ENGENDERED AND ENDANGERED:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVES OF
TWELVE FEMALE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

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SUBMITTED TO
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership
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A Dissertation

Entitled

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Twelve Female Social Studies Teachers

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lives of twelve female social studies teachers. Specifically, through a phenomenological approach, the lived experiences, personal thoughts and professional journeys of the twelve participants were examined in order to identify those experiences that are unique to being a female social studies teacher. The themes that emerged were: (a) treatment of participants as a result of gender; (b) the role of the Catholic Church and Catholic schools in the lives of the participants; (c) the appeal of social studies education to the participants; (d) the benefits and contributions of female social studies teachers; (e) the participant’s journeys in to the field of social studies education; (f) the lack of representation of females in social studies education; (g) the devaluing of social studies education; (h) the importance of social studies education; (i) the characteristics of a successful female social studies teacher; and (j) the coachification effect in social studies education.
DEDICATION

To my grandfather, George J. Siracuse, and the Honorable Michael R. Merz for instilling in me an authentic appreciation for the rule of law, a commitment to American principles and a love for my country.

To my parents, Patricia and George Zimmer and Colonel George and Mary Siracuse who provided for me two of the greatest gifts in my life – my education and my faith. I love each of you and am thankful that the manner in which you raised me enabled me to do all I have done academically, socially and spiritually.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am thankful to the twelve women who served as participants in this study. Thank you for allowing me to tell your stories. I consider it a privilege to be your colleague in the field of social studies education.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Heading out of the principal’s office, Betsy found herself filled with a variety of emotions. The interview had gone well. Her nervousness was quickly quelled when the members of the interview team complimented her on the various academic successes highlighted on her resume. Betsy was able to answer each question with thoughtful ease and articulation while demonstrating a mastery and command of her content knowledge. Then the sticking point became obvious. Half way through the interview principal stated that there was a need for a boys basketball coach. Betsy felt her throat tighten as she mustered up the courage to respond with, “Oh. Well, I understand.” Immediately, Betsy noticed the change in the atmosphere and the interview seemed to end abruptly. The obligatory “thank yous” were exchanged and Betsy could not help but feel a bit crestfallen as she left the interview. Did all of her work over the course of the past four years in college not mean anything? Did her passion for her discipline and her love of teaching not matter to those people in that office? Was she really going to miss out on her first social studies teaching position simply because she did not fit the gender stereotype of a boys basketball coach?

Susan made yet another request to teach the Military History course at Freedom High School. A twenty-five year veteran of the social studies department, Susan worked with a variety of social studies teachers during her tenure. From the young first year teacher who accepted the chance to become the varsity football coach to a number of United States Armed Forces veterans who took advantage of the GI Bill and became
social studies teachers after returning from war, Susan’s experiences working with her 
social studies colleagues had been as varied as the men themselves. She had often 
wondered if her gender affected her chances of teaching a course that many of the other 
department members thought was a course that should be taught by a male, especially 
John Jones who is a 15 year Army veteran. Certainly, her knowledge and understanding 
of United States military history was gender blind. Knowledge is knowledge and 
expertise is expertise – where does gender fit in to that equation? Once again, though, 
Susan was passed over for the teaching assignment of the Military History course and 
John Jones received the assignment.

Dating back to colonial America, the journey for equal civil rights has been a 
common thread in the history of the United States of America. From the early years of 
the young republic to the current status of the United States of America as a world leader, 
various civil rights movements have painted the American landscape. These various 
movements incorporate members on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, age, 
physical abilities, and gender. The pursuit of gender equity, specifically in the work 
place, continues to hold a prominent place in the social and political realms of life in the 
United States.

In addition, these grassroots movements have impacted the legislative as well as 
the judicial environments of America. Members of each civil rights movement continue 
to seek legislation that is favorable to the group’s members in securing equal rights and 
treatment. Members also seek relief in the courts throughout this country, hoping for an 
interpretation of legislation and constitutional provisions expanding the definition of 
equal rights and, as a result, extend more protection to the class of citizens enjoined to the
group. However, one cannot assume that enacting, executing, and interpreting legislation necessarily change the mindset of the people of a society.

Various legislative initiatives and Supreme Court cases have left indelible marks specifically on the women’s rights movement, nevertheless, females in America continue to experience secondhand treatment as compared to men. Such treatment can still be witnessed in the workplace, specifically in the area of the teaching profession.

**Background of the Study**

The political beginning of the women’s rights movement is oftentimes associated with the gathering that took place at Seneca Falls, NY, in July of 1848. Known as the world’s first women’s rights convention, this event resulted in the signing of the Declaration of Sentiments, a document that called for the ending of discrimination against women in all areas of society (National Women’s History Project, n.d.; TeacherVision, n.d.). A host of other events which helped women in their struggle for gender equity took place after the Seneca Falls convention with the advent of the second wave of feminism, oftentimes identified with the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both the state and national governments took legislative action to help women achieve legal equality with men. Much of this legislation, coupled with various Supreme Court decisions, focused on defining and protecting employment rights, educational opportunities and economic interests of women.

By 1900, all states had passed legislation that granted women control over their property and earnings, and 1920 was the year in which the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, containing language that prohibits states from
denying suffrage on the account of one’s gender (National Women’s History Project, n.d., p. 2). Then, from 1938 – 1964, Congress passed a series of legislative acts that received executive approval and sought to protect the economic and employment rights of minorities, including women. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act created a minimum wage for employees regardless of one’s gender (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2002, para. 1). In 1963, the Equal Pay Act guaranteed workers equitable wages for the same work regardless of the employee’s race, color, religion, national origin or sex (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.a), however, the Act exempts from its provisions “domestics, agricultural workers, executives, administrators or professionals” (TeacherVision, n.d., para. 43). Then in 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act created a prohibition of employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.b, ¶1). In order to investigate complaints about employment discrimination and to enforce penalties, the Act “establishes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which received 50,000 complaints of gender discrimination in its first five years” (TeacherVision, n.d., para. 45).

Then, in 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments which prohibits sex discrimination in all education programs that receive federal funds (United States Department of Education, 2005). This piece of national legislation, more often identified with its impact on collegiate athletics, greatly impacted the educational opportunities provided to women. According to Grunberg (2007), Title IX “has improved and promoted equality in high school and college athletics, resulted in growing numbers of women earning college, graduate and professional degrees, increased the hiring and
salaries of female educators, staff and coaches, and prohibited sexual harassment” (¶1). This Act resulted in a historical first in 1978 when more women than men entered college (TeacherVision, n.d., para. 60).

To help with the execution of Title IX, Congress adopted the Gender Equity in Education Act in 1994. Specifically, the purpose of this Act was to empower the Secretary of Education to “promote, coordinate, and evaluate gender equity policies, programmes, activities and initiatives in all Federal education programmes and offices, as well as developing materials and research related to education equity for women and girls” (International Labour Organization, 2002, para. 1). A Special Assistant for Gender Equity in the Department of Education was appointed by Deputy Secretary Kunin in May of 1995 and was responsible for “advising the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on all matters relating to gender equity” (United States Department of Education, 1999, para. 2).

Then, in 1985 at the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, and sponsored by the United Nations, a “Platform for Action” was developed. This platform is the long-term strategy for empowering women and girls and advancing their status worldwide” (United States Department of Education, 1999, para. 8). In response to this platform, the US Department of Education (1999) created the following five National Education Initiatives:

1. To convene a national assembly on girls’ and women’s education and launch a public awareness campaign to change discriminatory policies and practices;
2. To convene a leadership forum dedicated to nurturing a new generation of women leaders;
3. To intensify efforts to raise the number of employers who encourage family involvement in learning;

4. To promote girls and women in science, mathematics, and technology.

5. To combat violence against girls and women. (para. 11)

During this same time period, the Supreme Court of the United States and other inferior courts provided a series of decisions directly impacting the political struggle for gender equity. According to the National Women’s History Project (n.d.), some of these landmark years and decisions include

- the 1965 decision in *Weeks v. Southern Bell*, 408 F. 2d. 228 (5th Cir. 1969) in which various restrictions on women’s working conditions were ruled unconstitutional and making once male-only jobs available to women (¶32);

- the 1971 decision in *Reed v. Reed*, 404 U.S. 71 (1971), when the Supreme Court held unconstitutional an Idaho law that gave automatic preference to males as administrators of wills (¶38);

- the 1975 decision in *Taylor v. Louisiana*, 419 U.S. 522, in which the Supreme Court ruled states could not exclude women from serving on juries (¶47);

- the 1976 decision in *General Electric Co. v. Gilbert*, 429 U.S. 125, in which the Supreme Court ruled that women who are pregnant are entitled to unemployment benefits during the last trimester (¶48);

- the 1984 decision in *Roberts v. U.S. Jaycees*, 468 U.S. 609 (1984), in which the Court opened up to women access to previously all-male organizations when it ruled that sex discrimination in membership policies were unconstitutional (¶53);
• the 1986 decision in *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57 (1986), when the Supreme Court held that sex discrimination in the workplace can be proved through the existence of hostility or abuse (¶56);

• the 1993 decision in *Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.*, 510 U.S. 17 (1993), when the Supreme Court ruled that a victim did not need to prove the suffering of physical or psychological injury as a result of sexual harassment; and

• the 1996 decision in *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515 (1996), when the Supreme Court declared that the male-only admissions policy of a state-supported military school was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment (¶63).

In sum, these decisions helped women to secure equity in economic interests and employment rights. In addition, the *Reed* decision marked the first time that the Supreme Court of the United States declared unconstitutional a law that treated men and women differently and the first time the Court declared women to be “persons” as stated in the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution (National Women’s History Project, n.d., ¶38).

**The Statement of the Problem**

What are experiential components specific to the professional journey of secondary female social studies teachers? How does one’s gender impact individual experiences and professional treatment as a teacher? How do these components serve as a help or hindrance to secondary female social studies teachers whose subject field teaches about equality?
Significance of the Study

The quest for equality and equity is an on-going, dynamic journey in the United States of America. Certainly, legislation, executive orders, and judicial decisions have helped to create an environment ready for securing and protecting equal rights for many classes of people here in the USA. These approaches are not always enough to change the cultural mindset of people in our society. An additional stroke of the legislative pen, while well intentioned, cannot erase the gender discrimination that still exists, specifically with female social studies teachers. However, these measures set the tone for institutional equality; that, in turn, provides women the foundation on which to build their own journeys for self-empowerment and to claim equality.

This study seeks to bring to the surface and subject to critical discussion the discrimination that may still exist. In doing so, this study is professionally significant because it

1. Questions whether the intents of the women’s rights movement along with civil rights legislation have been recognized and fulfilled in the social studies field, a field known for citizenship education and the study of equality.

2. Uncovers and discusses the concerns of secondary female social studies teachers with regard to their professional treatment and experiences due to the fact they are females.

3. Emphasizes the point that the journey for equal rights continues and requires us to look beyond legislation and case law; it requires a
continued reshaping of the culture that exists below the surface and in the mindset of people who live in society.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to provide female social studies teachers a means through which they can find their voices in order to share their stories that are unique to being female social studies teachers. The focus of their lived experiences centers around how the social construct of gender and gender roles impact the manner in which female social studies teachers are represented and educated in teacher education programs; recruited and hired for teaching positions and subsequently treated in their professional roles. In addition, the participants will share how gender roles impact social studies education.

**Questions for the Study**

The following questions guided the research for this study:

1. What do female social studies teachers believe about the manner in which gender roles impact their professional journeys and experiences? How did they arrive at their beliefs?

2. What kind and degree of impact have these gender roles had on the educational and classroom environments connected to the experiences of female social studies teachers?

3. How have the experiences of female social studies teachers impacted their beliefs about gender equity between female and male social studies teachers?
Delimitations of the Study

This study examines the phenomenon of being a female social studies teacher. The subjects in this study share individual journeys that are personal and authentic to each of them. Because of the personal and authentic nature of their stories, their professional and personal journeys may or may not be shared and experienced by other female social studies teachers. Therefore, the ability to generalize this study is limited; however, the results, representing the lived experiences of twelve female social studies teachers, are powerful and important.

Definitions of Key Terms & Phrases

Coachification – The term referring to the phenomenon in social studies education whereby social studies teaching positions are offered a candidate primarily because of the candidate’s abilities to coach and secondarily because of the candidate’s abilities to teach social studies.

Equal Protection – The constitutional concept providing that the government must apply the law equally to all people without creating arbitrary or unfair discrimination between people.

Masculinization – The process of assigning characteristics to an object, environment, or institution that are thought of as being characteristics that identify maleness; the process of making an object, environment or institution male in identity.

Preservice – The time immediately before a teacher education candidate is hired in a formal position as a teacher.
Social Studies – The field of elementary and secondary education that includes government, history, economics, sociology, psychology, and other courses dealing with social activity and human behavior.

Teacher/Coach – The term used to describe a teacher who also assumes coaching responsibilities.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Examining issues pertaining to the comparative treatment of the genders, possible
gender inequities and related implications on educational issues requires an examination
of both theoretical and empirical research. The review of literature contained in this
chapter a) examines Feminist Theory; b) defines liberal feminist theory; c) explores the
evolution of citizenship education; d) discusses the relationship between women, the
teaching profession and the Women’s Rights Movement; e) discusses gender as a social
construct; f) analyzes the relationship between women and social studies education; g)
discusses the engendered nature of social studies; h) discusses the relationship between
coaching and Social Studies education; and i) discusses the topic of second career
military personnel and social studies education.

Feminist Theory

With any area of study, various theories exist in order to explain the set of related
phenomenon. These theories provide a framework for understanding and are “coherent
principles that explain and inform practice” (Winters, 2000, p. 105). This research project
is based on feminist theory in general with liberal feminism serving as the specific type
of feminist theory in which this project is based.

Within the study of feminism a number of different schools of thought exist.
However, regardless of the specifics of each view, all feminists agree that the obstacles
facing women are many and social attitude, religions, laws, and institutions have
prevented women from achieving equality (Kerr, 1999).

Though there are differences in the substance of these theories, supporters of most
feminist perspectives agree that theirs is the “organized movement which promotes
equality for men and women in political, economic and social spheres” (Stewart, 2003,
¶1). The need for this movement rests on the belief that there are gendered constructs
created by the members of society and passed on from generation to generation. The
creation and transfer of these social constructs cause feminists to “believe that women are
oppressed simply due to their sex based on the dominant ideology of patriarchy”
(Stewart, 2003, ¶1). In other words, women’s oppression is a result of the social construct
of gender and the manner in which the ideology of patriarchy perpetuates the social
construct.

Feminist research and theory attempt to understand and explain the differences in
the lives of males and females. Feminists classify these differences according to those
that are necessary versus accidental and those that are based on biology versus those that
are based on culture (Grumet & Stone, 2000). In addition, feminists theorize, “in order to
explain why gender norms are so difficult to contest” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 99). These gender
norms are created in different times and places and in different contexts. Feminists
believe that gender differences are not due solely to the biological differences between
the sexes but due to social constructs that are impacted by time, place and condition
(Winters, 2000, p. 109). This structural conceptualization, then, creates gendering as, “the
process and the gendered social order the product” (Lorber as cited in Lorber, 2000, p.
82).
Due to the different times, places and contexts that impact the creation of various social constructs, different theories of feminism developed over time. According to Lorber (2000), “men’s domination of women has not been the same throughout time and place, but varies with political, economic and family structure” (p. 82). Because the experiences of women vary, so, too, can their framework of understanding. Ahmed (2000) stated that, “feminist theory, that is, is not simply about any kind of theoretical work, or only a certain kind of theoretical work: it is produced in particular ways, in different times and places” (p. 97). To illustrate this point, Ahmed continued:

The acts of theorizing will be different, for example, for Western bourgeois feminist nomadic intellectuals who have the relative freedom to move across the globe, than it would be for women who do not have passports which allow such an ease of movement. (p. 100)

In addition to happening in different spaces where people live, feminist theorizing also happens in different ways in these different spaces (Ahmed, p. 101). This results in a variety of feminist theories as described in Table 1 (Stewart, 2003; York University, 2006).
### Table 1

**General Description of Feminist Theories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>General Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyber</td>
<td>Women should use new information &amp; technology as a means through which to empower themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Women should embrace femininity because it is better than masculinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco</td>
<td>Women’s oppression is related to the destruction &amp; degeneration of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>All people deserve equal rights; oppression of women exists as a result of socialization; women should have equal educational &amp; political opportunities; social institutions serve as a vehicle through which equality will be achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Women’s oppression can be erased &amp; women liberated by way of their material condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodern</td>
<td>Women have different reactions technologies based on their class, race, sexuality &amp; country, therefore, there is no one universal approach that is appropriate in all setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>Women’s oppression is a basic system of power upon which relationships are based; rejects most scientific theories and data because women are excluded &amp; the information is not women-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separatist</td>
<td>Women must reject heterosexual relationships because the disparities between men &amp; women are unable to be resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>Women’s oppression exists as a result of societal class structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Combining both different spaces with different ways means “feminism is not a single project or discourse” (Grumet & Stone, 2000, p. 184). As a result, the course of action adopted by feminists is not prescribed; rather, it is determined by and dependent on context (Ahmed, 2000; Wylie, 2003). This means the political, social and financial male dominance found in society is not biologically inevitable; social policy, then, that is based on biological views of equality is dangerous to achieving true equity (Fausto-Sterling, 1985).

Regardless of the theoretical framework adopted, the purpose of the framework remains the same: to explain the nature and complexities of gender inequities (Walby, 2000, p. 238). In addition, “feminist movements focus on inequities and exploitations, especially in the gendered work world and domestic division of labor” (Lorber, 2000, p. 83). This gendered division of labor creates domestic patterns; these domestic patterns then become a part of culture. Once embedded in culture, such patterns exist outside of the will of individuals and then repeat themselves as patterns in society whether individuals are aware of the pattern or not (Ermarth, 2000).

Such a perspective on culture patterns emphasizes the feminist claim that social structures based on the biological differences between males and females are not a natural occurrence but man-made (Lorber, 2000). When contextual practices survive the test of time and then are labeled as natural, we “conceal arbitrary power” (Gerson, 2002, p. 798). In order for people to live as free as possible in an environment that provides rights to all means we must question those norms we commonly accept.
Liberal Feminism

Feminist theory is not linear; it is not confined to one dimensional thinking, but, rather, the schools of feminist thought develop as a result of specific time, place, and experiences of those who develop and utilize the theory. One prominent type of feminist theory is liberal feminism, which provides the theoretical framework for this particular study. Simply stated, the objectives of liberal feminism are to secure equality of education, treatment and status (Feminist Theory, 2000; Parsons, 1990; York University, n.d.). From a supporter’s perspective,

Liberal feminists are socially disruptive: they challenge traditional views about masculinity and femininity, cite the difference in roles that men and women play in the household, the workplace and in public life as evidence of unfair treatment and agitate for remedies that employers and others regard as intrusive and burdensome. (Baber, n.d., p. 7)

From a theoretical perspective, liberal feminist theory rests on reason as a shared characteristic between men and women, the power of knowledge to bring about social change, value of the individual and the existence of unalienable rights that are not contingent on time, place or location. Liberal feminism asserts that gender equality can be achieved through legal means and social reforms. Total isolation of the individual emphasizes the self-reliance, personal liberty and independence needed by the individual to achieve gender equality. According to early feminist Wollstonecraft (1790), rationality is a characteristic defined not by gender but by humanness; therefore, women must be empowered with the same freedom in making life decisions. The ability to reason is a
human ability and not held as an exclusive characteristics due to one’s maleness nor is it lacking in a woman’s life simply because of her femaleness.

According to Lorber (2005), the sources of gender inequality include the following “gendered socialization of children, women’s primary responsibility for childcare and household maintenance, division of work into women’s jobs and men’s jobs, devaluation and low pay for women’s jobs and restricted entry in to top employment positions” (p. 26). An analysis of these five sources reveals that they are rooted in social constructs and not biologically predetermined characteristics. For example, the process of socializing children rests on preconceived social gender roles. Much of this socialization takes place in schools – places where sexual and gender identities are developed (Crocco, 2001). These identities are based on roles society has prescribed to the sexes because males are males and females are females. These roles create gender bias and this socialization continues to perpetuate the cycle of passing on the learned bias. As a result, gender bias is so ingrained in schools that teachers and students are oftentimes unaware of its influence (Zittleman & Sadker, 2002).

It is important to note that because the liberal tradition is a reform movement rather than a revolution of ideology its advocates have faith in the liberal institutions, such as the legislatures and the courts (Johnson, 1999). Because men and women deserve the same type of legal protection and status, liberal feminists work within the gendered system with the goal of ridding the system of the gender discrimination that exists (Lorber, 2005). The institutions provide the means through which equal legal protection and status will be secured; the legal system serves as the major vehicle used to purge the
system of gender discrimination and help free women from the patriarchal gender roles (Lorber, 2005; Feminist Theory, 2000).

It follows, then, that liberal feminist theory is grounded in the belief that formal equality under the law is enough to eliminate male-female inequality. However, some critics of liberal feminist theory contend that supporters do not acknowledge the psychological differences between men and women. Some liberal feminists respond by stating that it is not their intent to prove that there are no biological differences but to ask whether these differences account for the discrepancies in power, prestige, and roles between men and women (Baber, n.d.; Fausto-Sterling, 1985). Certainly, liberal feminist theorists assert, such differences are not the cause of these discrepancies; rather, it is the cultural constructs.

In her 1790 writing, A Vindication of the Rights of Man, Wollstonecraft based her belief of an equality between the sexes on the idea that reason is a gift from God given to all of humanity and the responsibility individuals have to fully develop this gift. Therefore, all human beings, whether male or female, should be empowered to exercise reason by making choices and accepting responsibility. Wollstonecraft (1790) believed women’s disposition was a result of how they were treated in society and not because of any law of nature. Liberal feminist theory asserts, then, that reason and personhood, and, therefore, the related legal statuses are not to be defined in terms of maleness but in terms of humanness (Gerson, 2002, p. 798). For the liberal feminist, this is the essence of the struggle; that is, that women achieve the same citizenship rights possessed by and guaranteed to all men while also recognizing those needs and characteristics that are unique to women (Armstrong, 2002).
The struggle for equal citizenship rights requires an examination of the nature and definition of citizenship and rights. For liberalism, the purpose of rights is to protect a person’s ability to act independently, to act without having to depend on or refer to someone else (Gerson, 2002). These rights exist regardless of social constructs based on gender. Equality, then, is established by virtue of one person holding the same rights as another.

Taking into consideration contact, that is, time and place, liberal feminists do not push for or advocate for universal norms (Ahmed, 2000; Wylie, 2003). Wylie stated that “it is important to recognize that in the contestation of culture some women may opt for norms that seem oppressive to others – like choosing to wear the burqua as a statement of identity or as a means of evading harassment” (p. 221). Every person must be guaranteed the rights needed to live a fully free life; the manner in which those rights are extended must not be oppressive but, rather, facilitative. There must be opportunities for people to draw upon and celebrate what is revered and not harmful about culture. In essence, liberal feminism does not, “oppose nature to culture or individuality to society, but rather sees the ability to achieve autonomous personhood as dependent on social conditions” (Gerson, 2002, p. 794).

Critics of liberal feminist theory find this lack of a universal focus to be a weakness of this school of thought. MacKinnon (1989) specifically stated that because liberal feminists view rights as being granted to individuals as individuals then violations of these rights can only be treated on an individual basis. For example, such an approach enables the feminist theorist to view the harm pornography inflicts on an individual woman but prevents a liberal feminist from seeing the collective harm pornography
commits against women as members of a group. It is important to maintain a collective view regarding rights and rights violations in order to see the way, “individual personal events can manifest and replicate societal structures of inequality” (Schwartzman, 1999, p. 37). In essence, Schwartzman (1999) asserted that in order for liberal feminism to be effective, the components of social relations of power must be understood and this happens through a collective view.

However, this individual approach is needed in order to be sensitive to one’s social conditions; a collective approach, that is, a push for universal norms, requires a disregard for individual social conditions. These two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, for it is through a collective denial of rights that the individual members of a group can mobilize for action. This is the manner in which the legal inequalities of women in the United States were recognized and addressed.

Throughout the history of the United States, women’s legal personalities depended on and derived from men. Adopting her husband’s surname at marriage, needing her husband’s permission to acquire or change citizenship and submitting her income under her husband’s tax file provide examples of that dependence (Gerson, 2002). Even attempting to reclassify and redefine a legal status does not diminish the gender bias on which the status was originally based. This point is illustrated with the change in the “‘reasonable man’ standard to evaluate certain action. In recent years, bowing to gender sensitivities, the standard has been renamed the ‘reasonable person standard’” (Noddings, 1992, p. 233). Legal theorists recognize that in identifying reasonable behavior, what is reasonable for a woman may not be reasonable for a man. The reasonable person standard has been developed in a culture based on masculine
components and does not take into account women’s experiences (Taylor, 1986). Simply changing the name of the standard does not erase the gender bias or address the social context in which the legal standard was created.

**Citizenship Education**

Since the time of Aristotle, gender and citizenship have long been linked to each other and, historically, citizenship is a masculine construction. Rationality, a characteristic associated with men, was valued over emotion and passion, characteristics associated with women; it was the rational who should be politically active in the public realm (Tupper, 2002). Aristotle believed that women should not spend too much of their energy on rational activity; women, then, engaged only in the familial, which was a part of the private realm of life (Parsons, 1990; Tupper, 2002). Women’s obligations to society were rooted in service to the private realm as invested in the family unit.

Based on Aristotlean thinking, United States citizenship, including those associated rights such as the franchise, has historically been limited on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender and class (Crocco, 2000). Though disenfranchising people who belonged to these categories represented the denial of one of the most basic rights of citizen, the impact was felt in other areas of life, particularly for women. Women could be taxed but they had no say in their representation; a women who married a non-citizen lost her American citizenship; for decades married women did not control their own property and wages; and all women were denied the right to sit on juries (Crocco, 2000). Just like the women of Aristotle’s time, women in the United States pledged their allegiance to their men and not to their country.
As the Women’s Rights Movement gained momentum during the second wave of feminism, various legal protections were granted to women that helped to erase a number of these discriminatory practices and empower women to claim their citizenship.

According to Shklar (1991), women longed for complete citizenship status because the status included, (a) one’s standing, or right to be recognized in society; (b) citizenship as nationality, which is one’s legal status; (c) active participation in civic life, or one’s political status; and (d) citizenship as the ideal republican, or one’s moral status. Citizenship, therefore, should not be defined by the one dimensional act of voting because the relationship a citizen forges with the state extends beyond the ballot box. In other words, full citizenship status cannot be assumed to have been experienced once disenfranchised groups were granted the right of the vote. Denying a person of the holistic status of citizenship with the state strips the person not only of a political voice and economic protection but dishonors the person as well (Crocco, 2000).

Using this expanded definition of citizenship impacts the liberal tradition; citizenship should be based on the possession of the rights an individual holds – rights that exist simply because an individual is a part of the state (Tupper, 2002). Such a standing must not be based on gender, ethnicity, race, religion or class; is it a standing based on one’s humanness.

With this broader definition of citizenship, social studies education is greatly impacted; it is, after all, the “school subject that aims at instilling citizenship education” (Crocco, 2000, p. 53). This expanded definition means that the private sphere of life must be included alongside the public sphere of life. This means that the elements related to the home and family become a part of citizenship defined (Noddings, 1992; Tupper,
2002). Such a focus on social life creates the understanding that life and citizenship development begin in the home; this focus validates the domestic roles that women have fulfilled for hundreds of years and reminds us that the emphasis in citizenship should not be solely on the public political activities in which people engage; the contributions that add to the stability of the state are as varied as the people themselves (Crocco, 2000; Noddings, 1992; Tupper, 2002).

With a redefining of citizenship, social studies curriculum must, therefore, include gender studies. This enables the students to understand the creation of gender roles, the history of these roles and the manner in which these roles impact them now and in their future development (Hewitt, 2004). Because social studies educators possess interests in citizenship education, they are in a unique position to consider gender and sexual identity (Crocco, 2001).

Goodlad (1997) also emphasized the need for citizenship education. Beginning first with the assertion that education is a right held by all people, the need for universal education of a people is important, if not vital, to the continued success of a community and of a nation. Students, therefore, must then be provided the opportunity to receive an education that teaches them the importance of their political culture. According to Goodlad (1997), “a political democracy requires for its sustenance the reiteration of truths and widespread allegiance to them” (p. 25). This type of education comes through the role played by the social studies teacher and the social studies classroom, for this is where student learn about the civic truths and values of their country. This is also the arena in which students are taught about their responsibility in keeping their political life alive and thriving in such a way that it is preserved for future generations.
Women, the Teaching Profession and the Women’s Rights Movement

Being a teacher carries cultural meanings. From the perspective of gender, being a teacher is seen as an ideal profession for women because it is compatible with the responsibilities for raising children, a duty historically reserved to women. Schopenhauer (n.d.) stated:

Women are suited to being nurses and teacher of our earliest childhood precisely because they themselves are childish, silly and short-sighted, in a word big children, their whole lives long; a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the man, who is the actual human being, “man.” (p. 57)

This feminization of the teaching profession is a direct result of the social structures found in the family. The structures produced in the family are transferred to the larger world; this results in what we call sex roles, which are imposed on a variety of activities in which gender is irrelevant. As a result, during the 19th century, it was rationalized that women should be teachers due to their ability to nurture and not because of the work of education; teaching, then, is viewed as a domestic occupation (Biklen, 1995). Women were socially situated and expected to be caregivers; therefore, because teaching required many of the same qualities, it was only natural that women became teachers (Hoffman, Dechausay, Lamb, & Sabnis, 2000). This perception distorted the ability to view women as academic scholars in their chosen fields of education as people believed, and oftentimes believe today, that women choose the teaching profession primarily to be caregivers.

These structural constraints as embodied in gendered roles limited women’s employment opportunities for centuries in this country (Biklen, 1995). In addition,
choosing teaching as a profession resulted in two primary social criticisms. First, those who selected the teaching profession were labeled as having failure of ambition; second, there was an intellectual insult associated with being a teacher. Even as women started to break the gender barriers in careers, a new social phenomenon developed that continues today; as more women populate a profession, the status of that profession is diminished (Biklen, 1995).

Once a woman makes her way into a profession dominated by men, her chances of advancement seem to be stymied by a phenomenon known as the “glass ceiling” (Williams, 2000, p. 298). In essence, women find themselves “constrained by invisible barriers to promotions in their careers, caused mainly by sexist attitudes of men in the highest position” (Freeman as cited in Williams, 2000).

On the other hand, a man who enters a profession traditionally predominated by women experiences a different phenomenon known as the “glass escalator” (Williams 2000). Men believe they are at an advantage when seeking employment in fields dominated by women. In addition, men perceive this status to put them at an advantage when pursuing promotions (Williams, 2000). In addition, in Williams’ research (2000), men reported they were often pushed into seeking advanced positions even if they were not interested in such advancement. Oftentimes it was male supervisors who encouraged the male employees to seek these positions. These men experienced invisible advantages in advancing in the employment area; many times, when they were not interested in advancing, they had to work to stay right where they were, fighting for the ability to remain in their current position (Williams, 2000).
Even though some men fought hard to remain in the predominantly female positions, many men viewed the advancement as a way out of the job that caused, “internal conflicts involving their masculinity” (Williams, 2000, p. 299). Such a perception is evidence of the engendered stereotyping occurring in various professions.

Williams (2000) also reported that men who remained in the predominantly female fields were more likely to be supervised by other males than women were to be supervised by other women. Specifically, in elementary education a male elementary education teacher was more likely to be supervised by a male principal than was a female teacher likely to be supervised by a female principal. This underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in education represents another phenomenon deserving of inquiry and analysis for a number of reasons. First, the teaching profession is 71% female and 29% male (Feistritzer, 1992); such a disproportionate representation of women in leadership is of concern. Second, the male dominance in educational leadership could be yet another situation in which power and authority are labeled as components belonging to men, which is an engendered line of thinking.

The gendering of the teaching profession manifested itself in a variety of ways specific to the working conditions of female teachers. First, as men made education their profession of choice, disparity in pay between men and women was obvious. Table 2 reflects data reported by Coffman regarding teacher pay for male and female teachers in 1900 (as cited in Carter, 2002). Interestingly, the data from 1900 reflects information recorded 47 years after Susan B. Anthony first pushed for equal pay for female teachers (Carter, 2000).
Table 2.

Comparison of Teacher Salaries

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Male Teacher Salary</th>
<th>Female Teacher Salary</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$534</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$658</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$1083</td>
<td>$688</td>
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The pay disparity emphasized the importance of the gender of the teachers rather than the actual tasks completed by the teachers. Men were paid more than women simply because women were women and women were assumed to be less qualified simply because they were women (Darling & Glendinning, 1996).

Proponents of pay disparities justified these differences by explaining that men deserved to be paid more because they would eventually be promoted to administrative positions. The presence of women in educational administration was seen only in the position of elementary principals and that was due to the fact that men did not compete for those positions. However, women administrators were not seen on the secondary or central office level (Carter, 2000).

In addition to this economic influence, control over female teachers was exerted through the human body and marital status. Body control ranged from prescribing dress codes for females teachers that prohibited them from wearing pants. In addition, for
decades women who were pregnant or became pregnant while teaching were not permitted to be employed as teachers (Biklen, 1995). Women teachers who were married were not hired as teachers and women teachers who were hired prior to getting married were not contractually renewed or were expected to resign from their teaching position (Carter, 2002). These marriage bars were implemented first, because women who married became socially situated to be homemakers and second, it was believed that married women did not need their own income (Darling & Glendinning, 1996).

Regardless of a woman’s marital status, if she desired to work as a teacher, social stigma was attached to her life. If a female teacher remained single, she was seen as odd and unattractive. On the other hand, if a female teacher married and continued teaching, she was viewed as greedy and neglecting her domestic duties (Darling & Glendinning, 1996).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women mobilized for social change. Creating and joining organizations that focused specifically on female teachers, their participation in these organizations whose members advocated for legal changes in the treatment of women was viewed as liberal feminist activity, specifically during the 1970’s (Marshall, 2002). The formation of such coalitions among female teachers served as, “evidence of their marginalization within the profession and the degree to which teachers’ goals corresponded to the objectives of the American Women’s Movement at large” (Carter, 2002, p. 33). This mobilization impacted both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers (Carter, 2002). Specifically, the number of women holding leadership positions in local teachers’ associations increased, leading to a greater involvement on the part of the national affiliates with women’s issues
and salary inequalities (Marshall, 2002). For the women themselves, their participation demonstrated a level of confidence in their ability to bring about change (Carter, 2002).

By the 1950’s, as women continued to resist the gender mistreatment, they were met with great resistance. In their 1947 publication, Modern Women: The Lost Sex, Lundberg and Farnham stated, “The central thesis of this book is that contemporary women in very large numbers are psychologically disordered and that their disorder is having terrible social and personal effects involving men in all departments of their lives as well as women” (p. v). This statement effectively underscores the social station women maintained as recently as 63 years ago. Women who advocated for equal treatment were not only viewed as disordered but the disorder was viewed in terms of its negative impact on men.

By the 1970’s, the Women’s Rights Movement pushed for legislation that provided women with the rights, employment protections, economic benefits, and educational opportunities more readily accessible to men. Specifically, much of this political activity during this time focused on extending labor rights to women, providing for equal pay for equal work, childcare and pregnancy leaves (Marshall, 2002).

The important role of female teachers during the Women’s Rights Movement is multifaceted. According to Kessler-Harris (1983) there were several obstacles that hindered the fight against inequitable treatment of working women. First, women had to tread lightly for fear that challenging their status quo could disrupt their ability to retain employment and necessity of income. Second, working women did not have union protection. Third, as a result of this lack of protection, working women did not possess negotiating skills needed to deal with the disparities in salary and employment
protections and benefits. Finally, working women were fearful of advocating for themselves and a better position in life and the possible social stigma that could result.

The position of female teachers adequately addressed each of those obstacles. First, as college educated people, female teachers possessed a status not held by all female workers of the time. Second, their professional experiences and membership in professional associations helped female teachers develop the negotiating skills that could be used to advocate legally, professionally, and socially for the changes needed for all working women (Kessler-Harris, 1983).

The essence of liberal feminist theory is effectively reflected in the relationship fostered between women, the teaching profession and the Women’s Rights Movement. Females in the teaching profession were able to mobilize in a manner that brought about significant legal, professional and social changes not just for female teachers but for all women. These female teachers greatly impacted the direction and impact of the Women’s Rights Movement.

**Gender as a Social Construct**

Feminist theorists draw a distinction between *sex* and gender. Sex refers to the biological and anatomical difference between males and females; gender refers to the socially constructed roles and relationships between men and women (Ward-Hood & Cassaro, 2002). As a result of these gender based relationships, males and females typically have different roles in life. These different roles are a result of social processes to which children are exposed during their development; these processes shape them into behaving in socially desirable, sex appropriate ways (Govier, 1998). Males and females
are socialized to perceive behaviors differently, believing certain social-sexual behaviors as appropriate or inappropriate based solely on one’s gender (Hang-yue, Foley, Wong, & Loi, 2003). This process impacts educational, employment and professional career choices individuals make. This leads people to occupations seen as appropriate for their sex. In the end, we realize gender deals with the roles and responsibilities assigned to us according to these social constructs (Crocco, 2000). These matters of gender, which are deeply connected with issues of career, define what it means to live a successful life (Noddings, 1992).

In addition, these social constructs manifest themselves in socially assigned gender characteristics. The socially identified and assigned attributes of masculinity include self-reliance, individualism, ambition, dominance and the ability to lead, The socially identified and assigned attributes of femininity include kindness, being affectionate, being eager to soothe hurt feelings, reflecting a dimension of expressiveness and communality (Colley, 1998). In turn, society, including mass media, parents, teachers, and peers encourage boys to be masculine and girls to be feminine (Lorber, 2005). According to Connell (1990)

A banal but perhaps largely correct explanation is that patriarchy is so firmly entrenched in existing political institutions, such as bureaucracy, and the press, and the major parties, that in the normal run of things no more is needed; state and media substitute for a mobilization of men. (p. 532)

Unlike the need of women to mobilize during the Women’s Rights Movement, men have no such need. Simply put, the patriarchal structure of society is so deeply engrained in
everyday life through everyday social institutions that men do not need to mobilize with each other; society continues to mobilize on behalf of men everyday.

According to Carter (2002), schools are also patriarchal structures and these structures are resistant to change because change threatens the power holders. These patriarchal power holders are in a position to socialize the less powerful underscoring the manner in which power becomes central to the relationships found in the school (Thorne, 1997). When schools operate in accordance with male norms, females who are a part of those schools are forced into masculine roles if they hope to be successful, as success is defined and measured by those male norms (Carter, 2002). In addition, adults in schools excuse and even accept boys’ displays of masculine superiority because of contempt feminine things (Thorne, 1997). This gendering of boys and girls combined with the patriarchal structure of society have resulted in gender roles that are dysfunctional for both young women and men (Crocco, 2001).

**Women & Social Studies Teacher Education**

Social studies as a subject has been constructed by men. The traditional topics and teachings of the subject area are those that in general are associated with men (Hurren, 2002). The strong, dominating presence of men and lack of women in the social studies curriculum appears to be matched by the percentages of males and females enrolled in social studies teacher education programs. In studies that analyzed the reason teacher education students chose social studies as their content area, Weller and Smith (1999) and Connors (2000) reported the following percentages of male and female social studies teacher education students at three mid-western universities:
• Kansas State University: 65% males; 33% females
• University of Northern Iowa: 68% males; 32% females
• Ball State University: 70.7% males; 29.3% females

With such disparity between males and females the journey to reach gender balance in social studies education remains challenging. More recent statistics are not available.

In addition to reporting the disparity of female social studies teacher education students as compared to males enrolled at the University of Regina, Hurren (2002) uncovered gender disparity in the number of male and female social studies education faculty supervisors and in the number of male and female social studies education cooperating teachers students. In 1997, the University of Regina registered 14 social studies teacher education students with seven males and seven females. All 14 teacher education students were supervised by male faculty advisors; 11 of these students were placed with male cooperating teachers while three were placed with female cooperating teachers. In 1998, 17 social studies teacher education students were registered with 10 males and seven women. All 17 of the students were supervised by male faculty advisors; 14 of these students were placed with male cooperating teachers while three were placed with female cooperating teachers. In a five year period, the University of Regina registered 79 social studies teacher education students. 75 of these students were supervised by male faculty advisors and four were supervised by female faculty advisors; 63 of these students were placed with male cooperating teachers while 16 were placed with female cooperating teachers (Hurren, 2002).

These numbers indicate something gendered is happening to the structure of the subject area. The construction of a subject is impacted by the gendered body count of
those in the field (Hurren, 2002). As a result, the presence of males and lack of a balanced presence of females in the social studies field emphasize the masculinity of the field and combine with the engendered curriculum and resources to present social studies as a field belonging to men.

In addition to the disparity in numbers between male and female social studies teacher education students, there are other concerns in this area of professional training. Zittleman and Sadker (2002) reported that sexism in social studies teacher education texts persists. This presents a serious threat to the authenticity of the students’ academic experience in social studies classes. When teacher education students are exposed to texts that are laden with sexism, the gender bias is reinforced and the inequities are not addressed and corrected.

Crocco (2001) and Brown (2000) each reported that few teacher education programs address the issue of gender. As a result of this failure, future social studies teachers never confront their own attitudes about the sexist patterns that exist in schools. From a classroom perspective, future teachers then lack the strategies needed to help students discover and understand women in history. This means students remain uninformed and unable to appreciate contributions of women in American society (Zittleman & Sadker, 2002). If social studies educators, future and current, fail to provide students an authentic academic journey, the cycle of gendered inequalities is perpetuated. This occurrence violates the very spirit of the purpose of social studies.

When female social studies teachers are present in the classroom, they provide a positive impact, specifically for female students. Fouts (1990) reported that when female students had a female social studies teacher, the female students (a) were less likely to
name social studies as their least favorite class than were female students who had a male social studies teacher, (b) expected to receive higher grades, (c) stated they were more interested in the social studies class, and (d) identified themselves as highly involved in the class. The differences between the females who had female social studies teachers and the females who had male social studies teachers can be explained as follows: (a) the female teachers brought unique perspectives to the classrooms, (b) the female teachers employed different methodologies, (c) the female teachers created a learning environment that interested girls, and (d) it could have been the first time the female students encountered a female role model who was enthusiastic about and committed to the field of social studies (Fouts, 1990).

The presence of a teacher with whom girls can identify on the basis of gender is a powerful component of the educational experience for the girls. Penn (2001) identified the following as components that are present in the education of successful adolescent girls: (a) the teacher’s gender-role identity, (b) the belief by the teacher that girls are important, (c) teachers who value and celebrate diversity, (d) teachers who recognize that school is a gendered community, and (e) teachers who recognize the gender of equity is not just for girls but boys as well. In addition, a female teacher can help foster positive attitudes among female students towards the field of social studies. McTeer and Beasley (1977) reported that males were more positive than girls with regard to their attitudes towards social studies. A possible reason for “gender differences in attitudes toward social studies was the dominant role of males in subjects such as history and government” (Corbin, 1994, p. 4). Based on these data, increasing the number of women in the field of social studies education could improve the attitudes and possibly interests of female
students in social studies. Shakib and Dunbar (2004) reported that, “individuals are considered more likely to imitate the behaviors of same sex role models,” (p. 277); therefore, one can clearly understand the positive impact a quality female social studies teacher can have in the lives of young female students.

In studying the effectiveness of the use of oralized history in social studies classrooms, Hamer (1998) reported that students remember the stories about history told to them by their teachers based on their teachers’ personal perspectives better than information transferred through lecture and textbook readings. Hamer (1998) also reported these stories, formed in part by the teachers’ personal experiences, were inherently masculine. This is an important discovery of which to take note due to the fact that half of the high school population is comprised of females and, given that most high school history is male-dominated and the stories masculinized, the female historical perspective continues to remain untold.

Hamer (1998) also reported though teachers used oralized history, students seldom had the opportunity to practice their story telling. Combined with the predominately masculine stories told by the teachers, female student voices are less likely to be heard, a finding also reported by Sadker, Sadker, Fox and Salata (2000).

**The Engendered Social Studies Curriculum**

There is evidence identifying and documenting what is now known among social studies education experts as the engendered social studies curriculum (Sanford, 2002). The information presented in a social studies class is driven by both the curriculum and the textbooks used in class and both are structured with a masculine tone.
Much of current social studies curricula is an outgrowth of the curricula traditionally used in boys schools and appeal to the public lives of males. Today, the curricula in elementary and secondary schools remain very much the same (Sadker, et al., 2000). Male and female social studies students are exposed to an engendered curriculum that tells a partial history (Sanford, 2002) and that provides rare glimpses of women in curricula. As a result, interest in social studies is not generated when exclusionary language is used and a lack of female role models leaves the impression that leadership, power, and authority belong to men while the characteristics traditionally associated with females is treated as irrelevant.

Curriculum serves as the basis of discourse between the teacher and students; a discourse that helps students to make sense of their world (Crocco, 2003). When females are left out of the curriculum they find no interest in or connection to social studies when that exclusionary language is used and young women are not empowered to understand who they are and how they are entitled to a public voice in society (Levstik, 1997). According to Kumashiro (2001), this silence and exclusion are significant parts of a “hidden curriculum that sanctions the partial and oppressive knowledge already in schools and society” (p. 5).

In addition to the information left out of the curriculum, the information included in the curriculum presents an engendered, limited view of social studies. Kumashiro (2001) reported:

For example, when US history curricula focus on political leaders, military conflicts, and industrial inventors, they are including the voices, experiences, and
perspectives of only certain groups in society, namely the privileged. Left silenced or pushed to the margins are such topics as the gendered division of labor. (p. 4)

The content of social studies curricula presents an incomplete story of humankind. The language of the social studies curriculum continues to reflect the patriarchal world (Sadker et al., 2000; Sanford, 2002). By focusing on the achievements of men in the public realm and paying little, if any, attention to women, the power of shared understanding expressed through personal language that connects people together is forsaken (Crocco, 2003; Tetreault, 1986). This approach to curriculum, and eventually instruction, continues to support the masculine model of schools (Sanders, 2000).

A reconstruction of the social studies curriculum is not only needed, it is vital in order to remain true to social studies. Certainly, such a reconstruction is challenging as creating a more gender equitable curriculum requires us to reconsider what counts as valid knowledge in schools (Levstik & Groth, 2002).

Textbooks

Sanders (2000) reported that social studies textbooks portray men and women in gender stereotypical roles coupled with masculine language. Sadker et al., (2000), reported that of the social studies books reviewed only two percent of the space was devoted to women. Of the six social studies textbooks analyzed by Zittleman and Sadker (2002) only 2.5% of the content covered issues of sexism and the experiences of women. In addition, the textbooks portrayed women in the role of teachers two times more than men and men were seen in the role of principal five times more than women, leaving the
impression that administration and school leadership are fields designed specifically and solely for men (Sadker et al., 2000; Zittleman & Sadker, 2002).

In addition, the lack of female role models in the posters, videos and texts offered in classrooms leaves the impression with young women that leadership, power and authority belong in the world of men (Sanford, 2002). The field of political history is the analysis of power and control. With the absence of women in the curriculum, women appear politically powerless and without importance (Levstik, 1997).

According to Kuzmic (2000), social studies educators must “examine how textbooks, as curricular and cultural text, construct and define masculinity in particular ways,” and to examine, “the ways in which schools serve as social, political and cultural sites where patriarchy is not only manifested and maintained, but may also be contested” (p. 105). Textbooks are powerful tools used in the classroom by educators and students. With a narrow, restrictive curriculum, all students are not empowered with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in all facets of life (Foran, 2008). The visual and textual representation of information is impressionable and convincing, oftentimes viewed by students as truth. However, what is perceived as truth in representation is not always truth in substance.

**Coaching & Social Studies Education**

Competitive interscholastic athletics have evolved into an element of education that carries with it an important status in high schools throughout the United States. In addition, high school athletics is dominated by male sports (Lesko, 2002). The experience a student receives when a part of a team can play a positive role in their
socialization, nevertheless, it is possible for schools to create an environment that is dominated by male athletes and their respective teams. When such domination is pervasive in the school culture, discipline, policies and educational goals are based on the male athlete experience (Lesko, 2002). As a result, competitive athletics are masculinizing a part of the school culture.

Historically, masculinity and nationalism are both linked through sports (Lesko, 2002). One can prove physical strength through sport and physical strength is a masculine characteristic. For many athletes there is no greater honor than to compete athletically in the name of one’s country or in a manner that demonstrates a country’s domination in the athletic arena. When one demonstrates pride of country through successful athletic competition, regardless of the level of play, then the individual’s legal status, known as citizenship, is respected by the state. This cycle perpetuates the social construct of masculinized citizenship. Lesko stated, “The social relations of sports create a small group of privileged males who dominate women and lower status men” (p. 198).

Although the masculinization component of interscholastic athletics is an issue impacting teachers of all subjects, not just social studies, this phenomenon is important to this research project for three reasons. First, masculinizing a culture in which half of the members of the community could theoretically be females means the voices of half of the community are quieted if not silenced. Second, such an environment means there is not equal treatment for all students regardless of sex. This is especially disturbing to the liberal feminist, a classification discussed in Chapter 3: Methodology. Finally, such a culture should be disturbing to social studies teachers as it violates some of the very
principles of equal protection and equal treatment that are the focus of much of what is taught in the social studies curriculum.

**Pre-service Social Studies Teachers & Coaching**

When thinking back on their elementary and secondary school years, most people might find it easy to identify one or more social studies teachers who also coached in the athletic department. Perhaps these memories influence preservice social studies teacher to believe that one must be willing to coach in order to be hired into a position teaching social studies (Chiodo, Martin, & Rowan, 2002). As a matter of fact, social studies preservice teachers possess a considerable interest in coaching as a means of securing employment. Specifically, Chiodo et al. (2002) reported,

- Science and social studies preservice teachers possessed a considerable interest in coaching as a means of securing a job;
- A significant number of preservice teachers believed that being willing to coach is an important factor in obtaining a teaching position; this effect was due largely to the response of the social studies majors;
- 38% of the preservice social studies teachers ranked coaching as the most important activity in helping to secure a teaching position, a ranking more important than teaching in one’s content area.

As a social studies department chairperson, I have noticed the high percentage of male applicants who have expressed an interest in coaching. In addition, it is not unusual for me to receive a letter of application from a male applicant in which his coaching ambitions are the focal point of the letter rather than an expression of a desire to teach.
According to Weller (2002), although factors such as rigor of curriculum, influence by an inspirational social studies teacher and importance of curriculum to everyday life impacted the decision of preservice teachers to choose social studies, the opportunity to coach influenced many of the preservice teachers to select the field of social studies. In addition, with regard to the number of participants who indicated they choose social studies because they wanted to coach, the male participants responded, “considerably higher than did females. It appears that consistently more males are choosing to teach Geography and social studies because they want to coach than do females” (p. 133).

Certainly the desire to coach is not an inherently negative one. However, when a person is motivated to join the teaching profession because it is the means through which to gain a coaching position, the teacher probably enters the classroom with the coaching obligations para.mount to the teaching responsibilities; this could result in a negative impact on the teaching performance.

Of course, female teacher candidates are able to make the decision to coach while also teaching. However, the number and percentage of female coaches on both the interscholastic and collegiate levels have decreased steadily and consistently over the past 35 years (Gregory, 2007; Hasbrook, 1988; Stromquist, 1993; Tucker Center, 2009). The reasons for the decrease in numbers are first, that women left their coaching positions and second, these coaching vacancies were not filled by other female coaches. The reasons for the decrease in the percentage of female coaches are first, the number of available coaching positions increased and second, the majority of those new positions were filled by male coaches (Gregory, 2007; Hasbrook, 1988; Stromquist, 1993).
Although the decrease in the number and percentage of female coaches represents a gender based issue deserving of independent, in-depth research, the issue is made applicable to social studies teacher education for a specific reason. Weller (2002) reported that many educators “wonder why coaching responsibilities seem to fall to teachers of geography and social studies more than to teachers of other disciplines” (p. 133). Therefore, if coaching responsibilities are given mostly to social studies teachers and the number and percentage of female interscholastic coaches are declining, the question one must ask is whether female social studies teachers are being squeezed out of the pool of viable teacher candidates and kept out of the classroom as a result of the coachification effect of the desirability of a coaching credential for social studies teachers.

That was the case for at least one female social studies teacher. The candidate had been rejected for 13 social studies teaching positions because of the coaching requirements (the qualifications for which were listed in the job announcement before the teaching qualifications). This woman was rejected not based on her teaching abilities but because she lacked coaching qualifications (Weller, 2002).

Finally, a teacher/coach sometimes views the coaching responsibilities as the primary job in the dual roles (Massengale, 1981; Templin & Washburn, 1981). As a result, the teacher/coach experiences role conflict. Eventually, the teacher/coach realizes there is a greater chance of being fired for losing as a coach than for teaching deficits and inadequacies. As a result of the role conflict and the pressure to win, the teacher/coach finds the coaching more attractive than the teaching (Rog, 1984) and then chooses to focus primarily on the coaching performance and not the teaching performance.
**Administrators & the Hiring of Social Studies Teachers**

Oftentimes, administrators perpetuate the stereotype of male coaches dominating the social studies department due to their specific hiring practices. Addressing students enrolled in a social studies methods course, a group of administrators informed the students that if they have two social studies applicants, one of whom is able to coach, the administrators would select the one who could coach when making the hiring decision (Weller & Smith, 1999). Administrators hire the most qualified coach, not being concerned about the mastery of social studies content because principals believe anyone can teach social studies (Adomanis, 1986); such an approach to hiring social studies teachers has produced a serious impact on social studies education, as 60% of those teaching history are not certified/licensed to teach in the field (Loewen, 2007).

In addition, this means those coaches who are hired to teach social studies enter the classroom without the needed theoretical background nor skills preparation needed for the content area (Stellwagen, 1997). This is concerning because if social studies instruction is to effectively reach the students in the classroom, “there is simply no alternative to the thorough education of teachers in the subject matters of the curriculum, methods, and their interrelationships” (Thornton, 2001).

Administrators can also add pressure to the dual role of the teacher/coach by viewing the coaching responsibilities as paramount to the teacher profession (Massengale, 1981). This added pressure is yet another component focusing the energies of the teacher/coach on the coaching performance and not the teaching performance.
**Classroom Environment**

Fouts (1989) examined the classroom environment differences between coaching and non-coaching social studies teachers. Using the Classroom Environment Scale (CES), students’ perceptions of their social studies classes were measured. The CES measured four dimensions and the related subscales. The first dimension, relationship, included the subscales of involvement, affiliation and teacher support; the second dimension, personal development, included the subscales of task orientation and competition; the third dimension, system maintenance, included the subscales of order and organization, rule clarity and teacher control; and the fourth dimension, system change, included the subscale of innovation. Fouts (1989) reported that, although there were no statistically significant differences between the coaching teachers and non-coaching teachers in the first three dimensions, data revealed statistically significant differences in the fourth dimension of systems change. Essentially, Fouts (1989) reported, this means the non-coaching social studies teachers were more innovative in their teaching practices than were their coaching counterparts.

In their replication study, Van Deraa and Schug (1993) reported two different findings. First, in their study, the classrooms with coaching teachers had higher scores in all three parts of the relationship dimension: involvement, affiliation and teacher support; however, only the teacher support scale was significantly significant. Second, in the personal development dimension, the classrooms with noncoaching teachers had a higher mean score in task orientation, with a medium effect size. In summary, this seems to indicate noncoaching teachers have a greater effectiveness than coaching teachers in keeping students on task (Van Deraa & Schug, 1993).
With regard to Fouts’ (1989) finding regarding the lack of innovation, one possible explanation for the lack of innovation rests on the manner in which coaches in the classroom use their coaching strategies. Coaching strategies, whether used in the classroom or athletic playing field, enhance skill learning; however, such strategies do not enhance discovery learning (Stellwagen, 1997).

Jenne (1997) reported that innovation in the teaching practices in the social studies field is vitally important. Social studies teachers not only need a mastery of content but appropriate methods that will present and deliver the information effectively during instruction (Thornton, 2001). Goodlad and Adler both concluded that the reason K-12 students in public schools dislike social studies more than any other subject is because the content is presented in a way that removes human character and reduced to memorization, while most instruction in social studies classes centers around lecture, textbook work and worksheets (as cited in Chiodo & Byford, 2004).

Adler (1984) stated that effective teachers are able to implement quality methods while in the classroom. Addressing the issue of effective instruction specifically in the history and social studies classrooms, Adler emphasized the need to use three specific types of teaching, which are coaching, lecturing and discussion. Coaching, which is the giving of reading assignments followed by recitation in class, does not mean rote memorization, a method that tends to dominate a number of history and social studies classrooms. The giving of such reading assignments must be accompanied by map work, looking up of additional facts and visual materials along with quizzes. Simply requiring the social studies student to adhere to rote memorization destroys the ability of the student to become well grounded in history.
Lecturing is a teaching method in which the teacher and students use dates in an attempt to create associations among all of the material presented in class discussions and readings. This is vital to the history and social studies classroom because students must be able to draw connections between material, draw contrasts between that same materials and identify any oddities found in the material. This is how the historical mind works (Adler, 1984, p. 120).

Finally, the method of discussion is another vital tool for the social studies classroom. This method means engaging in discussions that extend beyond what the students read in the classroom textbook. As a matter of fact, exposing students to multiple sources of information during their time in social studies classes is vital to them truly understanding and challenging the information. People who experience the same historical event will most certainly recall the event in different ways and with different meanings attached to the event. Students must be exposed to those different sources that tell those different stories so as to identify how history can be lived differently with different meanings for different people who experience the same event. This provides students the opportunity to understand how it is that history and social studies truly are the telling of the human story (p. 121). Therefore, if those teaching social studies selected the career as a means through which they can acquire coaching positions rather than a passion for the field of social studies, the focus of those educators could likely be the coaching responsibilities rather than the teaching and improvement and use of effective methods; this might also explain why students find the social studies boring (Weller & Smith, 1999).
Second Career Military Personnel & Social Studies Education

Another influence on the teaching of social studies is discussed here. As a result of the G.I. Bill, also known as The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, a record number of military personnel pursued college opportunities upon returning from combat in an effort to find a second career after their World War II military service. Many of those enrolling in college pursued degrees in education hoping for a chance to teach (Greenberg, 2008; United States Department of Veterans Affairs, 2009). As former military personnel continue to seek second careers in the area of education, there are factors that specifically impact the area of social studies education.

First, Feistritzer (1992) reported that military personnel who are seeking teaching positions are focusing predominantly on securing teaching positions in the area of social studies education, a phenomenon addressed later in this section with a discussion of Jenne’s (1997) study. Specifically, 36% reported a desire to teach geography; 42% reported a desire to teach in the general area of social studies; and 45% reported a desire to teach history. The next three highest ranking fields of teaching interest were general sciences (27%), mathematics (26%), and business education (23%) (Feistritzer, 1992).

Second, military personnel who enter the social studies classroom come from a masculine institution. Females, who make-up 14% of the military population, are probably not fully accommodated in the military institution (Women’s Memorial, 2009). Oftentimes, the most significant life issues for a woman, such as pregnancy, childcare and family obligations, are not addressed by the military institution and the institution reinforces hostile attitudes towards gender integration (Shields, 1998). The second career
military personnel perhaps enter the teaching profession having been socialized in a manner that is discriminatory towards females.

Third, in his research related to second career military personnel seeking teaching positions, Jenne (1997) reported data specifically impacting social studies education. First, most second career military personnel seeking positions in the teaching profession are selecting the field of social studies teaching positions. Second, these candidates are relying more on their personal experiences and knowledge rather than pedagogical practices and research. In other words, these candidates identify their preferred teaching methods based on their experience with military training and the knowledge they identify as important is also based on their personal knowledge. This reliance on personal knowledge is common when the teacher lacks the needed content knowledge (Jenne, 1997). Given the manner in which licensing for social studies education is completed Jenne (1997) reported this phenomenon is more likely seen in social studies than any other field.

Fourth, because of the personal knowledge phenomenon, second career military teacher candidates fail to move social studies education in the needed direction. Social studies instruction has remained the same during the course of the past century despite the research indicating the need for change. The entrance of second career military teacher candidates into social studies classrooms will keep social studies stagnant.

**Summary**

This literature review examined a number of components related to the nature of this study, including feminist theory, with an emphasis on liberal feminism; citizenship
education; women, the teaching profession and the women’s rights movement; gender as a social construct; women and social studies education; the engendered social studies curriculum; coaching and social studies education; and second career military personnel and social studies education.

An examination of the existing theoretical and empirical evidences serves three important functions. First, the review provided a summary of the research that has already been completed in areas related to this study. Second, the review demonstrated the relationship between the components related to this study. Third, the review serves as an important form of preparation for and introduction to this study, which examines the lived experiences of twelve female social studies teachers.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

The primary methodology of this study was qualitative. The contextual framework is that of phenomenology. In order to capture the essence of what it means to be a secondary female social studies teacher, twelve subjects were recruited for this study. Data were collected through phenomenological interview methods. Personal conversations and interviews were used as the primary sources of data gathering. Once gathered, the data were analyzed to identify patterns, repetition of patterns and themes present in the evidence collected. The primary focus was in identifying how one’s female gender impacts her professional and personal experience as a secondary social studies teacher.

The twelve female participants, though not randomly selected, represented different geographical regions in the United States of America and possessed different levels of professional training and educational experience. In addition, the twelve subjects possessed varying years of classroom teaching experience.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is used when the researcher believes not in one social truth but in the idea that people define and describe their social reality (Boeije, 2010). Because the focus of this study was to identify the meaning constructed by the 12 participants regarding their experiences as female social studies teachers, a qualitative research approach was adopted. Merriam et al. (2002) stated, “the key to understanding qualitative...
research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their worlds” (p. 3). The purpose of this research was not to hypothesize or predict what the meaning of life is as a female social studies teacher. I did not attempt to validate the truth of the data (Creswell, 1998); rather, the purpose of the research was to allow the participants to explain the meaning as they had come to construct it based on their lived experiences, which is the purpose of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). My role was to serve as an active learner, telling the story of these 12 women from their point of view with their attached meanings to their experiences (Creswell, 1998, 2007).

Qualitative research designs possess a number of characteristics. According to Merriam (2002), the first is the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the meanings people have attached to their world; there is no attempt to predict anything in the future but to discover how individuals have experienced life and what that experience means to them. Relative to this study, no prediction was made regarding the essence of what it means to be a female social studies teacher; rather, the 12 participants described their experiences and what those experiences mean to them.

The second characteristic is the researcher serves as the primary means through which data are collected and analyzed (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). The researcher’s role as the one who collects and analyzes data is vital to the research project. Creswell (1998) stated, “the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information” (p. 19). This means the data collection procedures are rigorous for the researcher. Multiple forms of data are collected and appropriately summarized and the needed amount of time is spent in the field (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2007). The data analysis means, among other things, the researcher
works to find patterns, repetition of patterns and themes present in the collected data. This requires the researcher to verify the accuracy of the report to ensure the final story is told correctly and not with the researcher’s meaning but the meaning of those who have lived the experience, or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, 2007).

The third characteristic is qualitative research is inductive; data are gathered and analyzed in order to discover the existence of patterns, repetition of patterns and themes (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). The researcher does not begin with an established truth or concept to be tested but, rather, provides an opportunity for the participants to build the truth based on their lived experiences and the meanings of those experiences as told by the participants. Creswell (1998) stated, “we examine the qualitative data working inductively from particulars to more general perspectives, whether these perspectives are called themes, dimensions, codes or categories” (p. 20).

The fourth characteristic is the qualitative research is descriptive; the data are presented using descriptive language that tell the story of the participants in a way that conveys the feelings, emotions and experiences (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). Such a rich description engages the reader and creates for the reader the experience of being in the midst of the lived experiences being described (Creswell, 1998).

**Qualitative Research & Feminist Theory**

Qualitative research maintains a unique relationship with feminist theory, yet another reason a qualitative approach was adopted for this study. According to Brayton (1997), in qualitative research the researcher uses methodology “to capture the best representation of social reality” (p. 3). The focus of feminist research is to capture the
essence of social relationships and situated experiences of women (Monroe-Baillargeon, 2004) specifically focusing on “the gender inequities that lead to social injustice” (Sielbeck-Bowen, Brisolara, Seigart, Tischler, & Whitemore, 2002, p. 3). When combined, qualitative research and a feminist theoretical perspective provide the opportunity to capture the essence of the lived experiences of women, by focusing on, questioning and exposing the intricate workings of gender (Pillow, 2002). Their social reality and attached meanings can then be presented in a narrative manner. In addition, the approaches used in qualitative research align with the values of feminism in that they focus on the experiences and attached experiential meanings of those people who are being researched (Broido & Manning, 2002).

A basic premise of feminist theory is that gender matters in people’s everyday lives and how people experience everyday life is impacted by gender matters (Pillow, 2002). A qualitative approach to research provides the feminist researcher with the means through which to share the stories and interpretations of women with regard to the manner in which gender impacts their lives.

According to Monroe-Baillargeon (2004), “feminist qualitative research which includes teachers’ lived experiences (women along with their male colleagues) and the knowledge which they draw upon through reflection on these experiences provide the opportunity for social change and reform in education” (p. 2004). The feminist researcher understands that gender inequalities are structurally based, that is, the inequalities are a result of socially created systems (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002; Ward- Hood & Cassaro, 2002). The opportunity for these women to share their lived experiences and the attached meanings can be a source of empowerment for them; a chance to reflect on the power
structure present in their life relationships and a chance to reflect on how to bring about changes resulting in their gender not being treated as a restrictive characteristic of these relationships. This commitment to empowerment and social change as a common point of feminist research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Pillow, 2002).

Where a qualitative researcher explores a human or social problem, the feminist researcher explores it from an engendered perspective and does so in great detail as told by the female participants (Creswell, 1998). Just as qualitative research employs methodological traditions, feminist research does the same with the intention to give voice to women. Where a qualitative researcher creates and presents a complex, holistic picture, the feminist theorist does the same by focusing the picture on the lives, experiences and attached meanings of women. It follows that qualitative research and feminist theory possess a natural match with each other.

**Phenomenology**

According to Creswell (1998, 2007, 2009), the purpose of phenomenology is to understand a concept or phenomenon and identifying people’s experience toward that phenomenon. Merriam (2002) added, “a phenomenological study focuses on the essence or structure of an experience. Phenomenologists are interested in showing ‘how complex meanings are built out of simple units of direct experience’” (p. 7). Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) added that phenomenology is “useful to use when the researcher has identified a phenomenon to understand and has individuals who can provide a description of what they have experienced” (p. 32). The focus of this study is to understand the phenomenon of being a female social studies teacher, to provide the 12 participants the
opportunity to describe this experience in their own words, attaching their own meanings to this phenomenon. Subsequently, phenomenology is the appropriate framework on which to base this research study.

**About the Researcher**

My passion for social studies started early during my 7th grade year in middle school. Chosen to play the role of GOP Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan for our presidential debate and mock election, I immediately immersed myself in learning all I could about the candidate and the presidential election process. I was hooked and from that point forward I pursued every academic opportunity to learn as much as I could about government, civics, history, economics, and sociology. My high school experience, which took place at the state’s largest coeducational Catholic high school, was exceptional. I thrived in the classroom, especially in the areas of communications and social studies. I was afforded every opportunity of my male classmate counterparts. I knew nothing of active gender discrimination and certainly not in the field of social studies.

I came from a family, both nuclear and extended, of successful people and professional, both male and female. Lawyers, doctors, critical care nurses, business and management directors, and aerospace engineers were the professional roles successfully sought and secured by my mother, paternal aunt, sister, and maternal aunt. I was blessed to have strong female role models both socially and professionally. The other girls with whom I attended high school were also successful in areas predominated by men, such as
neurology, military leadership, college teaching in the sciences and mathematics, and engineering. I knew equality because I lived in its essence academically.

Interestingly enough, it was not until I enrolled in my undergraduate institution that I encountered the issue of the lack of women in social studies education. I was the only female in my college graduating class who sought a comprehensive social studies teaching certificate. My classes were filled with my male college counterparts and oftentimes I was the only female enrolled in a history or political science class. I clearly remember that a supermajority of the male social studies teacher education candidates also desired to be coaches. From a teaching perspective, I never encountered a female college professor in any of the social studies related departments of history, geography and political science and it was not until my senior year that I was enrolled in an economics course taught by a female professional. This was in stark contrast to my high school experience, where half of the high school social studies teachers I encountered were females.

During my first teaching assignment in a middle school in southern California, I was a member of a social studies department dominated by men. I was one of four women in a department of nine teachers; when I accepted my current position at a high school in north central Ohio, I was one of two females in a department of eight teachers. During both teaching assignments, the department leadership was provided by a male. In the district of my first assignment, there was no female in a social studies leadership position and in the district of my second assignment, there was no female in a social studies leadership position until I was named social studies department chairperson.
During my first few years as department chairperson I could sense that I was not taken seriously as a building leader and most certainly not as a leader of the social studies department. On two separate occasions I was never consulted with regard to the hiring of two new social studies teachers; interestingly enough, both of the men hired that year were also hired to serve as head coaches of separate athletic teams. During the hiring process for one of the teacher/coaches, my building principal at the time allowed me the opportunity to meet with his candidate of choice. I remember walking into his office, the candidate sitting in a chair opposite the principal’s desk. While I engaged in a conversation with this candidate, the principal continued to watch the news on the television mounted in the corner of his office. It was obvious to me at that point the decision had been made and we had ourselves a new head coach for one of our boys sports team and he just happened to teach social studies. Then, in 2007, when I was named “Teacher of the Year” for my district, I received a handwritten note of congratulations from a former principal of my school and the man who offered me my current job almost 22 years ago. What I read confirmed what I started to suspect about the social studies and the role of sex, gender and sports in the hiring process. His note read, “I am thankful I pushed for your hiring during a time period when the pressure was on hiring quality coaches.” I am also thankful.

This would not be the last time I experienced an engendered approach to social studies education but it would be the start of my professional observation about the issue of gender discrimination in my field of choice. Although I understand such practices happen in other fields of education; schools are, after all, masculine institutions, there is something disturbing to my academic and professional senses when this occurs in the
field of study devoted to the pursuit of liberty and equality. I have experienced gender
discrimination as a social studies teacher and, quite honestly, that is a statement I never
thought I would utter. However, I believe this research project will help to empower other
women to find their voices and work towards a social studies field free from an
engendered, discriminatory tone.

**Instrument and Procedures Used in Data Collection**

The primary instrument in collecting the data was the use of open-ended
interviews. According to Seidman (2006) a researcher interviews because of an interest in
other people’s stories and experiences. Specifically, I am interested in knowing the lived
experiences of my 12 participants as these experiences relate to them as female social
studies teachers.

Feminist research methodology uses interviews in order to provide the
opportunity for the researcher to reveal feelings, establish an environment in which the
questioning and answering are shared and reciprocated; this changes the manner in which
interviewees are treated. Women as participants are not treated as objects, a practice
considered masculine in nature; rather, they are treated as valuable women with a
personal, human story to tell (Monroe-Baillargeon, 2004). When treated as such, people
are more willing to work in creating an account of their lives (Monroe-Baillargeon,
2004).

To this end, in-depth phenomenological interviewing consists primarily of open-
ended questions (Seidman, 2006), which was the type of questions developed for and
used in this research study. Creating open-ended interview questions enables the
participants to tell their stories and the meanings these stories have in their lives (Seidman, 2006). These interviews served as a means through which my participants could be emotionally expressive and intuitive, two, “legitimate sources of knowledge” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, p. 7) especially for the feminist researcher. The discovery of knowledge for the feminist researcher takes place within a setting that provides for interaction with participants within the context of relationships (Sielbeck-Bowen, et al.).

Before beginning with the interview phase, I completed all necessary steps with the Human Subjects Review Board. Specifically, I applied for approval in using the 12 female participants. Included in this process was the writing and mailing of “Informed Consent Forms” to each of the participants. These forms explained the purpose of the study, how data would be collected, how confidentiality would be maintained, the voluntary nature of participation and the explanation of the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time during the process. In addition, participants completed audio recording release forms in order to grant permission for the interviews to be recorded.

Each participant was interviewed a minimum of two times for a period 60 – 120 minutes per interview. The interviews took place in relaxed environments free from distraction. I followed the interview series as offered by Seidman (2006). The first interview focused on the life history of each participant as each participant was asked to put her life in context. Specifically, each participant was asked to share how they came to be where they are in their respective lives at this particular point in time. The second interview focused on the details of the experience. Specifically, I asked each participant to reconstruct the details of their lived experiences as female social studies teachers. The
third interview focused on reflection. Specifically, each participant was asked to reflect on and explain the meaning of their experiences as female social studies teachers.

Each interview was recorded using an audio recorder. In addition, I kept interview notes during each conversation in order to track follow-up questions I wanted to ask, provide clarification I received from the participants and track significant themes that might need to be revisited at a later time within the context of the next scheduled interview. The audio tapes were then transcribed into computer documents and stored electronically. The digital video recordings were used as a secondary source for the information gathered from the audio tapes and interview notes.

**Process of Data Analysis**

Once all of the data were collected, transcribed and electronically stored, the data analysis process commenced. The first step was to read the transcripts and bracket the passages that were interesting (Merriman, 2002; Seidman, 2006). Specifically, I bracketed the statements from the interviews in which the participants explained how they are experiencing the phenomenon of being a female social studies teacher. This process, referred to as horizontalization of data by Creswell (1998), treated each statement with equal value while identifying the significant statement made by my participants (Merriman, 2002; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 1994).

Referred to as the methodology of reduction (Seidman, 2006), this procedure laid the groundwork for one component of research verification. Once I completed material bracketing, the participants were provided the opportunity to check my material brackets to ensure the items I identified as interesting data were, in fact, interesting and important.
data according to the participants and their perspectives. Both Merriam (2002) and Seidman (2006) state this process of member checks adds validity to the research.

In the second step of data analysis, I utilized two types of coding. With the first type, called open coding, I analyzed and sorted into themes the bracketed information in order to code the data (Boeije, 2010; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 1994; Seidman, 2006; Thomas, 2006). I then moved to the utilization of the second type of coding, called axial coding (Strauss & Corbin as cited in Merriman, 2002); specifically, during this process I described the identified themes from the open coding (Boeije, 2010). This process enabled me to develop textual and structural descriptions, that is, descriptions of what was experienced and how it was experienced by my participants (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 1994). As a result of this process, I was able to make connections between a category and the related subcategories in order to generate several main categories, also called meaning units (Creswell, 1998) and to then develop a “composite description of the experience” (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 1994, p. 22). Moustakas (1994) refers to this process as, “intuitive integration” (p. 100). This composite description serves as the structure “of ultimate ‘essence’ which captures the meaning ascribed to the experience” (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 1994, p. 31) by my participants.

Establishing Verification

Because the purpose of a phenomenological qualitative feminist research study is to tell the story of lived experiences of particular women, verification (Creswell, 1998), not validity, is of concern to the researcher. According to Giorgi (2002), phenomenology “has one criterion, fidelity to the phenomenon” (pp. 9-10). Specifically, the requirement
in this study was to ensure I told the life stories of these 12 female social studies teachers accurately. To do so, I used a number of strategies, including: (a) prolonged engagement; (b) triangulation; (c) member checks; (d) rich descriptions; (e) peer review; and (f) explanation of the relationship between me (the researcher) and the phenomenon being study, that is, the phenomenon of being a female social studies teacher. In addition, I maintained a research journal, a strategy recommended by Merriam (2002).

**Prolonged Engagement.** According to Creswell (1998), this strategy involves building trust with the participants of the study. This was accomplished by using the three interview structure recommended by Seidman (2006). Each participant was interviewed three times for 90-minutes per interview. This type of data collection provided me the opportunity to engage with the participants long enough to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and to arrive at a point at which no new evidence was any longer revealed by the participants (Merriam, 2002).

**Triangulation.** Methods of triangulation involve the use of multiple data gathering methods (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002; Talja, 1999). During my research, I gathered data through personal interviews, examination of primary documents provided by my participants and observation of participants in their professional settings. These different data gathering methods provided a way for me to cross-check the data collected.

**Member Checks.** As previously mentioned, the participants in this study were used to verify my bracketing of the data. Specifically, after I bracketed the information from each interview that I identified as descriptive of each participant’s experience of the
phenomenon, I asked each participant to review my selection of data. Because my participants are the experts in describing their lived experiences and the meaning of these experiences (Brayton, 1997), each participant was asked to verify I correctly identified and described those experiences relation to the phenomenon being studied (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 1998). By bringing back my tentative results to my participants, they were able to ensure their experiences were being clearly described in my words (Merriam, 2002).

**Rich Descriptions.** By providing the stories of my participants using detail rich descriptions, the reader can identify shared characteristics and then transfer the information to other settings (Creswell, 1998). I used language and wording that was expressive of the experience and emotions tied to the experience of being a female social studies teacher.

**Peer Review.** The structure of my dissertation committee provided for me the opportunity to use the strategy of peer review. Throughout the entire research process, I was able to submit my data, interpretations and analysis to the members of my committee in order to receive questions about the meanings, methods and interpretations I structured based on the raw data I experienced (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). These peer reviews helped to ensure that my interpretations of the data were consistent with the data collected (Thomas, 2006).

**Explanation of the Relationship Between Researcher & Phenomenon.** Called “reflexivity,” this is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human as instrument,” according to Lincoln and Guba (2000, p. 183). This strategy is
also important to me as a feminist researcher so I can assess how my roles and experiences impact my understanding of the lives of my female participants (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 1994; Ward-Hood & Cassaro, 2002). Because I am the one who constructed then articulated the findings in this research, this strategy provided me with the opportunity to reflect on and clearly express my subjectivity during this research (Biodo & Manning, 2002).

Within phenomenology, “the goal is not to try to eliminate subjectivity, but rather to try to clarify the role of subjectivity when correct knowledge is attained” (Giorgi, 2002, p. 8). This perspective and role of one’s self does not become a disconcerting element of the research; rather, this serves as a resource and is vital to qualitative research (Olesen, 2005).

**Research Journal.** During the research process, I maintained a reflective journal detailing the problems, obstacles, and successes experienced during the data collection and analysis processes. In addition, I tracked all interactions with the data so the process of interpretation was recorded.

**Summary**

When a researcher intends to tell the story of what participants all have in common as they experienced a phenomenon, Creswell (1998, 2007, 2009) recommends the qualitative research approach of phenomenology. Therefore, this was the research framework selected for this study because the purpose was to tell the story of twelve participants and their collective experiences with being female social studies teachers.
This chapter presented and discussed in greater details the reasons for selecting a qualitative research design, using the approach of phenomenology. In addition, an explanation was provided regarding the relationship between qualitative research and feminist theory, which provided the theoretical framework for this study. In addition, this chapter: (a) summarized the instrument and procedures used in data collection, (b) provided the process of data analysis, and (c) explained the process of establishing verification. The next two chapters present the results that emerged from the twelve female social studies teachers who were the participants in this study.
CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine the lived experiences of twelve female social studies teachers. The participants in this study ranged in age from 26 – 59 years old. Their experience as social studies teachers ranged from 5 – 36 years as full time educators in classrooms ranging from 7th – 12th grades. The results indicated a number of shared experiences among the participants, which have been coded according to themes. The results also indicated a number of similar meanings participants assigned to these shared experiences; in addition, there were different interpretations assigned to some of these shared experiences.

Eight of the participants were women with whom I have professionally worked during my twenty-one year teaching career. Six of those eight women I have worked with in our shared roles with the College Board’s Advanced Placement United States Government & Politics annual examination reading. The other two of those eight women I have worked with in a school setting. Three of the remaining four women were referred to me by colleagues who were aware of my designed study and the last remaining woman I met at an Advanced Placement United States & Government teacher workshop. When approached by me, all twelve women readily agreed to serve as participants in this study.

Each participant completed at least two interviews that lasted from 60 – 120 minutes each. The interviews were structured around three series, or tiers, of questions. Series I, entitled, “Putting Life in Context” asked the participants to relive their experiences as elementary, middle and secondary school students. In addition,
participants were asked to share their stories about their journeys that brought them into social studies education as teachers by building on their experiences, while also discussing their current teaching assignments and relationships they maintain in their professional lives. Series II, entitled, “Reconstructing the Details of Life,” focused on each participant’s experience in social studies education as an undergraduate student, student teacher and graduate student. Many of the questions focused on the role and presence of women in social studies education among other topic. Series III, entitled, “Reflection on & Meaning of Life Experiences” focused on the participants’ thoughts and ideas about what their lived experiences mean to them and how these experiences relate to their roles as female social studies teachers. In addition, participants were asked to analyze such topics as the importance of social studies education in the lives of students today and the future role of women as educators in this field. When needed, participants were contacted for a follow-up interview in order to provide any clarification or give further details about previously shared information.

Once the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed to written text. The data were then coded for major themes. Once the major themes were identified, they were then analyzed for the presence of any subthemes. The next step involved the weighing of the themes. Specifically, the themes were divided into two major categories. The first category contains those themes that are very important to many of the participants and/or are strong themes that appear consistently within the story of one specific participant. The second category contains those stronger themes that are important or prevalent among all of the participants. The first category of themes is discussed in this chapter and the second category of themes is discussed in chapter five.
In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, their names and personal information have been changed. All of the participants were given pseudonyms and coded in such a way so as to keep their identity aligned with their personal stories. In addition, their current state of residence and teaching locations were coded through the use of general geographical terms and common demographic characteristics that provide enough information to personalize their stories yet still protect confidentiality. What follows is a biographical summary of each of the twelve participants. The women are introduced according to the number of years they have taught, from least to most and their information is summarized in Table 3, Research Participants, Experience and School Demographics.

**Introduction of Research Participants**

Renee Chapman had completed her fifth year of teaching at the time of her interviews. Although her biological parents have been together as a couple for more than 30 years, they are not married. Renee has a younger brother who had just graduated from high school. In addition, due to her father’s affairs with two other women, she has two younger half-brothers who are both young adults. Renee attended a large public university in a Midwestern state where she earned her undergraduate degree. She then attended a satellite campus of a large public university in the same state to complete her graduate degree, specifically, a Master’s of Science Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She was teaching social studies at a public high school that serviced about 800 students and was located in a small Midwestern town. At the time of her interview,
Renee was married and she and her husband had welcomed their first child within the past year of the interview.

Whitney Edson was in her sixth year of teaching. The oldest of three children, Whitney had a younger brother and sister. She was raised in a large Midwestern city until the age of six when her family moved to suburb of another large city in her state. She attended a midsized private Catholic University before accepting her first job at a coeducational Catholic high school in a midsized Midwestern community. After one year, she left that position to become a theology and social studies teacher at a single sex Catholic high school, which was the high school from which she graduated. She was also the varsity gymnastics coach at her current school of employment. Although she had not started her graduate degree course work, Whitney was looking forward to completing the required entrance examination for acceptance into a graduate program in Gifted & Talented Education.

Wendy Jenkins had just completed her tenth year of teaching. The middle of three children, Jodi’s family consisted of an older sister and a younger brother and both of her biological parents. She grew up in a small town outside of a major city in a Midwestern state with a number of extended family members living in the surrounding area. Jodi attended a small college located in a southern state where she earned her undergraduate degree in education. Then she attended a large public university in a Midwestern state in order to earn her Master’s of Science in Education. She spent five years teaching at a large urban high school located in a major city of a Southern state after which time she relocated back to her home state and had just completed her fifth year of teaching at a
high school in a wealthy school district that is in a suburb of a major Midwestern state. At the time of her interviews, Wendy was not married nor did she have any children.

Olivia Keim had just completed her twelfth year of teaching. The older of two daughters, Olivia’s parents were still married and she maintained a good relationship with her family members. She attended a small liberal arts college in the Midwestern United States for two years before transferring to a much larger public university in another state, where she completed her undergraduate degree. Olivia started her graduate coursework at the same large university with the intention of earning her Masters of Science in Economics. However, she transferred to another university in another state and earned a Master’s of Science in Curriculum and Instruction. Upon earning her undergraduate degree, Olivia worked for a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational organization located in the Eastern United States. Olivia spent her first two years teaching at a high school in a state that is now labeled a part of the “Rust Belt,” that maintained a student enrollment of 1100 students and 55 faculty members. After those two years, Olivia spent one year teaching at the American School located in a South American country. Her past nine years of teaching had been spent at a large suburban high school. At the time of the completed research, Olivia was not married and did not have any children.

Cathy Simpson had completed her twelfth year of teaching. She grew up in a middle-income suburban area of a Midwestern state. The middle of three children, Cathy has an older brother and a younger sister; her biological parents were still married. She grew up surrounded by many members of her extended family as they all lived in the same community. Cathy attended a large public university where she earned her
undergraduate degree in education with her teaching credential in the discipline of history. In addition, Cathy attended the same university to complete her graduate degree which is a Master’s of Science in Theory and Social Foundations & Education. Cathy had one year of teaching experience in a high school located in a suburb of different Midwestern city than the one in which she was currently teaching. In addition, she completed one year of teaching at the middle school level in a school located in yet another Midwestern urban area. Cathy had spent ten years teaching at her current school, which also happened to be the high school she attended as a student. At the time of her interviews, she and her husband had two young children, one boy and one girl.

Becky Lawson was in her 13th year in teaching social studies. An only child, Becky was born and raised in the same large city of the southern state where she taught. Once she graduated from high school, she attended a small Catholic liberal arts university in her home state. She graduated with a degree in political science and history and eventually returned to school to earn her master’s degree and teaching licensure. She had taught her entire career at the same urban high school, which was located in an upper middle class community of the city; however, because her school district was under court order to integrate students, most of those attending the school were bused to Laura’s school from around the entire city. Becky was married and had a sixteen year old daughter.

Brenda Jaimeson had just completed her 14th year of teaching social studies. She was the oldest of three children and her siblings included a younger brother and sister. Neither one of her parents had a college degree. Brenda grew up in the Catholic Church and remained involved in a number of church related activities. Brenda started as a math
major and eventually completed her undergraduate work to become a social studies teacher in her early twenties. Before entering the classroom as a social studies teacher, Brenda and her husband owned a restaurant which they eventually sold. Brenda spent her time teaching in the third largest school district in her large southwestern state. She was married with two children.

Heidi Greene was in her fourteenth year of teaching social studies. She was the oldest of three children and lived as an only child for twelve years until her siblings were born. Her father was an air-traffic controller so she moved around quite a bit as a child; her school years were spent in a northwestern town in Pennsylvania. She married at the age of twenty and shortly thereafter she and her husband moved to a large southern state. Once they relocated she and her husband welcomed their son and Heidi completed her undergraduate degree at a large university that maintained an enrollment of about 25,000 students. Though she completed her undergraduate degree in social studies education, Heidi did not enter the classroom until she completed her Masters of Science in Social Studies Education. At the time of this study, she had taught all fourteen of her years at the same large, urban high school located in the southern state where she attended college.

Grace had just completed her 17th year of teaching. She was the younger of two daughters and her sister was three years older. Grace was raised by her biological parents, who were still married. She attended a middle sized university that maintained a student enrollment of approximately 20,000 students in the Midwestern United States. Grace spent her first seven years of teaching at a small town high school that maintained a student enrollment of 1200 students and a faculty of about 95 teachers. Her most recent ten years of teaching had been spent at the high school from which she graduated and
which shared the same student and faculty demographics as the school of her first teaching assignment. Both schools were located in the same Midwestern state. In order to raise her two children during their infant and toddler years, she took a four year leave from the classroom while her husband continued to work fulltime.

Beth Lowell was in her 18th year of teaching social studies. The oldest of four children, Beth had two younger sisters and one younger brother. She grew up in a suburb of a large city located in an East Coast state. Beth ’s parents divorced when she was a young adult in her early twenties; her mother remarried and her father did not. Beth ’s step-father passed away about five years before the time of her interviews. She earned her undergraduate degree in political science from a large university in her home state after transferring from a small Catholic University. Once Beth made the decision to become a social studies teacher, she returned to the same large university and completed her teaching credentials and earned her Master’s of Science in Education. At the time of her interviews, Beth was teaching social studies in a wealthy suburban school district located close to her childhood hometown. She was married to her husband and they had two young daughters.

Wanda Shriver had spent 28 years in education, with 16 years as a classroom teacher and 12 years as an administrator. Raised as an only child, Wanda’s parents remained married their entire lives until her mother passed away. Wanda attended a small college in a Midwestern state and completed her undergraduate work in five years during which time she took one year off from her studies for financial reasons. In addition, she completed an extra year at different liberal arts college in the same Midwestern state in order to complete her teaching credentials. Wanda completed her graduate work in school
administration after having earned her master’s degree from the same university from which she earned her teaching credentials. She spent all 28 years in the same urban school district in a Midwestern state. Her most recent teaching assignment was at the district’s high school that accommodated a diverse student population of about 1000 students and 85 faculty members. She was married and the mother of one daughter, who was also married and had two children.

Donna Reynolds started her teaching career in 1974 as a full-time social studies home instructor and was in her 36th year of teaching, all with the same small town school district, with the exception of one year during which time she worked for the local detention home. Donna was an only child and raised by her biological parents who remained married until Donna’s mom passed away at the age of 53. Donna attended a small liberal arts college located in a Midwestern state where she earned her undergraduate degree in social studies education. She returned to the same university to earn her special education credentials along with her Masters of Science in Education, Curriculum & Instruction. At the time of her interviews, Donna was teaching the senior level social studies courses in her high school’s special education department. Donna and her husband were still married and had two adult sons, both of whom had one child each.

Even though I share with these women the demographic characteristic of gender and the professional identity of being a social studies teacher, I recognized these women had their own stories to tell and, even when they told of experiences similar to mine, I reminded myself that their meaning was their own. I could not and did not attach my meanings to their experiences. Rather, I encouraged the women to share with me in as much rich detail as possible their life’s journeys as these journeys pertained to being
female social studies teachers. In addition, in order to keep on track with the purpose of this study, I used the three developed series of interview questions to provide guidance during the interviews.

Because the results of this study are the lived experiences of twelve specific women, the results here are not intended to be generalized to all female social studies teachers. While these women share some common features, their individual interviews represent their own personal stories with their contrived meanings. Not all female social studies teachers will necessarily share in the experiences as told and lived by these twelve women. Even in cases where other female social studies teachers can identify shared experiences with my participants, the meaning of these experiences is a personal and individual as the women themselves. Given that premise, I hope this study invites further scholarly investigation and research so that the experiences of female social studies teachers can be shared, valued and honored. These women have powerful stories to tell. I am honored to be their storyteller.
Table 3

Summary Information of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>School Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renee Chapman</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Public high school located in a small Mid-western town with 800 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney Edson</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Suburban, all girls Catholic high school with 830 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy Jenkins</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Suburban public high school with 1300 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Keim</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Large suburban public high school with 1700 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy Simpson</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Large suburban public high school with 1800 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky Lawson</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Large suburban public high school with 1900 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Jaimeson</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Large urban public high school with 1800 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi Greene</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Large urban high school with 1700 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Altman</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Medium size small town public high school with 1200 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Lowell</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Medium size suburban public high school with 1500 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanda Shriver</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Medium size urban public high school with 800 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Reynolds</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Medium size small town public high school with 1200 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I Know I Was Treated that Way Simply Because I Was a Female”

Many of the participants identified gender as a component in a number of areas of their career, as discussed under other titled themes. In addition, a few of the participants offered personal accounts of the way in which their gender directly impacted their professional journeys.

As the only female in her school’s social studies department, Cathy shared a story that seemed to be something from years gone by. During department meetings it was always expected that she serve as the secretary charged with the responsibility of taking notes then transcribing the notes for all of the department members. She stated, “It is assumed that I will serve as the secretary because I am the woman in the department.” For a while Cathy tried to convince herself that she was selected by the members of the department to serve as the department secretary simply because she was the most efficient on the computer; however, she stated, “I am the token female in my department and they expect me to fulfill the roles of the token female.”

Recalling an experience related to securing a summer school teaching position, Grace relayed that her gender played a role in the manner in which the scenario played out. Grace and a male colleague in her department both expressed interest in teaching a section of United States government for the upcoming summer term. When the decision was made to offer the position to the male teacher, Grace was told by her assistant principal that he was being offered the position because, “he was married and had a family to support.” At that time, Grace was also married and had two children. She recalled thinking that this was a decision made to protect the male provider. What made
the experience more disturbing to Grace was the fact that her male colleague possessed a teaching certificate in only history; he was not certified to teach government. When Grace reminded her assistant principal of this fact, the assistant principal said, “I don’t really think that’s an issue.” In the end, after accepting the position, Annette’s colleague decided not to teach the summer school section of government. Retorted Annette, “And, of course, like an idiot, I ended up teaching the course. What I should have done was said, ‘Shove it! I’m not helping you guys out now.’”

Brenda recalled her experience trying to secure a teaching position when she was pregnant. The position, which would have been Brenda’s first teaching job, was at a high school where Brenda had completed a summer school teaching experience. Brenda entered the interview process with “outstanding letters of recommendation for a number of teacher-leaders from the school,” with whom Brenda had worked. She deliberately made herself available for the summer school position in order to begin networking with the faculty at this particular school. In addition, the other candidate who expressed interest had very limited experience at a middle school outside of the district. She knew the other candidate and though she considered the two of them friends, Brenda knew she was the more qualified candidate. Interviewed by one male administrator, Brenda did not receive the position. In thinking back on the experience, Brenda believed she did not receive the position because she was six months pregnant. She offered, “Nothing was ever said about me being pregnant but it was one of those situations where I know I was being treated that way simply because I was a female and I was pregnant.”

Elizabeth, who taught at an all-girls Catholic high school, identified a number of ways in which gender has impacted her professional journey. Though her experience was
not discriminatory in nature, after spending one year teaching in a coeducational Catholic high school and then the past four years in an all-girls, Whitney pointed out a number of ways in which gender impacted the educational settings in which she taught. First, as a product of an all-girls high school and after her experience in both settings, Whitney stated that girls oftentimes feel “more academically nurtured in an all-girls school setting.” Specifically, girls were able to have an “academic voice in school without any snide remarks coming from boys” when they were educated in a single-sex school.

Second, there were fewer distractions for girls when they attended a single-sex school. Whitney remarked that girls in a single-sex educational setting still dealt with the issues common to female adolescent development, the lack of male students downplayed the impact those issues had on the school setting and the girls themselves. “Without the boys around,” stated Elizabeth, “there is less social drama for the girls to deal with.”

Third, with a majority of female faculty members on staff at her school, Whitney explained how the presence of the few male teachers on staff impacted the manner in which the men were perceived. “The male teachers are built up to be better than they are. We refer to them as ‘rockstars’ and know the students build them up because they are an anomaly.”

“We were Catholic, Catholic, Catholic!”

When asked to describe their lives as young girls who grew into women, a number of the participants revealed that their association with the Roman Catholic Church was an integral part of their upbringing. In addition, a number of participants
shared that their educational experience included being educated in the Roman Catholic school system.

Brenda attended Catholic schools from Kindergarten through Grade 8. Her parents selected Catholic school for her for three reasons. First, the rigor of the curriculum was, in their opinion, better than that of the local public schools. Second, her parents appreciated the stringent behavioral expectations of the teachers at the Catholic school. Third, her parents were highly involved in the Catholic parish and Brenda’s attendance at the parish’s elementary school was an extension of that connection. This experience cultivated in Brenda a deep importance for her faith that carried on throughout high school and into her adult life. In addition, Brenda shared that her experience with the Catholic Church cultivated in her an enjoyment in discussing moral issues, something she believes that is connected to her liking of social studies.

Cathy’s experience in Catholic schools, though not as long in duration as Brenda’s, also made a lasting impact. As a matter of fact, Cathy revealed that she was devastated when she was pulled out of Catholic school after the second grade. However, her connection to the Catholic Church was sustained through her family’s ethnic ties to the church. Cathy stated, “We were Catholic, Catholic, Catholic! We were a classic Irish-Italian Catholic family.” She found a strong connection between her family’s ethnic identity and her membership in the Catholic Church. In addition, Cathy remained very involved in her church’s youth group even after she no longer attended Catholic schools. She found comfort in her membership to the church.

Grace did not attend Catholic schools and did not view her upbringing in the Catholic Church as being directly relevant to her choice of education as a career.
However, because that experienced shaped who she is, she affirmed some sort of relationship. Grace contributed two components about her upbringing that may have been partially influenced by the fact she was raised in the Catholic Church. The first component, a strong work ethic, was reinforced in her home and she was raised to believe that a lack of a strong work ethic was a disgrace to the family. The emphasis on this type of work ethic was something Grace connected to the Catholic Church’s teachings. The second component, the value of family, was also lived out in the Church as well as Annette’s home as a child and young adult. Combined, both of those components attracted Grace to a career in teaching. First, Grace recognized that her strong work ethic has been a significant reason why she was a successful educator. She knew she would not be able to succeed in such a demanding field without a work ethic whose strength matched the challenges inherent to the teaching profession. Second, Grace knew she wanted to have children and be available to parent them as much as possible while still having a career. The teaching profession has fulfilled that desire by providing her and her children similar schedules.

Renee attended Catholic schools during her elementary years. She attended a school that was nationally recognized due to the high academic achievements recorded by the student body. As a result, her parents believed she was receiving a much better education than the one she would have received from the local public schools. Renee was also quick to point out that the religious component was also another reason her parents decided to send her to Catholic schools. Her experience at such an academically successful Catholic school fostered within her a commitment to academic rigor that she carried into her career as a social studies teacher.
Beth attended Catholic schools from first through twelfth grades. Though Beth stated that she is not sure that her experience with Catholic school education impacted her choice to become a teacher, she shared that, “I have always felt tied to the care for your neighbor, care for the poor, tolerance wing of the Church so I guess that my leaning toward teaching about other societies is where it is from.” In addition, she shared that her being educated in Catholic schools and raised in the Catholic Church could very well have impacted the student club she advised, Invisible Children, which is a student organization focused on helping needy children in Africa.

Whitney attended Catholic schools from first through twelfth grade. In addition, she attended a mid-sized Catholic university for her undergraduate work. Whitney always knew she wanted to be a teacher and always had a passion for social studies. She believed both elements were fostered by her experience in Catholic schools as well as being raised according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. She shared that, “The Catholic environment of service to community and caring for others seemed to say to me that teaching was a career that provided me the chance to do both things.” Whitney believed that her moral responsibility to give back to the community, a tenet of the Catholic Church, was lived out in her career as a professional educator. In addition, the field of social studies afforded Whitney the opportunity to be informed about current events and have an awareness of how those events impact other people. This social awareness was best developed in the field of social studies.

Wanda and Donna, the two participants with the most years of teaching experience and who both were young women of the Catholic Church in the late 1960’s and the 1970’s provided a perspective that is unique to their generation. Wanda attended
Catholic schools for all twelve years of her education. When asked about the connection between that experience and her eventual choosing to become a social studies teacher, she remarked, “Church history and ‘regular’ history were taught in a way that they coincided.” When she was learning about the history her peers in public schools were learning, it was presented in alignment with the history of the Catholic Church. This infused approach impacted her perspective and understanding of history. In addition, Wanda described that being taught by the nuns in her Catholic school impacted her view of teaching. She stated, “The nuns viewed their teaching profession as a vocation and not a job. They truly cared about us. That’s what I wanted. I wanted a vocation like these nuns lived out in front of my eyes.” Wanda recalled that memory a number of times when she made the decision to become a social studies teacher.

Donna believed that her career choice was directly impacted by her membership in the Catholic Church. Early on she was attracted and dedicated to the approach of the Catholic Church to take care of others. Donna also found a connection between the emerging feminist and Civil Rights movements in the United States during the late 1960’s and the Catholic Church’s teaching and perspective on human equality. Donna’s commitment to the Church’s perspective on these issues drew Donna into the field of social studies education because she saw a link between her personal belief system as cultivated by the Church and the ability she could have to empower students to work for more equitable social conditions for themselves and others.
“There’s Always Something New to Discuss and Examine”

Though their routes to the field of social studies education varied, the participants had in common a number of things they liked about social studies education, ranging from the dynamic nature of the field to the interaction with students.

Cathy, Brenda, Wendy, and Beth each quickly pointed out that one of the items they like the most about social studies education is the degree to which the members of their respective departments are involved in the lives of their students. This involvement extended beyond the element of serving as a coach but included advising extracurricular activities and investing in the lives of their students through simple everyday conversations.

Asked if this tendency was more prevalent among social studies teachers as compared to other departments, Brenda responded, “It’s called, ‘social’ studies for a reason. Those of us who teach social studies are much more social. When you get around people who teach social studies they tend to be people who are highly involved and want to interact with kids.” Brenda continued by adding that social studies teachers tend to want to talk about ideas and experiences with their students and invest in their students’ lives in ways other than just in the classroom. Wendy added that the nature of social studies created an atmosphere in the classroom that is much different than other subject areas. That atmosphere lends itself to creative approaches that are student centered and provide teachers with an opportunity to connect in a different way with students. Beth said that she enjoyed hearing the students say, “Social studies teachers have the most fun.” Recognizing that entertaining the students is not the goal of social studies education, Beth knew that if students witnessed the teachers of the department enjoying
what they teach and positively contributing to the environment in which they teach then the students will sense the willingness of teachers to invest in the lives of their students.

With regard to the dynamic nature of social studies education, the participants all agreed that this was one of the elements they liked the most about social studies education. Renee noted that the ever-changing nature of social studies meant that she could do something new every day. Grace appreciated the fact that the always-changing nature of social studies meant that she would be afforded the chance to discuss more issues of relevance with her students in class. Those lively debates and discussions served as a reminder of the fact that within such conversations students are developing the knowledge and skills needed to grow into effective citizens. Whitney added that the content, the discussions, and the conversations in class are “never the same because there is always something new to discuss and examine.” She also remarked that this is one of the advantages of social studies that can help teachers ignite interest in their students.

Beth said that the dynamics of social studies meant that she was never bored with the content because it was never the same and it invited students to engage with new material on a constant basis. Brenda added when students turn on the radio, or television or use the internet, they see social studies in action. This meant that Brenda had something new to discuss the first five or ten minutes of class. Donna referred to this characteristic of social studies education as a “never-ending continual history.” In other words, there is always something new to discuss and discover in the field of social studies education.

According to Wanda, engaging in the study of that continual history provided teachers and students the opportunity to teach and learn about the past so we can learn
about our relationships and our mistakes in an effort to learn from them. Wanda also found great satisfaction in the fact that her students, year in and year out, taught her the importance of appreciating diversity. Whitney added that “the nature of social studies provides me the opportunity to learn from my students; that’s something I truly appreciate and value.” Interacting with students who brought different perspectives to the classroom was a highlight of the field for Wanda and Whitney because such activity invited both teachers and their students to look at issues from multiple views with different experiential meanings attached. Both women stated that this was a unique characteristics found only in the social studies classroom. To Wanda and Elizabeth, that was the beauty in social studies education.

From the same perspective, Olivia believed that the excitement of social studies education laid in the fact that the field was more relevant and related to student lives than they realized. She found great satisfaction in watching students make that realization, that connection between the field of social studies and their own lives in so many areas. Olivia also stated that she liked the fact that the nature of teaching made her the boss of herself. “I get to create, deliver and assess the effectiveness of what I do in the classroom.” Olivia said she enjoyed that freedom that came in being a teacher.

Whitney said, “I enjoy social studies because there is so much real world application. Economics and Government are every day experiences. Social studies is everyday life.” She shared that one of the most eye-opening activities in which her students engaged was in her economics class when they were instructed to create a “real life budget that accounts for daily, weekly, monthly and annual costs. They are always so amazed at how much knowledge they need in economics in order to be successful at
this.” From understanding tax brackets and income tax withholdings to learning how to balance a checkbook, Elizabeth’s students learned the everyday importance of understanding economic principles. In addition, she stated that her students learn about the daily impact, “government plays in their lives. And it’s not just in the area of voting.” Her students were exposed to lessons that taught them the role of local, state and national government and the manner in which each impacted the daily lives of people across the country. Social studies was life and this was something Whitney greatly enjoyed about the field. Becky shared similar thoughts and reinforced the fact that the dynamic nature of social studies makes it such an appealing subject.

“Female Teachers Celebrate the Human Spirit not Just the Warriors”

In examining the contributions that female social studies teachers can make to the field, a number of the participants pointed out a number of common components. In light of the fact that the participants credited these components to the issue of gender, the participants also commented on the need to recruit qualified females to the field of social studies education as teachers.

A number of the participants remarked that one of the contributions that female social studies teachers can bring to the field is their perspective of the social sciences. Beth commented that “female teachers celebrate the human spirit not just the warriors.” She expressed the thought that most male social studies teachers are concerned about teaching about battles and wars and not necessarily about the human side of the story. Female teachers, she shared, have a love for the social components of life and not just teaching about wars, an idea that was echoed by Olivia when she stated that females
social studies teacher know the importance of teaching about the human issues of social issues and social studies. Wanda remarked that students need to know that a war is not just about soldiers and women oftentimes teach from a perspective that extends before and after the battle.

Cathy concurred with this perspective and applied it to her own experience. She shared that during the beginning of the school year, a number of the male students enrolled in her Advanced Placement United States History class expressed disappointed in having her as their teacher because, “they knew I wasn’t going to spend weeks on end talking about the battles and weaponry of every war.” Where a male social studies teacher would spend three weeks discussing the battles of World War II, Cathy said she would spend a few days and dedicate the rest of the time discussing the causes and effects of the war because that is where the real story is found.

In addition, Cathy was of the opinion that female social studies teachers are able to teach with more compassion. Pointing to the manner in which males and females are socialized into their respective gender roles, she commented,

As a woman, I can teach about the Civil Rights Movement, I can teach about conscientious objectors with a little bit more empathy than a male social studies teacher who was not allowed to have that kind of empathy because I am a girl and that was the way I was socialized. So, having said that, I can teach a personal story a little easier.

Donna echoed the same sentiment. When asked to comment on the ability of women to teach with more compassion, Donna stated, “Women have lived with discrimination; they have had to work harder than most men so they have the compassion, the empathy” to
teach the stories that make up the foundation of social studies. Becky offered a similar insight. She believed that many women understand on a first hand basis the struggle for equality and, as a result, can bring a different voice to the social studies classroom. Because women have been excluded in so many ways from social studies education, women are more sensitive to the need to include the voice of women and they make an effort to do just that as social studies teachers.

In addition, Wanda added that women look not just at battles, war, and military successes, but at the total picture, the human side of social studies. Wendy also commented that female social studies teachers, “bring a more emotional perspective. Female social studies teachers can bring in a different perspective on some topics in history that men don’t think about. Women think about more of the big picture than the men.” In doing so, female social studies teachers are able to bring a different, more universal perspective to social studies.

Brenda added that it is more acceptable for female social studies teachers to call into question the moral components of historical events. Because of the socialized characteristic of being more nurturing, female teachers are able to openly discuss topics like inequality and make statements regarding the right and wrong in a given situation that is studied in social studies. Brenda thought that female social studies teachers bring something special to the classroom that is unique to being female and can be a positive influence on the students. Any teacher who can add to a universal view of social studies would be a benefit to the field of social studies education. Whitney said that female social studies teachers bring a different perspective to the classroom. She said, “Women can see the bigger picture and also connect to details. We can teach kids how to challenge the
status quo because we have been doing just that for so long.” In other words, the experiences female social studies teachers bring to the classroom help students to see history lived out in front of them.

Heidi offered a global perspective regarding the contributions women make to the field of social studies education. Pointing to the role of the United States as a world leader, she said the following:

Women in social studies bring a whole new perspective. If we are going to continue with our world status, we cannot rely on men alone. Politically, socially, economically and culturally women add needed dimensions in educating students in social studies. This helps us to create students who can participate in our global community.

Heidi provided further clarification by explaining that the emerging, new world relationships between countries today means that we must tap into the skills and abilities of women who are more amendable to creating these 21st century relationships. In other words, the perspective brought by women into the social studies classroom helps to broaden the level and types of discussions about global issues. In addition, it is important to note that a number of these issues are specific to women, such as education, children and poverty.

Interestingly, Renee believed that the different contributions social studies teachers make to the classroom were based more on individual performance as a teacher and not because of any differences between males and females. She stated,

There are some men who are sensitive and compassionate and in some people’s eyes they would be seen as being feminine and there are females that are
extremely masculine and have a different approach in the classroom. I don’t think it’s really a male versus female thing as much as it is an individual teacher component.

While she recognized that there are characteristics labeled as predominantly male or female, those characteristics are not always demonstrated by the gender to whom the characteristic is socially assigned.

Olivia and Grace provided more specific comments regarding the differences in teaching styles between male and female social studies teachers. Olivia remarked that male teachers are more likely to teach chronologically while female teachers are more likely to teach thematically. Grace added that some of the men in her social studies were not as unbiased as she would like them to be in the social studies area. When asked to provide further insight, Grace stated that male social studies teachers seemed more likely to insert their opinions when teaching something like economic policy. Where she would teach both the liberal and conservative perspectives of the issue, the men in her department were more inclined to teach from their personal perspectives. In addition, Grace commented that male social studies teachers were more likely to teach about conspiracy theories. She witnessed male teachers in her department provide instruction on such things as the Warren Commission Report in a way that was not factually based and stated that, based on her experience, men are more likely to teach social studies that way than were women.

The discussion about the differences in the approaches between male and female social studies teachers led to the emergence of another similar thought among the participants. Specifically, a number of the participants remarked that the female social
studies teachers with whom they have worked have been dynamic in personality and presence. Olivia remarked that all of the women in her department were much more outspoken than the men. Olivia offered as an explanation the need for the women to be sure they are heard in a field that oftentimes overlooked women.

Donna offered the same opinion. In addition, she believed that female social studies teachers are more vocal and dynamic because they have had “to fight to make a place for themselves in a field heavily dominated by men.” Women understand the long road that has been traveled by those before them to make the gains in the field of social studies education, therefore, women must remain vigilant to protect what has been gained.

During her career, Beth remembered all of the female social studies teacher candidates with whom she has interacted have been must more lively and vibrant. In addition, those females who have been hired at her school have “always been lively and vibrant and highly effective in the classroom” as compared to male candidates and the males who teach in her department.

Contributing to the discussion, Cathy offered an in-depth reason to the dynamic nature of female social studies teachers. Women in the field may be more dynamic “because we must demonstrate we know our stuff. If we don’t make our mark, we will be run out.” Cathy believed that this fight for survival in social studies education is not relevant for male social studies teachers. “Social studies is a male story. They don’t have to fight for their voice in the story. I’m in a man’s world and I know how to play his game.” In other words, females oftentimes take on a more assertive, dynamic approach in order to effectively operate in a male dominated field in education.
Wendy summarized her thoughts on the issue when she stated, “Obviously there are more men than female social studies teachers but what’s funny is that every single female social studies teacher I come across is really good. She is an excellent educator.”

Given the input from the participants regarding the contributions females can make to the field of social studies education, the participants also commented on whether there was a need to recruit quality females as social studies teachers. A majority of them agreed there was a need to do so. Beth remarked that there was a need to recruit more women to the field in order to help make social studies more appealing to female students.

This presence of female educators, according to Beth, would help women find their voice in social studies. Because women add a different perspective to social studies, their presence in the field would be a benefit to students. In addition, the presence of female social studies teachers would help to break the stereotype of the social studies field as one that is filled with male coaches who care more about coaching than teaching.

Because women have struggled more than men, because a woman has seen so much more than a man in regards to the struggle for equality, Donna believed the presence of women as social studies teachers is important. She stated that this is a powerful voice for students to hear in the classroom and efforts to secure more females in the field were valid and needed. This was also a thought shared by Laura. She remarked that the hiring of more females in the social studies classroom could increase the likelihood that students are exposed to women’s stories. Interestingly, she also remarked that the presence of women in social studies classrooms can help break the historical
pattern of social studies being a field meant only for men, taught by men and all about men.

Responding with an emphatic, “Absolutely” when asked about whether there was a need to recruit qualified women to the field of social studies education, Cathy pointed out that there are different needs for students of each gender and the presence of women speaks to young female students. In addition, female social studies teachers serve as strong role models for girls who are enrolled in courses that, for so long, have told just “his story” and silencing the story of half of the population. Brenda agreed that social studies teachers can serve as role models for young women and demonstrate that social studies is a field for females as well as males.

Along that same line of thinking, Wanda believed that there was a need to recruit women to the field of social studies education because as women, “we need to be an example to all students in breaking the gender bias and stereotypes” that surround those who teach in the field. Wanda commented that women are not well represented in the field. Young women are not drawn to the field of social studies because men are the ones studied in great detail in the field. The presence of women teaching in the field can help in ensuring that students are taught the human story and not just that of the male experience.

Grace offered a different perspective with regard to the need to recruit qualified women to the field of social studies education. “The emphasis seems to be geared towards recruiting girls and women to science and math. We are forgetting that girls and women can make great contributions to the field of social studies.” For Annette, one of those great contributions could be encouraging females to become social studies teachers.
Based on her thoughts about the contributions that can be made by female social studies teachers, Heidi remarked that a “failure to recruit quality female social studies teachers can be harmful for girls.” She reiterated the need for quality female social studies teachers as one way to teach a more global perspective on world issues in an every changing world.

“No, no, no! Girls don’t become social studies teachers!”

Certainly, one of the central issues that needed to be examined in this study was how the twelve women arrived in the field of social studies education. Interestingly, most of the women did not enter college as social studies education majors. Specific life events led many of these women to declare a major other than social studies education. For some of the women, education was not even a part of their original majors. Then, other events took place in their lives that landed them in social studies education and eventually in the classroom as female social studies teachers.

Cathy vividly recalled the reaction of her high school guidance counselor when she told him that she had been accepted to the College of Education at the university that she considered her first choice. When she told him that she was going to become a social studies teacher, he responded with, “No, no, no! Girls don’t become social studies teachers! That’s for coaches.” That one conversation caused Cathy to rethink her entire plan because she was a girl and she most certainly was not interested in coaching. As a result, Cathy entered her university’s College of Education as a French education major. After a poor experience with a college French professor, and realizing she could pick her own classes in college, Cathy switched to English education and picked up a history
minor. Her experience in her college Western Civilization class caused Cathy to become intrigued by the history of personal life stories as told to the students by her female Western Civilization professor. Cathy was pushed by a passion and interest to “make connections to the news” in a field that required her to, “go to the library, and read, write, research and think.”

Brenda actually left high school liking math and, due to the number of scholarships offered to her if she was an education major, she entered college as a math education major. Her early career thoughts centered on her possibly becoming a math teacher, a lawyer or a veterinarian. However, she did not meet with much success in her math classes, an experience that, as an academically accomplished high school student, was difficult for her to accept. At the same time she struggled with her math classes, she found academic success in her English classes and her upper level social science classes. During this time she realized she had a passion for debate, politics, and history. Combined with her discovered passion for women’s history and literature, Brenda said that things “just clicked for me” and she then changed her major to social studies education.

Donna also entered college as a math major. During her first year as an undergraduate student she took a five credit hour calculus class that she failed. Her failure was also not easy for her to take. She dropped her math major designation and spent the rest of the year focusing on her general education requirements. During that time she enrolled in a history course with a professor that commented to Donna that Donna had a gift for understanding and speaking about history. When she enrolled in another history course, a second history professor made and shared with Donna the same
observation. Both of these gentlemen encouraged her to tap into this gift. At that point, 
Donna decided to pursue social studies education and found that she had a passion for 
economics, in part because of her love for math.

When asked about whether she thought about becoming a social studies teacher 
when she was in high school, Grace emphatically responded by saying, “No! No! At that 
point I never would have placed myself doing what I am doing now.” During this time in 
herself life, Grace had thoughts of entering a business or computer related profession; 
education simply was not on her “radar screen.” Grace actually entered college as an 
undeclared major; however, during her freshman year she completed two courses she 
really enjoyed. One was an English class; the other was a history class. These two 
courses caused Grace to become intrigued with the idea of becoming a teacher, though at 
this point she still was not thinking of social studies education. As Grace continued 
completing college level history courses that tapped into her lifelong love of reading, she 
soon realized that social studies education was where she belonged and she changed her 
major.

Wanda always loved history and toyed with the idea of majoring in history; 
however, she entered college as a science major. When it became obvious to Wanda that 
her passion was in history, she changed her major, but not with the intention of becoming 
a social studies teacher. She intended to use her history degree in order work in a 
museum. However, once she graduated with her undergraduate degree in history and 
applied for a job with her state’s history museum, a hiring moratorium was issued for all 
state jobs due to the impact of the gas crunch crisis of the 1970’s. The economic impact 
of this energy crisis made its way into the hiring process for state government jobs.
Recalling the positive experience she had in a history class her freshman year of college with an outstanding history professor, Wanda decided to return to a local university to earn her teaching credentials so she could be a social studies teacher.

Beth always loved social studies but entering into high school her true love was in art. During her time in high school she oftentimes thought of becoming an interior designer. By her senior year Beth found herself saying “I’m good but I am not great. I can’t do that. I better think of something else to do.” Beth knew she liked to debate and she had developed a passion for politics and she began to entertain the idea of eventually attending law school. Entering her freshman year of college, Beth declared political science as her major and maintained that major all four years of her undergraduate study. During her senior year of college she received a job working in a law firm, and, through a chance encounter, overheard a conversation between one of the female law firm partners and a secretary. In the course of the conversation, the partner shared with the secretary how the partner’s son was surprised that his mother was able to take him to McDonald’s for lunch and said to his mom, “Why are you with me today mom? You are always at work.” At that point, Beth realized she did not want to have the kind of career that would monopolize her time as a career in law most certainly could. After graduating with her undergraduate degree in political science, Beth went to work at the same law firm managing the firm’s accounts payable office. Remembering her love for debate and politics and recalling her mother’s constant statements that Beth “would someday become a teacher,” she returned to college to earn her teaching credentials and complete her master’s degree.
Wendy recalled not having a great experience in high school with regard to her exposure to social studies. She remarked, “I didn’t get a good grasp on social studies, especially US history and World history like I think I should have.” Wendy’s love for social studies was cultivated once she enrolled in college. She entered her college without a declared major but was thinking of something in the area of science. However, during her sophomore year of college, she encountered a history professor who left a lasting impression on her. Wendy remarked “this professor, who was just phenomenal, brought history alive for me. He was a great story teller and I remember how he really brought out in me my true love for social studies.” When Wendy, also a collegiate athlete, reflected on this along with her desire to remain connected to athletics, she saw a connection between becoming a social studies teachers and finding opportunities to become a coach. Therefore, during her sophomore year of college, Wendy declared social studies teacher education as her major.

One of the most intriguing human stories of entry into the field of social studies education came from Renee. During her time in high school, Renee completed a post-secondary college psychology course that appealed to her and as a result she thought she would pursue a career in psychology. As Renee continued to consider her options for a college major, she engaged in a process of elimination. She did not like the absolute nature of math and did not think that would be enjoyable to teach so she ruled out math education. Chemistry was not a class of interest for her so that ruled out science education. She had always liked reading and writing but struggled through poetry, so English education was eliminated. That essentially left social studies; that, combined with her own family background and a chance encounter with a history book finalized her
decision before she enrolled in her university as a full-time undergraduate student. The
daughter and granddaughter of Hungarian immigrants, Renee recalled the time in high
school when she was reading a history book and came across her grandfather’s name and
his role in the Hungarian Revolution. This was a somewhat pivotal experience for Renee.
It was as if the words on the pages of the book came alive to her for she personally knew
the revolutionary about whom she was reading. When Renee entered her university as a
freshman, she had declared social studies teacher education as her major.

Olivia finished up her high school years thinking she was going to either major in
Russian studies or become a commercial pilot. After applying to a number of universities
and flight schools, Olivia enrolled in a small college as a Russian studies major. Then,
during her junior year she enrolled in a study abroad program in Russia. The experience
was a miserable one for Olivia and she returned home after spending only two months
abroad. When she returned, she was not sure what to do with regard to her major. She
took a look at her transcript and realized that most of her elective classes were in the
areas of political science and economics. She left her college and enrolled in a larger
university in another state as an economics major. After she graduated, she was
participating in an interview for a position as a financial advisor. During the course of
asking questions, the woman interviewing Olivia asked Olivia what she enjoyed doing in
her spare time. When Olivia described her passion for teaching swim lessons as a
lifeguard, the interviewer asked Olivia why she was not pursuing a career in education.
Olivia brushed off the question by saying, “I can’t do that. Teachers are underpaid and
underappreciated so what a horrible job that would be to have.” However, at the end of
the hour long interview, Olivia declined the job offer that was made, walked out of the
office and went back to her university’s registrar office to register for education classes so she could earn her teaching credentials.

Becky finished high school knowing she would be a political science and history major as an undergraduate student. She had not given thought to becoming a social studies teacher and during her college years she had set her mind to attending law school. Before graduating, Becky met the man who eventually became her husband; he happened to be a police officer for a large city in the state where they resided. After much discussion, Becky joked the two decided that it probably was not a good idea for Becky to go to law school as she and her husband would then find themselves sitting at opposing tables in the courtroom. During this time, Becky and her husband welcomed their daughter, and this event sparked within Becky the desire to find a profession that combined her passion for politics with her love for children. She enrolled in a graduate program to earn her Masters of Science in Education degree and her teaching license.

Raised by World War II generation parents who did not have college degrees, Heidi never saw herself attending college after high school, let alone becoming a social studies teacher. Encouraged by her parents to get a job after high school, Heidi worked for an architect for two years while sporadically taking college courses at the local community college. Then Heidi met her husband who strongly encouraged her to earn her college degree. After moving to a new state in the southern part of the country, getting married and having a baby, Heidi enrolled in college to complete her undergraduate degree and teaching licenses. She chose social studies education because it had always appealed to her as a student. During her undergraduate experience, one of her professors noticed Glenna’s love for social studies and effective teaching skills; he encouraged
Heidi to apply for the James Madison Memorial Fellowship in order to complete her graduate work. Once selected as a national fellow, Heidi earned her Master’s of Science in Social Studies Education and then finally entered the classroom as a social studies educator.

Whitney knew during her high school years that she wanted to be a social studies teacher. She always enjoyed social studies as a student because it was the one subject that gave her the ability to develop an awareness of the world around her. She desired to find a career that would allow her to share her passion for social studies with her desire to find a way to invest in the lives of others. Amazingly, Whitney was the only participant who knew early in her life she wanted to be a social studies teacher and who followed that route directly out of high school and through her college career.

**Summary**

In this first chapter of results, the participants shared details that pointed to the identification of five major themes as these themes relate to their experiences as female social studies teachers. Specifically, these themes included; (a) the treatment of participants as a result of their gender, (b) the role of the Catholic Church and Catholic schools in the lives of the participants, (c) the appeal of social studies education, (d) the benefits and contributions of female social studies teachers, and (e) the participants’ journeys in to the field of social studies education. What follows in the next chapter is the second part of the results from this study as revealed by the participants.
CHAPTER V

Results Part II

The results presented and discussed in this chapter center on the data provided by the participants that was rich in description and/or that carried for the participants deep meaning.

Representation of Women in Social Studies Education

A comprehensive theme that emerged from the data analysis centered on the issue of the representation of women in social studies education. When the participants were asked to recount their experience regarding the number of women with whom they came in contact during their experiences as students and teachers, an in-depth pattern was revealed. Specifically, the pattern revealed women were underrepresented in a number of areas pertaining to social studies education. The areas in which women are underrepresented included the following: (a) secondary social studies education teachers; (b) undergraduate professors in social science disciplines; and (c) social studies curriculum, textbooks and supplemental materials. What follows is a discussion of the data based on these three subthemes of underrepresentation.

The Presence of Women in Secondary Social Studies Education

An interesting trend that emerged from the data related to the presence of women in social studies education was the lack of the presence of women specifically in secondary social studies education. The participants’ stories shed light on two areas: the
presence of women in the participants’ student teaching experience and the presence of women in the participants’ current department composition. What follows is data shared by the participants as related to these areas, respectively.

**Student Teaching.** Brenda completed her student teaching experience in both social studies and English. Her cooperating English teacher was a female and her social studies cooperating teacher was a male. The male cooperating teacher, who was a former coach, left the classroom to enter administration a few years after Brenda completed her student teaching. Of particular interest was Brenda’s comment that her male social studies cooperating teacher was very different in teaching style than Brenda. He relied heavily on lecturing, while Brenda preferred to explore and utilize various cooperative learning activities coupled with the needed direct instruction. (The issue of teaching style variations between male and female social studies teachers is examined under a separate section.) Brenda was the only female assigned to complete her student teaching in social studies during the semester of her enrollment.

Cathy completed her student teaching experience in English education; however, she was provided the opportunity to observe a number of social studies teachers during her time as a student teacher. Her only interaction with a female social studies teacher at this time was with the sole female of the department who also served as the department chairperson for social studies.

Renee completed her student teaching with two cooperating teachers in the field of social studies. One cooperating teacher was a male and the other was a female. What was most interesting about Renee’s student teaching experience was the detail she
provided regarding the difference in teaching styles between the two teachers. This data will be presented under a separate theme.

Wendy completed her student teacher with a male cooperating teacher. She remarked that she “did not really learn much about the art of teaching from him.” In addition, in the department of six social studies teachers, all of them were males.

Whitney completed her student teaching with a male cooperating teacher who was a second career teacher having served time in the United States military. In addition to serving as a social studies teacher he served as the head softball coach. There were six members of the social studies department and four of them were males. In addition, the athletic director and assistant principal, both of whom were males, each taught one class each for the social studies department. Whitney remarked that her student teaching experience was good simply because she “learned more about what not to do as a teacher. The good things I learned about being a teacher I learned from others.” She explained that her cooperating teacher did very little to engage the students in the learning of social studies as he relied on his students to read only from the book, to take notes, and to answer questions at the end of each chapter.

Wanda completed her student teaching in a middle school setting with a female cooperating teacher, a fact that was not surprising to Wanda given that the presence of women in social studies, though still rare during the 1970s, was more common in middle school education than high school education. She remembered developing a positive working relationship with her cooperating teacher and an excellent rapport due to her cooperating teacher’s dedication to the profession. Wanda recalled that the others who completed their student teaching in social studies during the same semester were all
males and with the exception of her cooperating teacher, all of the members of the middle school social studies department were also males.

Donna also completed her student teaching in a middle school setting; however, she was assigned to a male cooperating teacher who was a coach. She stated with some strong emotion that she did not like her student teaching experience as she was subjected to behavior by her male cooperating teacher that, by today’s legal standard, would be classified as sexual harassment. The remaining members of the social studies department were males.

Beth completed her student teaching at a high school with a male cooperating teacher who was also the head wrestling coach. Overall she recalled having a good experience and remembered her cooperating teacher trusting her to take full teaching responsibilities rather early in her time at the school. During that semester, Beth recalled a total of 20 social studies student teachers with a male to female ratio of 13:7.

Olivia completed her student teaching with two cooperating social studies teachers, one was a male, the other was a female. The male was also the head baseball coach. Olivia also remarked that her female cooperating teacher provided a much more guided experience by beginning with a co-teaching approach, whereas her male cooperating teacher expected Olivia to “take over the class the very first day of student teaching.” The social studies department contained eight teachers with a male to female ratio of 6:2.

Grace completed her student teaching with a male cooperating teacher at the middle school level. Though she could not recall whether her cooperating teacher had any coaching responsibilities, she remembered the department of five was mostly male
teachers. She referred to her student teaching experience as a mixed bag as on the one hand, she was left to teach on her very first day in the classroom, and on the other hand, at other times her cooperating teacher hovered around her. Oftentimes he made comments that questioned why Grace was becoming a teacher because she was too smart for the profession. There were two other females who completed their student teaching during this same time and both of them were matched with male cooperating teachers. One of those females left her student teaching assignment before completion because her male cooperating teacher told her he had fallen in love with her.

Becky completed her student teaching with a female cooperating teacher. The social studies department had seven teachers and the male to female ratio was 3:4, a statistic that thoroughly surprised Becky, due to the male dominance in social studies education. Becky had an outstanding student teaching experience with her cooperating teacher. She found her cooperating teacher to be supportive, encouraging, understanding, and an expert in the field.

Heidi completed her student teaching with a female cooperating teacher. The social studies department contained nine teachers and the male to female ratio was 6:3. Heidi said that she had an excellent experience with her cooperating teacher and learned much about methodology as well as content.

**Social Studies Department Demographics.** Due to the fact that the focus of this data centered on the composition of secondary social studies departments, Donna’s department information is not reflected in the following information. Because Donna is a
member of her school’s special education department which included people with varying content expertise, her department information is not included.

Olivia reported that her high school serviced about 1100 students, with a faculty that numbered around fifty-five members. In addition, the social studies department contained seventeen members and had a male-to-female ratio of 9:8. When Olivia noted this information about the close gender ratio, she paused and remarked, “Athletics is secondary at my school so maybe that’s why we have so many women.” The applicability of that statement to this study is discussed in a separate section. Finally, the social studies department chairperson was a male teacher.

Wanda described how recent financial reductions in her district had impacted the social studies department at her high school. The teachers at the school serviced approximately 1,000 students and, before the cuts, there were twelve teachers in the social studies department with a male-to-female ratio of 8:4. After the financial reductions, the ratio was 6:3. The teacher who led the department as the chairperson was a male.

Cathy’s high school and social studies department were also subjected to recent financial reductions. The school where Cathy taught contained almost 2,000 students and a faculty numbering approximately 200 members. Before the financial reductions, the social studies department contained 17 teachers, with a male-to-female ratio of 13:4. After the financial reductions, the department contained 12 members, with a male-to-female ratio of 10:2. In addition, the department chairperson was a male teacher.

Brenda, who taught at a large suburban high school, was the only participant who held the department leadership position. In addition, she was the only participant who
reported that the department chairperson was a female; all of the other participants were members of departments that were led by male social studies teachers. Brenda’s school maintained a student enrollment of 2,300 students, with approximately 180 members of the faculty. There were seventeen teachers in the social studies department, with a male-to-female ratio of 10:7.

Wendy taught at a suburban high school that maintained a student enrollment of 2,700 students and 200 faculty members. There were twenty members of the social studies department, with a male-to-female ratio of 16:4. Prior to teaching at that high school, Wendy taught in another high school in a different state that had twenty members in the social studies department and with a male-to-female ratio of 15:5. Each of the social studies departments in which Wendy had worked was led by a male social studies department chairperson.

Renee was a member of a high school staff that contained 60 faculty members and maintained a student enrollment of 800 students. Prior to recent financial reductions, the social studies department contained nine members, with a male-to-female ratio of 7:2. After the financial reductions, the department contained five members, with a male-to-female ratio of 3:2. During her tenure at her school, the social studies department was always headed by a male department chairperson.

Beth was a member of a faculty in a wealthy suburban high school that maintained a student enrollment of approximately 1,000 and a staff of about 90 members. Beth reported that there were 9.7 members in the social studies department, with a male-to-female ratio of 7.5:2.2. In addition, she stated that the social studies department chairperson was a male colleague.
Becky was a member of a high school staff that included 85 members and maintained an enrollment of 2,200 students. Located in an upper middle class neighborhood, the high school had a 14 member social studies department. The male to female ratio was 12:2 and the department chairperson was a female, who was also the most senior member of the department.

From the perspective of the male-to-female ratio, Annette’s experience was the most restricted, in that she had never worked alongside another female social studies teachers at her most recent school. This particular school maintained a student enrollment of approximately 1,000 students and had a faculty of 60 members. Prior to financial reductions, the social studies department included nine members with a male-to-female ratio of 8:1. After the financial reductions, the department included six members with a ratio of 5:1. During her ten-year tenure at this school, Grace never worked with another female social studies teacher. As a matter of fact, at her first school, Grace was also the only female in the seven person social studies department for her first two years. Then, in her third year of teaching, another female joined the social studies department. Grace remained a member of that department for another five years. During her entire career, she has been under the leadership of male social studies department chairpeople.

Whitney was a member of a high school staff that included 75 teachers and maintained a student enrollment of 775 in an affluent all-girls Catholic high school. Located in an upper middle class suburb of a major Midwestern city, the social studies department included seven members. Interestingly, Whitney was the only participant who was a member of a high school social studies department predominated by female teachers with a male to female ratio of 1:6. Whitney believed that one reason her
department was predominated by women was because the school was an all-girls educational institution. At her previous school of employment, which was a coeducational Catholic high school, Whitney was one of six members of the social studies department; the male to female ratio in the department was 4:2 and the department chairperson was a male.

Heidi was a member of a high school faculty whose members numbered anywhere from 120 – 150 teachers, depending on the teaching needs in a given year. The student enrollment of this urban high school numbered about 2600 students with a 70% minority population. She was a member of a social studies department that included 18 teachers and had a male to female ratio of 8:10. Heidi was only one of two participants who reported no great disparity between the number of male and female department members; as a matter of fact, she was one of only two participants who belonged to a social studies department that had a majority of female teachers.

**Undergraduate Experience.** Wanda started her undergraduate experience as a social studies education major during the 1970s, the advent of the passage of Title IX, the “Equality in Education & Athletics Act.” During her time as an undergraduate student, Wanda recalled that most of the other social studies teacher education students were male; as a matter of fact, Wanda struggled to remember if there were any other social studies teacher education students who were female. In addition, many of the male candidates, if not all of them, expressed an interest in coaching, specifically football. During this time she remembered being left with the impression that many of these male candidates saw that becoming a social studies teacher was a great way in which to
become a coach. With regard to her undergraduate history professors, all of them were men. However, although Wanda only had one female professor in any of her content courses, she remembered the one female political science professor fondly as this professor made a profound impact on Wanda.

Donna, who was also an undergraduate social studies education major during this same time period, recalled a somewhat similar experience as Wanda with one major difference. She remembered that although there were more male economics education majors, there were more female history majors than male. Most of the male social studies education majors with whom Donna came in contact also expressed an interest in coaching and she remembered that those female teacher education majors who wanted to become coaches were in the field of Physical Education and not social studies. Also similar to Wanda’s experience is Donna’s experience with her undergraduate professors for her content courses. During her time as an undergraduate student, all of Donna’s professors were male, with the exception of one female professor who was Donna’s instructor for her economics course. Donna remembered her time with this professor for two reasons. First, this female professor made a long-lasting impact on Donna with regard to the professor’s mastery of the content and the professor’s ability to be an effective teacher. Second, this female professor was garnering success as a college professor in a field typically dominated by men during this time period.

Beth’s recollection of her undergraduate experience was intriguing, as she specifically recalled that the ratio of male to female social studies teacher education majors was 70:30. She also remembered that male professors predominated in the content courses she took as an undergraduate. She stated, “There were ten professors in the
history department at my college and I remember being shock that only one of them was a female. Talk about a gender imbalance.”

Olivia’s experience with other social studies teacher education students echoed much of what the other participants reported. She remembered that most of her fellow economics teacher education students were male, with a ratio between male to female of 80:20. Although the ratio was not as imbalanced with those who were enrolled in political science courses, Olivia stated, “It was obvious by the gender make-up of the students in my poly sci classes that this was also a male-dominated field.” Olivia recalled a somewhat similar experience as Beth’s with regard to the ratio of male to female content professors she had as an undergraduate student. She specifically remembered at her first college of attendance that there was only one female professor in all of the content related departments and this professor taught in the political science department. Olivia never had nor knew of a female professor in the economics department.

Brenda’s story regarding the gender ratio of social studies teacher education students was different. During her time as an undergraduate social studies teacher education student, she did not recall a situation that she would classify as a gender imbalance. As a matter of fact, Brenda stated, “I didn’t notice any classes in which there were more men than women. It seemed like it was about equal.” In addition, she did not recall many of her fellow social studies teacher education students who wanted to coach; this represented a different experience than that of the other participants. However, her experience with the professors of her content courses aligned with that of the other participants. Brenda remembered six history professors in the department; five of them were male and one was a female. Like the other participants who had limited experience
with female professors in their content courses, Brenda remembered this female professor because the professor was a dynamic educator and she eventually became the dean of the department.

Not only did Cathy describe the gender imbalance she experienced with regard to the other social studies teacher education students, but she also described in emotional detail how she felt being in the minority as a female. Cathy remembered that, with the exception of a small handful of females, all of the other social studies teacher education students were males. She stated,

I remember always sitting in the front of my content classes because they were all males in the classes. I wanted to be fine with that fact but the truth is it wasn’t a super friendly environment being in the minority as a girl. It wasn’t fun or enjoyable.

In addition, Cathy recalled that many of her male counterparts were also interested in becoming coaches and she remembered that football was the predominant sport of choice. Her experience with female content professors as an undergraduate student varied just a little bit from the other participants as she remembered there being a handful of female professors in her university’s history department; however, the department was predominated by male professors. Cathy made it a point to share the fact that, although there were a handful of female history professors, all of them taught the introductory 100 level, or survey courses. None of the female history professors at her university taught the advanced, honors, or graduate history courses.

Annette’s story was similar to the other participants. She remembered the number of male social studies teacher education students far outnumbering the females. She
remembered that in her history and economics course, along with political science classes, that there were many more males than females, and while she remembered a number of male peers wanting to coach, she could not recall the same for the very few female social studies teacher education students. Her experience with the content undergraduate professors also resonated with the stories of the other participants. Grace had only one female professor in a content course, and that was sociology, but her history and economics courses were all taught by females. While she remembered having a handful of female instructors in her political science courses, she also remembered that they were graduate assistants and not professors.

Although not a social studies teacher education major during her time as an undergraduate student, Becky was enrolled in a number of social studies content courses because she majored in both history and political science. The political science department had no female professors, and the history department had only two females. During her four years, Becky had exposure to only two female professors in the content area. In addition, most of Laura’s fellow students in her history and political science classes were males; she struggled to recall another female student. During her graduate studies, all of Laura’s content professors were male. Most of the other graduate students were male and Becky could not recall any female student besides herself in the graduate level social studies content courses.

Renee’s experience differed from the others. She remembered at least four female social studies teacher education fellow students, but the males still dominated. The difference with Renee’s experience is that all of the female social studies teacher education students expressed an interest in coaching. Interestingly, of the four female
candidates, one did not pass her state teaching test, one withdrew from the program, and the other two were the only ones from the original four who completed the program.

Wendy was another participant whose experience seemed much like Cathy’s. Wendy did not recall there being another female social studies teacher education candidate besides herself at her college. In addition, she remembered that all of the social studies teacher education candidates wanted to coach, including Wendy. However, unlike the experience of some of the other participants, the predominant sport of choice was soccer and not football. Wendy also echoed another trend regarding the presence of female professors in her undergraduate experience. During her time as an undergraduate student, Wendy did not encounter any female content professors because there were none in history, economics, and political science.

Whitney and Heidi both recalled a somewhat different experience as undergraduate social studies teacher education students. Whitney attended a private coeducational Catholic university in a Midwestern state where the gender ratio of those enrolled in the social studies teacher education program, “was about equal, though there were more men in social studies education than any other field except for math.” Given the Catholic foundation of the university, Whitney always thought the university advocated a sense of social responsibility and the need for Catholic students to give back to their community. She believed that was one reason there was a close-to-equal representation of males and female in the undergraduate social studies teacher education program. The gender ratio of Elizabeth’s content professors was different, however. Though there seemed to be an equal representation of male and female history professors, all of Elizabeth’s economics and political science professors were males.
Heidi attended a large public university in a southern state with a student enrollment of approximately 26,000 undergraduates. Heidi shared that there were about 60 undergraduate social studies teacher education candidates. Though the number of candidates seemed evenly distributed between males and females, the males outnumbered the females, though Heidi does not remember it being a great disparity between the two. Like Elizabeth, Glenna’s experience with her content course professors from the perspective of their gender was much different than that of her fellow students. All of Glenna’s professors in her history, political science and economics courses were male. As a matter of fact, Heidi recalled having only two female professors in all of her social science courses. One female professor taught an educational psychology course, and another taught a course on domestic violence. In addition, during her graduate studies in social studies education, Heidi had eight male professors and only two female professors, and all of her classes were filled predominantly with male graduate students.

**Social Studies Curriculum, Textbooks and Supplemental Materials.**
Important to the teaching of any of the disciplines in social studies is the teaching of all groups, especially those distinguished according to gender. This premise served as the basis for the participants to discuss their thoughts on how women and the role of women are covered and addressed in curriculum, textbooks and supplemental materials.

Overall, Brenda believed that the coverage of women in textbooks was improving. When she first started as a social studies teacher, there was very little coverage of women in textbooks or supplemental materials. Today, she is pleased to see that women are given more recognition, specifically in history and government.
However, she could not think of any standard in her state’s social studies curriculum model that specifically targeted women or the teaching of their contributions.

Renee did not believe that women are well represented in her state’s social studies curriculum model or in textbooks. However, she pointed out, there are many groups that were once disenfranchised that are also left out of the social studies curriculum. In addition, she remarked, “It is hard to point out contributions of women who lived in a time in this country that was dominated by patriarchy.” She did not mean to say that women were not contributing to society during that time period but that their contributions of that era would look much different than the contributions of women in today’s society.

Though women are mentioned in social studies textbooks these days, Beth was concerned that they are covered simply through blurbs and not comprehensive integration. Simply highlighting the contributions of a woman by giving her a corner section of one page of the history or government textbook simply devalued the contribution of that woman. In addition, Beth made an interesting connection between the social studies curriculum and the interest the field has to males versus females. She stated that “one reason more males are drawn to social studies is because social studies curriculum and textbooks are so male dominated.” Wendy shared that perspective and stated, “Throughout history our perspective has been a male dominated field. We can get around that by including women in the curriculum and in textbooks.” Expanding the depth and breadth of women in social studies curriculum and textbooks could work to make it a field to which young female students could be attracted. Whitney also stated the need to cover women more holistically in the curriculum, textbooks and supporting
materials. In reference to presenting women in blurbs, she stated, “Not only are women presented in blurbs in a book, the women who are covered are always just the notable ones. We are in need of integrating women – all women – into the human story.”

Heidi took her perspective one step further regarding how women are selectively included. She stated that this selective and limited approach makes it appear that women are simply an afterthought. Specifically, Heidi remarked that if a social studies teacher doesn’t seek out or deliberately profile women, girls become bored and disengaged and don’t pursue careers with the government. In simply terms, Heidi cautioned, “We simply can’t rely on publishing companies to adequately portray women in social studies textbooks. We must remember history is written by winners and in our history, the winders have been men.”

Since entering the field in the 1970s, Donna believed there has been an improvement with regard to how women are covered in textbooks. She recalled a time during which the mention of women was almost nonexistent. However, Donna stated there was a lack of presence of women in social studies curriculum. Because textbook companies publish books that align with a state’s curriculum model, Donna believed that if social studies curriculum continued to improve with regard to including women, then there would be an improvement to the manner in which women are discussed in textbooks and accompanying supplemental materials.

Olivia noted that women are “treated the same way as most non-majority groups” and while this was troublesome to her, she was not quite sure how to address the issue beyond her own classroom and the way in which she handled the curriculum. In addition, Olivia was critical of the manner in which women were discussed in textbooks. She
remarked that it seemed to be done in an obligatory way. “You know, in one chapter you mention three women and four events that involved women and their contributions.” Olivia was bothered by this approach that lacked a comprehensive presentation of women and their contributions.

Becky likened the treatment of women in social studies curriculum and textbooks to that of second class citizens. She remarked that this happens in social studies because it has always been a male dominated field. In order to overcome this gender disparity, Becky commented that teachers have to make a conscientious effort to integrate other sources in the classroom.

Cathy shared the same concerns as the other participants. She believed that the coverage of women in curriculum and social studies textbooks was “simply horrible.” She pointed out that a lack of women translated into a lack of perspective which is offensive, given the fact that one goal of social studies education was to teach about multiple perspectives. Of great interest was Cathy’s observation of how feminists in particular are presented in textbooks as opposed to those female not traditionally labeled as feminists. She quickly pointed out that feminists, like Gloria Steinem, were oftentimes portrayed as physically unattractive, while women like Phyllis Schlafly were oftentimes portrayed well dressed and in pictures that illustrated them at political events such as a political party’s national convention. In addition, Cathy believed that women were sometimes misrepresented in history books. For example, in the United States history textbook she utilized in class, the chapter on “Progressives” the authors failed to tell the story of why women such as Ida Tarbell and Dorthea Dix actually became Progressives. Slanting the story to make it appear as if these women became Progressives because of an
allegiance to some political party, the authors of the textbook failed to tell the real story – that these women became Progressives because they believed the lives of their children were in danger. In addition, she shared the concern expressed by Beth and Olivia that women were simply presented in textbooks through the occasional snippet in the lower corner of a textbook page.

“*We Have to Fight Against the Devaluing of Social Studies Education*”

When asked to discuss the challenges facing social studies educators today, all of the participants had a number of thoughts to share. The most prevalent of the concerns, however, centered around the serious issue of the devaluing of social studies education.

Brenda, Annette, Renee, Donna, Wanda and Cathy individually shared with a great passion the manner in which social studies education is being devalued. Brenda shared that in her district, when a new writing initiative was implemented, the district leadership selected the social studies teachers to receive the training for administering and grading the student assessment tool. Social studies teachers were pulled from their classrooms to receive the training and then administer the tool to the students, who were also pulled from social studies classes to complete the assessment. Brenda offered, “I seriously doubt the administration even gave thought to using another department. They think that making up missed time in social studies is easy.”

Grace pointed to a content specific devaluation of social studies. She stated that people think “being a human being, living in this country, being a citizen makes everyone an expert in our field.” In other words, mastering social studies content required no formal academic training but simply the experience of living. In addition, the devaluation
is demonstrated through the devaluation of technical terminology. When people use incorrect terms or terms incorrectly in the field of social studies, it is an accepted practice. This is not something that is permitted in other fields. “In math, you can’t call a ‘product’ a ‘sum’ and get away with it. But in our field, you can call a ‘republic’ a ‘democracy’ and people are fine with it.” Annette’s statement also underscored the lack of social studies knowledge among people in our society. Finally, Grace quickly pointed out how the manner in which social studies teachers are certified demonstrated a disregard for the field. In her state, using an elementary teaching license, an eighth grade teacher is enabled to teach about topics such as the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. From her perspective, the teaching of these topics must require a content specific degree and license. The importance of these topics is too great in the lives of students to be left to the teaching of someone with a general elementary teaching license.

Donna believed one of the best examples of the devaluation of social studies education was demonstrated by her own state legislature and state board of education. Donna shared that her state required students to pass a state test in reading, writing, math, science and social studies. The passing of the state test is required in order to earn a high school diploma. The state legislature and state board of education were entertaining the strong possibility of changing the required assessment for high school graduation from the state core tests to the test called the “ACT,” also known as the American College Testing which is a national college entrance testing program. Donna was quick to point out that the ACT test contained no social studies segment. Students are tested in reading, writing, math, and science, but there is no separate section that assessed a student’s understanding of social studies.
Wanda echoed this same concern. In addition, she expressed the irony in the fact that social studies teachers must convince state and national policy makers of the importance of social studies education. “Here they are a part of the very system we teach about and they seem to see no value in teaching the younger generation about social studies. That’s ironic.” Cathy added, “We are fighting to prove the worth of social studies education.” A subject area that offers students the opportunity to learn so much about the American voice should be valued and highlighted and not simply dismissed because people think that it is not important or vital to the continued success of our nation and our people.

Renee remarked that “Social studies seems to be getting squeezed out of the educational equation.” With the continued emphasis on math and science, social studies education is oftentimes overlooked, a dangerous pattern. Renee also pointed out that the devaluation of the field is evident in the way in which social studies teachers can sometimes be perceived by others. “What is that saying? ‘Those who can, teach. Those who can’t, teach social studies.’” For Renee, that underscored the lack of a serious approach, a lack of respect for both the field of social studies education and those who dedicate their lives to the teaching of the field.

Referring to the issue of the squeezing out of social studies, Whitney shared that in her school she has noticed, “that social studies has been put on the backburner.” She shared that even her administrators fail to place equal importance and emphasis on social studies education. This lack of emphasis was seen in one specific way; her administrators failed to see the importance of social studies education keeping pace with the other core departments with regard to textbooks, technology, and other resources. Such an approach
left the impression with many teachers and students that social studies education was not as important as math, science and English.

Heidi believed that a major reason why there was a devaluing of social studies was due to the fact that it is not a subject assessed on her state’s mandatory high stakes tests. This exclusion, created at the hands of the state legislature, makes social studies not seem as important as other core departments. Responding specifically to the lack of year-long course requirements for both government and economics, she shared:

I find it absurd! These kids are going to be voters and workers; they need more than one semester of government and economics! Sometimes, I look at our General Assembly and wonder if it’s a conspiracy, like they don’t want our kids to understand the system our politicians control. I know it’s not true but it makes you wonder why they don’t want our kids to have more exposure to government and economics.

Heidi cautioned that the devaluing of social studies education will have a long term impact not only on our students but on the general welfare of our communities and countries.

Compounding the challenge of overcoming the devaluation of the field of social studies education was the concern a number of participants expressed regarding the role of women in social studies education. Brenda and Wendy both remarked that there is still the challenge of getting more women into the field of social studies. Once in the field, Renee offered, women must fight to overcome the stereotypes associated with social studies teachers once seen as only those who are interested in coaching. Wanda stated, “We women start at a disadvantage. We are a social anomaly. People don’t think we have
the same knowledge as men. We have to work to change that in our field.” Becky shared a similar opinion. She believed there were two specific challenges for women with regard to social studies education. First was the challenge of ensuring equal representation of women in the field. The reason for needing this equal representation was to ensure the field of social studies can benefit from the contributions of female social studies teachers. Second was the challenge of ensuring that those women who are already in the field have their voices heard in the departments in which they currently taught. Becky remarked that the dominance of men in the field means women have to be more vigilant in expressing their perspectives, knowledge and expertise in the field.

For Beth, this meant dealing with the challenge of finding women’s voices in all disciplines including history, government, politics, and economics. Incorporating the voices of all people was identified as a challenge by Cathy as well. This must be done to ensure the accurate telling and retelling of the American story.

Wendy, Olivia, and Beth individually highlighted the challenge of dealing with bias in the field of social studies education. These three women pointed out the fact that students are constantly exposed to bias in the media, whether it is on television, the radio, or the internet. “It is an everyday challenge to help our students filter through all of the political crap they see on television,” remarked Wendy. Beth said that social studies teachers are faced with the challenge of dealing with controversial content in such a way that they do not sacrifice the important discussions out of fear that someone will say it is politically incorrect.

Although a number of the participants highlighted the dynamic, every-changing nature of the social studies curriculum as a component they enjoyed about the field,
Olivia and Cathy both commented that this was a challenge for social studies educators. Olivia stated that it was a challenge to filter through all of the information that changes daily and the new information that is added to the field daily in such a way that you ensure your students are exposed to that which is most important. Cathy pointed out that balancing the demands of an ever-changing curriculum was not an easy task for any teacher who was dedicated to the field of social studies education. It was not an easy task but it was a necessary one, she remarked.

“What is the importance of Social Studies Education? One word comes to mind, ‘Citizenship!’”

Certainly, as social studies teachers, each of the participants easily identified the importance of social studies education. While each of the participants had their own story to tell relative to their personal experience, there were common answers provided by the women regarding the importance of social studies education.

Wendy, Renee, Brenda, Donna, Wanda, Cathy, Olivia, Beth and Grace individually pointed to the role social studies education plays in the shaping of students as participatory citizens in our society. Wendy commented, “What is the importance of social studies education? One word comes to mind, ‘citizenship.’” Social studies education is the manner through which students learn about the issues and topics of our society. Based on her experience, Wendy believed that social studies education prepares students to become participatory members of society.

Renee, Brenda, and Grace each stated that the skills students learn in social studies classes teach students how to get involved in their political life while also giving
them the tools to be model citizens. These skills include writing elected officials, getting involved in a candidate’s campaign, using critical thinking abilities and being an active, informed voter while also finding ways to invest in their own communities. Brenda commented that this is important, “so they understand that being a citizen is not just a privilege, it is a responsibility. And that is one of the most important lessons we offer our students.” These types of lessons, remarked Beth, really are lifelong lessons we offer to students.

Donna pointed out that social studies education will remain with students every day of their lives and teaching them to live and function within a system that has the potential to dictate so much is a professional and social responsibility of every social studies teacher. In addition, when taught correctly, social studies education empowers students with the ability to cultivate the skills and knowledge needed to participate in the very system that will dictate so much about the lives of students. Whitney summarized this importance by underscoring how the social studies curriculum contains so much real world application. Specifically, she said that the importance of social studies was found in the simple but important fact that subjects like government and economics are everyday experiences in the lives of all people, including social studies students. Becky echoed this very position and highlighted the fact that everything that is taught in a government or economics class is vital to the lives of students on an everyday basis.

The correct teaching of social studies education, according to Wanda, meant that teachers provide students with the knowledge of how our system works, the purpose of our system of government and the protections provided to every person within the
jurisdiction of the United States. In the end, students develop an awareness of their responsibility as citizens.

The teaching about the structure and function of our government is the paramount importance in the teaching of government, remarked Olivia. In addition, Olivia added that teaching about how the system functions clearly demonstrates to students the important place they hold in the continuation of that system. Also of importance specifically regarding the teaching of economics is the way of thinking students learn to employ. This new way of thinking enables to students to understand the logic behind those economic lessons that are vital to their participation in the economic facet of our system.

Cathy stated that “history is the ultimate literature. It creates the American value,” and teaching social studies to our future citizens is the most important, most powerful lesson imparted by social studies teachers.

“Using Test Results to Measure Teacher Success is Merely Superficial”

When asked to identify the characteristics of what makes them successful social studies teachers, all of the participants quickly pointed out that there were institutional measures and along with affective and social measures of teacher success in the field of education. Specifically, the institutional measure rested in test results. Those test results ranged from the state examinations in social studies to the College Board’s Advanced Placement tests in the social sciences. Though these results were the quantitative measure of both student and teacher success, Cathy remarked that such a measure of teacher success was, “merely superficial.” With that offered, the participants identified a number
of components that were characteristics of successful social studies teachers, all of which were built upon the teacher-student relationship.

All of the participants pointed to the role students play in measuring their successes as female social studies teachers. Brenda stated that her involvement with her students and their openness to her role in their lives was a good measure of her success. She stated, “You know you have been successful when students seek you out to share their news with you or ask for letters of recommendation.” In addition, she shared that a long-term measure of her success was the fact that former students return after graduation to thank her for how well she performed in the classroom.

Simply put, Donna said the measure of her being a successful social studies teacher, “comes from the kids.” She remarked that her students always want to fill her in on the details of their lives, even years after leaving the school. In addition, whenever she saw a former student in the community or anywhere outside of the school, they approached her for a conversation.

Cathy remarked that her success was seen every time she saw her students enjoy history. To Cathy, there was no better measure of success than to teach students the skills they needed to be contributing members of society and then watch them utilize those skills. In addition, Cathy requested her students to complete an end-of-the-survey and every year she received comments about students enjoying her class.

Grace also offered that “the true measure of success comes from kids. And one of the things that means the most to me is getting feedback from students later on.” Students oftentimes returned to Annette’s classroom after completing college level courses and commented to Grace that they used the information from her class in those college level
courses. She also found that building relationships with the students was a sign of success. Grace remarked, “Students seek me out to write letters of recommendation and to share their everyday life details. That means something more than a test score.”

Building on the idea of success as measured by the creation of strong relationships with students, Renee added that those relationships helped to develop a classroom environment that was conducive to learning and student success. “When I have good relationships with the students, they are polite and respectful in class and that makes the learning environment so much better. That’s success.”

Wendy stated that test results are not the true picture of teacher success. She shared that it is the relationship with students and how they respond in class that are some of the best measures of teacher success. When a social studies teacher is successful in this manner, it opens up the types of class discussions and debates you can have. Wendy shared that

The best moments are when students arrive to class and say, “Hey, I saw this on television!” or, “I was reading this and I talked to my parents about what we discussed in class.” I think that is the best measure of a successful social studies teacher—engaging them in the material in a way that connects them to their own lives.

Whitney remarked that this learning of something new that students can apply to their lives is really what underscores success for the social studies teacher. She also added that when her students are equipped with the ability to look at the world and world issues in a different way and leave her classroom equipped to ask the important questions about the world and world issues, then she has been a successful social studies teacher.
Beth stated that she knows she is successful because her students seek her out to share news, to ask for letters of recommendation, and to just check in and chat about their everyday lives. She also shared that this kind of connection she makes with her students extended beyond their time at school. Oftentimes she is visited by her former students after they graduate when they return for a visit once they are attending college.

Olivia was quick to point out that people look to test scores but that success is more than that. Like some of the other participants, she pointed out that the rapport you develop with the students is the foundation of teacher success. A good rapport, she said, leads to the creation of a good classroom environment, helps to increase student productivity and achievement, and is good for building a safe environment for discussions and great debates.

**The Coachification Effect of Social Studies**

One of the most predominant themes that emerged from the data is being labeled as the “coachification effect” of social studies education. Specifically, as developed through the data collected as a part of this study, the coachification effect contains three components. First is the tendency in social studies education to put the hiring of coaches paramount to the hiring of quality social studies teachers. Second, the term refers to the historical marriage between the field of social studies education and coaching; in other words, the manner in which people who are hired to coach are predominantly social studies teachers. Finally, as related to this study, the term includes the impact that gender plays with regard to the hiring of people as coaches and social studies teachers. What follows is a discussion that includes the following elements as shared by the research
participants: (a) the interest of undergraduate social studies education majors to coach; (b) the number of coaches versus non-coaches in the participants’ respective social studies department; and (c) the preferential treatment of coaches in the field of social studies.

**Undergraduate experience**

Many of the participants made reference to the interest a number of their undergraduate peers demonstrated with regard to becoming a coach. In addition, a few of them made mention of the fact that a number of those who wanted to coach deliberately chosen social studies education because it was seen as the least academically challenging field.

A social studies teacher education candidate in the 1970s, Donna recalled that most of the candidates in her program were not only males, but also that most of them wanted to be coaches. In reflecting on the females who were education majors and who also wanted to be coaches, Donna responded, “The females who wanted to be teachers and coaches weren’t in social studies; they were in PE.” She also commented that there had always been a deep connection between male social studies teachers and the desire to coach. “It’s just always been that way for some reason.” Her perception was share by the other participants.

Wanda could not quite explain why there were so many male social studies teacher education candidates who wanted to coach. She reflected, “Maybe it is the idea that social studies is the easiest field to teach, though we know it’s not.” Wanda shared that there were very few female social studies teacher education candidates enrolled with
her and that none of them were majoring in history. There were some females in political science and none of them expressed an interest in coaching. She recalled, “Oh, of course the men wanted to be coaches and most of them wanted to be football coaches. It fit the long standing stereotype we have about social studies.” She termed this relationship as a form of institutional marriage between social studies teaching and coaching.

Brenda recalled very few of her undergraduate social studies teacher education peers expressing an interest in coaching. Also a participant who experienced a gender imbalance in her undergraduate experience, Brenda did remember that those who did express an interest in coaching were all males. Heidi also remembered very few social studies teacher education candidates who expressed an interest in coaching; however, she also remembered that all of those who expressed an interest in coaching were male.

When asked if any of the social studies teacher education candidates expressed an interest in coaching, Cathy responded, “Oh, yeah! Most of them did and most of them were men. I would also say a majority of them played or had an interest in football.” In addition, it sometimes appeared to her that the acquisition of a teaching job was simply the means through which these young men would become coaches.

Wendy remarked that a fair number of the social studies teacher education candidates wanted to coach and were collegiate athletes at the time they attended college. Interestingly, the majority of the social studies teacher education candidates who expressed an interest in coaching were members of the college soccer teams, both men and women’s, a break from the stereotype of social studies teachers coaching in football. Although a majority of those who expressed an interest in coaching were males, Wendy
also expressed such an interest, and for three years served as a high school assistant soccer coach at her second school of employment.

As an undergraduate social studies teacher education student, Whitney remembered being told that she would increase her chances of finding a teaching position if she was willing to be a coach. Reflecting on her experience, she said that of the thirty social studies teacher education majors with whom she studied, about thirteen were females and seventeen were males. Only three of the females expressed an interest in coaching, while most, if not all, of the males expressed the same interest. She recalled that football and basketball tended to be the top sports for which the males wanted to coach. In addition, she added that the desire to be a coach is more prevalent in social studies education because “So many people think social studies is so much easier than any other subject.” Demonstrating that point, Whitney told the story of two male classmates who entered their freshmen year of college knowing only that they wanted to coach. One of them wanted to be a football coach and the other wanted to be a baseball coach. She distinctly remembered that they made the decision to enter the field of social studies education over any other field because it would be the easiest content area.

Whitney also offered an interesting perspective about the difference between male and female coaches. Recognizing the fact that she thoroughly enjoyed being a gymnastics coach, she responded,

My passion is in the classroom with my students. Women see sports less in the “life or death” perspective and I believe that is true for women coaches. Sometimes, the competitive nature in men can take over and their passion becomes their coaching.
She believed that men who want to coach are drawn to social studies teacher education as undergraduates, because, as previously stated, she also experienced their belief that social studies is easy to teach.

Renee shared that quite a few of her peers in her undergraduate social studies teacher education program expressed an interest in coaching. As a matter of fact, she shared that a number of those people were women. However, not all of the women remain in the program and, as a result, do not find teaching or coaching positions.

The school Becky attended for her undergraduate studies only offered an elementary education program. As a result she did not have any exposure to social studies teacher education candidates who expressed an interest in coaching. However, during her graduate experience she remembered that most of her fellow classmates, all of whom were males, were already coaches or expressed an interest in becoming a coach.

**Number of Coaching versus Non-coaching Social Studies Department Members**

Each of the participants was asked to provide information pertaining to the number of coaches on staff in the social studies department. In addition, participants were asked to provide information regarding the gender of each of the coaches. What follows is a summary of that information as provided by each participant.

- Olivia reported that out of seventeen members in her department there were only two coaches and both of them were females.
- Cathy reported that out of the twelve members in her department ten were coaches, including some who coached in other districts, and all ten of them were males.
• Wanda reported that out of the nine members of her department two were coaches and both of them were males.

• Grace reported that at her first school where she taught five of the seven members were coaches and all of them were males. At her most recent school there were six members in the department with two of them serving as coaches, both males.

• Brenda reported that of the seventeen members in her department seven were coaches; six of the coaches were males and the remaining coach was a female.

• Wendy reported that of the twenty members in her department ten were coaches and all of them were males. She also noted that she at one time served as the assistant varsity soccer coach for the girls team but no longer worked in that capacity.

• Renee reported that of the five members in her department all of them were coaches; three were males and the other two were females.

• Whitney reported that one of the seven members in her department was a coach and that happened to be her. She recalled that at her first school of employment there were four of the six social studies teachers who were coaches and all of them were males.

• Heidi shared that three of the 18 members of her department were coaches and all of them were males.

• Becky shared that eight of the 14 members of her department were coaches and all eight were males.
The Preferential Treatment of Coaches in the Field of Social Studies

Once the participants provided a numerical overview of the number of coaching versus non-coaching department members, they were then asked to provide insight about the impact that coaching has on those who choose to coach and teach in the field of social studies education. The participants shared with great detail what can be termed preferential treatment that is created when a social studies teacher is also a coach.

Beth shared that she believed that, in general, being willing to coach is a major factor that weighs heavily in the hiring process. Based on her experience, however, the department that is most impacted by the recruiting and hiring of coaches is the physical education department.

Grace recalled being told by her college advisor, “You will be lucky to get a job as a social studies teacher because you are not a coach.” Based on her experience, Grace believed that people who want to coach are entering the teaching profession and sometimes it appeared that this is happening mostly in the field of social studies. She expressed concern over this trend for two reasons. First, people who wanted to coach and entered the field of social studies became teachers who lacked a passion for what they taught. Second, this lack of passion resulted in a disregard for the quality of teaching provided in the classroom. In addition, Grace remarked that “based on my experience with the teachers and coaches in my department, coaches are less likely to be innovative.” With regard to methodology, coaches were less likely to try new approaches in the classroom and sometimes failed to engage in quality direct instruction.

Whitney remembered a specific event during her student teaching that left a strong impression regarding the manner in which coaches engage students in the
classroom. Paired with the head varsity softball coach who was a male, Whitney said that during the week of the state softball tournament, which was a very busy and stressful time for her cooperating teacher, he seemed to completely disengage with the students. During this week, he made the decision to show the entire movie *Pearl Harbor* to all of his world history classes. This decision disturbed Whitney for a few reasons. First, there was probably only ten minutes of the movie with educational value and, second, his disengagement with the class was very obvious to everyone; the students knew he was more focused on the busy softball week.

One of the most detailed accounts regarding this preferential treatment was provided by Brenda. As the social studies department coordinator for her school, Brenda witnessed first-hand the preferential treatment given in the areas of hiring and teacher performance to those social studies teachers who coach. She shared that, “When we opened the new high school where I teach, coaches were hired first.” As a matter of fact, when the administrative staff found a person to serve as the new basketball coach, a candidate who was also a social studies teacher, Brenda was told, “Well, we need a basketball coach and he’s a highly qualified coach. He needs some help in the teaching end so could you coach this person up and help them as a teacher?” As the leader of the social studies department, Brenda was only a part of one phone interview with this candidate who ended up receiving the job. This experience made Brenda remark that, “It was very obvious to me that getting quality coaches was going to more important than getting quality teachers.”

Heidi shared how the change in leadership at her school has changed the preferential hiring process for coaches. Recalling the manner in which she received her
job, Heidi revealed that the position had been promised by the principal to a male candidate who was serving as a long term substitute for a social studies teacher at the school; this was the position that was eventually vacated by the permanent teacher and posted as an opening. The principal promised the position to the male candidate because he was a wrestling coach. Fortunately, when the time came to interview candidates, the faculty had implemented a change in the hiring process at the school. Hiring was no longer a process completed by a single building administrator, but by a committee comprised of members from the social studies department. Shortly after Heidi was offered and accepted the position, there was a change in the administrative team at her school. Now led by a female principal, Heidi shared that there is no longer a primary emphasis on hiring coaches first; the focus was now hiring the best teacher candidate. However, Heidi shared that there are still quite a few schools in her district where the hiring of a coach is paramount to the hiring of a teacher. In addition, during her tenure in her district, Heidi stated there were more coaches in the social studies departments throughout the district than in any other department. She explained this happened because many thought social studies was a subject that students hated; therefore, it did not matter who teaches it and if that teacher also coaches.

In addition to the hiring preference, Brenda shared that once a part of the social studies department, preferential treatment is extended to coaches once they are in season. Specifically, lesson plans are completed by the non-coaching social studies teachers and shared with the coaching social studies teachers during those coaches’ respective seasons. As a result, Brenda believed that non-coaching teachers are more inventive than coaching teachers. Interestingly, Brenda said that in her experience she found this tendency to
apply to only male coaches and not female coaches. She shared that the one female coach in her department remained self-sufficient as a teacher whether she was in or out of season. This particular female coach was a “go-getter who does very well in the classroom all of the time.”

Cathy recalled that during her high school experience, all of the members of the social studies department were males and all of them coached. This tendency of male coaches to dominate the field was something Cathy stated was still prevalent in social studies education. In addition to there being preference given to male coaches in social studies teaching, Cathy commented that there seemed to be an institutionally created privilege given to coaches. She stated, “I do think there is a privilege extended to coaches and there is an ‘old boys club’ and that’s just what it is. If you are a male coach you don’t have to teach as hard.” Cathy pointed out the privilege extended to the head coaches in the social studies department with regard to their teaching schedules. All of the coaches are provided with eleventh period prep, which is the last period of the day. This practice provided coaches the ability to prepare for practices and games before their athletes are released from school. Cathy quickly pointed out that as a mother, she could benefit from such a schedule because a prep period at the end of the day would enable her to pick-up her two young children from her day care provider. However, she remarked, “I am not a coach. I will never get that benefit. So is this privilege gender specific? One hundred percent absolutely, without a doubt.” Cathy shared that coaches are also provided extra preparation time in addition to the standard one preparation period that all teachers received.
Cathy then pointed out what she believed was a disturbing incident that played out in her department. One of her male social studies colleagues served as the head cross country coach and had done well in developing a state-ranked cross country program. During the fall, Cathy was approached by her principal and asked if she would please accept a student transfer into her junior level Advanced Placement United States History class. The student was a freshman and Cathy inquired as to why the move was needed. The principal responded that the student was currently enrolled in the social studies class taught by the cross country coach. The student’s parents called the principal concerned about the lack of quality of teaching and academic challenge in the student’s social studies class. Cathy accepted the student but found it quite disturbing and offensive that her colleague’s poor teaching performance was not addressed by the administration. She staunchly believed that he was not confronted because he was a successful coach.

Donna remembered interviewing for her first social studies teaching job along with other candidates, most of whom were males and interested in coaching. During this time period, the mid 1970’s, Donna knew there was a male dominance in social studies education for two reasons. First, many administrators believed that “anyone could teach history” so the hiring of quality coaches was paramount to the hiring of quality teachers. Most coaches at the time were males who used social studies teaching as a gateway to coaching and thus the dominance of men in social studies education. Second, because women were not viewed as the intellectual equal of men, more men were hired in social studies departments. In speaking about the social studies department at her school, Donna recalled the time when there was one female and six males in the department and all of the males were coaches. She watched for years as the social studies department became
the home to many head coaches in football, basketball, soccer, baseball, and track. When asked about this stable relationship between social studies and coaching, Donna responded, “That’s the way it has always been.” Although she believed that female social studies teaching candidates can also benefit from a willingness to coach, it is still more of a benefit for males.

Although Olivia was teaching at a school where athletics were secondary to academics, she most certainly had witnessed this coachification effect. During her job search for her first social studies teaching position, she attended a teacher job fair and was told by at least five different school districts that had a social studies teaching position to fill that she would be a viable candidate if she could coach one of the boys teams that had a coaching vacancy. Based on her experience, Olivia believed that the willingness to coach is more beneficial for male social studies teachers. First, even in light of the impact of Title IX in increasing the number of interscholastic athletic teams for girls, Olivia believed that these coaching positions were being offered and filled by male coaches not female coaches. In addition, like Donna, Olivia noted that because of the attitude that people carry with regard to the perceived ease with which social studies can be taught, the advantage in becoming a coach is greater if one is willing to teach in the field of social studies. Becky concluded this by stating that people who want to coach will oftentimes choose social studies education because they think the field, which is perceived to be dominated by rote memorization as the main teaching method, is the easiest field in which to teach.

Olivia believed that innovation seen in the classroom by a teacher-coach was initially due to the innovation having been a part of the role of coach and not teacher. She
shared that the head baseball coach who taught in her department started to use a new computer program to track statistical information about student performance and grades. However, the teacher-coach only discovered this program because he used it to track statistics for his athletes. Becky believed that coaches could be innovative in the classroom. However, she offered a bit of a different perspective. Based on her experience coaches in her department were bland and boring during their season and more productive in the classroom during their off season. She believed this was due in part to the coaches becoming consumed with their supplemental responsibilities.

Wanda’s story aligned with those of many of the other participants. She recalled the fact that she was denied her first social studies position because the school needed a coach. Like Donna, Wanda began her job search in the mid-1970’s and shared Donna’s perspective with regard to the relationship between social studies teaching and coaching. Wanda responded, “Coaching and social studies teaching have always enjoyed a strong bond.” When Wanda was interviewing for another social studies position, she was surprised to receive the offer for employment because, as it was shared with her, that social studies position had been promised to a male who was hired to coach. The principal at the middle school refused to offer the position to the male candidate because he lacked the needed social studies certification. The principal at the high school, where the male was to serve as a coach, was then given a social studies teaching position at that location. Wanda continued the story by citing the preferential treatment this candidate was given, “Two days a week he was given class coverage and he left the building midday to attend classes at the local university in order to earn his social studies teaching credentials.” Wanda wondered if this would have happened in any other field other than
Both Renee and Wendy believed that their interest in and willingness to coach was a benefit to each of them during their job search. Wendy remarked, “Yes! My willingness to coach was definitely an advantage for me, definitely an advantage for me over other candidates who were ‘just’ teachers.” In addition, Renee stated that she was inclined to believe it’s any candidate’s willingness to coach and not necessarily only for male candidates. She also stated that the presence of those in the dual role of coach and teacher predominated the field of social studies though she was not sure of the reasons.

Unlike Olivia, Wendy believed that coaches have an advantage in being innovative in the classroom. She stated, “Teaching and coaching go hand-in-hand. A good coach makes a good teacher. Poor coaches perform poorly in the classroom.” Of interest was that Wendy’s statement indicated that quality teaching was a product of quality coaching, thereby holding the coaching role as the priority. Wendy also shared that the coaches in her department are not assigned to teach the higher level social studies courses, which usually involved a greater time commitment for preparation and grading than the lower level or average level courses. She commented that the coaches in her department are under more pressure to perform successfully on the field than in the classroom.

One of Wendy’s most interesting comments related to her explanation of why students sometimes cite social studies as their least favorite subject. “Sometimes students sense that, for example, social studies teachers who are coaches don’t care as much about teaching as they do coaching.” Wendy shared that this was also her own experience.
When she was in high school, her social studies teacher was the head football coach and her experience in his class was less than a quality one. She did not learn much in that class and always knew his true passion was coaching football.

**Summary**

In this second chapter of results, the participants shared details that pointed to the identification of an additional five major themes as these themes relate to their experiences as female social studies teachers. Specifically, these themes included: (a) the lack of representation of women in social studies education, (b) the devaluing of social studies education, (c) the importance of social studies education, (d) the characteristics of a successful female social studies teacher, and (e) the coachification effect in social studies education. The participants offered rich details in describing each of these themes and the manner in which these five themes manifested themselves in their personal and professional lives.
CHAPTER VI

Summary and Discussion

Before presenting the summary of the results and the related discussion, a brief summary of the statement of the problem and methodology is provided to help the reader focus on the components of this dissertation. Such a review will help the reader understand the focus of this study, the results and the related implications as revealed by those results.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiential components specific to the professional journey of secondary female social studies teachers. Through the discussions with the research participants, the manner through which they arrived in the field of social studies education was explored. In addition, participants revealed the ways in which their gender has impacted their professional careers as social studies teachers. Finally, the participants discussed the various issues facing social studies education as well as those issues specific to female social studies teachers.

Review of Methodology

In order to capture the essence of what it means to be a secondary female social studies teacher, twelve subjects were recruited for this study. The participants in this study ranged in age from 26 – 59 years old. Their experience as social studies teachers ranged from 5 – 36 years as full time educators in classrooms ranging from 7th – 12th
grades. Participants completed the necessary Human Subjects Review Board documents before commencing with the research process. The participants resided and taught in various geographic locations throughout the United States of America including Ohio, Michigan, Florida, Kentucky, New York and Texas.

Data were collected through phenomenological interview methods. Personal conversations and interviews were used as the primary sources of data gathering. The interviews were structured around three series, or tiers, of questions. Series I, entitled, “Putting Life in Context” asked the participants to relive their experiences as elementary, middle and secondary school students. In addition, participants were asked to share their stories about their journeys that brought them into social studies education as teachers by building on their experiences, while also discussing their current teaching assignments and relationships they maintain in their professional lives. Series II, entitled, “Reconstructing the Details of Life,” focused on each participant’s experience in social studies education as an undergraduate student, student teacher and graduate student. Many of the questions focused on the role and presence of women in social studies education among other topic. Series III, entitled, “Reflection on & Meaning of Life Experiences” focused on the participants’ thoughts and ideas about what their lived experiences mean to them and how these experiences relate to their roles as female social studies teachers. In addition, participants were asked to analyze such topics as the importance of social studies education in the lives of students today and the future role of women as educators in this field.

Once the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed to written text. The data were then coded for major themes. Once the major themes were
identified, they were then analyzed for the presence of any subthemes. The next step involved the weighing of the themes. Specifically, the themes were divided into two major categories. The first category contained those themes that were very important to many of the participants and/or are strong themes that appeared consistently within the story of one specific participant. The second category contained those stronger themes that were important or prevalent among all of the participants. The first category of themes was discussed in chapter four while the second category of themes was discussed in chapter five.

**Summary of Results**

Once the interview audio files were transcribed, the coding process revealed the following themes as shared by the participants: (a) treatment of participants as a result of gender; (b) the role of the Catholic Church and Catholic schools in the lives of the participants; (c) the appeal of social studies education; (d) benefits and contributions of female social studies teachers; (e) the participants’ journey into the field of social studies education; (f) the lack of representation of females in social studies education; (g) the devaluing of social studies education; (h) the importance of social studies education; (i) the characteristics of a successful female social studies teacher; and (j) the coachification effect in social studies education. In essence, the results of this study indicate that gender impacted the professional journeys of the twelve female social studies teachers who served as participants in this study.
Relationship of Results to Prior Research

The issue of gender has been the focal point of a number of research studies related to education. In addition, the relationship between social studies education and the coaching has been the center of a handful of research studies. The results of this study align with prior research in a number of areas, including:

Weller and Smith (1999) and Connors (2000) reported that females were greatly underrepresented as undergraduate students in social studies teacher education programs at three Mid-western universities. The difference between the percentage of males versus females ranged from 27% - 30%; in essence, the males outnumbered the females by a 3:1 ratio. A majority of the research participants confirmed that the females in their respective undergraduate social studies teacher education programs were also outnumbered by the male students enrolled in the program. In addition, Hurren (2002) reported that women were also underrepresented as student teaching cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Again, a majority of the participants’ experience aligned with the prior research as most of the participants completed their student teaching with male social studies teachers. The participants also worked with content based professors who were predominantly males.

With regard to the social studies curriculum, various prior research underscored the underrepresentation of women, a phenomenon that is referred to as the engendered social studies curriculum (Hurren, 2002). This engendered social studies curriculum is based on topics and teaching constructed by men and results in teaching of a partial curriculum by silencing the voice of women (Sandford, 2002). All of the participants in the present study were quick to point out that this was one of their greatest concerns
about social studies education. The participants confirmed that social studies curriculum was overpowered by the male point of view and subsequently silenced the important story that women have to tell. Levstik (1997) reported that there was danger in this engendered curriculum because women were not able to understand the political voice they have in society, which aligned with the words and experiences of the participants.

The participants all remarked that the engendered social studies curriculum was also reflected in the lack of women in social studies textbooks. Many of the participants made two specific remarks regarding the portrayal of women in social studies textbooks. First, many of the participants stated that there is not adequate coverage of women in social studies textbooks. This finding aligned with research completed by Sadker (2000) and Zittleman and Sadker (2002) in which it was reported that less than two-percent of the space in textbooks was devoted to women and that less than three-percent of the content covered in the social studies textbooks was centered on the issues of sexism and the experiences of women. Second, a number of the participants remarked that the manner in which women were portrayed was according to gender stereotypical roles. This finding aligned with Sanders (2000) research findings that reported women were pictured and described in textbooks in ways that kept with social gender roles of women. Zittleman and Sadker (2002) referred to this portrayal of women quite simply as sexism, a position shared by a few of the participants.

All of the participants were emphatic with regard to their thoughts on the need to recruit quality women to the field of social studies teacher education. A number of the benefits of having a quality female social studies teachers identified by the participants were also benefits identified in prior research studies. First, Fouts (1990) reported that
female social studies teachers made a positive impact on their female students, a benefit the participants affirmed. Second, Penn (2001) found that effective female social studies teachers helped to foster a positive gender role identity with their female students which, in turn, reinforced for the female students the idea that girls are as important as boys in the educational setting. A number of the participants shared that they had experienced firsthand the positive impact that had on their female students by serving as gender role models. Third, Corbin (1994) and McTeer and Beasley (1977) found that the dominant role of males in history and government impacted the gender differences with regards to attitudes towards social studies; girls had less of an interest in the male dominated field than boys. The participants commented that recruiting female teachers would help increase interest in social studies among female students.

Regarding the role of coaching and its relationship to social studies teachers, a number of the participants shared stories from their educational and professional lives that aligned with a wealth of the previous research. Chiodo, Martin and Rowan (2002) reported that social studies teacher education students expressed a stronger interest in coaching in order to secure a teaching position than all other content field teacher candidates. A number of the participants shared the same information as it related to their own experiences as undergraduates recalling the number of fellow social studies teacher education students who wanted to also pursue coaching. In addition, those participants recalled that a majority of those expressing interest in coaching were males, a fact that aligned with research completed by Weller (2002).

A number of the participants remarked about the institutional marriage that seems to have taken place between social studies teaching and coaching. The participants and
their colleagues oftentimes wondered why so many of the coaches were found in the social studies department, a question that surfaced in research completed by Weller (2002).

When asked about this relational phenomenon between social studies and coaching, many of the participants indicated that it was more prevalent among males who were coaches and social studies teachers than it was among females who served in the dual roles. A handful of the participants pointed out that, even in light of the increase in coaching positions due to the increase in female interscholastic teams, male coaches/teachers were at an advantage because they were the ones receiving the coaching jobs for the female teams. This aligned with various research completed by Gregory (2007), Hasbrook (1998), Stromquist (1993) and the Tucker Center (2009), all of which revealed that there has been a decrease in both the number and percentage of female coaches on the interscholastic level. This was due to the fact that males were being hired as the coaches for the female teams.

Participants also shared various personal accounts about the hiring preference given to those social studies teacher candidates who were willing and interested in coaching. Weller and Smith (1999) reported this phenomenon in their study and revealed that administrators would, in fact, be more likely to hire someone who was also a coach over someone who was not. The participants explained that this approach was more pervasive in social studies education because people, specifically administrators, believe that anyone can teach social studies; therefore, hiring a quality coach was paramount to hiring a quality social studies teacher. Adomanis (1986) reported this same finding and, just like a few of the participants shared, Loewen (2007) stated this meant that a number
of coaches who were also hired as social studies teachers were not even certified to teach social studies.

Once a person began to fulfill the dual role of coach and social studies teachers, the participants shared that it was not unusual for the coaching role to predominate. Massengale (1981) and Templin and Washburn (1981) reported the same finding. In the end, Rog (1984) reported that the teacher finds the coaching role more attractive than the teaching role. Some of the participants shared that they witnessed firsthand the devaluing effect of the teaching responsibility by social studies colleagues. This devaluing effect also impacted teaching performance of the coach/teacher. Fouts (1989) reported findings that demonstrated that the coach/teacher was less likely to be innovative in the classroom than their non-coach teacher counterparts. This finding was observed and shared by the participants as based on their personal experiences with those who performed as both a coach and social studies teacher.

**Implications for Practice**

One of the best ways to ensure a free people remain as such is to provide compulsory education; freedom and education rely on each other, with each serving a vital role in our republican nation. Such an approach to education must include requirements for and an appreciation of social studies and citizenship education. In addition, all people within the United States must be provided educational opportunities that are not denied on the basis of race, gender, class or any other characteristic that creates an arbitrary discrimination between said characteristic and equal educational opportunities. However, as revealed by this study, there are times when gender has
played an unfair role in the treatment of women in the area of social studies education.

By awakening our senses to the social and institutionalized gender discrimination that occurs in social studies education, we can achieve some valuable and much needed goals.

First, an awareness of the important role women have played, play and will continue to play in the American society will ensure that the teaching of social studies is not done purely from a masculinized perspective. Certainly, it should not be the goal of social studies educators to silence the voice of men; in telling the story of “him,” we must also advocate the telling of the story of “her” so as to provide an accurate portrayal of who we were, who we are and where we are heading. We cannot say we speak as a nation when fifty-percent of our citizenry is silenced.

Second, such an awareness can help to break down the walls of gender discrimination. When social studies is treated as a masculinized subject area, females at all educational ages are left feeling unimportant and not attracted to the field of social studies. For a subject whose soul rests on the ideals of freedom and equality, social studies educators must not only expect but they must demand equal treatment and opportunities for women.

Third, by recognizing and correcting the gender discrimination and inequality that exists in social studies education, we empower women with the opportunity to reach their full potential as members of the body politic.

Fourth, a focus on the need for a serious approach to social studies education can help to address the issue of what appears to be an institutionalized marriage between men, coaching and teaching social studies. While it is recognized that there are many outstanding male social studies educators who also serve as outstanding coaches, the data
herein revealed that the stereotype of being a “coach who teaches social studies” still exists and it negatively impacts the perception students have about the field of social studies education.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

In order to ensure students are receiving an education that reflects the American political ideals of freedom and equality, additional research must be conducted for a few key reasons. First, there is a need to engage in further research related to the inclusion of women in social studies education. Specifically what must be both quantitatively and qualitatively researched is the number of women recruited into the field of social studies education as both secondary teachers and content professors in colleges and universities. In addition, longitudinal research must be completed in order to track the advances and improvements made with regard to including females in social studies curriculum, textbooks and supplemental materials.

Second, there should be additional research completed regarding the manner in which females are recruited to the field of social studies education. Although the assertion to recruit women to the field simply because they are women is not a central tenet of this study, there are certainly females who could not only develop an interest in the field of social studies education but who can continue making invaluable contributions to the field while, in turn, serving as effective, positive role models for younger females in each generation. Certainly, this type of additional research would yield positive results if women were more conscientiously integrated in social studies curriculum, textbooks and supplemental materials as mentioned previously.
Third, additional research is needed to measure what undergraduate social studies teacher education students are taught about gender and its role and impact in the secondary classroom, specifically the social studies classroom. Such research could reveal the need to educate social studies teacher education students regarding the role gender plays in the classroom and its impact on learning and teaching styles. This information could, in turn, help to foster a cadre of social studies teachers who have an awareness of the educational differences between the genders and who use that knowledge to meet the needs of every student who walks into their social studies classroom, whether that student is a male or female.

Fourth, there needs to be additional research examining how the issue of coaching impacts the content area choice a teacher education student makes as an undergraduate student. Specifically, such research must examine the reason why so many undergraduate students who want to coach select social studies as their area of teacher certification. A comprehensive research study on the topic could reveal the ways in which social studies education has become so highly devalued by those in secondary education. It could also offer support and recommendations to changing the seriousness with which people approach social studies education and ways in which to make it a competitive academic field.

Finally, there needs to be additional research examining the manner in which the status of being a coach impacts one’s effectiveness as a social studies teacher. Such further study could help identify how the educationally institutionalized marriage between social studies and coaching developed over the years. In turn, this could provide recommendations on ways in which to effectively support those who choose to be both a
coach and social studies teacher, ensuring there is little role conflict but continued success in both roles.

Conclusions from this Study

Although road to national independence commenced in 1775, the road to emancipation and equal opportunities for many groups once disenfranchised in this country has been an ongoing journey. This study revealed that gender is a characteristic that impacts the type of professional journey one will have as a social studies teacher. In addition, gender is a characteristic that can positively impact one’s contributions to the field of social studies education. Gender is not a characteristic for which people should feel ashamed or a sense of worthlessness; rather, this study revealed that it is a characteristic that can empower the social studies curriculum, the manner in which it is taught, the ability to engage students in the curriculum and serve as an identifying component with which female students can relate.

This study also revealed trends in a number of areas regarding the inclusion of women in social studies education. First, over the course of the past 36 years, which is the longest amount of service of one of the research participants, the inclusion of women in social studies curriculum and textbooks has increased, though very sparingly as discussed in Chapter 2 and the beginning of this chapter. Second, the number of women entering the field of social studies education has not increased as would be hoped. Third, there continues to be present the institutional relationship between being a male social studies teacher and a coach. While the number of female interscholastic teams in existence has increased as a result of Title IX, the number of female coaches has not as
these positions are being filled by men. If the relationship between being a male social studies teacher and being a coach continues in the field, the number of females in the field of social studies education will not necessarily increase.

In addition, this study revealed that fighting against the hurtful stereotype of “involved coach, ineffective social studies teacher,” is a challenge but one that these twelve women are willing to undertake for themselves, their field and their colleagues, males and females alike.
References


Retrieved from http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_41_1_ARForan_outside_place_SS.htm


APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION &
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
“Engendered & Endangered: A Phenomenological Study of Twelve Female Social Studies Teachers”

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Miss Kimberly Siracuse, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education, in Educational Leadership in the Ashland University College of Education, is conducting a phenomenological research study to help identify and describe the experiences specific to female social studies teachers on the secondary level. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a female who teaches or has taught secondary social studies.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will participate in a minimum of two interviews each lasting a minimum of 60 minutes and conducted by Miss Siracuse. The interviews will include a variety of questions covering issues from your childhood, young adulthood, career training, professional growth and development and how those experiences are unique to being a female in the field of secondary social studies education. Digital audio files will be made of the interviews. Follow-up electronic messages will be exchanged if/when it is necessary. Such communication will be archived electronically. In addition, phone calls will also be used if/when it is necessary. Digital audio files will be made of any such calls.

2. You will be asked to share any artifacts, such as documents, letters, pictures, and other archival information, that help to relay and add description to your story as a female in the field of secondary social studies education.

3. If relative to the focus of the study, Miss Siracuse will complete non-participant observations of you at your work place. During these observations, you are asked to engage in those activities that are a part of your everyday behaviors associated with being an educator. Field notes will be taken to record the findings.

These procedures will be completed between April 15 – June 15, 2010, accommodating your schedule and availability. Any related observation will take at least one school day and no more than two school days.
4. Your identity will be kept confidential and your personal name and other identifying marks will not be shared on any research information and data.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. During the interview, you may feel nervous or uncomfortable sharing sensitive and personal information. I encourage you to ask me any questions at any time during this study.

2. During the interviews and any related observations, I may take notes and this might make you feel uncomfortable. The notes will only be used to help me understand your experiences and the meanings you attach to these experiences.

3. Confidentiality: Participation in this research study involves a loss of privacy when you share information with me. All of the information collected from you will be strictly confidential. Your personal identity will not be revealed in any data results and a pseudonym will be used. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet drawer accessible by only me. When the expiration date approved by the Human Subjects Review Board arrives, all raw data will be shredded and discarded to further protect your privacy. My dissertation chairperson, Dr. Jane Piirto, and I will be the only people with access to your research data during the data reporting and analysis processes.

4. Please note that information shared during this study that discloses harm to you the participant, another person or another person’s property is not protected by the researcher-participant confidentiality described.

D. BENEFITS

The benefit to you from participating in this study will be the opportunity to tell your story as a female secondary social studies teacher. In addition, the information you provide may help other female secondary social studies educators understand the challenges associated with being a female educator in the field of secondary social studies, while also helping to encourage other females who share the same experiences. Finally, the information you provide may also reveal information, social & professional patterns and issues unique to those secondary social studies teachers who are females.

E. COSTS

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study.
F. PAYMENT
You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

G. QUESTIONS
As the researcher, I, Kimberly Siracuse, am available to answer any questions you have about this study that have not already been answered or that arise during the research process. You may call me at 419-606-2277.

If you have any comments or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with me, the researcher. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the Ashland University Human Subjects Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. Specifically, you may contact:
Davide Vanata
Chairperson, Human Subjects Review Board
419-289-5292
dvanata@ashland.edu

You may reach the board office between 8:00 and 5:00, Monday through Friday.

H. CONSENT
You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point.

If you agree to participate, you should sign below.

_____________________ _________________________________________
Date     Signature of Study Participant

_____________________ _________________________________________
Date     Signature of Person Obtaining Consent