before them. As a result, changing assumptions within this strong organizational unit, which will be discussed in greater depth in chapter two, is extremely difficult.

South Eastern University’s website boasts that the total student population is comprised of approximately 19,000 students, 67% of which are in-state residents. Furthermore just under half of the current enrollment identify as female. The institution’s freshman to sophomore retention rate hovers at just over 90%, aiding in the institution’s ability to remain in the U.S. News and World Report’s top 25 public institutions. Tuition and fees for a full time resident student for SEU is approximately $23,000 and non-resident is estimated to cost $40,000 (assuming the student is living on campus). The
majority of undergraduate students are traditional aged college students (18-25 years of age). This make-up of the student body is important to understand if one is truly going to be able to gain insight into the organizational culture of SEU.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First and foremost, it is important to note, that I am a woman researching this topic. This identity is one in which I take great pride and ownership. While the methodology I am employing yields better results when one is a member of the researched unit, it is also fair to assume that there are internal biases that exist based on my gender alone (Wang & Burris, 1997). By acknowledging this at the beginning, I am able to showcase a truthful and honest portrayal of the research and the interpretation of the data collected.

As with any qualitative study, there are limitations persistent with the methodology utilized. While this study will focus on the depth of experiences from a small number of women at one institution, yielding results inherent to their experiences, we must be careful not to assume that these results will be replicated on a large-scale basis. However, gaining a deeper understanding of culture and its impact on women can only be discovered through qualitative research.

Finally, as a product of more than one institution of higher education, my experiences as a college student will potentially provide additional biases. Not only am I a woman, but also I am a woman who is a product of higher education. The experiences that I will be exploring with the research subjects will potentially not be unlike my own.
I must be cognizant of the fact that the stories being examined are that of the subjects and not my own. This limitation is not unlike most other studies conducted with subjects within the higher education system, and as such, I have multiple and varied examples of how to remain as unbiased as possible in exploring the experiences of the students I will work with through the course of this study.

**Definition of Terms**

There are several terms that I will use throughout this paper as I explore women’s political leadership efficacy development through the lens of culture. It is important to provide a framework and definition for those terms so that the intent of the paper remains clear. As such, below are a series of definitions that will aid readers in understanding the terminology used throughout the paper.

**Culture** – There are several definitions of culture that will be introduced in chapter two of this paper, however the definition that I will lean on most heavily is that of Schein (2010). Schein (2010) describes culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 18).

**Institution** – An accredited college or university, specifically in the United States higher education system.
Self Efficacy - Self efficacy is defined as the level of positive or negative views one has on their own ability to motivate others, overcome challenges or make important decisions (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Leadership Efficacy – Related to self efficacy this is “leaders’ beliefs in their perceived capabilities to organize the positive psychological capabilities, motivation, means, collective resources, and courses of action required to attain effective, sustainable performance across their various leadership roles, demands, and contexts” (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008, p. 2).

Politics – For the purposes of this study, the word politics refers to the running of governmental affairs at the local, state or national level.

19th Amendment – Ratified on August 18, 1920, this amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America prohibits any United States citizen to be denied the right to vote based on sex.

Stereotype – Stereotypes, in their most basic form, carry no positive or negative weight, but are simply generalized, consistent beliefs about various social groups (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Stereotype Threat - Stereotype threat is the risk of confirming these negative stereotypes, or cultural assumptions about one’s group and even believing it to be true (Eagley & Karau, 2002).
Gender – Gender, for the purposes of this study, refers to a range of characteristics of femininity and masculinity, and does not assume biological sex.

Chilly Campus – At institutions of higher education this phenomenon occurs when institutional policies create cultures that discount women or discriminate against them (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Nora & Terenzini, 1999).

Photovoice – Qualitative methodology that uses visual research methods to capture the life experiences of participants through photography (Wang 1999).

Chapter Summary

This research is based on the story started with our mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers. It has been less than 100 years since women were granted the constitutional right to participate in government. The 19th Amendment, monumental in American history, was limited in its abilities. An amendment is a policy. It is one of the most basic forms of understanding a culture. However, that amendment could not solely be responsible for changing a culture. The story continued as women entered institutions of higher education and finally have risen to equal academic partnership within said institutions. And yet, there is still a pervasive masculine culture embedded within the American culture, including institutions of higher education.

Throughout this paper I will review organizational culture and the power it yields. I will also explore the history and development of women’s political leadership efficacy. This study is meant to inform practitioners at institutions of higher education about the
power of institutional culture on the development of women’s political leadership
efficacy, and possibly offer up one explanation to the seemingly unconquerable political
gender gap.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1920, women were granted the constitutional right to vote in the United States. This marked an important turning point in America, yet more than 90 years later, there are still substantial and obvious gender gaps penetrating the political system at the local, state and national levels. To better understand this unquenchable breach within our political system, I will explore how institutional culture within higher education may play a role in the perpetuation of this inequity.

Culture within organizations yields a power than can influence members’ beliefs, understandings and perceptions of reality (Schein, 2010). In this sense, it also impacts behavior and social dynamics. Schein (2010) explains culture as a dynamic phenomenon based on what is happening in the present while simultaneously recognizing the background inherent structures of our organizations. “When we learn to see the world through cultural lenses, all kinds of things begin to make sense that initially were mysterious, frustrating or seemingly stupid” (Schein, 2010, p. 13). This theory provides a strong framework for understanding how, and if, institutional culture impacts the development of women’s political leadership efficacy.

There is a vast amount of literature available on organizational culture (Marion & Gonzales, 2013; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1996; Schein, 1990, 2010; Tierney, 1988; Trowler, 2008). There is also a growing body of literature on women’s political leadership efficacy (WPLE) (Hoyt, 2002, 2005; Hoy, Murphy Halverson & Watson,
This study seeks to add to the existing body of literature by examining how institutional culture may impact women’s political leadership efficacy. This chapter will review the literature on this multi-layer issue in order to better understand how culture within the organization of higher education may impact the development of women’s political leadership efficacy. This chapter will also provide a greater depth of content related to the theoretical framework being used in the study while also shedding greater light onto the evolution of women’s leadership efficacy development.

**Organizational Culture**

To understand organization culture, one must first understand the power of culture. It is an abstraction that is synchronously both divisive and uniting in nature. Schein (2010) states that culture forces are so powerful because they are outside of the realm of awareness, however greater insight into culture will yield an enhanced understanding of organizational life and personal awareness. “Culture is not only all around us, but within us as well” (Schein, 2010, p. 9). Culture, therefore, is not something that happens to us, but instead is a constant interactive relationship that exists both externally and within ourselves. To understand this relationship is to better understand our own beliefs, actions and understanding of the world around us. The power of culture exists both internally and externally, permeating all aspects of life and place.
Culture, defined by O’Reilly and Chapman (1996), is a “system of shared values and norms that define appropriate attitudes and behaviors for organizational members” (p. 160). Marion and Gonzales (2013) expand on this definition by identifying culture as something not just limited to nationality or ethnicity but “any stable order that emerges from interactive, social dynamics” (p. 225). Geertz (1973) accepted culture as muddled and flawed interpretations used by members and observers for sensemaking purposes. Schein (2010) described culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 18).

These definitions represent only a glimpse into the multiple variations of a definition of culture. The interwoven threads permeating each definition showcase a phenomenon of shared assumptions, beliefs and norms that dictate group behavior, feelings and thoughts. Culture provides a common sense of reality for its members, legitimizing behaviors, infrastructures, language and other important components (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). This understanding of culture is paramount in understanding the focus of this research.


1. Observed behavioral regularities when people interact: “language they use, the customs and traditions that evolve, and the rituals they employ”

2. Group norms: “implicit standards and values that evolve in working groups”
3. Espoused values: “articulated, publicly announced principles and values that the group claims to be trying to achieve”

4. Formal philosophy: “broad policies and ideological principles that guide a group’s actions toward…stakeholders”

5. Rules of the game: “implicit, unwritten rules for getting along in the organization”

6. Climate: “feeling that is conveyed in a group by the physical layout and the way in which members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with other outsiders”

7. Embedded skills: “special competencies displayed by group members in accomplishing certain tasks”

8. Habits of thinking: “shared cognitive frames that guide the perceptions, thought and language used by members of a group and are taught to new members in the early socialization process”

9. Share meanings: “emergent understandings that are created by group members as they interact with each other”

10. Root metaphors: “ways that groups evolve to characterize themselves, which may or may not be appreciated consciously”

11. Formal rituals and celebrations: “ways in which a group celebrates key events that reflect important values or important ‘passages’” (Schein, 2010, pgs. 15-16).
While each of these characteristics influences, reflects and/or relates to culture, it is critical to understand that not one of these characteristics, independent of the others, are the culture (Schein, 2010). The concept of culture insists on additional assumptions and implications beyond the singularity of any one characteristic. “Culture implies structural stability, depth, breadth and patterning or integration” (Schein, 2010, p. 16). The first implication, stability, is valued within organizations, providing a foundation and sense of safety for members. Culture implies depth, as much of culture exists in intangible abstractions taking root in the depth of the unconsciousness of a group. Furthermore, culture assumes breadth, meaning that it has a pervasive quality that impacts all aspects of the organization’s operations. Finally, there is an implication of patterning and integration that organizes the various elements of behavior, beliefs, rituals and climate into a comprehensible and coherent totality, reinforcing that culture does not exist in any one characteristic independent of the others (Schein, 2010).

Culture is not just a reflection of overt behavior, but instead emphasizes the importance of perceptions, thoughts and feelings that accompany the situational contingencies of the environment (Schein, 2010). Marion and Gonzales (2013) concur stating “attitudes and perception are some of the most important elements of behavior” (p. 287). Behavioral reactions alone do not provide enough information to ascertain if said behavior is a result of shared assumptions and values or if there is another non-cultural explanation for the behavior. Deeper insight into the situation is needed to be able to distinguish the actual cause of the action. Only by examining the essence of the
behavior, through the lens of the aforementioned characteristics and implications, can we determine its connection to culture.

Schein (2010) identified three levels of culture. The most basic of these levels exists on the surface and is a representation of the things that a researcher would see, hear and feel when introduced to a new group or organization. These surface level artifacts might include the way the physical environments are organized, the language used, the technology, products and creative representations of the culture, displays of emotion, stated values and/or public rituals and celebrations. All of these artifacts are observable, outward displays of the culture.

For institutions of higher education these artifacts might include, but are not limited to, strategic plans, annual reports, organization charts, student codes of conduct, university identifiers, vision and mission statements, course catalogs, organizations throughout campus, committees and websites. Metcalfe (2012) underpins this argument by stating, “prominent landmarks are increasingly seen as part of the brand that then becomes part of one’s institutional identity” (p. 519). While artifacts are easy to identify, they are much harder to decipher. Assumptions can be made by an outsider about what these artifacts mean, but to really deepen one’s understanding of the culture, they must deepen their level of assumption (Gagliardi, 1990). Furthermore, interpretation of these artifacts will most likely be seen through the cultural lens of the observer, limiting their ability to fully grasp the intricacies of the culture at hand.
The second level of culture refers to groups’ espoused beliefs and values (Schein, 2010). These are much harder to identify than artifacts. Beliefs and values are the result of joint action and a shared observance of the outcome. Often tested in times of strife or stress, values must be a result of the group and not just the leader. Once tested and proven reliable, values and beliefs will transform into shared assumptions. However, not all values and beliefs can be transformed. If a value or belief is unable to be empirically tested and proven reliable, is based on uncontrollable elements of the environment or can only be tested by way of consensus, transformation will not take place (Schein, 2010). In order to gain insight into this level of culture, one must differentiate between aspirational values, ideological beliefs and values that are congruent with shared assumptions.

Values that continue to stand the test of time, are reliable throughout crises and can be shared ultimately result in shared assumptions, the deepest level of culture (Schein, 2010). These basic assumptions are, generally speaking, ignored and taken for granted as reality. In fact, when faced with an alternative to the shared assumption, group members will often find said alternative impossible or inconceivable. As such, basic assumptions are very challenging to change. In order to do so, a group must be willing to upset the stability of the groups’ cognitive structure, often causing increased anxiety levels. Alternatively, members will distort facts, deny new information or find other ways to falsify what is going on around them, so as to keep from upsetting the delicate balance of the culture through shared assumptions. In this way, organizations may fail to change even when presented with new factual information (Schein, 2010).
These unconscious assumptions, whose power comes from being shared, have the ability to distort data and alter perceptions. These assumptions explain the nature of truth, the distinction between right and wrong, the ways in which members should relate to one another, the value and importance of work, family and oneself and the expected roles implicit of gender (Schein, 2010). Because these assumptions are so imbedded into our understanding of self and how we relate to the world around us, it is extremely hard to change them. They also have a direct impact on individual behaviors within organizations. Members, often without even realizing, maintain these assumptions through their personal beliefs and behaviors (Deal & Peterson, 1999). For purposes of this study, assumptions about gender, politics and/or leadership may play a role in understanding the impact organizational culture may have on the development of women’s political leadership efficacy.

While’s Schein’s work is important to understanding the elements of culture for this study, it is also vital to incorporate the work done by researchers utilizing a more inductive and interpretive lens for examination. This research will go beyond these components by asking participants to make meaning of their culture, similar to the work of William Tierney. Tierney (1988) takes a much more holistic and process oriented approach to understanding culture. Reality, therefore, is determined by the social reciprocity in which perceptions are affirmed, altered or disregarded as a result of perceived congruence with other members. “Institutions are certainly influenced by powerful, external factors such as demographics, economic and political conditions, yet they are also shaped by strong forces that emanate from within” (p. 3). By looking at
culture through this inductive lens then, Tierney is arguing that organizational culture exists and persists through the members’ interpretation of the history and symbols developed by the ways in which they interact and communicate with one another. A successful interpretive leader, according to Tierney, would be one who is able to capture the historical gradations and the human resources embedded within the organization (Marion & Gonzales, 2013).

Trowler (2008) expanded upon these ideas even further by introducing the need to see cultures as interactive, dynamic and fluid. He refers to this view as the multiple cultural configuration approach or MCC. From this perspective, institutional cultures are nuanced, open and diverse, recognizing that within any one institution, there will be several cultures. The cultures within organizations “occupy different ‘stages’: front-of-stage (the public arena), back-stage (where deals are done), and under-the-stage (where gossip is purveyed)” (p. 13). Within this MCC perspective culture is recognized as both enacted and constructed, meaning that members learn predominate cultural norms, but also maintain the power to maneuver or even change the culture, should they find it necessary. Early in this chapter, Schein (2010) argued that new organizational culture relies on the founders. The MCC perspective recognizes that the sagas of the founders do not dictate or shape the lifelong destiny of the organization. They can change, ebb and flow based on the needs of the current members (Trowler, 2008).
Gender Ideals

Imbedded within organizational culture are beliefs, values and understandings of gender. The nuanced understanding of gender in an organization lends itself to gender ideals, which are accepted and idealistic traits of men and women. Gender ideals are important to note when gaining an understanding of organizational culture, specifically for purposes of this study. Investment in gender ideals may be one of the moderators impacting women’s leadership efficacy. Gender ideals are different than negative stereotypes because the focus is on the “ideal woman.” The more a woman invests in gender ideals the greater the level of importance they will have in determining her level of leadership efficacy (Wood, Christiensen, Hebl & Rothgerber, 1997). Women who place a higher level of importance on gender ideals adhere to societal gender norms and expectations (Sanchez & Crocker, 2005).

Gender ideals can be harmful because self-worth is then determined by external factors such as perceived competencies and opinions of others (Sanchez & Crocker, 2005). When these gender ideals do not match up with leader roles, women will maintain the gender ideal at the cost of participating in the leadership domain (Sanchez & Crocker, 2005). Gender ideals can create an even greater obstacle when combined with stereotype threat conditions. When women who are invested in gender ideals are presented with stereotype activation they often underperform on leadership tasks (Wood et. al., 1997). Furthering our understanding of how assumptions permeate culture,
specifically as it relates to gender, we must explore stereotype threat in addition to gender ideals.

**Stereotype Threat**

In order to understand stereotype threat, it is important to first define and understand stereotypes. Stereotypes, in their most basic form, carry no positive or negative weight, but are simply generalized consistent beliefs about various social groups (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Negative stereotypes “communicate to stigmatized individuals the accusations that specifically devalue their group’s social identity” (Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005, p. 276). Gendered stereotypes are the widely held beliefs or cognitive structures used to process information about men and women. These stereotypes are both descriptive and prescriptive providing a framework for what both men and women should be like as a social group (Hoyt, 2005). Stereotype threat is the risk of confirming these negative stereotypes, or cultural assumptions about one’s group and even believing it to be true (Eagley & Karau, 2002).

There are stereotypes for both men and women in relation to leadership. Stereotypes for women are often more social in nature. For example, women are stereotyped as being friendly, warm, nurturing and sensitive (Hoyt, 2005). Men, on the other hand, are generally stereotyped in a much less communal fashion. These stereotypes include being decisive, independent, assertive and confident (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Hoyt, 2005). These stereotypes are paramount to understanding the immediate disadvantages afforded to women in relation to leadership, specifically in a culture where
valued leadership traits favor male stereotypes. This is one of the reasons that men and women alike have a harder time seeing women in leadership positions. Empirical research supports the notion that most people think that to be a successful leader, one must possess stereotypical male characteristics. This is often referred to as the think leader-think male stereotype (Hoyt, 2005; Sczesny, 2003).

The incongruity between stereotypes of an effective leader and female stereotypes leads to a greater level of prejudice against women leaders. Eagly and Karau (2002) claim that because of this incongruity, women are seen as less qualified for leadership positions. Furthermore, when women are able to attain leadership roles, they are discriminated against for not following traditional gender roles. These prejudices combined, account for the reason why women are seen by both genders as less favorable candidates for top leadership roles and less effective if they attain such positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). These cultural assumptions therefore may help explain the political gender gap in United States culture. Because of the U.S.’s widely held beliefs about political leaders (both formal and informal) it could be argued that men are groomed to engage in politics whereas women will learn early to shy away from this particular arena. To better understand how stereotype threat works, let’s look at it in greater depth.

Stereotype threat has been researched in multiple realms, but most notably it has been used to explain the underperformance of black students in test situations (Steele & Aronson, 1995), the underperformance of women on math tests (Spencer, Steele & Quinn, 1999) and most recently on women’s leadership self-efficacy (Hoyt, 2005).
Steele (1997) theorized that there were three conditions that must be met in order for stereotype threat to occur. There first must be societal awareness of the negative stereotype. The second condition is that a person must stake a large portion of their identity on being a member of the stereotyped group. And finally, the last condition that must be met is the relevance of the negative stereotype during a specific situation (Steele, 1997). Typically stereotype threat is more apt to happen when a task is difficult or the task elicits the stereotype (Hoyt, 2002).

Most frequently when stereotype activation occurs there is a diminished level of task performance (Hoyt, 2002). Leadership effectiveness is difficult to measure, however research has indicated that if individuals perceive that they underperformed on a leadership task, they are less likely to affiliate with the leadership domain in the future (Aronson, Quinn & Spencer, 1998). Hoyt’s (2005) work corroborated this point finding that women, specifically who perceived their performance on a leadership task as bad, were less likely to engage in future activities within the leadership domain.

Research indicates that there is a relationship between stereotype threat and women’s leadership efficacy (Hoyt, 2005). However, there exists a gap in the literature exploring how this relationship could affect the number of women in political leadership roles, adding to the overall gender gap in high-level leadership roles. This understanding of stereotype threat as it relates to women’s leadership in particular will be important in gaining a greater understanding of the political gender rift that exists in the American
political system. In the next section, we will explore why stereotypes and other assumptions persist by examining the challenges associated with culture changes.

**Culture Changes**

Yukl, (2009) stated that it is much more difficult to change the culture of a long-standing organization than it is to just to create a new group. Because so many shared assumptions and beliefs of a mature organization are subconscious in nature or because they are meant to justify the actions of the past or are a point of pride, it is extremely hard to change a culture. However, if innovation and revolution is to take place, cultural change within an organization must happen. As the world becomes more globalized, more and more organizations will form that are far more complex than previous organizations. In order for mature cultures to keep up with these new and complex organizations, culture changes must take place, but it is not easy (Schein, 2010).

According to Schein (2010), the way that an organization embraces change directly relates to the stage of maturation in which it is operating. Newer organizations change based on fresh insight while midlife organizations might change because of systemic adaptations from selected subcultures. Finally, a mature organization, the hardest organization to change, may transition due to scandal or mergers and acquisitions. New organizations define culture based on the founders’ assumptions and should it survive and claim itself independent of other organizations, new members will be taught the culture. The major resistance to change in a new organization comes from the founders, who are still generally a part of the organization. As the organization grows it
becomes more diverse, making the decision of which elements to change or sustain a difficult one for organizational leaders. During midlife though, organizations are still able to change assumptions because additional subcultures are typically introduced during this time. As a mature organization in its decline, change only happens as a result of scandal and turnarounds, assisting in the dysfunctional operations of the organization (Schein, 2010).

Maintaining equilibrium is the goal of every organization. “Coping, growth, and survival all involve maintaining the integrity of the system in the face of a changing environment that is constantly causing varying degrees of disequilibrium” (Schein, 2010, p. 300). Culture therefore exists through values, beliefs and attitudes in an attempt to create a sense of predictability and provide meaning to members (Weick, 1995). This quest for equilibrium, therefore explains the slow pace of change within organizations and the way in which shared assumptions can provide stability for members.

The leaders of organizations play a critical role in the change process. Schein (2010) claims that leadership is often the catalyst for transitions within organizations, providing direction and stability in moments of uncertainty. For example, when changes are out of the control in the organization, such as a natural tragedy displacing the organization, or a person retiring from the group, members will expect the leader to guide them through this transition. Deal and Peterson (1991) refer to this cultural leader as a healer. It is the leaders of the group then, who are responsible for adopting change while also providing a sense of stability, allowing for organization persistence. In cultures
where men and/or masculine leadership have been accepted as the healer, even in times of change, gender ideals and stereotypes may persist.

O’Reilly and Chapman (1996) provided a four step process for creating effective cultures. The first is participatory decision making, which will allow all members of an organization to feel empowered in the decision making process. This helps members feel a sense of ownership in the decisions of the organization while enhancing their own understanding of how they are making positive contributions. The second step requires the leaders of organizations to understand the symbols their actions convey and work to make them congruent with the messages they wish to be sending. The third is a greater understanding of the shared social information within the organizations. And finally, a congruent and thoughtful reward system reflective of the values of the organization will help yield stronger cultures according to O’Reilly and Chapman (1996). By utilizing these strategies, the connection between leadership and culture is strengthened.

**Leadership and Culture**

As was introduced in the previous section, culture and leadership are interwoven so intricately that it is hard to remove one from the other (Deal & Peterson, 1991). As new organizations and groups are created, so is culture. Once culture exists, it is the leaders “that determine the criteria for leadership and thus determine who will or will not be a leader” (Schein, 2010, p. 22). The impact the founders have on an organization is staggering. “Founders not only choose the basic mission and the environmental context in which the new group will operate, but they choose the members and thereby shape the
kinds of responses that the group will make in its efforts to succeed in its environment and integrate itself” (Schein, 2010, p. 219). These founders sell their visions and as they increase membership, thus shaping the culture. As such, leadership is both the creator and the change agent of organizations. To exemplify this notion, I will next explore how this has played out in relation to women’s leadership and political history.

**Women in Leadership**

Early leadership theories, terminology, images and concepts have been found to be closely related to masculinity and often fail to consider a feminine perspective (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). In early leadership literature, trait theory was widely acknowledged as a legitimate form of understanding leadership. This leadership philosophy laid claim to the idea that leaders were identified by the characteristics they embodied (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007, 2013). In western cultures leaders are thought of and praised for being direct, assertive, commanding and powerful, all of which are stereotypical masculine behaviors (Fine & Buzzanell, 2000). These words are often not used to describe females or women in leadership, explaining how cultural assumptions can manifest in language.

Masculine language, with themes of subjugation within traditional leadership theories, suggests power and control, and reflects masculine socialization in Western societies (Chin, Lott, Rice & Sanchez-Hucles, 2007). Because of this, women’s voices are often silenced or void in the leadership conversations. Research shows that this silencing of women and oppressed groups is detrimental to leadership development for
members of these identities (hooks, 1994). The trait theory automatically silences these groups and sets up a dynamic of privilege, indicating that those people who embody certain characteristics will automatically be a candidate for leadership while those with other skills and abilities are less valued (Komives et al., 2007). The language of leadership therefore plays an integral role in the understanding of who seeks out leadership roles.

Building upon the leadership language, traditional views of leadership have led to incongruity between female gender stereotypes and leader roles. Because women are thought of as more communal, they are often seen, by both genders, as less favorable candidates for high level leadership positions (Hoyt, 2005). This incongruity often indicates a less favorable attitude toward a female leader causing greater resistance or aspirations for leadership (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010). Historically speaking, women leaders once had no other choice than to model male behavior and to adopt the values and definition of leadership created by men. Furthermore, “women’s voices and experiences are generally absent from the academic discourse on leadership, and that absence has profoundly affected theorizing leadership” (Fine, 2008, p. 180). This absence from academic discourse, places women at a disadvantage and fails to engage leadership perspectives from vantage points that are not directly related to masculinity.

As more women became a part of the fabric of higher education, women’s leadership within the academic realm began to shift (Fine, 2008). The literature, compounded by experiences, perception and expectations for female leadership indicates
that women work in a different leadership environment from that of men (Chin, 2007). Feminist theory was one of the first attempts to provide a framework for an important shift in our understanding of leadership. The feminist outlook provided a framework and new perspective of subjugation of females by a male dominated world (Fine, 2008). This movement changed the way that leadership was understood and set a foundation for more inclusive leadership theories. This exploration into leadership with a feminist lens substantiated the earlier claims that women lead in different ways. It also upheld the idea that interpersonal relationships and emotional connections were of greater importance for women than men (Brumberg, 2000). However, as culture changes are hard to actualize, as explained earlier in the chapter, these shifts in understanding leadership are slow to materialize and have yet to take root as cultural assumptions.

As the research on women’s leadership continues to grow, some thematic perceptions are emerging. Current leadership literature reflects evolving definitions of leadership to include more typically feminine language and traits such as cooperation, mentoring, collaboration, reduction in hierarchy and relationships (Kellerman and Rhode, 2007; Chin et al., 2007). Some studies do show that, in comparison to male leaders, women leaders tend to be more nurturing, inclusive, utilizing collaborative strategies that encourage participation and creating egalitarian environments as opposed to the traditional directive approach described above (Chin, 2004; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Rosener, 1995). The literature on women’s leadership consistently finds that women effectively incorporate democratic, relational behaviors into their leadership styles (Bass, 1997; Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly & Johnson
1990; Hoyt, Johnson, Murphy & Skinnell, 2010; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, & Smith, 1999). This shift is often referred to as the great women theory of leadership and follows suite with traditional trait theory introduced earlier, arguing that women’s leadership styles are always nurturing, collaborative and inclusive (Pittinsky, Bacon & Welle, 2007).

While studies have shown that women have a tendency toward these characteristics, it is imperative to note that provocative descriptions of sex-typed leadership styles can have both positive and negative effects on women’s leadership (Pittinsky, Bacon & Welle, 2007). As stated previously, stereotypes are both descriptive and prescriptive, meaning that these sex-typed leadership styles often set women who fail to conform to female leadership styles up for failure (Glick & Fiske, 1999). These sex-typed leadership styles may also have an impact of the cultivation of women’s leadership efficacy and help sustain previous and/or current held assumptions about women in leadership roles.

Research cautions that these stereotypes can be both positive and negative for females. While a substantial body of literature does show that women may lead in different ways and that the process of leadership they typically pursue is unique from that of men, the result is more substantiated stereotypes (Fine, 2008; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Rosener, 1995). Women are often deemed more collaborative, nurturing and relational, yet it is important to recognize that women’s leadership is not that simplistic (Chin, 2004; Pittinsky et al., 2007). Personal experiences, environments, values and bias all contribute
to personal leadership development (Chin, 2004). Women that may not fall into this stereotyped definition of women’s leadership may then feel ill equipped to pursue any leadership experience.

Leadership development is a central component of the educational pursuit of most institutions of higher education (Komives et al., 2007, 2013). Leadership development has been linked to student involvement and engagement on campus and has a direct impact on identity development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) first introduced standards for leadership development in institutions of higher education in 1986 (Miller, 2003). In the 2003 contextual statement CAS dictated that leadership programs needed to go beyond the traditional methods of teaching and training positional leadership, but truly cultivate leadership within all students (Miller, 2003). Based on this, it is important for this study to explore how women’s leadership in higher education manifests itself.

**Women in Politics**

Mirroring the evolution of women in leadership, the history of women being formally left out of the political process in the United States began at the time of the revolutionary war. It was at this time that women were formally banned from participating in the political system (Darcy, Welch & Clark, 1994). It was not until 1920 that most states allowed women the right to vote (Conway et al., 1997). Women’s suffrage movements resulted in conventions, rallies and a call for change that ultimately led to the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, ratified August 18, 1920,
granting women the constitutional right to vote (Conway et al., 1997). After this victory though, women’s levels of voting failed to equal that of men’s until 1980, when there was finally equal numbers of votes in a presidential election (Conway et al., 1997). However, equal participation in politics is far from a reality. As of 2004, there were only 26 women in United States history who had ever served as Governor of a state (Carroll, 2010). Even more shocking is the midterm election of 2010, where the United States suffered a tremendous loss of women in politics with the number plummeting to levels not seen in almost three decades (Center for American Women and Politics, 2010).

Much like higher education and leadership theories that will be explored throughout this chapter, politics within the United States has a culture rooted in masculinity. Brown (1988), expressed that politics “has been more exclusively limited to men than any other realm of endeavor and has been more intensely, self-consciously masculine than most other social practices” (p. 4). This is not surprising, given that the United States is a patriarchy, like many historical civilizations, and that masculinity is deeply rooted within some of the most important constructs in this country including military, industry and technology (Millet, 1969). Hayes and Bean’s (1993) research indicates that women, on a grander scale, indeterminate of country, are less interested in politics than men. This lack of interest may be related to the fact that politics are not geared towards women and are masculine in nature, leading to lower levels of political efficacy for women, and in turn, lower levels of female participation in politics. Given that women make up over half of the total enrollment in institutions of higher education, and account for half of the labor force, and that the political arena is still dominated by
men in the United States, it is evident that work still needs to be done to balance the political scales and alter cultural assumptions.

In 2016, over 95 years after women officially were granted the opportunity to vote and participate in the political process; the United States ranked a disappointing 95th in a comparative sampling of women in national parliaments (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2016). Even more devastating is the fact that only 20 years prior, the United States ranked 34th in the world, meaning that the rest of the world is surpassing the United States in female participation in politics (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2016). This is important because research continues to show, as mentioned previously, that women lead in different ways than men. Even more relevant, is the research done by Duerst-Lahti and Verstegen (1995) that found that women in political office have different priorities and, as such, bring a new and necessary voice to the table. Failure to embrace women’s leadership style and find ways to increase leadership efficacy for women is having a direct negative impact on the American political system.

Stereotype threat may help explain the gender gap in the American political system. Huddy and Terkildsen, (1993) define “political gender stereotyping” as “the gender-based ascription of different traits, behaviors, or political beliefs to male and female politicians” (p. 120). Stereotypes of women politicians are often that they are more liberal and democratic then men. Kahn and Fridkin’s (1996) work on United States Senate candidates found that voters have more favorable evaluations of women candidates who run in campaigns that highlight “female” issues and much lower
evaluations of women who run in more “male” issue environments. “Female” or “soft” issues are often inclusive of childcare issues, education and health care. The distinction between “male” and “female” issues sets up a hierarchy of issues and places both genders in specific roles. Since gender stereotypes are prescriptive, deviations from stereotypical behavior are likely to be punished (Glick & Fiske, 1999). However, since the issues deemed most important are stereotypically “male” issues, there has been little incentive to make sure more women are at the table.

In 2009, Linda Tarr-Whelan, previous United States ambassador to the United Nations introduced a concept called the 30% rule. Her research states that the proven tipping point for women to have a substantial and impactful voice of any organization is 30% representation in the decision making body. Countries who have adopted this notion have seen an increase in ideas, more balanced and productive communities and an overall positive shift in government relations (Tarr-Whelan, 2009). This is an example of what Schein (2010) refers to as the second level of culture wherein values and/or beliefs are tested multiple times to be proven credible.

An understanding of culture and how it has impacted gender on a grand scheme in the United States is paramount in the research for this study. This chapter has shown how cultural assumptions have led to a decreased level of women both in regards to leadership and politics. The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to gaining a greater understanding higher education’s institutional culture as it relates to women and their leadership development.
Women and Higher Education

The makeup of the college population has changed. Women began to outnumber men in total enrollment in higher education starting in 1979, and have continued to do so ever since (Freeman, 2000). According to the 2012 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) the percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded earned by females was between 60 and 62% (NCES, 2012). Women currently make up more than 50% of law school, medical school and business school graduates in the United States, and yet they remain under-represented in professional leadership roles (Stickel & Bonett, 1991; Tarr-Whelan, 2009). Like no other time in history, women are trained with the knowledge, skills and abilities to accept the challenges created by the increasing demands of leadership roles; however a greater understanding of the process of leadership efficacy development for women within institutional culture might help explain the unswerving gender gap (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008).

Identity Development

An understanding of student development is generally important in research dealing directly with traditional aged college students; however it is of particular interest to this study to specifically explore student development through a gendered lens. Northouse (2012) laid claim to the idea that gendered differences can begin as early as childhood and can impact perception of the world and life experiences. Student development, specifically, psychosocial identity development, is key to understanding how these gendered differences impact a person’s ability to construct his/her own social
development with the dynamics of gender, for example, will open the door for
understanding how a healthy self-concept positively impacts cultural identity
development.

Identity development has been a topic of study for over 60 years; however the
complexities associated with gender identity development was introduced much later
(Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). The
foundational work of Erikson (1959), Perry (1970) and Kohlberg (1984) were all
paramount in understanding student development; however, they each were developed
through research done on white middle class males. It wasn’t until Gilligan (1982), a
student of Kohlberg, first challenged the process and set out on research to see if women
really developed in the same way as men. Through the work of Gilligan (1982) and later,
Belenky et al. (1986) women’s identity development began to be understood in a new
light. This was the first time that research indicated that men and women might develop
in different ways, with women having a tendency toward care and relationships (Evans,
Forney, & Guido-Dibrito, 1998).

The research and theories that resulted from this initial exploration into female
gender identity continue to show that social relationships play an integral role in female
identity development within institutional culture. Harris and Lester (2009) point out that
identity development for men alters drastically in that they tend to develop through
separation, individuation and autonomy while women tend to build identity through their
interactions and relationships with others. It is from these seminal works that many leadership theories and models have emerged (Komives et al., 2007, 2013). This information is important to the study because it provides a historical context of gendered leadership, which often manifests in various ways on a college campus, as will be discussed in the next section.

Chilly Campus and Involvement

As stated, experiences gained through attending institutions of higher education play an integral role in the development of students, physically, emotionally, spiritually and even politically. In order to understand the impact of this experience, it is important to take into consideration the path women have taken in higher education. As more women enrolled in college, the landscape of United States institutions of higher education has been forced to change to accommodate the needs of both men and women. Currently women exceed men in enrollment at all levels of education (Peter, Horn & Carroll, 2005). While there have been many changes instituted as women became more engrained in the fabric of the higher education system, such as sexual harassment policies and curriculum adjustments, there is still a body of research that shows that these institutions do not always provide a supportive environment for female students (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Nora & Terenzini, 1999). This “chilly campus” phenomenon is created when institutional policies create cultures where faculty, staff and students participate in practices that discount women or discriminate against them (Whitt et al., 1999). This research aligns with Schein’s (2010) argument that shared assumptions within an organization are extremely difficult to change. This innate bias on college campuses can
have a negative impact on women, causing them to question their competence, affect their personal self-worth and reinforce gender stereotypes (Hall & Sandler, 1984).

Despite the chilly campus phenomenon, there is hope that institutions have the ability to positively impact women’s self efficacy. Various aspects of campus climate have been shown to impact college women’s political engagement differently. Sax (2008) in a study of 17,000 college men and women at over 200 institutions identified some elements of campus life that impact women’s political engagement. Both men and women were shown to have a heightened interest in politics when they engaged in campus co-curricular leadership experiences (Sax, 2008). Student populations that reported higher levels of self-confidence also had women that were more interested in the political process (Sax, 2008). Overall, the elements of campus that helped women develop a stronger political identity were peer groups, opportunities for co-curricular leadership experiences and informal dialogue with faculty and staff (Sax, 2008).

Astin and Kent (1983) show the importance of student involvement on college women’s self-confidence. Women who had leadership experiences are more likely to report higher levels of self-confidence and, in turn, seek out additional leadership opportunities (Astin & Kent, 1983). Kuh (1993) also found that out-of-the classroom experiences have a significant and positive impact on student development. Further research claims that being active in a student organization positively affects student development (Logue, Hutches, & Hector, 2005). The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), that conducts research on incoming freshman students has been
instrumental in identifying trends in student populations. Of significance, is the trend that while women are more engaged in their communities, academically and socially, men boast greater confidence in these areas (Sax, Lindholm, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 2002). Astin and Kent (1983) argue that if women are to truly be able to take on whatever role they choose, they must first gain a greater level of self-confidence through leadership experiences on campus. Knowing that increased involvement may impact a women’s political leadership efficacy is an important factor that must be taken into consideration in choosing the participants for this study. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

**Women’s Leadership Aspirations**

The insight into women leading differently has gained momentum in research focused on college women. Examples of such research have focused on women in student governance (Wilson, 2007), perceived leadership ability (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000) and women student leaders at large (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Lynch, 2003; Romano, 1996). Many of the conclusions drawn from these researchers complement each other. Some factors emerged to explain women’s tendency to seek out leadership opportunities such as strong female role models (Romano, 1996) and peer groups (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003). Deterrents for getting involved in leadership experiences were lack of opportunity (Lynch, 2003) and not wanting to be a minority (Wilson, 2004).

Stereotype threat has also been noted for a reason that women refrain from seeking higher positions of leadership (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). In 2005,
Empirical research was conducted indicating that exposing women to gendered stereotypes impeded upon their leadership aspirations. Women were exposed to TV commercials that supported a female gendered stereotype and then asked to perform a leadership task in one of two environments: an identity neutral environment and an identity vulnerable environment (Davies et al., 2005). This research supported the theory that stereotypes have a detrimental effect on women’s aspirations for power, status and leadership, specifically when exposed to them in a threatening environment (Davies et al., 2005). Since institutions of higher education and the American political system have both been deemed masculine in nature, it might be said that stereotype threat in these environments could have a detrimental effect on women’s political leadership efficacy.

Through normalization of stereotypes, women are often their own perpetuators of negative beliefs regarding women in leadership (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004). It is well researched that people see themselves, most generally, in terms of their most stigmatized social identity (Davies et al, 2005). Gender, therefore will most likely always be a large component of social identity when understanding women’s leadership aspirations. Women in leadership roles are constantly searching for social cues in determining if and how they are being targeted. These cues come in multiple forms from pictures on the board room walls of men doing business to the everyday language used in their leadership setting (Davies et al., 2005). The way that women internalize these stereotypes may, in fact, impact their leadership aspirations and efficacy (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004).
Leadership Self-Efficacy

There is a substantial body of scholarly literature that exists on efficacy. The exploration of efficacy in terms of self-efficacy, team efficacy and means efficacy has resulted in parallel thinking about the overall topic in that all forms of efficacy are related to performance outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Hannah et al., 2008). Self-efficacy has been shown through research to be particularly important construct in the leadership domain (Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000; Hoyt, 2005; Shea & Howell, 1999). Confidence, which is often used interchangeably with efficacy, has been associated with leadership competency in much of the research done on leadership development (Hollenbeck & Hall, 2004; Komives et al., 2007; Roberts, 2007). This overall understanding of efficacy literature will be helpful in gaining a greater understanding of women’s political leadership efficacy development at an institution of higher education.

College provides a platform for students to experience the self-efficacy process. As such, leader self-efficacy is higher for students who are fully engaged in their collegiate experience both within the co-curricular and curricular spheres of the institution (Sax, 2008). Individual effort and involvement are critical determinants of impact on college student experience on their identity development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Leadership efficacy can be cultivated through activities promoting civic responsibility and greater knowledge of personal and social values, including

Self-efficacy, which is a widely studied phenomenon, has been researched and theorized in large part by Bandura (1977, 1993, 1997). Self-efficacy is defined as the level of positive or negative views one has on their own ability to motivate others, overcome challenges or make important decisions (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Bandura (1977, 1993, 1997) argues that the most effective way of creating a strong sense of efficacy is through experiences that build expertise. Mastering an experience will lead to a person seeking out more opportunities and developing a greater level of confidence to tackle challenges. People with high levels of self-efficacy see failure as an educational experience and not as a personal deficiency (Bandura 1977, 1993, 1997). Hoyt (2002) furthers this to say that a person’s sense of self efficacy has the ability to impact every part of their life including how they relate to others, their motivation to get involved in their community and their ability to handle stress.

Self-efficacy shares concepts with leadership development. Positive leadership experiences will dictate whether or not a person continues to pursue further leadership opportunities. Hollenbeck and Hall (2004) argue that participation in situations that stretch abilities will increase leadership efficacy. Leadership self-efficacy positively predicts leadership, group, and organizational outcomes (Chemers et al., 2000; Hoyt, Murphy, Halverson, & Watson, 2003; Murphy, 2002). The cyclical nature of self-efficacy development shows how positive experiences can yield greater motivation and
higher levels of confidence. Conversely, research indicates that when highly capable people doubt their abilities or worth, their performance suffers (Bandura, 1997).

Development of leader self-efficacy relates to culture and is based upon personal experience, other’s modeling experience, social persuasion and managing emotions (Hollenbeck & Hall, 2004). Individual’s levels of self-efficacy influence what people choose to do, how they handle challenges and how much effort they put forth (Bandura, 1982; Hoyt, 2002). Hollenbeck and Hall (2004) identify action steps for building leadership efficacy including participating in situations that stretch abilities, observing and learning from others, articulating the confidence development experience and using reflection to review experiences. All of these elements work to build a stronger leader efficacy, which in turn will promote follower efficacy impacting the collective agency (Hannah et al., 2008). Success is also related to leader self-efficacy, although the interpretation of that success is the determining factor of efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Hannah et al., (2008) built a multi-level study of leadership efficacy with the purpose of connecting leader, follower and collective efficacies. Their focus was to prove that when leaders and followers both believe in and trust their abilities to make a positive impact on each other through collaborative work, support and collective performance, the overall culture of an organization will be positively impacted and thrive. In addition, the contextual components will help shape leadership efficacy while it in turn help shape organizational culture, creating a cyclical and adaptive process. As such, Hannah et al. (2008) contended that leadership efficacy is best represented and
conceptualized as an emergent and collective process. Taking this a step further to understand how women cultivate leadership efficacy, might help to better understand, and subsequently address, the current gender gap.

**Stereotype threat and leadership efficacy.** Gender ideals and stereotypes, as described earlier in the chapter, provide an important lens in which to better understand women’s political leadership efficacy. While a great deal of literature exists on the topic of gendered stereotype threat, there exists little empirical research aimed at understanding how that stereotype threat impacts women’s leadership efficacy (Hoyt, 2005). Hoyt’s (2005) seminal work on the topic provided a strong foundation upon which to build subsequent research.

Negative stereotypes have been shown to harm individuals’ self-assessment of their abilities resulting in poor performance levels (Hoyt, 2002). The stereotype threat model highlights how the psychological effects of negative stereotypes actually induce underperformance by targeted populations such as women and minorities (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Conversely, Hoyt’s (2005) research indicates that women, in particular, who self-report high levels of leadership efficacy, are less adversely affected by stereotype activation and in some cases even increase their leadership effectiveness.

Stereotype activation then has the potential to enhance or impair efficaciousness of women in regards to the leadership domain (Hoyt, 2002). The research indicates that when less confident women are confronted with stereotype activation and they perceive their performance as poor, their desire to hold a leadership role diminishes. However,
highly efficacious women, when exposed to stereotype activation, approach the situation as a challenge and the result is often an increase in leadership efficacy (Hoyt, 2005). Women’s initial levels of leadership efficacy were then paramount in predicting their reaction to stereotype activation in this study.

Hoyt’s (2005) research is important in understanding why some women seek out leadership positions and others do not. The perceived lack of knowledge and experience most women indicate feeling towards politics may result in lower levels of initial leadership efficacy, therefore stereotype threat may help explain the low number of women in politics. It might also help inform ways to increase those numbers through providing opportunities that allow women to report higher levels of performance and therefore increase their political leadership aspirations.

**Social cognitive model of leadership.** Astin and Astin (2000) claim that leadership development is critical for all students, as it will inevitably impact all areas of their adult life. The acquisition of leadership knowledge, skills and abilities helps students realize the impact that they can make on their communities (Astin & Astin, 2000). A recurring theme in all leadership literature is the concept of self-confidence (McCormick, 1999, 2001). McCormick (1999) points out that while self-confidence has been shown to be important to leadership development, it is much harder to conceptualize. Self-confidence is generally thought of as a personality trait; therefore, it has typically held little, if any, academic weight and has rarely been theorized due to its lack of process and determinants (McCormick, 2001). However, its impact on society
and leadership in particular cannot be overstated (McCormick, 2001). McCormick, (1999, 2001) expanded upon the work of Bandura’s (1977, 1982, 1993, 1997) self-efficacy and introduced the concept of leader self-confidence. The model McCormick (1999) introduced is the Social Cognitive Model of Leadership, and is based upon the assertion that self-confidence, which predicts a leader’s performance, is a result of self-efficacy. Self-confidence translates to leadership through a person’s confidence in their knowledge, skills and abilities to make decisions and subsequently their ability to motivate others (Northouse, 2012). Self-confidence also provides increased emotional stability for leaders (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1995). Being able to manage one’s emotions is helpful in stressful situations when others are looking to leaders to model the way.

Confidence enhances students’ leadership experiences and has a direct impact on furthering leadership aspirations. Specifically, it has been shown that there exists a relationship between female leadership aspirations and confidence (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003). Women who are given an opportunity for leadership within a supportive and adaptive environment increase their confidence and, as a result, show higher levels of leadership aspirations. Conversely, one study on collegiate female aspiration found that fears of negative evaluation had a direct effect specifically on women’s leadership development and confidence (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003). This fear of negative evaluation might cause some women to steer away from leadership opportunities. By cultivating environments that support and define leadership in new and inclusive ways, women will garner higher levels of leadership confidence and aspirations (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003). Compared to men, women tend to enter college with a lower level of
confidence in their leadership skills and abilities and as the college years unfold, this gender gap just increases (Sax, 2008). This could be due to the chilly campus environment that induces stereotypes that was mentioned earlier in the chapter.

As previously stated, McCormick’s (1999, 2001) model of Social Cognitive Model of Leadership (SCM) is based off of Bandura’s (1997) concepts of self-efficacy, portrayed most accurately in the social cognitive theory, Bandura’s seminal work. McCormick focused specifically on leadership as a component of human performance. McCormick’s assertion that self-efficacy and self-confidence lead to personal leadership effectiveness is the basis for this cyclical model. Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive model asserted that self-efficacy was determined through three variables: personal cognitions, behavior and environment. These same principles, when applied to leadership make up the Social Cognitive Model of Leadership (McCormick, 2001). In this vein, McCormick defines leadership as “a complex cognitive and behavioral task that takes place in a dynamic social context” (McCormick, 2001, p. 28). The interconnectedness of leadership experiences, the acquisition of knowledge skills and abilities and leader behaviors are showcased in McCormick’s model, Figure 2.1.
The SCM showcases the path a leader takes to goal attainment. Through personal experiences, a leader is able to create goals and assess her efficacy to goal attainment. From this point, the leader, utilizing her knowledge skills and abilities, is able to assess her motivation and task strategy development. A strategy will guide the leader to choose appropriate behaviors that will have an overall effect on the environment. The change in environment inevitably leads to new experiences. In this model, leadership self-efficacy is central to the entire process. The confidence that one has in their ability to lead a group will be a factor in generating goals and moving through the rest of the process, with personal cognitions providing the framework for the behaviors that will be taken.
(McCormick, 2001). This model, therefore seeks to elucidate the relationship between self-confidence and leader effectiveness (McCormick, 2001).

Self-efficacy, as the central component to this model serves multiple purposes. It is central to both the cognitive process as well as a determining factor in behavioral choices (McCormick, 2001). This model is the only model that captures self-confidence as it relates to leadership effectiveness. Utilizing the foundational work of Bandura’s (1982) theoretical framework of social cognition enabled McCormick (2001) to expose leadership studies to methods that better capture the role of efficacy in leadership development.

With the exception of Hoyt’s (2005) work on women’s leadership self-efficacy in the face of stereotype threat, the research done on women’s self-efficacy is limited. SCM does provide a framework to better examine women’s leadership efficacy in order to gain a greater understanding of how confidence in leadership is cultivated and sustained. By utilizing this model as a framework for understanding leadership efficacy, this study should be able to better explain the impact of institutional culture on women’s political leadership efficacy development.

Chapter Summary

As evidenced by this review of literature, institutional culture does have an impact on college women’s leadership efficacy. However, there exists an apparent gap in knowledge concerning how this knowledge impacts women’s political leadership efficacy development. In addition, the research, up until this point, has been quantitative
in nature; therefore, a qualitative study would add richness to the discourse of women’s political leadership efficacy development. This chapter explored the stereotype threat within institutional culture and how that has been shown to impact women’s leadership efficacy development. Women’s leadership and consequently women’s leadership efficacy as related to politics has been in a state of flux and adaptation over the past few decades. As more women have entered institutions of higher education and continued into traditionally male dominated fields, the call for a new understanding of leadership has emerged, especially in regards to politics. It has also called into question our ability to institute change within our organizations without first admitting that a change is needed. This study is meant to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of the college women going through the leadership efficacy process and in turn provide greater insight into ways to lessen the gender gap in American politics.
CHAPTER THREE

FRAMING THE STUDY: A CONSTRUCTIVIST INQUIRY

The intent of this qualitative study was to explore how institutional culture impacts women’s political leadership efficacy through the perceptions, interpretations and experiences of female students. This research utilized a constructivist design in a combination interview and document (participant photo) analysis study that investigated the phenomenon of women’s political leadership efficacy utilizing the lens of culture theory.

Using a qualitative design allowed female student participants the opportunity to share their leadership experiences and the meanings that they ascribed to them while examining if gendered stereotype threat exists on college campuses. The methodology used for this study further examined the phenomenon through enabling participants to share their personal experiences. This chapter will illustrate how the design method chosen will inform research, policies and practices associated with women’s political leadership efficacy. As such, the secondary purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the female student experience and discover new avenues of support concerning the development of their political leadership efficacy. First, the major paradigm and research philosophies guiding this study are examined. Following that, the chapter explains the rationale of the chosen research design including research questions, methodology, site and participant selection, data collection and analysis. Closing this chapter is an examination of the limitations to the chosen design.
Paradigm and Research Philosophies

It is important to understand the paradigm and research philosophy of a study. Creswell, (2003) explained that a paradigm is a way of looking at the world that presupposes a set of assumptions that guide the research process. A qualitative design lends itself to a constructivist paradigm in that it assumes that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon that evolves through participants’ lived experiences. These lived experiences are often best captured through qualitative design as opposed to a numerical process (Creswell, 2009). In order to collect the richest data possible, utilizing the constructivist paradigm, a qualitative design for this study made the most sense and yielded important information that might lend to further program or policy development on campus to promote higher levels of women’s political leadership efficacy.

Constructivist Paradigm

The constructivist paradigm emerged from a post-positivist tradition (Creswell, 2003). Researchers who utilize this paradigm are concerned with how participants make meaning within the groups that they occupy (Creswell, 2003). A constructivist is exploratory in nature, examining in-depth processes in ways that often cannot be captured numerically or through objective processes (Creswell, 2003). By adopting this lens, the researcher allowed for multiple variations of reality and facts (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). Understanding this paradigm is critical for the researcher because it drives the research questions, methodologies employed and data analysis.
A constructivist, according to Creswell (2003) believes that reality is socially constructed and therefore varies from situation to situation, meaning that research designs have to be fluid. This paradigm also mandates that a relationship between the researcher and the participant is dynamic and interactive, allowing for each to influence the other and garner more in-depth discoveries (Creswell, 2007). The researcher utilizing the constructivist paradigm understands and even embraces the biases and assumptions that they bring to the study. They refrain from trying to produce a sterile, value free environment for the study, but instead embrace their biases as an important part of the qualitative research process (Merriam, 1998).

When making decisions about methodology, a constructivist employs an inductive method (Creswell, 2007). As opposed to creating hypotheses that will later be tested, the constructivist examines what results from the collection of data to see what meaning can be attributed to the phenomenon of study. The researcher is a part of the process, an integral tool in understanding the findings from the study. In contrast to positivists who use various instruments to collect data, a constructivist is the instrument collecting, interpreting and analyzing the data (Merriam, 1998). The methodology being used for this study, which will be discussed later, fits well with this paradigm as it employs inductive reasoning and fosters an interactive, dynamic relationship between the researcher and the participants whose lives are being studied.

**Interpretive perspective.** In order to further understand how this research was conducted it’s critical to explain the interpretive perspective that was employed during
The interpretivist lens assumes that humans construct meanings or realities from their multifaceted and complex interactions with their surroundings (Crotty, 1998). The interpretive perspective allowed the researcher to better understand the complex realities of the lived experiences of the participants in the study. This perspective examined the social interactions of the participants and assumed that all learning is socially and relationally based (Crotty, 1998). Institutions of higher education provide a complex situation where people learn to act and react based on tradition, social norms, values and behaviors of others. These interactions help build realities, including a sense of self, which is important in understanding women’s political leadership efficacy development on college campuses. Gaining a greater understanding of how the participants in this study construct their reality provided substantial insight into how institutional culture might impact participants’ political leadership efficacy.

**Research Questions**

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, which is to understand how institutional culture impacts college women’s political leadership efficacy, research questions needed to be developed to guide this primarily exploratory study. Based in part on the theoretical framework of Culture Theory and the Social Cognitive Model of Leadership (McCormick, 2001), discussed in chapter two, the following research questions were developed:

1. How does institutional culture impact women’s political leadership efficacy?
2. What messages, if any, do female students receive/perceive about political leadership from their institution?

3. How do female students describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy?

In order to fully examine each of these questions, they first have to be used as a guide in developing the qualitative research design of the study. The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to showing how this study was set up in an effort explore the answers to each of these research questions.

**Research Design**

Qualitative studies such as this one are useful in studying social meanings and phenomenon. The participant-observer relationship as explained by Creswell (2007) is critical to the qualitative process and should result in a rich in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The information that is gathered is emergent allowing the researcher to be a part of the discovery process. Many of the methodologies that have evolved from qualitative research were first utilized in anthropology and sociology. While some quantitative research (Hoyt, 2005) has delved into the development of women’s leadership efficacy, there is no current in-depth qualitative research that has been done on institutional culture and women’s political leadership efficacy.

In an effort to focus on the lived experiences of the participants, the chosen methodology for this study was Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997; Wang 1999). This methodology utilized visual research methods to capture the life experiences of
participants by putting cameras in their hands and asking them to document aspects of their everyday lives. This methodology granted the researcher unique access to the participants’ everyday life that enhanced and promoted a greater understanding of community and personal issues (Wang, 1999). Collier and Collier (1986) wrote “it is through perception, largely visual and auditory, that we respond to the humanness that surrounds us. Our recognition of cultural phenomenon is controlled by our ability to respond and understand” (p. 1). Photovoice, an ethnographic photography methodology, allowed the participants to both engage in and respond to their own reality. The camera, as a research tool, is sensitive to the attitudes and beliefs of the operator and at the same time results in an image that can be sensitive to the attitudes and beliefs of the observer.

Utilizing a camera as a research tool is not new; however, as stated previously, most of the research conducted in this manner has been done so in the fields of anthropology and sociology. It was Gregory Bateson and Margaret Meade who first employed the idea of photographic research and found great success (Collier & Collier, 1986). It has been used less in the field of education, but its purposes could prove useful in understanding some of the cultural phenomenon that occur at institutions of higher education, therefore making it a suitable methodology to use in this study.

**Photovoice**

As discussed, the use of photography in qualitative studies has been evolving throughout the course of the last 50 years. One of the many methods that have resulted from this is called Photovoice. The Photovoice concept was first introduced by Wang
and Burris in 1994 when they had Chinese women in a rural village document their lives through photographs. As such Photovoice’s roots are in feminist inquiry. This feminist methodology insists that women be a part of the process in identifying and explaining their real life experiences. Photovoice gives women’s experiences a voice by allowing women to document and share their lived experiences. Furthermore, Photovoice insists that participants and researchers work toward improving the communities of which they are a part (Wang & Burris, 1994).

There are key concepts in Photovoice, as described by Wang (1999), that help better understand how to utilize this method in a study. The first concept that needs to be understood when using Photovoice is that images are teaching mechanisms that detail how we relate to the world in which we live and how we make sense of that world. As such the physical structures in the photographs bear little meaning without the interpretations of that image by the participants. “Images can influence our definition of the situation regarding the social, cultural, and economic conditions that effect women” (Wang, 1999, p. 186). The second concept of Photovoice is that images can influence policy. This also relates to the third concept, which is that community members need to be part of the process of informing public policy. This is not to say that images themselves inform policy, but the interpretation of images highlights the relationship between a person and the community in which they live. These insights can help create policy that meets the needs of the population in question (in this case, women) by allowing them the opportunity to be a part of the process. Photovoice, therefore, asks for those at the grassroots level to generate photographic portrayals of their community. The
The intent of Photovoice is to evoke knowledge that is directed towards action. Banks (2001) argues that students have the ability to participate and enhance their communities through transformative citizen education. Photovoice calls to action members of SEU’s community integrating empowerment education, feminist theory and documentary photography.

Wang and Burris (1997) explained the purpose of Photovoice as a process is that it allows people to identify, represent and enhance their community utilizing participatory photography. There are three many goals to the methodology of Photovoice. The first goal is that it needs to encourage and enable people to engage in, reflect and record their community or individual experiences. The second goal is to promote dialogue in large and small groups based upon the common causes and themes that result from their photographs. The final goal of Photovoice is to find new avenues of educating others, especially policy and decision makers, on the realities of their situations. This methodology grants access to a participant’s world that otherwise might go unnoticed by policy makers. It also requires that the researcher and participants go beyond the photographs and find meanings within that produce knowledge and further our understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice is generally used to give voice to those that previously were silenced, be that by force, culture, socio-economic status or tradition. It highlights the unequal power structure between those that create policy and those that do not. It attempts to understand our individual and collective experience through critical dialogue around the
photographs taken resulting in education and new policy development (Wang & Burris, 1997). This critical dialogue is often referred to as photo elicitation, an interviewing technique that allows the participant to make meaning of images during interviews either individually or in groups. These interviews, in conjunction with the photographs taken by the participants, are used to explain reality and potentially inform policy because the researcher is interested in the perceptions of those people whose lives differ greatly from that of the major decision makers (Wang, 1999).

Graue and Walsh (1998) argued that because of the flexibility and empowerment strategies of Photovoice, participants often become fellow researchers, sharing perceptions of their reality. The unique nature of Photovoice mandates that the photography be representative of the voice of the participant. As such, they are responsible for generating the photography and for giving voice and meaning to the photography. Through group and individual interviews the participants’ reality will be illuminated for the researcher and aid in data analysis. “The process seeks to empower participants to determine how the project unfolds, and to avoid approaches that foster dependency or powerlessness” (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 172).

**Feminist theory.** Feminist inquiry into women’s lives mandates that women be a part of the process and not just subjects of the study. It is meant to acknowledge and empower women while valuing their knowledge and experience (Wang & Burris, 1997). This lens is critical to this study because the intended effect is to draw on women’s experiences at the institutional level to gain a greater understanding of how women’s
political leadership efficacy is developed or hindered within SEU’s culture. Feminist theory insists that women are authorities on their own lives. Furthermore, feminist theory is built upon the belief that oppression or injustices in practices are wrong and inclusivity should be the end goal. Feminist thought aligns with the constructivist paradigm in that it rejects the assumption that neutrality exists in the research process. Feminist research not only creates new knowledge but also utilizes its methods as a part of the findings or as Wang and Burris (1997) stated, “the means are the ends” (p. 175).

As Marion and Gonzales (2013) pointed out feminist theory has taken on a variety of perspectives, ranging from the early work where the primary goal was to add women to the economic system to much more complex outlooks in recent years focused on the gendered nature of organizations. The gendered nature of organizations often privileges men as the ideal worker, in turn, marginalizing women and maintaining the cycle of oppression that pervades society and history (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). “In other words, organizations are not simply led by people who want to keep women down, but they are sites where major societal conventions and norms…have crucial, often economic consequences for groups who have had little to with the organization of a society as a whole…” (p. 314). An understanding of this critical feminist theory and the reality of the ideal worker that exists within our organizations was an important distinction for this study. By exploring SEU’s institutional culture utilizing a critical feminist lens one can explore seemingly neutral policies, practices and experiences with a more comprehensive perspective as it relates to the lived experiences of participants. Critical feminist theorists argue that by examining our organizations from this perspective, we will be better able to
understand the needs of the members and align our policies and practices to reflect that (Marion & Gonzales, 2013).

Site Selection

The site of this study is a large research and land grant institution in the located in the southeastern region the United States (Carnegie Classification, 2010). For the purposes of this study we will refer to the institution as South Eastern University. The university is steeped in institutional history and tradition. Originally a military college, South Eastern University was an all-male institution until the middle of the 20th century when they changed their status to a civilian coeducational college. As a land grant institution, it is charged with being a university for the people, offering educational access to students in an effort to teach and prepare students for citizenship (Campbell, 1995). SEU then is poised to graduate informed and educated citizens prepared to engage in the community and create positive change for society. In fact, the stated learning outcomes for the university claim that one of their missions is to graduate global citizens. As SEU is a former military school and current land grant institution, this site made an excellent option for understanding how institutions are contributing to women’s political leadership efficacy and/or the stereotype threat that may or may not be impacting that development.

The current enrollment of South Eastern University is 19,000 students, 12,000 of which are undergraduate students. According to the data reported on the most recent academic school year, there are slightly more men than women enrolled at the institution.
at the undergraduate level. It is a predominantly white institution and the overwhelming majority of students attending SEU are paying in-state tuition. With 34% of the undergraduate population living on campus, it is considered primarily residential (Carnegie Classification, 2010). South Eastern University is steeped with institutional pride and tradition, making this an interesting location for the study. The way the participants react to the environment of the institution will provide great insight into the impact of stereotype activation on women’s political leadership efficacy.

This site was selected for several reasons. The first of these reasons is the researcher’s relationship with key on-campus gatekeepers that allowed for greater access to the population of interest. This institution is also located in a state that has traditionally had a very low level of female political participants, often boasting some of the lowest numbers in the country. Given that this institution is a land grant institution charged with producing active citizens and that the majority of students come from the state, SEU provided an appropriate site to investigate how institutional culture impacts women’s political leadership efficacy through the perceptions, interpretations and experiences of female students.

Participant Information and Selection

In qualitative studies such as this one, purposeful samples grant access to information through rich in-depth inquires allowing the researcher to learn a great deal about the central purpose of the research. Merriam (1998) stated that access to this rich in-depth information is essential in research aimed at discovering meaning and
uncovering phenomenon. In order to select participants for this study, I first had to develop a set of criterion that participants must meet in order to be considered for the study.

The population of interest in the study was female college students enrolled at South Eastern University. Since I wanted to know if institutional culture impacts women’s political leadership efficacy, I recruited participants who had been enrolled at the institution for at least two full academic years. This purposeful sampling allowed for more in-depth interviews and documents assuming that they have had more time, experience and opportunities to interact with the institution than a newer student would have. Furthermore, the participants represented a traditional-aged (18-24) undergraduate student because the potential for gaining a more in depth understanding of student development is greater with traditional-aged students (Pascarella & Tarenzini, 2005). A majority of the student development theories that have evolved throughout the discipline study traditional aged students making this age range a logical choice for this study. A sample size of 8-12 participants was the goal. Creswell (2003) stated that for rich in-depth analysis this sample size is sufficient in providing information about the population in question.

Additional strategies of purposeful sampling were used. These included that participants must identify as female and be a resident of the state where the land grant institution is located. Being a resident of the state was important in gaining an understanding of their competence level concerning politics. The participants represented
students that are both engaged or involved in political leadership opportunities on campus and those that are not. For purposes of this study, we will include student government as well as other like organizations that allow students to engage in the political leadership process.

**Data Collection**

Photovoice, the methodology used in this study, uses photographs and interviews as a way of gathering data, but as Staller, Block and Horner (2008) indicated, this method provides much more than evidence gathering. It is an empowerment strategy that engages community members, sparks critical dialogue, and provides the impetus for positive social and community change. The primary method for data collection for this qualitative research study was through a series of individual and group interviews including photo elicitation interviews conducted in a group setting. As Creswell (2007) pointed out, interviewing is a key component of qualitative research and is utilized in various ways dependent upon the methodology employed in the study. A semi-structured interview technique was utilized throughout the study as it allowed for enough flexibility for adaptations throughout the interview to fully capture the participant’s reality and generate new questions if necessary. Furthermore interviews provided an opportunity for the researcher to gain an accurate depiction of the participants’ feelings, action and thoughts as related to campus culture. Individual and focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim in order to capture the entire process in its totality and identify any emerging themes throughout the interview process.
Wang (1999) provided the stages of Photovoice and clearly states that the process is more involved than just handing cameras to participants and asking them to document their lives. As such, this research study followed the parameters of Photovoice as described by Wang (1999) and recreated by others since. The stages included conceptualizing the problem, recruiting policy makers as the audience for Photovoice findings, conducting Photovoice trainings, devising initial themes for photography, taking pictures, facilitating group discussion and critical reflection, selecting photographs for discussion, contextualizing and storytelling, codifying issues, themes and theories, documenting the stories and finding ways to reach policy makers (1999). Photovoice advocates for community change as opposed to just an exercise in data collection.

**Photo elicitation interviews.** In a similar fashion to other studies employing photo elicitation interviews as a method of data collection, student participants were given a camera and asked to take pictures of campus symbols, places, experiences and processes that reflect messages of political leadership. Harper (2002) describes this process as a way for participants to creatively make meaning of their reality. In addition to the photographs, participants were asked to provide a narrative for each photo selected. Asking them to provide a narrative allowed them the opportunity to explore political leadership as a concept and to determine what it means to them and to their community. Guiding questions were provided to help the participants engage in the process of understanding the development of women’s political leadership efficacy on campus.
Students were then asked to meet individually and collectively to discuss the photographs. It is important to note, as Warren (2005) did, that the process of taking a photograph is often more telling about the photographer than the image within the photograph. Providing participants with the prompts (discussed previously) allowed them to be more conscious of their photographs and the reasoning behind them. Holm (2008), pointed out that the image is a production of how the participants see themselves or want to see themselves within the context of their community. Therefore, interviews and critical dialogue must be used if the researcher is going to understand the context of the photographs.

Data Analysis

In a qualitative design, data analysis begins as soon as the research does. Because of the inductive nature of qualitative research there is more fluidity in the data analysis stage than what is normally seen in more quantitative designs. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that in qualitative studies the research is analyzed in order to determine what emerges. In this study, I used the constant comparative method, allowing for the relationship between collection and analysis to remain flexible, coding themes as they emerged during participant interviews (Glasner & Strauss, 1967). Utilizing this format of data analysis requires that, just as the name implies, data be continually compared from the beginning of the first interview throughout the rest of the process.

Interviews were transcribed as they were conducted. As Lichtman (2013), points out, the art of transcription helps the researcher develop a more complete understanding
of the data collected. In addition to the transcriptions, field notes taken during interviews were typed and used as a collection of data. These field notes yielded some of the emergent themes that came out of the interviews (Lichtman, 2013).

Inductive coding strategies were used to organize and analyze the data that emerged from the study. In analyzing this data, I engaged in the commonly used three-step coding process that includes open coding, axial coding and thematic coding (Berg, 2007). Together these coding strategies broke the data down into simple concepts, reassembled them into related categories and uncovered patterns, trends or themes of human behavior (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The purpose of open coding is to note anything that seems of significance to the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Often times, open coding is built upon field notes taken during the interview process. Axial coding builds upon the breakdown of data done during open coding by transitioning the open codes into groups or categories (Berg, 2007). Thematic coding is then employed to extract and name a central theme to which all categories are related (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Utilizing interview transcriptions and field notes allowed me the opportunity to engage in the coding process extracting themes of consequence to the research questions.

**Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in qualitative design is critical, and even more so when utilizing the Photovoice method where the relationship between the participants and researcher is critical to fully understanding the perspective of the participants. As stated
previously, the role of the researcher is to be the primary research tool and as such come inclusive of values, assumptions and biases (Creswell, 2003).

It is critical as a researcher, to address how my subjectivity impacts the approach, design and results of this study. I am a student affairs practitioner who has been working at institutions of higher education for ten years. My primary areas of experience reside in leadership education and programming, however I have further experience in international student life, judicial affairs, Greek life, gendered based leadership programming, orientation, first year experience programs, facility management, assessment and institutional research, enrollment management, student organization advising and diversity education. I have also taught graduate and undergraduate courses in a leadership certification program. The concepts of leadership education and social justice inform a great deal of my practice. I believe in the power and nature of a holistic education and the ability to spark positive change within a community.

As a woman, I bring to the table my own experiences and beliefs of what it means to develop women’s political leadership efficacy. As a young woman in college I was heavily involved in various organizations across campus. Since then, I continue to engage in organizations within my profession and outside of it. While I am politically active on some levels, I do not hold any kind of political office, nor have I ever done so for my local, state or national governing body.

A few years ago, I was told to develop a women’s leadership program at the institution that I worked for at the time. There was no current program on the campus
and my experience in developing a women’s leadership program was limited at the time. Over the course of the following few years I reached out and learned a great deal about women’s leadership; the history of it and the present state of it. I engaged in conversations with women across the country, on and off college campuses, and those conversations were the impetus for this research.

**Ethical Issues**

There are some ethical issues that accompany the use of Photovoice. Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001) have provided a framework for dealing with the ethical issues that arise when using Photovoice. First there must be a training session for all participants engaging in the photography exercise on ethical photography. Each identifiable individual in a photograph must sign informed consent forms. Member checks must be performed so that participants have the opportunity to verify any written data put together by the researcher. Finally all participants in the study must sign photograph release forms that clearly explain what the photographs will be used for where they could be published. All of this is critical to the success of the Photovoice and was necessary in order to pass through the institutional review board process.

A further ethical consideration as stated by Packard (2008) is recognizing the fact that this process attempts to give power to the powerless. It also reinforces traditional power relationships by shedding light on the inequalities that still exist. The ethical implications to the participants needed to be considered throughout the study, making the
relationship between the participants and researcher that much more critical (Packard, 2008).

**Limitations to the Study**

While Photovoice does have many strong attributes, there are some limitations that have been identified. Like many forms of qualitative data, it is hard to generalize the data collected using Photovoice because of the specific focus on the participants’ lives and experiences (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). For Photovoice to work effectively, the researcher must commit time, support and intentional and clear instruction in order to garner a wide array of images. Lockett, Willis, and Edwards (2005) also point out that what is not photographed can also be considered excluded knowledge and may impact the results of the study without the researcher’s knowledge. Finally, even with a training session on the ethics of photography, one can never account for all of the ethical considerations and therefore cannot protect against all unethical behavior by facilitator or participant (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

One of the limitations of this study is based on the paradigm of the researcher. A constructivist design allows for multiple interpretations of the same experience or cultural reference. The openness of this paradigm can run the risk of everything being considered culture and then limiting the scope of the results (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). A framework was utilized in order to provide specific ways of understanding culture, and regulate for this perspective.
This study was further limited by the fact that it was conducted on only one campus and that campus has a strong, all male, military heritage, meaning that it might not be representative of the same population at a different institution. In addition, the policy and decision making process at this institution differs from that of other institutions, making it harder to relate. As a woman, I brought my own set of biases and experiences to the study, which may have potentially impacted the conversations and results of the research. Being aware of these potential limitations made it easier to head off any situations that may have impacted the data collected negatively.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the paradigm and philosophies guiding this study and justified the purposes of utilizing a qualitative design strategy. The guiding research questions were provided. The chapter also identified the methods of data collection and analysis that will be used throughout the study. The site and participant selection processes were explained in detail. Rounding out the chapter, ethical implications of the process were introduced and the role of the researcher examined, including biases that may impact the study. Finally, the limitations of the study were discussed.
As stated previously the purpose of this qualitative study is to gain a greater understanding of how the development of traditional aged college women’s political leadership efficacy may be impacted by the institutional culture that they are a part of as a member of their university. This chapter will specifically focus on the analysis of the findings from the phenomenological study using the constant comparative method of coding. Utilizing this method allowed for the relationship between collection and analysis to remain flexible, coding themes as they emerged during participant interviews and researcher’s observations (Glasner & Strauss, 1967). NVivo 11 by QSR was also utilized to aid in the systematic coding, thus forming the themes discussed in this chapter. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does institutional culture impact women’s political leadership efficacy?

2. What messages, if any, do female students receive/perceive about political leadership from their institution?

3. How do female students describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy?
Study Demographics

The participants who took part in this study included eight college students who had been enrolled in South Eastern University for at least two academic years. They ranged from 20-22 years of age and all are residents of the state in which the institution resides. They were solicited for the study through their academic and co-curricular involvements. The academic majors of the eight participants vary, as do their involvements on campus. About half of the participants indicated a high level of co-curricular involvement on campus including participation in student government and fraternity and sorority life, two of the more prominent student experiences at South Eastern University. The other four students indicated some level of involvement, but their focus on their academics often kept them from engaging on campus in a more active way. During the initial meeting with the participants each of them indicated an interest in participating in this study because they had a desire to promote women’s leadership both on campus and in the community. Table one highlights the participants’ academic majors and classifications.

Table 4.1
Basic Demographics of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Chelsea</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Destinee</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Emily</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Hollie</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julianna</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racquel</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roslie</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the first meeting with each participant, consent for participation in this study was explained and all documentation to proceed was reviewed and signed if necessary. The research questions were given to each participant along with an explanation of the study itself. I engaged respondents in initial conversations about their experiences on campus and their initial thoughts on their own leadership. Each participant was given a disposable camera and asked to spend the following two weeks documenting their lived experience as it related to leadership, specifically women’s leadership. At the conclusion of two weeks, the cameras were retrieved from participants, developed and subsequent meetings scheduled. The remaining parts of this chapter will focus on the data analysis as a result of reviewing those photos and engaging in interviews about their experiences on campus.

**Data Analysis**

The data for the study were personal interviews based on the lived experiences of the participants as documented through Photovoice procedures (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997; Wang 1999). The data were then analyzed using a constant comparative method to extract meanings from the significant experience shared by participants. The experiences
were analyzed, grouped and coded according to their meanings, and themes in the codings were identified. The themes all addressed the three main research questions of the study. The major themes found were deemed to be the experiences with the most number of occurrences. Findings also include minor themes of the other significant experiences that received relatively fewer responses or occurrences.

**Defining Leadership**

By far the most prevalent theme to emerge from the data analysis was the fact that, without exception, they all saw leadership as primarily a service and relational oriented construct. There were over 42 references throughout the conversations with each participant that addressed the leadership issues. It is important to note that each participant talked about both relationships and service as fundamental to leadership and interconnected. Emily combined both leadership and service in this comment. “Leadership is a weird amalgamation of learning how to serve and how to be a part of a team.” She went further to showcase this new understanding of leadership by stating, “I think a lot of times we forget that leadership is a fairly new concept in terms of it being anything other than Great Man Theory. I think that it’s really cool that now in most definitions of leadership, we’re talking about social justice…about creating a more equitable world.”

Hollie said, “I like helping others and I think that it helps me to be a better person to see others prosper around me. It builds a kind of trust net and makes me feel included. I like being that person that incorporates people into the work, not just me being the
number one.” Julianne concurs by saying that leadership to her is “just being able to help as much as I can to help others.” Destinee explained her understanding of leadership in this way. “One thing that I would say should be the central catalyst for any person that’s a leader or in leadership is that you are serving others above yourself. I feel like, as long as you are hitting on that principal thing, you’re a leader.” Hollie’s first photo, Figure 4.1, after prioritizing, is a picture of the Sullivan Center truck. This vehicle travels around the lower part of the state giving vaccinations and health care treatments for lower income families and individuals.

![Sullivan Center truck](image)

*Figure 4.1. Volunteer and Outreach from Hollie*

Chelsea even named her leadership style when she stated, “I’m more of a relational leader. I like to relate with people. I feel like you can’t really lead them, or have empathy with them, or listen to them, or make change unless you first have a relationship with them.” She continues by referring to her photo, Figure 4.2, sharing that “a lot of people on campus don’t have a leadership role, a position or well known name. They just lead by example. Just like the girl with the image trying to promote diversity and an inclusive environment.”
This theme of leadership as relationships and service continued through each meeting with the participants. Morgan stated simply that leadership is “making an impact on others, helping them solve their problems.” Racquel used the language of comfort and support as important ways of developing the relationships necessary for leadership. And Roslie shared that she “always defines leadership as the ability to serve.”

**Physical Space**

The second major theme that emerged from the data specific to the first research question is the relevancy of the physical space on campus for the participants. Several students indicated that it was much easier to identify places on campus that lacked women’s leadership, but found it quite easy to identify important spaces for men’s leadership. Julianne provided Figures 4.3 and 4.4 as examples of women’s lack of leadership in the cultural spaces throughout campus. Julianne noted that while the
history of the institution is showcased through these statues on campus, the university is missing an important part of the story by not including institutional monuments dedicated to the women, specifically the woman without whose land this institution would not exist.

Furthering the conversation about spaces on campus were photos of the football stadium where the participant shared that “women aren’t represented at all, and yet it is a very important part of the institution’s identity.” Several pictures of the president’s home were also offered as spaces on campus representing leadership to the participants each noting though, that there has never been a female president of South Eastern University.

One participant did include a photo, Figure 4.5, of a plaque honoring the first female students at the institution. She stated, “I think it’s really important that this is when we were first allowed at [SEU].” She shared that this is where student ambassadors often end their tour of campus; however, when asked if she spoke of it’s relevancy to the potential new students she shared, “Not specifically about that, and I don’t even mention
it. I just had noticed it on my spare time. We stop there on a tour because, from that vantage point, you can see how the university is set up along with the library.”

![Image of a marker for first women students.](image)

**Figure 4.5.** Marker for first women students

After students had a chance to review all of the photos from the study, one participant articulated that she “noticed there was a huge lack of women’s leadership portrayed super visibly on campus.” Another student noted that she could only think of one place on campus that was named after a woman. In response it was noted that, “they’re trying to name Core Campus after the first woman who attended [SEU]...at least that’s one of the names they are considering.”

**Adaptive Culture is Encouraging**

The third and final major theme that emerged from the data relating to the first research question is that an adaptive institutional culture is encouraging to the students. All eight participants noted that having an accepting and adapting institution encourages
them to excel and reach for their greater goals. Chelsea noted that she believed, based on her lived experiences at SEU, that the school is respecting diversity more and showing students they are willing to adapt to changes. She says, “I guess I feel like we are really trying to become more inclusive and diverse. Just looking at the student government elections…we have a girl in our class running for president…you can tell we are in a time of change.” Emily echoed how an inclusive institution allows for collaboration and encouragement as a whole while she was describing Figure 4.6.

*Figure 4.6 Inclusive Leadership*

Emily shared that this photo taken during one of their campaign activities while she was running for student body president. She shared, “This person had written inclusive excellence, which is a pillar of our campaign but I think it goes beyond just that…I think people really do was to see the campus more united and more intentional about bringing people in.”
Julianna also noted that SEU’s efforts to provide leadership learning opportunities showcased an adaptive institutional culture. “I think [SEU] does a great job offering ways to get involved. They offer leadership classes and different organizations and clubs…there’s pretty much something to do for everyone.” She then used a photo of her sorority hall to exemplify this point, sharing that many leadership opportunities had been offered her as a member of this organization.

Both Racquel and Roslie shared stories of women on campus who inspire and encourage female students to do their best. They spoke of the personal inspiration that this offered them as students, and in particular, female students on SEU’s campus. Racquel even stated that “when I think about leaders on campus I only think about women honestly. Every office I walk into there’s a woman to greet you and take you to another women’s office and then another...all the way up until maybe the final door is where you have a man.”

The only minor theme that emerged was that participants mentioned their parents and families throughout the conversations, specifically related to how they saw themselves as leaders or how they engaged in politics. No questions were asked of them about their families and as a result, little follow up was done; however, it appeared often enough to make it a significant component of the research and a minor theme relating to the first research question, recognizing that organizational member’s past experiences will impact current cultural messages. Some of the messages of family included Julianne sharing, “I do have parents that have always told me I’m just a natural leader.” Later
Julianne also shared that her mom is who keeps her motivated to lead. Morgan also shared that she saw her mother as a strong leader who gave her a good head start in what she thought a leader should be. Emily noted that she was “raised in a home with very rigid gender norms…because of that my mom always deferred the big decisions to my father and so I think through that I internalized that maybe it wasn’t entirely my place to take a huge leadership role.”

The next major themes that emerged from the analysis are based upon the second question of the study: what messages, if any, do female student receive or perceive about political leadership from their institution. The major themes established were that: (1) the university is still male dominated or oriented and (2) higher expectations exist for women in leadership throughout the institution.

**SEU as a Male Oriented Institution**

The perception that the institution is male dominated permeated most of the conversations even though, as noted in the field notes, the participants were very apprehensive about sharing these messages. They truly want to believe that the institution is changing, as was prevalent in their language while discussing the previous theme. Despite their reticent linguistic tone and body language, each participant shared in multiple ways how the institution is still operating in a male dominated or oriented manner. From the male dominated statues and spaces throughout campus, as described earlier in the chapter (Figures 4.2 and 4.3), to the hierarchy of the institution, to the
makeup of the decision making units on campus, all of the participants spoke of the 
exclusivity for males on campus.

Emily shared, “I think at [SEU] that I get a lot of direct push-back for being a 
woman, who is not super outspoken about my beliefs, but not going to sit back and let 
someone openly criticize another person because of their social identities. I think if I 
were male, I would be treated differently in those spaces.” Asked what that pushback has 
looked like at SEU, Emily shared that during student body elections, women have been 
called radicals as a result of wanting to increase equity on campus and social justice 
awareness while others have been criticized for the way they dress. None of these 
comments were made about, or to, any of the male students running for the elections. 
She stated that people felt, specifically regarding the student body president position and 
the student senate president position, that [SEU] can’t have two women in those roles.

Destinee shared in her first meeting that “I have been in certain situations that I 
feel like my leadership wasn’t taken as seriously or valued because, one, me being a 
woman and, two, me being black. With those two things, what people would say are 
strikes against me, I’ve seen a little discouragement from [SEU].” Not only did Destinee 
articulate feeling less valued for being a woman, but also felt her race disadvantaged her 
on SEU’s campus, specifically relating to leadership.

At a macro level it was mentioned by Roslie that the institution had made some 
efforts to promote women’s leadership through conferences and programs, but
“as we see new male deans being hired or just your male professors getting approved for tenure and your female professors aren’t, it’s kinda like, I know what you’re trying to tell us. Hey, you all are equal…but as far as being the actual leader or the dean of a college, that’s not really going to happen.”

Furthering that sentiment Emily added:

“I think that just looking at the infrastructure of who is in what position at the highest administrative level…I can’t think of too many institutions where the president isn’t male and the Vice President of Student Affairs isn’t female…You also see male professors in higher levels of health and engineering and more women in lower levels of Communications and Education, with men holding the higher roles…with that you definitely get some sort of impression about your academic potential in certain fields.”

Racquel shared the photograph, Figure 4.7, showing a group of professional men walking through campus. She shared, “I saw this for the first time really and it was surprising to me…I took a picture because the men’s role on campus is very big but rarely do I see them out actually with people.” When asked what messages she was receiving as a result of this picture, Racquel stated, “I don’t see the people who are really controlling the things that effect my everyday life. This is how the people look who are in control and I don’t have access to.”
This theme of a male dominated institution persisted into a conversation about policy making in which Morgan noted that women are more the “policy followers, especially in Greek Life…The men would not follow the rules and the women would and when the rules got changed because of the men, we still followed the new rules and did everything we were supposed to. The men still are not.” Adding to that was Racquel’s observation that “women are out here making it comfortable, making the university approachable…and the men are behind the scenes giving orders. Women just fill in, fill in, fill in.”

**Higher Requirements for Women**

The next theme that emerged relating to the second research question is the idea that higher requirements are expected of women in leadership throughout SEU. This showed up in several students’ stories as they shared their own challenges balancing their commitments as well as in the stories they shared of the mentors and female role models
throughout campus. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 showcase two of the female staff members that students identified as strong female leaders on campus.

*Figures 4.8 and 4.9. Female role models*

After sharing in detail the amount of work these two women do on campus and for Roslie’s organizations, Roslie spoke of these two women in these terms: “I feel as they don’t get the recognition as often as they should for the things they do. I think because, honestly, it goes to the very top positions which are filled by males.”

Emily concurred with this sentiment when she shared, “I think that as a woman, at least in my experience, I’m treated like I’m an imposter until I prove myself…there’s like a cultural norm of distrust towards females and it’s really frustrating when you are trying to affect change.” Julianne shared that in one of her classes they read an article that stated that more females are applying to college than males and since male applications
are down, more under qualified men are getting into institutions of higher education than well-qualified women in an effort to keep the male/female ratio balanced. Her response is that she feels “very honored and blessed to be here, and that I made the cut, that I wasn’t one of those unlucky females that had way more credentials in academic success than the man who took her spot.”

Finally playing into this theme is the concept introduced by Roslie who said, “I think in our society I read something like men over-estimate themselves and women underestimate themselves. So, for us to speak up and say others are wrong, but we actually turn out to be wrong, is very intimidating…so it’s better to just stay quiet unless you know what you’re talking about and nobody can prove you wrong.” Morgan agreed by saying that “we can have an opinion about something and then someone can ask you why and hound you to the ground about why you believe that and by the end of the conversation, I’ll be like I don’t even know what I believe anymore.”

**Increased Positive Experiences**

The final themes that emerged were related to the third purpose of this study, which questions how female student describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy. The themes are (1) increased positive experiences could have a direct impact on women’s political leadership confidence and (2) women might be more likely to engage in politics if they saw it as positive social change initiatives. Throughout the participant’s interviews and Photovoice experiences, these themes emerged multiple times from all participants, indicating that these changes may in fact,
enhance political leadership efficacy at SEU. This mirrors much of McCormick’s (2001) theory provided in chapter two. In the next chapter this connection will be discussed in greater depth.

The first theme, the need to increase positive political experiences for women, is highlighted in Morgan’s response when asked how she would feel if asked to share her political ideology: “Anxious.” Morgan had shared her multiple leadership roles and experiences on campus, and yet still answered that she would feel very anxious if asked to talk politics because she doesn’t feel like she has the knowledge to speak on political topics and previous interactions had solidified this perception. In fact, she articulates how her previous experiences of doing so in the past have resulted in multiple questions or attempts to prove her wrong, decreasing her interest in engaging in politics further. Chelsea echoed this sentiment by sharing, “A lot of times I’m just not educated enough on it to really care…in order for something to really change you’ve got to have women who want to actually be a part of it, be more educated and be more involved.” Hollie says that one reason she remains silent is because her experience is that “someone might have this more than I do.”

Their shared experiences of being questioned to the point of silence is reinforced by Roslie when she shared at the group meeting:

“I think that men, especially, expect women—if you say that you believe in something, no matter what it is—they expect you to 100% have full knowledge about it and completely agree with it. So if you say, ‘I support this candidate,’
that means in their head that you are 100% in every aspect of every choice that person makes. So one thing [that candidate] might have done bad 25 years ago they question you about. It makes you question yourself.”

Destinee also echoed Roslie’s point by sharing that it’s challenging to discuss politics because there is so much yet for them to experience. Her reality is that it’s better not to speak or engage because at this point in their lives at least “it’s not okay to be in the gray on a topic. You have to be black and white.”

Several photos that the women took were of professional women throughout the SEU community. In almost all references of these photographed women, the participants shared how important these women were to the functioning of the university and more specifically to the lives of the participants. They also articulated that in each case, the women seemed to be working tirelessly with little to no recognition. Figure 4.10 highlights Rebecca’s office. Destinee shared that she chose this picture because “Rebecca’s office is tucked away, but she does a whole bunch for the office that you would never even think about…so I just wanted to point out that there are many people who go unnoticed or who are working behind the scenes.

Figure 4.10. Unrecognized Leaders
It is also relevant to note that during several interviews the students entered and left the interview space offering apologies. The reasons behind the apology ranged from being 90 seconds late to the meeting to not being more politically engaged. While no apologies were asked for and no judgments made in the way the questions were presented to the way the answers were received, the women had an overwhelming need to apologize for their very presence, indicating a lack of confidence in discussing leadership and politics. Reassuring gestures and verbal cues that the students needn’t apologize was needed as a strategy of confidence building throughout the conversations.

Field notes indicate that in almost 80% of the interviews, an apology was given at least once from the respective participant. The field notes after Hollie’s first meeting included a passage that states:

“she was apologetic at times about how much she did or did not do campus, requiring me to reassure her that this project is about her lived experiences. It almost appeared as if she had a need to get this project right. I reinforced the idea that there wasn’t a way to do it wrong but that I just wanted to know about their lived experiences on campus.”

Julianne, Racquel, Destinee, Emily and Morgan all had similar exchanges with the researcher. Positive experiences for these students are marked by the idea that they have to get things correct. If they do not feel like they are able to offer a correct response, they often resort to silence or apologizing for their very presence.
The women were hesitant to call themselves leaders in many cases. Destinee even stated, “I’m really good at leadership roles, but don’t know that I’m a leader. I mean people call me a leader, but I just think that I’m who I am, so I don’t really consider that bit.” These are all examples of ways that negative experiences have been internalized for the women, leaving them doubting their leadership, their voice and sometimes even their very presence. Increased opportunities to engage in positive reinforcement along with a changed expectation about women’s need to always be perfect, could positively impact women’s political leadership efficacy. This will be discussed in further length in chapter five.

Positive Social Change Initiatives

The sixth and final major theme identified in the data is that women would be more inclined to engage in politics if they saw it as positive social change initiatives. Throughout the conversations with each of these participants and included in their photos is an overwhelming theme of wanting to leave their communities stronger and better. Emily showed the importance of social change initiatives in Figures 4.11 and 4.12.
Both of these photos represent leadership to Emily. Recycle mania on the library windows indicated to her a change in cultural norms about what were the important messages that need to be shared in this visible way. She shared that “last year when they were trying to paint the windows for this, it was a huge headache. It’s been cool to see the relationship build between environmental groups and the library this year…for a long time [this space] was reserved only for messages about football.” Figure 4.11 are county forms from United Way that help take the area’s homeless population census for the federal government. “They have to send it to the federal government to make sure that they understand the number of homelessness in the area so that they’re getting allocated the right amount of money to have available services.” Both of these photos for Emily showcased her drive to raise social awareness. It is important to note that while she couched both of these efforts in leadership, she was more reticent to call it political leadership.
Destinee also included pictures that showcased her drive for creating change in her community. One of her photos was of her and her organization raising awareness about women’s health. In another photo, Figure 4.13, she had gathered a group of students to discuss the issues facing women of color on SEU’s campus. She organized this event in an effort to allow space for voices to be heard. As was shared earlier in the chapter, Destinee’s identity as a woman of color has marked her experience at SEU. Figure 4.12 shows her engaging in a positive social change initiative related to an increased level of inclusion and diversity throughout campus.

![Women of Color Dialogues](image)

*Figure 4.13. Women of Color Dialogues*

A minor theme that emerged related to the third question of the study (ways in which female students describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy) is in the role modeling currently taking place on SEU’s campus. The students specifically highlight two professors whom they described as
strong female leaders and people they wish to model their own leadership off of in the future. In Figure 4.14 Julianne snapped a photo of one of her professors whom according to Julianne, “displays all of the characteristic of a female leader. She’s strong, independent, smart. She driven…She’s a very good example of a strong leader and I can personally see how it rubs off on me and I want to get out and make a difference.” In another photo, Figure 4.15, captured by Hollie of her leadership class she speaks in glowing terms of the professor. “I think [the professor] in the class, she’s always pushing us to do more and be better…she’s who I think of a leader I want to be, not intimidating but she knows what she wants and she goes out and gets it.” This minor theme is significant to note because while small in numbers, the impact that professional women may have on the lives of the participants may be grand, as exemplified through their own language.

Figures 4.14 & 4.15. Female Leadership Models at SEU
Chapter Summary

Chapter four of this phenomenological study includes the findings from the Photovoice interviews and field notes of the researcher. There were a total of seven major themes identified, all addressing the three main research questions of the study. In addition, two minor themes emerged in relation to two of the research questions. The themes addressing the first research question of how institutional culture impacts women’s political leadership efficacy development are (1) leadership is primarily a service and relational oriented construct and (2) that the institution’s cultural artifacts throughout campus are relevant to the students. A minor theme emerged as well indicating the impact family experiences, both previously and concurrently, have on women’s political leadership efficacy development. The second question of the study about what messages the female students receive/perceive from their institution prompted two additional themes embedded within the findings. The fourth overall theme was that the university is still male dominated and/or oriented. Additionally, a fifth theme that higher requirements exist for women in leadership was identified in relation to the second research question. Finally, in connection with the third research question of how female students describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy an additional two major themes were identified along with a minor theme. The major themes were (1) increased positive experiences could have a direct impact on women’s political leadership efficacy and (2) women might be more likely to engage in politics if they saw it as positive social change initiatives. The minor theme is that female role
models on campus matter. Chapter five will discuss the results in greater detail as well as the recommendations and implications of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

“Our most sacred obligation is to care for our places and exercise good stewardship and take advantage of their power to remind us of where we came from and sometimes even to discover who we are” (Archibald, 2004, p. 59). This study was an invitation for participants to take part in an exploratory journey of a shared place in an effort to better examine their institutional culture. The rich data produced by this highly reflective study showcased the dynamic phenomenon dependent, in large part, on the cultural and social influences of this place. The students’ viewpoints, perspectives, and perceptions on the multiple environments, practices and relationships aid in our understanding of how the power of place may impact women’s political leadership efficacy development. By weaving together, the previously discussed theory and study, evidence of a relationship between place and political leadership efficacy for women emerged. Themes that were uncovered during this research invite further discussion and, this chapter contains interpretations of those findings. Specifically, this chapter will focus on the findings related to impact, messages perceived, implications for practice, and suggestions for future research.

A total of seven major themes were identified relating to the three main research questions seen below. All of these themes were recognized using the constant comparative coding method based on the shared lived experience of eight traditionally aged, female college students at South Eastern University. The participants were
required to be in state students who had been on campus for at least two academic years. Their level of involvement throughout campus varied, as did their academic majors. As a result of these requirements, the participants were able to provide a wealth of insights, perceptions and lived experiences that showcased how they have made meaning of their institutional culture. Their realities were used as a basis of analysis when reviewing the three main questions guiding the research:

1. How does institutional culture impact women’s political leadership efficacy?
2. What messages, if any, do female students receive/perceive about political leadership from their institution?
3. How do female students describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy?

**Impact of Institutional Culture**

Constructivism reasons that the nature of reality is varied and meanings are socially constructed and interpreted by individual members of a particular group. Given the ontology of constructivism, this research often yields more questions than answers. The rich data collected throughout this study provided deep insight into the way the participants make meaning of their institutional culture and how that manifests itself in their political leadership development. Utilizing a feminist outlook as a framework provided new perspectives of the institution’s practices, policies and lived experiences of its members. As I came to understand South Eastern University better throughout the research, I realized how its culture certainly was influenced by external factors, but as Tierney (1988) indicated in his work, it is “also shaped by strong forces that emanate
from within” (p. 3). Each of the participants shared sagas of their personal interactions with the university and the social construction of their realities as a result. The themes derived from the Photovoice interviews with participants rely heavily on the characteristics of culture discussed in chapter two. These characteristics, seen through a gendered lens, were used as a guidepost for identifying patterns of perceptions, experiences, thoughts and feelings of participants, which were used to better understand the ways in which the participants make meaning of their institution.

**Perceptions of Leadership**

This study focused heavily on the participants’ experiences with leadership on campus. The images they captured in their photos along with the subsequent photo elicitation interviews illuminated their perceptions, actions, assumptions, and nuanced understanding of leadership. Relevant to this study is the way in which they contrasted their own leadership endeavors to their understanding of political leadership. While they each believed leadership to be relational and service oriented, they also believed political leadership to be more focused on influence, power and decision-making. By and large, each participant indicated that they would be more likely to engage in leadership when they could see the benefits for others rather than to elicit more power or influence for themselves. Previous feminist inquiry substantiates this finding, recognizing that women do, in fact, lead in different ways and that interpersonal relationships hold greater levels of importance for woman than for men (Brumberg, 2000). The opportunities for them to engage in leadership in this preferred way on campus is plentiful, however their sagas
indicated that SEU was more likely to recognize those that held positions of power on campus, bringing into question the neutrality of SEU’s structure.

When asked to define leadership, they spoke of personal leadership in terms of service and relationships. Words such as “comfort” and “support” were used in identifying the types of leaders they aspired to be in their lives. The participants saw themselves as engaging in leadership, but only when it was defined more as a function (like service and relationship) rather than positional. Each of these women shared successful leadership experiences through the lens of service and relationships where they have gained skills and positive reinforcement, aiding in their confidence to engage in future like leadership activities (McCormick, 2001). Emily shared how an experience trying to collect census information of the local homeless population helped her better recognize the needs for the community, motivating her to continue to find ways to work with and for this population. Destinee described her experience working to raise awareness about heart disease on campus as important and inspiring because she was able to share this message alongside her sorority sisters. Chelsea spoke with pride when discussing a photo of a female on campus, recognizing her as someone who worked in service to others and provided a welcoming environment. These experiences of volunteering throughout their community, serving their organizations and building relationships with those around them in efforts to help solve problems and provide comfort to those in need, reinforced their self-identity as leaders. This aligns with Astin and Kent’s (1983) assertion that student involvement is important in the development of college women’s self-confidence. The confidence in their leadership abilities was
directly connected to their selfless contributions throughout campus. The more they engaged in this work seems to have directly impacted their abilities to be more efficient as servant leaders, raising their leadership efficacy (McCormick, 2001).

When asked specifically about political leadership, the participants shared that they were less likely to get involved, because based on their understanding, political leadership is more about power, influence and titles. These were rarely, if ever, seen as motivators for the participants. The only exception was that SEU, in their lived experiences, tended to validate leaders with positions and titles. Roslie, as NPHC president, is proud of her efforts to create more service-based initiatives for members of her organizations, but is less connected to the title she currently holds. “On SEU’s campus, you have to first have the title. Once you have the title, you can sit at the table… I don’t know if I would have sought out being president on my own, my friends had to talk me into it. Once I realized I could make a difference, I was like, ok, let’s try it.” Several of the participants, like Roslie, saw the acquisition of a title or position as the only way to enhance their service to the community, although not all of them were as willing to take on such a role. The motivation, like in Roslie’s situation, would not be personal advancement, but a required means to meet a greater communal need.

The participants’ reality, shared throughout this study, is that leadership is an accessible process in which they can choose to engage in on SEU’s campus. While accessible though, leadership opportunities and values are not neutral on campus. This mirrors the claim in chapter two, that organizations founded by men have policies and
environments that privilege the male experience (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). The participants’ comfort level and interest in leadership, rests more on the ethos of care (Belenky et al., 1986). Recognizing gender as a pervasive symbol of power, SEU’s culture has set up a daily construction, and maybe even sometimes deconstruction, of gender, which can set the limits of possibility (Acker, 1996). Women are praised for their servant and relational leadership work on campus. However, leadership that is directive, hierarchical, positional and decisive is valued more. Since political leadership understanding on campus tends more toward the second, more valued view of leadership, the opportunities on campus are not gender neutral, explaining on some levels the lack of interest or involvement by women in political leadership on campus. Questions on how to adapt and change these cultural truths for these participants and like others, persist.

**Environmental Indicators**

The look and feel of a campus is a part of the cultural milieu in which the members of the community co-construct campus and academic life (Metcalfe, 2012). As the participants reviewed their photos and shared stories of their lived experiences at SEU, a pattern emerged regarding campus climate. The physical locations represent the major institutional norms, ways of doing and knowledge manifested by the organizers of the institution, which by and large, have been men (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). The physical structures that they photographed throughout campus were a reflection to the participants of the lack of women’s leadership roles on campus. They observed that the degree of male leadership throughout campus seemed unmatched by any other
constituent group of the university. The past men of the institution dominated the statues, monuments, building names and celebrations discussed throughout the research. Even the sorority hall, which to them was a reflection of organizations grounded in women’s leadership, was named after a prominent man. One student mentioned that she could only think of one space on campus not named for a man. These subtle environmental factors convey messages to the women about the people that have built the institution. The gendering of an organization is done through the creation of symbols, images and forms of consciousness that explicate, justify and more rarely oppose gender division (Acker, 1996). This constant reminder of who founded and organized SEU is another component of history framing the current society and maintaining a privileged male experience.

Several of the students took pictures of the president’s house on campus. Again, this space represented to them an important symbol of leadership. Each of them, however, noted that a woman has never served as president of SEU, nor did they believe this would change anytime soon. They also indicated during the photo elicitation interviews an awareness of a lack of women in other prime administrative roles, including the board of trustees. They saw these individuals as inaccessible, but yet responsible for making decisions that impacted their daily lives. What is most revealing is that, with the exception of one student, they could not identify the officials who held these positions, but yet still assumed they were male. While it is true that men hold a large number of these positions (16 out of 18 BOT members are men), the participants’ assumptions are not based in facts, but in the cultural messages they have received.
Prominent spaces, like the president’s home, are a reminder of the barriers that still exist at SEU. It is difficult to see another identity in these spaces of power because it has not yet happened. By looking at these locations with a gendered lens, the result is not an argument for women to occupy these roles in higher numbers, but instead a cultural reality check about whether these positions have been designed only for men (Wang & Burris, 1997).

While most of the photos taken were of the patriarchal components of campus, several students did mention small spaces on campus dedicated to honoring the women of SEU’s history. There was a flagpole with a picture of the woman on whose land SEU is located. In another photo there is a plaque honoring the first women to attend SEU. In conversations about these spaces, the students said they found these spaces on their own and wouldn’t classify them as significant to the overall institutional landscape. One student, an ambassador for SEU, noted that she often ends her tours for prospective students at the plaque honoring the first women at SEU, and yet reported that she has never mentioned the plaque. In fact, it wasn’t even because of her role on campus as a tour guide that she was aware of its existence, she just happened by it one day.

As the participants made meaning of the lack of physical spaces dedicated to the women of SEU, past or present, they acknowledged their own ignorance. For all participants, it wasn’t until they specifically went to look for these places that they realized they did not exist in large measure. After spending at least two academic years on campus, they had not noticed that women were not widely represented. When asked
about this, they were quick to say that women don’t need their names on buildings to be contributions and that it wasn’t really surprising. They never looked for the spaces because, as one student indicated, she assumed “there wasn’t anything to really find, not because we haven’t had great women, just because it’s harder for women in general to receive that recognition.” When it was mentioned that a new building on campus might be named after a woman, their response was positive. However, they shared an understanding that this was probably only a viable option because the building in question was not an academic space. In other words, academic buildings’ names were reserved for men. The internalized reality created by the physical spaces of SEU is that women must work harder than men to receive that recognition and should be grateful for any space that does exist. This understanding of higher requirements for women is broken down even further later in this chapter.

**Adaptive Institutional Culture is Encouraging**

Excitement and passion radiated from the participants, especially Emily, when she spoke about SEU as an adaptive institutional culture. All eight participants felt that having an inclusive and accepting university is important to them and that it encourages them to engage in leadership and strive for their goals. Previous feminist inquiry supports this notion in large measure, recognizing that women are more inclined to engage in leadership work designed to combat oppression and injustice (Wang & Burris, 1997). They spoke with excitement as they described the present as a time of necessary social change at SEU. Emily stated about SEU that “I think people really do want to see
campus more united and more intentional about bringing people in.” Given each participant’s dedication to leadership as relational, it is not surprising that they would also prefer to think of SEU as growing more inclusive.

An important component of this theme is that participants saw themselves as a part of creating a more inclusive SEU. While they may not have seen themselves as policy creators or decision makers, they did believe that their efforts were moving the campus towards creating a more accepting space. Destinee talked about this in her organization’s efforts to bring together women of color to ensure their voices were heard on campus. Emily discussed her efforts to create inclusive excellence through her campaigning for student body president. Still more, Julianne, Roslie and Morgan all discussed ways in which they could use their Greek letter organizations as catalysts for change on campus.

The women were encouraged to take action and be a part of the changes they hoped to see on campus related to inclusion. They did, however, see their contributions as very localized. The real decision making power, still beyond their reach. Their role is to create safe and inclusive spaces for the students already on campus and within their boundaries of influence. While not termed political leadership by any of the participants, it was clear that they were willing and encouraged to step into leadership roles if it meant aiding in creating a more accepting space for others to thrive. Also as a result of positive experiences doing this work, several of the participants talked about future plans, continuing their efforts to build a more dynamic, diverse community. Later I will
propose suggestions of creating more initiatives on campus to tap into these passions in efforts of potentially raising women’s political leadership efficacy.

**Messages About Political Leadership from SEU**

Being a part of an organization means that there are messages members will receive, internalize, pass forward and/or use as a call to action. These messages can be conveyed through language, group norms, values, policies, unwritten rules, climate, habits, root metaphors, rituals and celebrations as explained by Schein (2010). The messages participants felt they receive from SEU fell into two overarching and significant themes. The first theme is that the university is still a male dominated or oriented university. The second major message received by the participants is that higher requirements exist for women in leadership at SEU.

**SEU As Male Oriented**

The socially constructed forces that emanate from within an organization can have long standing impacts on how members make meaning of the roles that they hold. The lived experiences shared by the participants of this study indicated a powerful perception that the institution of SEU, despite being co-educational since the mid-1950s, is still male oriented. This was present in their description of the institution’s hierarchy of power and the dichotomous relationship that exists between policy makers and followers. All of the participants spoke highly of the women in their lives that serve in leadership roles, but these individuals represented the gatekeepers of campus more so
than the positional or powerful leaders. Participants shared how these male oriented messages impacted their own understanding of their role within SEU’s culture.

The internalized messages from SEU that males and/or masculinity hold more worth than women and/or femininity were highlighted in some of their stories. Destinee spoke of her awareness that her gender impacted her ability to fully engage in leadership. She described gender and race as two strikes against her at SEU, which ultimately left her feeling discouraged. Emily shared that she gets pushback on campus for being a woman who won’t allow others to criticize someone because of their social identities. She felt that pushback was a result of her gender, not her convictions. This messaging that being a woman is a strike against you or that sharing your opinions is not welcome because of your gender has resulted in student apathy, silence and low self efficacy for the participants in this study (Belenky et al., 1986).

Furthering this understanding of institutional culture are the messages reinforced at a macro level for the participants. They shared that while the university has a women’s leadership one-day conference, it does little to combat the messages they receive about the value of women throughout the academy everyday. One participant spoke specifically about this dissonance, although it showed up in the lived experiences of other respondents as well. She said that the stated messages of equality are negated when faculty tenure for women is denied or when dean positions are given to males rather than females. In other words, she sees gender equality on campus as something that people
say they believe in, but actions rarely align with the sentiment. This reinforces the earlier notions of women lacking power and decision making capabilities.

Broadening this proposition that gender equality is more of an aspiration and less of a reality is the topic of policy creation on campus. When asked about the women who are policy makers at SEU, participants said that women are the policy followers and men the policy makers. An example was shared specific to Greek life. Morgan said that when policies are created, women work to find ways to follow the policies while men just do so if it’s convenient. When men don’t follow the policies, the policies end up being changed and women continue to find ways to follow the new policies. While the participants stood strong on the idea that the majority of policy makers were men, they also shared that in not following policies, men still had greater ownership of this process. If women are not a part of creating policies on campus, it is more likely that the policies will not be fully representative of their needs. If the expectation is that men create and change policy and women follow policy, there is an unequal distribution of power and a high likelihood for policies to be slanted toward men on campus (Marion & Gonzales, 2013).

One of the more poignant observations came from a student praising the institution for its quest for greater gender inclusivity.

I think that the places captured on [SEU’s] campus have historically been pretty exclusive and it’s really encouraging to see that they no longer are. There are no longer any spaces on campus where females are prohibited or aren’t allowed to
be. It’s really cool to see how far [SEU] has come in such a short period of time…I don’t know that they’re at the end of the road by any means, and I definitely get messages from [SEU] as an institution that there are still spaces where women aren’t welcome, but there’s nowhere we aren’t allowed to be. We’re working our way. So, that’s kind of cool.

In attempting to praise the university for it’s gendered inclusivity throughout campus which allowed women to go anywhere they wish, this participant also sheds light on some of the most deeply rooted beliefs of SEU, and that gender does matter. Emily said that there are spaces on SEU’s campus where women are not welcome and the other women agreed. They referred to this as progress. The participants concluded that men still dictate where and how women show up throughout the institution. The messages they have received about being female at SEU are so fundamentally rooted, they are willing to celebrate and not question the idea that there are places where they are still not welcome at their institution. If spaces reserved for decision making and policy creation are also seen as the spaces where women aren’t welcome, one can see how these internalized messages might impact a woman’s interest in engaging in political leadership, given the earlier understood parameters this concept.

**Higher Requirements Exist for Women in Leadership**

Throughout our time together the participants continued to reference the fact that women on campus were required to meet higher expectations and standards of leadership. This was introduced earlier in the chapter when noting the lack of female named
buildings, statues or prominent spaces on campus. This was even more evident as they discussed their female role models as well as their personal engagement, or lack there of, regarding politics on or off campus. The participants have internalized these messages about expectations, which have them striving for perfection and avoiding high-risk situations. The following examples provide insight into how this perception became reality for the participants.

Several of the photos captured images of women working on what the participants referred to as the frontlines. These women offered students support and comfort. The participants described the leadership of these individuals in terms of always being available to students, working hard, and of having an unwavering commitment to the education and well-being of the student population. Through individual and group interviews, participants explained how hard these women work to keep the university functioning. They all agreed that, in large part, these women don’t get recognized for their efforts because, as Roslie indicated, “[the recognition] goes to the very top positions which are filled by males.” While Roslie’s assertion may be correct, it is most likely an indication that the ethos of care that the female workers at SEU exhibit is not regarded with the same level of institutional merit. Because administrators, who at SEU have traditionally been male, are responsible for developing recognition processes, it is possible that the system in flawed and angled more toward positional leaders.

In their own lives, the participants spoke of feeling like being treated like “imposters,” having to continually prove their worth, feeling like their knowledge base
was not to be trusted. They said that the exhaustive nature of continually having to prove themselves to others in order to affect change can be discouraging. The students spoke of being excessively challenged when they shared an opinion; so much so that it often left them feeling confused or wishing they had remained silent. Specifically, they felt this way in relation to sharing their political beliefs and ideologies. The all described having experienced such challenges when sharing their political opinion. As a result, they now believe that in order to discuss politics they have to know everything about politics, a requirement not expected of their male counterparts. They recognized that they could never know everything about politics, so their preference is to remain silent and not engage. Ultimately this leads to apathy as a result of their low political leadership efficacy. This additional requirement of having to possess complete information before stating an opinion may play a role in explaining why women fail to engage politically in greater numbers.

The pervasive nature of gender ideals on SEU’s campus is evidenced even more in the participants’ incessant need to apologize for failing to meet even the most unrealistic of standards. They apologize for their tardiness, even when they are early. They apologize for what they know and what they don’t know. They apologize in an almost reflexive manner, suggesting that at times they are even apologizing for their presence. Given that they voiced that there were places on SEU’s campus where they were only permitted, not welcomed, this makes sense. However, this habit of thinking does little to raise their leadership self-efficacy. Apologizing may be a defense mechanism to ward off unwarranted attacks via questions or to avoid confrontation with
their highly valued relationships. Participants were unable to articulate where this need to apologize originated, but noted it was a part of how they are expected to “show up.” The higher standard to maintain a level of perfection in all aspects of their lives results in this apologetic existence. Increased leadership efficacy is difficult to achieve and maintain, according to McCormick (2001), if the personal cognitions are wrought with doubt and fear of failure.

**Implications for Practice**

As stated in chapter three, Photovoice is rooted in feminine inquiry and as a result insists that women be a part of the process of identifying and explaining their real life experiences and then work toward improving the communities in which they are a part of (Wang & Burris, 1994). The interpretations of the photos in this study indicate that women have the power to influence policy by highlighting the relationship between themselves and the community in which they live. This study sought to promote awareness, stimulate discussion and improve decision making on campus. As a result, I have identified the following action-oriented themes.

**Enhance Positive Experiences and Women’s Political Leadership Efficacy**

It might be easy to dismiss this as obvious, but that would be at the expense of negating the deep-rooted fears women have about engaging in political leadership. The cultural messages they receive about the expectation of thorough knowledge have left the female students in this study unwilling to take risks and share their political opinions. They expressed feeling their political opinions are not supported and that there is a
campus-wide attitude that in order for them to be seen as an authority on a topic, or even trustworthy, they must know more than their male colleagues. Gender ideals, where men and women are seen only in respective monolithic and outdated ways, need to be challenged as a cultural norm at SEU. By creating an equitable cultural expectation for all members of the community to engage, a more dynamic and nuanced culture might emerge. This culture could impact women’s engagement tendencies.

A direct implication for practice would be for SEU to start engaging female students in positive political experiences. Utilizing methods in the classroom to reinforce controversy with civility might lower anxiety of female students. Co-curricular experiences are needed where they have the opportunity to not just follow policy, but are given authority to create policy that is inclusive and enforced unilaterally. This can be done through organizations or university wide committees or task force appointments. Furthermore, it might help the women of SEU see themselves in more prominent positions if more of an effort was made to acknowledge females that have helped shape the institution throughout its history. There should be more physical spaces honoring the women of the university, if only to match the number of locations honoring the men.

Another direct action might be to review admissions processes for SEU. As was mentioned in the interviews, by and large institutions are receiving lower numbers of male applicants. As a result, females perceive that, to keep admission numbers gender-balanced, less qualified men might be receiving admittance at the expense of stronger female applicants. While it is unclear if SEU is actually engaging in this practice, it
would be beneficial for the institution to be transparent about their admissions policies and procedures, and if needed to correct this practice. Being cognizant of sharing how SEU is equitably accepting students, could be a first step in creating positive experiences for potential new students while also reinforcing the competencies of the current student population.

Finally, SEU should review hiring, tenure and other recognition practices to ensure that policies and procedures are not gendered. Currently there are approximately 900 male faculty members on SEU’s campus and 500 female faculty members. There is equal gender representation in the remaining 5,000 professional jobs on campus. The insights from the students indicate a discrepancy between what SEU says it values related to gender equity and how the faculty and staff of the university are promoted and recognized. While there may not be a gendered inconsistency in practice, it is clear that there is a strong perception that women have to work harder than their male colleagues to be acknowledged for their work. Creating transparent spaces (physical, virtual or otherwise) for all community members’ voices to be heard is important and will begin to change the cultural expectations of whose voice is most prominent or deemed most important in a room.

The participants suggested that an adaptive institutional culture is encouraging to them. If SEU were to engage in some of these practices, it might alleviate some of the anxiety women have about trying new things or feeling as though they have to be perfect. This is in alignment with the Social Cognitive Model of Leadership discussed in
chapter two (McCormick, 2001). If the students are able to engage in encouraging experiences and receive positive feedback, they would increase their confidence as well as their knowledge, skills and abilities. They also might be more empowered to become the policy makers. Furthering this implication for practice is the fact that this research indicates that positive experiences will have a correlating impact on women’s willingness to engage in the unknown, such as political leadership. The educational experience at SEU has the potential to promote and engage students in new and dynamic ways, which will in turn, provide new outlets for positive social change in our communities. The next implication for practice will delve into this point further.

**Positive Change Initiatives**

The most prevalent theme that emerged from the data, one discussed earlier in this chapter, is that women define leadership by and large in terms of service and relationships. If SEU were to couch opportunities for political leadership in these same terms, the women of the institution might begin to see themselves as engaged in the process of political leadership. There is simply a disconnect between students’ understanding of political leadership and the work they are already doing on campus. There isn’t enough value placed on these experiences and they are not branded as political in nature. If SEU were to invest in the idea that women’s voices are necessary within the political landscape of the institution and the state, it might alter women’s internalized beliefs about their abilities. That investment might be in appointing more women to already agreed upon political activities, such as decision-making boards. Or
that investment might be more mission driven, placing greater level of political worth on the experiences focused on service.

An interesting note related to this theme is that The United States national primaries were taking place at the time of this study, and primary voting for both parties were held in SEU’s state. However, there was not one photo or experience shared that discussed this monumental time in US history. It was only when I asked specifically about it that the participants articulated that they didn’t see their participation in voting as a part of their SEU experience. This is an opportunity for SEU to engage students in conversations about the political processes taking place throughout the community, nation and world. If these women were to see how their engagement in the citizenship efforts of voting could help them work towards positive social change in their local communities, they might be more inclined to see SEU as a place for gathering knowledge, engaging in critical dialogues and overall increasing their political leadership efficacy.

SEU already has a plethora of organizations whose missions are to create positive sustainable change within our communities. In fact, many of the women in this study are members of said organizations. However, they do not see this work as political in nature. Working with these organizations to not only help them promote awareness about their work and move towards their visions, but also to understand the role they could have in the creation of policies, procedures and agencies, could increase the understanding of political leadership throughout campus. Once the mystique of political leadership is
removed and replaced by efforts to build purposeful and inclusive environments, political leadership opportunities should open up in new and dynamic ways.

**Social Cognitive Model Revisited**

In chapter two, the Social Cognitive Model of Leadership was introduced (McCormick, 2001). This model was used a framework throughout the study to better understand the ways the lived experiences of the participants, specifically related to leadership, impacted the development of their political leadership efficacy. In the participants’ constructions of their experiences at SEU, they shared multiple sagas about how the predominate nature of men and masculinity have helped shape their understanding of self and culture at SEU, leading to the enhancement or decline of their leadership efficacy.

The themes that emerged from this study directly related to the Social Cognitive Model of Leadership (McCormick, 2001). When the participants shared their service-based leadership experiences, they spoke passionately about their personal goals and how helping others was a motivator for their behaviors. The feedback they received from the people they were working with and from the university was positive. The knowledge, skills and abilities they gathered from these experiences are aiding in their pursuit of future goals and their leadership efficacy continues to rise with each new experience.

On the other hand, the male dominance of campus, coupled with the perception of higher expectations for women have led them to lower levels of political leadership efficacy. Their experiences of being questioned, not feeling fully supported and
receiving feedback that anything short of perfection was failure, have inhibited their interest and confidence in taking on new political leadership experiences. The messages the performance environment at SEU reinforced for these participants have resulted in feelings of anxiousness, apathy and silence when faced with politics. The knowledge, skills and abilities they have learned from these experiences are based in ways to best avoid future political leadership experiences. Utilizing the SCM as a framework for this study aided in the understanding of how the lived experiences of the participants often lowered their political leadership efficacy. The model also helped in understanding how to reverse this by providing opportunities, like the ones outlined in the previous section, to change the performance environment and shift efforts to enhance political leadership efficacy development in similar ways to service based leadership.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

The use of photography and the Photovoice methodology allowed for the opportunity to glimpse the constructed environment and perceived messages that often go undetected in a community. This study uncovered those messages and their cultural implications. Utilizing this strategy for qualitative research adds depth to interviews and gives a more specific picture of the lived experiences of participants. Since this type of research has not been done as much within institutions of higher education, future research might consider delving further into this process with women or other marginalized populations. This study was done with participants that had been at the institution for at least two academic years, but it might interesting to compare that to new
members of the institution to see what messages they might be receiving at the beginning of their tenure.

Research from this study found a campus culture that is not fully conducive to the development of women’s political leadership efficacy. While women see themselves and other women as making a difference in their communities, they do not equate this with political leadership. Further research might investigate when the internalized messages about how and when to engage in politics begins. While not a primary function of this research, a minor theme still emerged focused on the families of each participant. Delving into the role family plays in the development of women’s political leadership efficacy might yield even greater information about how to construct institutional cultures that promote and engage women in politics.

This research also focused on binary gender differences and did not discuss other identities of the participants. Increased research into the intersectionality of identities and how and whether that impacts a person’s motivation to engage in politics might be even more pervasive into understanding the ever present gender gap that exists in today’s political atmosphere. As our understanding of gender expands, these conversations and need for varied representation politically might be increasingly relevant.

**Chapter Summary**

This study attempted to better understand the gender gap that exists in today’s political landscape, and how institutions of higher education might be a contributing factor. Through the use of Photovoice, I concluded that institutional culture can and does impact women’s political leadership efficacy. However, it is not pre-determined if that
affect will be positive or negative. Institutions have the ability to create cultures that are inclusive or exclusive, and each culture will be different. In SEU’s case, the strong military and patriarchal traditions have created barriers to change. It is hoped that this research, along with other efforts on campus, will aid in the shifting of some cultural norms that have allowed systems of oppression and exclusivity to persist.

There are multiple opportunities to engage women in the political leadership process. It is shown that positive experiences for women related to leadership yield a greater chance that they will engage in political processes. Alternatively, negative experiences may result in women remaining silent and retreating from opportunities to share their opinions and to practice their leadership. By couching political leadership in terms of service and relationship building, it is more likely that women will be invested and become more involved. Also, if the institution were to value leadership and service in the same way it does positional leadership, women would see their contributions as more meaningful. This could go a long way toward embracing a more gender-neutral environment.

Finally, it is important to note that the women at our universities feel a pressure to be perfect. They are expected to follow the rules. They are expected to get perfect grades. They are expected to be involved. And when they share an opinion, especially a controversial one, they are expected to be able to meet a higher standard of knowledge. They are then acknowledged for very little, because our cultures have turned these into expectations for women and commendations for men. This is a recipe for apathy and almost guaranteed failure for women. Institutions need to create opportunities for women
to learn how to take calculated risks, engage in controversial and civilized discourse and be recognized for their effort to create sustainable positive environments. Continuous expectations of perfection from women will only steer them in directions of comfort and eventually complacency. Opportunities to engage and receive positive reinforcement about their ideas, creativity and abilities to make contributions to their communities has the potential to change everything “fulfilling our most sacred obligations of place” (Archibald, 2004).
Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The impact of institutional culture on women’s political leadership efficacy development as documented through Photovoice
Dr. Russell Marion, Principle Investigator
Laura McMaster, Co-Investigator

Research Questions
1. How does institutional culture impact women’s political leadership efficacy?
2. What messages, if any, do female students receive/perceive about political leadership from their institution?
3. How do female students describe an institutional culture that truly enhances political leadership efficacy?

Meeting #1
Participants will take part in 30 minute meetings where we will conceptualize the purpose of the research and conduct a Photovoice training. The outline of the meeting will go as follows:

- Description of the overall purpose of the project sharing with participants that the information they share with us will be used to better understand how institutional culture impacts women’s political leadership efficacy development.
- Description of the benefits will be shared with participants, including incentives.
- Description of the risks and for this project there are no known risks or discomforts expected.
- Reminder of rights will be provided and the consent form will be distributed and read aloud.
- Demographics including state residency, age, involvement on campus and number of enrollment years.
- An explanation of Photovoice will be provided which will cover the definition and reasoning behind using this methodology.
- Activity #1:
  - Give the student a piece of chocolate and ask that they write in words how they feel when they eat the chocolate. After ask them to draw a picture of those same feelings. Process.
- Review of Procedure
  - How to take a good picture: Things like lighting, angles etc. will be shared with participants.
  - Photovoice waivers: A review of the photo release forms will be discussed as well as the fact that we will blur out any faces that do not sign the release form.
How to share photos: Each participant will drop finished cameras on campus at agreed upon location. A dropbox folder developed by Laura McMaster will be shared with participants where their photos will be uploaded. Each photo should have a caption provided by the photographer.

- Baseline Questions:
  - Do you consider yourself a leader? Why or why not?
  - What motivates you to lead?
  - What messages, if any, have you received from your institution about what leadership is and your ability to engage in it?
  - To what level do you engage in politics? What political aspirations do you have?
  - To what level would you rate your political leadership efficacy (defined in layman’s terms if needed)

- Photovoice Charge:
  - Document the institution’s messaging about women’s leadership through photographs.

Meeting #2

Individual 45 min meetings with participants and researcher will take place following the collection of photos.

- During this meeting photos will be selected for discussion. This will be a semi-structured interview.
- Participants will first have the opportunity to review the photos and write any words or captions for the photos.
- They will pick out the pictures they would like to discuss.
  - In order of relevance as determined by the participant they will answer the following questions about each photo selected for discussion:
    - Please provide a brief description of the photo.
    - Please explain this photo’s relevance to the topic of leadership.
    - How does this relate to your life?
    - How does this relate to the lives of other people in your community?
  - How was the experience of documenting leadership on campus?
    - Was it easy or difficult to take the pictures? Why?
  - How do you define leadership? Is that different or the same as political leadership?
  - How do these pictures, individually or collectively represent that understanding of leadership?
  - What, if anything, did you learn about your institution’s portrayal of political leadership?
Do you believe, based on your lived experiences and/or the photographs in front of you that the leadership messages you’ve received from your institution are gendered? Explain.

Meeting #3

• The selected pictures as identified by each participant will be collected and used for the final group meeting. Pictures will be mounted on poster boards throughout the room and participants will have a chance to come in a review all of the pictures. Once all of the participants have had a chance to review the photos the group meeting will begin (semi-structured interview process):
  o What are your first reactions when looking at all of these photographs?
  o What do these photos tell you about our community? About leadership within our community?
  o Are there are parts of your leadership experience you weren’t able to capture?
  o In what ways do the images collectively portray an inclusive or exclusive messages about leadership and gender?
  o How do these images encourage or discourage you to engage in leadership?
  o Several of your pictures were meant to highlight the lack of women’s leadership examples on campus, what does this tell you about the institution.
  o In what ways do these pictures and/or your lived experiences show women as the policy makers on campus?
  o Share with participants the data reflected in the institution’s gendered graduation rates as well as the statistics for women’s political engagement in the state. Given the images documented here today, in what ways might you be receiving messages about how and when to engage in leadership, specifically as it relates to politics?
  o None of your pictures highlighted any political activity, despite the fact that the photos were being taken during the South Carolina republican and democratic primary season. Do you think there was a reason for this?
  o Do you and your female peers discuss politics?
  o How often and in what ways are you, as women, encouraged to share your political viewpoints on campus? How often are you expected to share your political viewpoints?
    ▪ How does sharing your political ideology with others make you feel?
  o If you were to engage in politics at a greater level than you do right now, what would need to happen?
o What changes are needed in the culture of the institution to better engage women in political leadership efficacy?

o What, if any, policy changes need to be made at this institution related to the development of women’s political leadership efficacy?
Appendix B

Consent Form

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

The Impact of Institutional Culture on Women’s Political Leadership Efficacy

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. Russell Marion and Laura McMaster are inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Marion is a faculty member at Clemson University. Laura McMaster is a student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Marion. The purpose of this research is to examine if the culture of a university impacts women’s political leadership efficacy.

Your part in the study will be to take part in interviews in which you will share your own college experiences, with a specific emphasis on your political leadership efficacy. You will be asked to document, through a series of pictures that you will take, images of leadership throughout campus. After taking pictures, you will participate in an additional interview to explain the photos and their meaning.

It will take you approximately 3 weeks to be in this study, which includes two, 45 minute interviews (one individual interview and one group interview with other participants). There will also be an initial meeting to discuss the process of the study.

Risks and Discomforts

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

Possible Benefits

By participating in this study, you may gain a greater understanding of yourself and how your campus impacts your leadership efficacy.

Additional benefits include gaining greater insight into how institutional culture may impact women’s political leadership efficacy development, an area of much needed research.
This study is also designed to aid in the dissertation process of one of the researchers with a potential benefit of completing their Ph. D.

**Incentives**

There will be food and drink provided at each interview. There will also be a t-shirt distributed that will be purchased for each student from the women's fundamental rights campaign as well as $5 coffee gift cards as a incentive for completing the study.

**Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. We will not disclose your identification and all necessary efforts will be taken to maintain your confidentiality.

**Choosing to Be in the Study**

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Russell Marion at Clemson University at 864-656-5105.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

**Consent**

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

A copy of this form will be given to you.
Appendix C

Photo Release Form

Clemson University
The Impact of Institutional Culture on Women’s Political Leadership Efficacy Development

Photo Release Form

I, ___________________ give permission for Dr. Russell Marion and Laura McMaster to use and publish my photographs developed during the “The Impact of Institutional Culture on Women’s Political Leadership Efficacy Development” study. They are free to use the photographs for presentations and publications about this project.

Contact Information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact (insert the Principal Investigator’s or researchers’ contact information here).

Participant’s signature: _______________________________ Date:

___________________________

Participant’s name: _______________________________
Appendix D

Public Photo Consent Form

Clemson University
Impact of Institutional Culture on Women’s Political Leadership Efficacy Development

Photograph Release Form

I, __________________________ am participating in a research study conducted by Dr. Russell Marion and Laura McMaster. Dr. Russell Marion is a faculty member at Clemson University. Laura McMaster is a student at Clemson University and is administering this study with the help of Dr. Russell Marion.

The purpose of this study is to use photography to document the culture of leadership on campus. The results of this research, including some photographs, may be included during conference presentations and in publications to academic journals.

As part of my participation in this study, I am requesting permission to take your picture.

Your name or any identifying information will not be used during the discussions or be revealed in any publications or presentations. However, someone who sees the publications or presentations may recognize you. Remember, your willingness to be photographed is completely voluntary and you may decline at any time.

Contact Information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Russell Marion at 864-656-5105.

By signing this form, I give permission to have my picture taken and for the photographs to be used in presentations and publications about this project.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: _________________

Print name: ___________________________
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