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**UNFOLDING WOMEN'S LIVES:
SOCIAL FACTORS THAT SHAPE THE LEADERSHIP
APPROACHES OF WOMEN SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN KENYA**

By

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Thesis presented for the degree of:

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**In the School of Education
Graduate School of Humanities**

University of Cape Town

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APRIL 2006

DECLARATION

I declare that: *Unfolding women's lives: Social factors that shape the leadership approaches of women school principals in Kenya* is my own work, except where indicated, and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any university.

Signed:

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ABSTRACT

This study constructs an account of the leadership approaches of five women school principals and relates these to their social contexts and social experiences. The study examines the experiences of the principals as young girls, teachers and principals.

The theoretical and analytical framework for the study is derived from Bourdieu's theory. Within a life history design, data was collected using structured interviews that were tape recorded and transcribed. The analysis of the narratives focuses on the relationship between the leadership approaches of women principals and their leadership dispositions and positions in the field. This narrative analysis suggests that the women principals in this study adopted multiple leadership approaches that appear to be shaped by seven major factors, namely, their androgynous leadership dispositions, valued gendered attributes, patriarchal interests, competing interests in the field, their social capital, the economic capital of their schools, and their emotional capital.

The contribution of this study is to explore the potential of a particular theoretical and methodological approach to deliver an explanatory account of leadership practices within a particular historical and social context. The analysis of the narrative of the five women principals in this study instantiate this approach.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The narratives of women school principals form the very heartbeat of this thesis. The greatest thanks must go to the women principals who entrusted their life histories to me and made this thesis possible. To all these women, I say *Asante* (thank you).

Dr. Heather Jacklin, my supervisor, has been and will continue to be my mentor. Without her intellectual questioning, support and encouragement, I could not have developed this thesis the way I have done. My thesis has benefited from her constructive and stimulating comments. The success of this thesis is a tribute to her.

I have benefited from conversations and seminars at the African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town with Prof. Jane Bennet and other graduate students. I have also benefited from the insights of Loic Wacquant, Craig Calhoun and Michael Grenfell. I am also grateful to colleagues in the school of education for their advice and encouragement. Linda Ronnie deserves special thanks for constantly sharing research articles with me.

Many thanks are due to my children, Mureithi and Shiku, who put up with me even when the going was rough; and to my parents, Kariuki and Wambui, my sisters Wairimu and Muthoni, and my brother, Mwangi, for their encouragement.

My gratitude is also due to the University of Cape Town for bursary assistance and to Prof. Gitay who was my grant holder.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR ACRONYMS

AEO	Assistant Education Officer
AIC	African Inland Church
BOG	Board of Governors
DC	District Commissioner
DEO	District Education Officer
DO	District Officer
DP	Democratic Party
FORD	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
FAWE	Forum of African Women Educationalists
KANU	Kenya African National Unity
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary of Education Examination
Kshs.	Kenya Shillings
MP	Member of Parliament
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PEO	Provincial Educational Officer
PDE	Provincial Director of Education
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SDP	Social Democratic Party
UT	Untrained teacher

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Focal research problem

This study explores, through life history narratives, the social factors that shape the leadership approaches of five women school principals in Kenya. Specifically, I examine their leadership approaches within the context of their lived experiences, which include their early family, schooling, career, emotional and gender-specific experiences, coupled with their social networks, power dynamics and economic capital of their schools. The key research question is: What is the relationship between the leadership styles of women school principals and their lived experiences, in three phases of their lives, namely, as young girls, teachers and principals? Using Bourdieu's thinking tools this study starts from these lived experiences to discern the relationship between the leadership approaches of women school principals and their socially produced leadership dispositions as well as their positions in the field. Relevant aspects of Bourdieu's theory will be discussed more extensively in chapter three.

Background and rationale

Unless we step inside the lives of women school principals, we cannot begin to understand their leadership approaches. My study stands on this premise. Available literature suggests that Kenyan women principals grow up and work in a highly patriarchal environment. Consequently they face gendered constraints such as negative socio-cultural attitudes and prejudicial actions, which are part and parcel of their social experiences. In the context of such social experiences, what approaches to leadership do women principals adopt? This is the question that motivates this study.

In this section, my purpose is to highlight some of the social experiences that Kenyan women principals face that are relevant to an investigation of the social context of their leadership approaches. As a prelude to this discussion, I look at the story of a Kenyan woman principal, Priscilla Nangurai, reported in the book titled *Dynamic African Headmistresses* by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in 1995. The

story of Nangurai illustrates the way leadership practices are implicated in gendered context and experiences.

Headmistress Priscilla Naisula Nangurai comes from Maasailand, a part of Kenya where elders place a high premium on bravery, valour and fearless fortitude in the face of the most awesome foe [...]; her radical defiance in the face of traditional beliefs and cultural norms relating to Maasai women and girls is not always appreciated by the Maasai men [...]. Mrs. Nangurai is the only daughter out of five children to finish secondary school and went on to study at Kenyatta University where she majored in education. Well aware that most male traditionalists still fear their daughters will 'either get spoilt, get married out of the society or worse still, not get married at all' if they go to school, Mrs. Nangurai also knows that many conservative Maasai see women's education as a threat to men's authority [...]. At times her mission may be to retrieve young girls, often as young as ten years old, who have gone home to be circumcised but haven't come back invariably because the parents have been paid the bride-price and are about to marry off their daughters [...]. Backed by the District Commissioner and his administrative police, the elders rarely dare refuse this feminine fighter as requested [sic], and Mrs. Nangurai has no hesitation in insisting that a child's right to education be upheld, even if it means she has to fight like a Moran until she succeeds [...]. Being fervent about seeing girls in school, Mrs. Nangurai is a ferocious fund-raiser [...]. Without doubt, AIC's [African Inland Church's] most illustrious donor is Kenya's Vice President George Saitoti, who became the sponsor of Ruth Nakisenya Tito after reading in the local press about the plight of the twelve year old Maasai maiden who had been betrothed to a 100 year old man [...]. "Maasai culture is so permissive" she says, "Once a girl gets circumcised she may be approached by any man (apart from those of her father's age group) on sexual terms. There is no such thing as rape in Maasai culture," said Mrs. Nangurai [...]. Admitting that there is no fool proof method of protecting them from unwanted pregnancy (since contraception is not an issue discussed among the Maasai), Mrs. Nangurai does everything within her power to ensure the safety of her students: counselling on a daily basis, 'search and seizure missions when her girls are hijacked' into unwanted marital contracts, protecting their dormitories with steel doors [...]. Mrs. Nangurai admits that few headmasters would follow a Maasai schoolgirl back to her home when she absents herself after the circumcision cycle.

(FAWE, 1995, pp. 15 -20)

There are three interrelated points that can be understood from Nangurai's account. First of all her story provides examples of patriarchal practices that affect girl education in schools headed by some women principals in Kenya. For example the story shows us that in the Maasai culture the rape of girls is not considered to be a sexual offence. Female

contraception is shrouded in silence. Female circumcision paves the way for a girl to be approached for sex by men. And as is demonstrated in the story, a twelve-year-old girl almost got betrothed to a 100-year-old man. What is more, an educated Maasai girl is viewed as a threat to male authority and her marriage-ability is in question. Women principals heading schools in conditions such as those described in Nangurai's story are therefore located in settings in which patriarchy dominates.

Secondly an environment such as the one described above raises questions about the kind of leadership that Kenyan women principals adopt amid these social circumstances. Nangurai's story provides us with an example of how resistance looms large in her own leadership approach when she challenges dominant male interests and values to become a gender activist and even a 'gatekeeper' in her school. She resists dominant values in order to retrieve her students from early marriages and protects them from unwanted sexual advances.

Third, Nangurai's story brings to our attention some resources that women principals utilize in their struggle to resist cultural norms that inhibit girl education. Illustrative of such resources are their enriching past social experiences as well as their social networks. Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in Nangurai's case. Her own struggle to promote girl child education in her school resonates with her past experience of being the only daughter in her family to have received not only secondary education, but also university education. Similarly, her networks with powerful public officials such as the District Commissioner and the then vice-president of Kenya appear to be important in her struggle to promote girl child education.

Ultimately, then, Nangurai's story enables me to show that the leadership practices of women principals in Kenya cannot float free of their social experiences. In other words, if no attempt is made to link the leadership approaches of women principals to their social experiences, it is difficult to see how we can grasp the complexities of their leadership approaches. In order to ground this premise further, I move to examine the gender prejudices that confront Kenyan women principals as they carve out their careers. Some

of these prejudices are illustrated in Barng'etuny's (1999) discussion of women principals in Kenya:

There is a general belief that women are unable to control boys in mixed schools. The majority of women head teachers are limited to girls' schools, which some people argue that [sic] they are easy to 'manage' because girls' schools 'conform' to rules. Depending on their cultural backgrounds, some of the female teachers have accepted that men are suitable heads of schools because the women are too involved in domestic chores and could not effectively devote all their time to school. Some of the women had been offered jobs as headmistresses but declined. The majority of the teachers teach in rural schools near the homes and their leadership roles were being controlled by the prejudices of their own cultures. Some rural communities may prefer a male headmaster because in their culture, a man is recognized as a leader. Sending a female teacher to them would possibly evoke feelings of discontent. So the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) 'legitimises' the cultural prejudices against women without intending to do so. Men who join the service in the same position as women and at the same time have higher chances of being promoted than women.

(Barng'etuny, 1999, p.54)

There are two brief points to be made from Barng'etuny's discussion of women principals in Kenya. The first has to do with the gendered socio-cultural attitudes facing women principals. The belief that women principals should head girls' schools, as they are easy to manage, is one of them. Beliefs of this type underscore the depth of the social presumption that women principals are inferior leaders. It is a patriarchal manipulation to say that women principals cannot head boys' or mixed¹ schools. Barng'etuny also illustrates how women principals are not seen to be "suitable" leaders due to the demands of their domestic chores. Such a belief implies that the ideal school principal is male. It is therefore not surprising, as Barng'etuny tells us, that male teachers have higher chances of getting promotions in comparison to their female counterparts.

Second, Barng'etuny implicates the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) in reinforcing the subordinate female status of women principals. She tells us that the TSC does not post female principals to rural communities that are known to prefer male leadership. This implies that the gender of a principal, by itself, is sufficient to bar women principals from

¹ Coeducational schools in Kenya are usually referred to as mixed schools.

heading schools in certain rural communities in Kenya. Where rural communities state their preference for male principals as opposed to female principals, it is clear that anti-women and sexist ideologies are present. But clearly, this practical expression of patriarchy is 'institutionalised' by the Teachers' Service Commission.

Even female teachers in some rural communities face discriminatory practices for no other reason than their gender. This is aptly demonstrated in a report of the government task force on student discipline and unrest in secondary schools that elicited responses from people in all the provinces of Kenya. The report indicates that, "In communities where females have low social status compared to males, boys have little respect for female teachers" (Republic of Kenya, 2001 p.56). This suggests that young boys do challenge female teachers as authority figures, and most of all, the notion of female inferiority is formed in boys at a young age. This calls attention to the patriarchal belief that women teachers, who in effect are potential principals, are socially subordinate in some communities in Kenya.

The image of women principals as subordinate is itself part of a broader social system. In other words women principals are heirs to social conditions in Kenya that play a key role in shaping condescending attitudes toward them. A government report on the education system of Kenya that drew on the responses of Kenyans province-wide reported that boys tend to be favoured in their traditional gender roles in comparison to girls. Parents are said to favour boys, particularly when a choice has to be made regarding whom to enrol in school. The report also notes that negative stereotypes about girls are frequently reflected not only in societal attitudes and behaviour but also in teaching practices in schools. Gender stereotyping, which reinforces negative perceptions of girls, is reflected in textbooks and other educational material (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

Men are therefore treated as dominant subjects and this is reflected in the leadership system. According to Masinjila (1997) male leadership in Kenya is validated at all levels as the only legitimate leadership in Kenya. He argues that male leadership is centred on patriarchy that has been strengthened by the colonial systems of governance and the

Judeo-Christian and Islamic religious practices that largely shape the theory and practice of the lives of Kenyans. The implication is that men have been apprenticed by society to become leaders. In this light the question that comes to mind is: what resources do women principals (subjected to a cultural apprenticeship that imposes a subordinate demeanour on them) draw on in their endeavour to lead their schools? This question motivates my study.

Thus the aim of this thesis is to generate an account that explains how women principals develop their leadership approaches, under what conditions, in what context and with what resources. This means examining the lived experiences of women principals that endow them with the resources that are at work in their leadership approaches. It also means examining the work experiences that render visible the context and conditions in which they actualise their leadership approaches. This should force us to see the leadership approaches of women principals not in isolation but rather in the social context of their lives and schools.

Personal motivation

My interest in the social factors that shape the leadership approaches of women principals is informed by the results of my master dissertation, which focused on the leadership styles of women principals. In my Master dissertation I found that women principals were viewed as authoritarian leaders by their teachers. This finding motivated my desire to think through the factors that made women principals lead the way they do. I was aware from my past experience as an education officer in the ministry of education that women principals faced gendered constraints. I sensed that these gendered experiences might shape their leadership practices. I thus became interested in situating the leadership approaches of women principals in their social lives and contexts. My reading of Bourdieu's theory helped me develop this research interest further. Hence, what I hope to accomplish in this study is to extend Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of habitus, capital and field to the realm of women principals' leadership. These concepts will provide a framework for understanding and explaining the 'habitus' of women principals, which is found in the knowledge and resources (capital) that they have acquired from structures of

the 'field' that they are born into or enter through work, to identify a collection of social factors that shape their leadership approaches.

Structure of the study

This study comprises ten chapters. Chapter one has articulated the research problem to be examined in this thesis and set out the background and rationale for the study.

In chapter two I discuss the social experiences and leadership of women relying on concepts and insights from the work of Bourdieu in tandem with other related literature. In particular I look at social processes and structures and how they are legitimated in women's lives, female leadership research and female leadership approaches. I then consider leadership theories; in particular I review literature on dominant leadership theories and critiques of these theories. Dominant leadership theories and perspectives have largely ignored the social context of leadership. I therefore consider the possibilities for drawing on Bourdieu's theory in leadership research, as his theory is attentive to the social location of practices.

The central concern of chapter three is to develop a conceptual framework for discussing the emergence of the leadership approaches of women principals in relation to their social experiences. Within this chapter, Bourdieu's notions of habitus², capital and field are outlined. The chapter then utilises these concepts to develop the concepts used in this study, namely, leadership dispositions and positions in the field. The conceptual framework links leadership approaches to leadership dispositions and positions in the field.

Chapter four describes the research design for the study and discusses related methodological issues such as data collection instruments and procedures, data management, validity issues and ethics. Five women principals were interviewed for this

² While the plural version of the word habitus ought to be habituses, Bourdieu uses the term habitus as both a singular and plural noun. Throughout this study, I have adopted Bourdieu's position with regard to the use of this word.

study. Structured interviews were conducted utilizing a life history narrative approach. The aim was to generate narrative data on the lives of women principals as young girls, teachers and principals. Bourdieu's field analysis model served as the basis for the analytical framework for this study. The interpretation of the narrative data involved linking the leadership approaches of women principals to their leadership dispositions and their positions in the field.

Chapters five to nine focus on the analysis of the narratives of the five women principals who are the subjects of this study. In each of these analysis chapters, I present a brief introduction to the respondent and a brief background to her school. I then present an account of the respondent in terms of her: (1) leadership dispositions based on her experiences as a young girl, teacher and emergent principal, (2) the relationship between her leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions and position in the field.

Chapter ten is the concluding chapter. It presents an overview of the thesis, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: FEMALE LEADERSHIP - A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I focused on the research problem including the background and rationale to the research problem. I pointed out that the aim of this study is to establish the relationship between the leadership approaches of women principals and their social experiences. In this chapter, I focus on a number of issues related to women's social experiences, female leadership and leadership theories. In doing so, I draw on relevant insights and concepts from the work of Bourdieu and other related literature.

Women's social experiences are related to social processes and structures³. The first part of this chapter discusses these social processes and structures in relation to the lives of women. Specifically I consider the relationship between socialization and the working lives of women. I also consider the impact of androcentricity on the workplace experiences of female leaders and female leadership research. I then look at female leadership approaches in the light of the feminine/masculine framework.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to the discussion of leadership theories. The aim of this discussion is to zero in on the contribution that Bourdieu's theory can make to leadership research. But first I discuss dominant leadership theories and how they have been critiqued so that we are placed in a better position to understand the context within which Bourdieu's theory can be utilized in leadership research.

Bourdieu, structures and women

In this section I specifically look at how: (a) socialisation, (b) androcentricity⁴ and (c) femininity and masculinity are legitimated in women's lives. The differences between men and women that Bourdieu offers are based on social structures that are highly

³ Structures are principles that organise or legitimise practices (Bourdieu, 1990a).

⁴ The concept of 'androcentricity' has been utilised by Bourdieu to describe the dominant position of men and the patriarchal structures that sustain it.

gendered. He refers to the sexually differentiated habitus as “historical and highly differentiated structures, arising from a social space that is itself highly differentiated, which reproduce themselves through learning processes linked to the experience that agents have of the structures of these spaces” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 104). He implies that there are deeply rooted socio-historical differences between men and women brought into play by gendered socialization. This is clearly seen when he posits that gendered socialization, particularly the sexual division of labour, contributes to the different dispositions of men and women.

Bourdieu (1990a) tells us that these dispositions are also embodied in the male and female bodies. Using an example of the Kabyle, he argues that when a woman offers a man a stool, she bends while the man remains upright. Similarly when the man knocks down the olives (with a pole) and a woman stoops to pick them up, then again the man remains upright while the woman bends. These actions symbolically represent the woman as a gatherer of what the man has cast to the ground. Hence women are confined to tasks that are low and inferior. He mentions that the discrimination that assigns women to continuous, humble, and invisible tasks is instituted “before our very eyes (increasingly so as one moves down the social hierarchy), both in things and in minds” (p. 146).

In the African context, patriarchy refers to male control of most aspects of women’s lives and actions. It is a profitable system for men given that they have access to women’s labour and benefit heavily from it (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003). McFadden (2003) tells us that the fundamental premise of patriarchal power in Africa is the silencing and suppression of women including the control of their bodies. She points to socialisation and gendered identity as the main vehicles through which women are constantly reminded that they are male property. Nevertheless, Pereira (2003) criticizes McFadden for assuming that all African women are sexually repressed arguing that African women's sexualities are varied across space and time

Although Bakare-Yusuf (2003) posits that African patriarchy is a changing and unstable system of power that can be transformed and contested, McFadden (2003) cautions that

there are serious challenges that face women in their struggle to challenge male dominance. McFadden tells us that African women are not naive when it comes to confronting patriarchal power, but they are nevertheless confronted with demands on their time and resources that sap their energies. She points to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa as an example of a reality that drains the energies of women and changes their dreams. Indeed, Gaidzanwa (2002) underscores the need for changes in societal values, structures, economies and politics if the empowerment of women is to be transformative.

Bourdieu acknowledges the relations of domination marked by the division of labour between the sexes. This domination is a fundamental dimension of the androcentric principle. Indeed, he argues that the androcentric principle organises not only the social construction that produces gender differentiation, but also the masculine order inscribed in the division of labour that excludes women from the noblest tasks and designates inferior places for them. He maintains that the uncompromising androcentric principle thus privileges ultra masculine domination (Bourdieu, 2001).

What do Bourdieu's insights on the sexually differentiated habitus and androcentricity imply for women's experiences? First it implies that the socialisation of women is highly gendered. Second, it implies that women work in a field that is male dominated. It also implies that women start their careers from a deeply subjugated position. In the section that follows I look at socialisation in relation to the lives of women.

Socialisation

In this section I consider relevant insights from the work of Bourdieu that touch on socialisation in relation to women's experiences such as childhood, mothering and emotional experiences including their social networks.

(a). Childhood experiences

For Bourdieu, families

[...] are like corporate bodies animated by a kind of conatus, in Spinoza's sense, that is, a tendency to perpetuate their social being, with all its powers and

privileges, which is the basis of reproductive approaches: fertility approaches, matrimonial approaches, succession approaches, economic approaches, and last but not least, educational approaches. Families invest all the more in school education.

(Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 19)

Thus Bourdieu considers the family to be an important reproductive agent in socializing an individual. In other words he sees the family as instrumental in shaping the learning acquired during the early years of one's life. He goes on to say that this learning is in turn facilitated by the family's investment in school education. But in as much as the school and the family play a key role in facilitating the early learning of children, these institutions also enhance social inequalities among girls and boys. He indicates elsewhere that early upbringing encourages boys to enter manly games such as politics, business and science, and this encourages boys to be dominant. Overall, he charges the family, the educational system, the church and the state as the institutions that perpetuate male domination (Bourdieu, 2001).

Available literature shows that learning during the early years of life is related to subsequent choices and practices of women with regard to educational leadership, more specifically. Adler, Laney and Packer (1993) suggest that parents were influential in the career choices of some women educational administrators in their study. Gustafson and Magnusson (1991) have put forward a similar line of argument. In their analysis of women's career patterns, they show that parental values exert a strong influence on females' educational and occupational outcomes. Similarly, in a study of the career narratives of women professors in South Africa, de la Rey (1999) noted that one of her respondents described herself as a born feminist partly because she had always felt marginal as a girl, always at war with her chauvinist father who ruled the household. Likewise, Clemons (2002) tells us that one woman administrator raised on a farm in Nebraska in a large family where chore sharing was encouraged in and out of the home, developed respect for others' opinions and the belief that there were many ways to achieve the same goal. As a result, her leadership style reflected these same philosophies. For example, she always provided a "forum" in which people could register their concerns.

(b). Mothering experiences

One of the criticisms that have been levelled against Bourdieu is that he tends to ignore the experiences of women as mothers. This critique has been offered by Silva (2005) in her recent study on the interrelationship of gender, family and cultural capital. She suggests that Bourdieu tends to ignore the role of women as mothers and homemakers in the development of his notion of cultural capital. She also indicates, for example, that Bourdieu uses the 'father's occupation' as a measure of social origin in his work, *Distinction*. Thus Bourdieu appears to ignore both the experiences of mothering and being mothered in his work. Yet literature suggests that the career paths of women educational leaders are different from those of men in view of their experiences as mothers. Based on her research in the US, Shakeshaft (1989) tells us that there are strong contrasts between male and female career trajectories – interruptions in the careers for men were usually to satisfy military requirements or attend universities to gain administrative certification or doctorates, but for women it was to raise children.

(c). Emotional experiences

With regard to emotional experiences Bourdieu (1998) suggests that the work of transforming the obligation to love into loving dispositions and the family feeling that generates devotion, generosity and solidarity in the family, falls more particularly to women. This, he says, is because women are responsible for maintaining relationships not only with their family but also with their spouses. He points to the visits, correspondences (such as sending good wishes) and telephone calls that women make as evidence of their affective dispositions. Even so, Bourdieu does not incorporate these emotional experiences of women into any of his theoretical notions.

Reay (2000) has used Bourdieu's concept of capital (discussed in the next chapter) to examine and begin to make sense of mothers' emotional involvement in their children's education home school relationships. She found a recurrence of intense emotions, both positive and negative, permeating through the mothers' accounts of their children's schooling. She even attempts to define the emotional resources passed on from mother to child through processes of parental involvement as emotional capital.

Other writers tell us that female leaders are positioned in highly emotional ways. Blackmore (1999) asks us to consider the highly gendered way emotion is viewed and managed. She argues that women educational administrators, who display negative emotions such as anger or no emotion at all, are considered to be non-feminine and uncaring. Yet, women who display negative emotions of passion, anger, fear and tears are viewed as weak, non-rational and psychologically inadequate. As a result women in educational administration feel trapped into displaying positive aspects of emotions such as care, warmth, patience and calm. Likewise, Sach and Blackmore's (1998) study of the emotional labour of women leaders in Queensland, Australia, show that schools are complex emotional arenas. What they found problematic was that women principals are constantly assailed by the emotional demands placed on them by their peers, students and members of the community.

(d). Social networks

Social networks are gendered. Although, Bourdieu has not spoken about the gendered dimension of social networks, he nevertheless demonstrates that social networks are akin to social capital or resources that can be drawn on to reap particular advantages. Karsten (1994) tells us that social networking helps people within social networks to gain feedback and social support and to wield influence within their organizations. She points to the old boys' network as a good example of a network that has become second nature to men.

Available literature indicates that 'girls' networks' among women educational leaders may not be the norm. Leong, Snodgrass and Gardener (1992) tell us that women do not usually have access to information networks and tend to have ineffective power bases. They indicate that women have fewer networks, given that there are fewer women in positions of power to network with and the women in executive positions are reluctant to network with other women. In her study of the careers of women professors, De la Rey (1999) indicates that some women professors benefit from their husbands' networks. While one of the woman professors in this study got her first book published with the

help of her husband, another one gained access to important networks through her husband.

Androcentricity

As mentioned at the start of this section, androcentricity is an essential part of the social structures (principles that organise or legitimise social actions) that affect women's lives. In this section I focus on the impact of androcentricity in the workplace and in female leadership research.

(a). Androcentric attitudes in the workplace

Several researchers have shown that androcentric attitudes impact on the working lives of women. Nostrand (1993) argues that organizations tend to be patriarchal by nature. She argues that leaders tend to lead the way they were led, and so men continue to collude with other males to exacerbate male entitlement. In the end, she posits, organizational cultures tend to be gender insensitive and even sexist.

Sexism in the workplace is highlighted in the study of Smith and Hale (2002) who interviewed sixteen female principals from five different school districts in the United States. They reported that women school principals encountered male intimidation:

When interviewed, one female principal described a confrontation with a parent who tried to intimidate her. The father tried unsuccessfully to have the principal change his son's consequences for a disciplinary incident from off-campus suspension to on-campus suspension. He resorted to yelling and threatening to call school board members if the principal did not comply with his request. The female principal countered his arguments with a calm and forceful resolve. When the father left the principal's office, he was heard to remark to his son, "I thought I could change her mind, son, but she's as tough as a man."

(Smith and Hale, 2002, p. 2)

Similarly, in an in-depth study of the leadership issues that confronted one African-American high school woman principal, Taylor (2004) focused on how race, gender, and power issues had influenced the leadership styles and successful career of one educator. She noted that this educator encountered a daily battle with discrimination but she

nevertheless sought to define and re-define her leadership capacities, to emerge as a successful leader who made remarkable contributions to education reform in the school setting and the implementation of the curriculum. Overall, her research has suggested that the disparities that exist in the promotion of women to school leadership positions are pervasive and even more prevalent for African American women.

Women leaders also encounter gender stereotypes in the course of their work. Indeed, Clemons (2002) tells us that women are placed in awkward and uncomfortable positions through gendered stereotyping. In her study of women in higher education institutions, one woman's account in her study read: "When we walked into breakfast (with a male colleague), all contact and conversation went to the male. Yet, I was the one speaking for the institution" (p. 5). Still another respondent in her study commented: "I was a single female administrator among ten to fifteen male administrators [...], in discussions and in dialogue; I would be present at the table, but invisible in terms of what I had to say" (p. 6).

Other researchers enable us to see how the use of language can be sexist toward women leaders in the workplace. According to Gupton and Slick (1996) the language used to describe women and men with regard to leadership styles is often not equitable. In this context, they argue that a man is described as firm when dealing with a difficult situation, but under the same conditions, a woman is referred to as stubborn.

The problem of sexist organisational barriers facing women is also evident in Hanekom's (2003) study. In her study of organizational barriers facing women school principals in the Wynberg region, South Africa, she found that school organizations still preferred male candidates for senior positions. In addition, women had to be unusually qualified and to work twice as hard as male aspirants to have the same promotional opportunities. Also, women who showed an interest in administration often received negative feedback from their peers. Male teachers were found to have difficulty in accepting women's perspectives as valuable and informative.

(b). Androcentricity in research

A number of writers in the field of education have shown that the androcentric principle is at work in female leadership research. Indeed, the inclusion of women's experiences in educational administration research work is a recent phenomenon. As Blackmore (1999) suggests:

During the 1980s, gender was still treated as a 'variable' within the paradigm wars in educational administration, rather than an organizing category. Women suffered a form of 'pseudo-inclusion' in educational administration texts, in the token paragraph, chapter or special edition of a journal discussing the 'peculiar problems' of women in leadership roles in education. By implication, men continued to be 'the norm' for leadership.

(Blackmore, 1999, p. 49)

Likewise, Shakeshaft (1993) notes that for many years it was nearly impossible to find research on women in educational administration in the mainstream administrative journals. Traditional literature in school administration, she tells us, largely ignored women.

It is therefore not surprising that researchers can still be seen to discuss educational leadership from a masculinist perspective. To give an example I turn to a passage on leadership written by Calitz et al (1992):

The democratic leader/principal/teacher does not relinquish *his* absolute authority, which is a part function of the position to which *he* has been appointed. *He* involves the whole staff/class in sharing this authority to the limits of the capacity of its various members instead. A democratic principal/teacher believes that *his* teachers/students should take decisions jointly in order to work together and be loyal to each other. When a school is run along these lines, the task of the principal/teacher becomes easier and *he* continues to be a truly professional leader.

(Calitz et al, 1992, p. 4 *Italics are mine*)

The quoted passage above describes democratic leadership but consistently uses the pronoun 'he' and 'his' as the generic terms in reference to the leader. This could easily imply that women in schools are either the followers or are invisible. In a similar vein, Lingard et al (2003) point out that the normalisation of heroic masculine forms of

leadership is partially explained by the higher representation of males in formal educational positions in schools.

Researchers attempting to study female leadership have encountered resistance from their colleagues. Ann Gold, a lecturer at the University of London, provides a very personal self-revelation about her experience when talking about the subject of women in education management to colleagues:

I am made to feel as though I lack intellectual rigor – I have not really understood the context of management; I have not read all the available literature, and it should be explained more carefully to me so that I will understand. Sometimes it is made obvious to me that I am wasting valuable time, so the explanations will be presented to me at another time. And worst of all I am made to feel like a novice who is too lightweight to be afforded enough respect to be taken seriously.

(Gold, 1993, p.17)

Undoubtedly, Gold's account provides some important insights into the way academia subjugates those doing research in the field of female management. Likewise Jill Blackmore, an associate professor at Deakin University, tells us that, "As a professional development consultant to principals and teachers, I am often expected not to rock the boat by mentioning gender too often, given that this makes men 'uncomfortable'" (Blackmore, 1999, p. 3).

Female leadership approaches

In this section I focus on female leadership styles and on how they are socially qualified under the feminine/masculine framework. Bourdieu suggests that femininity and masculinity are distinct and durable social dimensions. He suggests that women are subjected to 'feminization' where they "are expected to be 'feminine', that is to say, smiling, friendly, attentive, submissive, demure, restrained, self-effacing" (2001, p. 66). He posits that feminization is embedded in social structures perpetuated by societal figures such as parents and peers. Bourdieu also notes that masculinization is evident in the social games that men play such as the games of honour and war in traditional societies and the valued games of politics, business and science in advanced societies. He notes that these social games are inscribed in their sexually differentiated dispositions

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). When discussing the feminine/masculine framework, Bourdieu suggests that:

It is not hard to imagine the weight that the opposition between masculinity and femininity must bring to bear on the construction of self-image and world image when the opposition constitutes the fundamental principle of division of the social and the symbolic world (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 78).

Leadership practices contain these social dimensions of femininity and masculinity: in particular the caring approach is thought to be a feminine approach to leadership, while the controlling approach is considered to be a masculine approach to leadership and the androgynous approach is seen to encompass both the caring (feminine) and controlling (masculine) approaches to leadership. It is evident from the available literature that women leaders can be caring, controlling or both. Reay and Ball (2000) maintain that female leadership styles are not homogenous. They suggest that gendered identities are fluid and shifting contrary to texts that essentialise femininity by depicting women leaders as uniformly nurturing, affiliative and good at interpersonal relationships. I now move to look at the gendered leadership approaches that have been attributed to women educational leaders.

(a). The caring approach

Some research into the leadership approaches of women educational administrators suggests that they are collaborative, relationship oriented, concerned about marginal students, democratic and participatory (see Shakeshaft, 1989; Fullerton, 2001; Eagly and Schmidt, 2001; Grace, 1995; Walker, 1993). Mothering experiences are thought to have particular weight in orienting the caring practices of women. For instance, girls are said to naturally learn care taking skills by close and continuing apprenticeship to their mothers, while boys often fail to learn them because they are diverted to more impersonal and abstract worlds. This apprenticeship that a girl receives is said to be a very powerful tool in reproducing mothering in women and hence producing a caring attitude in them (Noddings, 1984). Furthermore, Gilligan (1990) indicates that women have traditionally been defined in terms of their goodness and their care for and sensitivity to the needs of

others. What all this means is that caring has been gender marked as a feminine practice. The question that this research raises is: what is the relationship between the caring leadership approach of women educational leaders and the caring learned from their past social experiences?

(b). The controlling approach

Other researchers have shown that women educational leaders are not necessarily caring but rather controlling. In a study of women principals who worked between 1900 and 1960, Edwards (2000) describes one example of a principal who did not conform to the caring feminine model: Alice Havergal Skillicorn, Principal of Homerton College, 1935-1960:

She negated her femininity through her body by failing to adopt feminine standards of attractiveness in her appearance and clothes. In the public sphere [...], she successfully wielded autocratic power with a masculine discourse of political skill, financial acumen and an approach to her staff and students, which was entirely instrumental.

(Edwards, 2000, p. 410)

Another example was Mary Miller Allen, Principal of Homerton College (1903 – 1935) whose students were “unanimous in bearing witness to her formidably stern and authoritarian public persona” (Edwards, 2000, p. 406).

Blackmore (1999) argues that by generalizing the caring approach to all women, certain errors are committed. First, a universal female caring approach ignores the possibility that the ethics of care are not confined to women alone. Second, the caring approach does not attend to the differences amongst women. Third, the female caring approach is applicable in some but not all contexts. Indeed, there are examples of women who are not necessarily caring leaders. One teacher (Jessica) described in her study, is quoted as describing her female principal as one who “actively undermined those women who were absolute dynamos [...] yet propped up an inadequate male teacher” (p. 192). Likewise, a male manager (John) comments that female principals displayed “an absolute determination not to have anyone challenge them [...], they are the ones who are most

ruthless in their condemnation of other aspiring women” (p. 192). And another male manager (Paul) in her study commented that female principals “try to be tougher and are more ruthless, less caring and less compassionate in their decision making” (p. 192). For Blackmore, it does not follow that women principals are controlling per se, only that they use multiple ways of leading.

Autocratic leadership, according to Dean (1997), emerged when men dominated the world of work. This may explain why the controlling approach has been gender marked as a masculine approach to leadership and it may also explain why women adopting this leadership approach tend to be socially punished in the work sphere. Blackmore (1999) tells us that autocratic women principals are often given labels in the workplace such as social males or queen bees or isolates. Similarly, in Adler, Laney and Parker’s UK based study, Margaret Thatcher was severely criticised by women educational administrators for adopting an autocratic approach, not as an ordinary leader but as a female leader. In this study, one secondary school principal commented: “no one wants to be like Mrs. Thatcher. She has done a disservice to women as she does not let the natural strengths of women show through.” A counsellor described in their study commented that, “Maggie Thatcher is a politician, not a man nor a woman” (Adler, Laney and Parker, 1993, p. 7). These comments reflect the perception that an autocratic approach is considered to be masculine and taboo for women leaders.

A number of studies indicate that women educational leaders tend to adopt controlling ways of leading due to factors related to their social and institutional structures. For example, Harber and Davies (1998) argue that:

Given the nature of the school organisation, their own identities as teachers and the top-down, highly centralised systems of education in most developing countries, it would be unlikely for the majority of head teachers to be anything other than despots, benevolent or otherwise. This is undoubtedly reinforced by gendered notions of ‘leadership’ with masculinist notions of strength, hierarchy and dominance being traditionally the paramount managerial model and with both men and women subscribing to this model.

(Harber and Davies, 1998, p. 61)

In a similar vein, Adler, Laney and Packer (1993) show that women administrators adopted male ways of working in order to effect change among their workers. For example, a senior woman in higher education in this study said: “you have to compromise to meet male expectations to a certain degree in order to effect change” (p. 15). The workers’ acceptance of male ways of working featured in the story of a head of department, in their study: “I found that I was working with people who wanted to be told exactly what to do” (p. 15). In the same vein, a retired woman head in their study said: “As head I made decisions in consultation with other colleagues, but they increasingly wanted decisions made for them as pressure of government reforms wore them out” (p. 15).

On her part, Blackmore (1999) notes that when confronted with political, ethical and moral dilemmas in their work, women principals tended to work harder and longer, to become highly task oriented and to focus upon procedures and processes. This concern is echoed in the work of Clemons (2002) who demonstrates that when female higher education administrators had to make hard decisions, they shifted from typically collaborative approaches to directive decision making to get the job done. In a similar vein, Thompson (2003) maintains that women that adopt authoritarian approaches do so when the situation demands exceptional survival skills.

The career paths that some women educational leaders follow are also seen to shape the female controlling approach of leadership. For example, a female senior inspector in Adler, Laney and Packer’s (1993, p.15) study comments that, “I am a manager who got promoted by the man’s rules. I tend to reinforce those rules as I got promoted by them.” This reinforces the argument, made by Blackmore (1999) that many long serving women principals who entered their leadership positions with little institutional or personal support in pre-feminist eras had little reason to reflect upon gendered politics once in power.

Overall there appears to be a relationship between the controlling approach adopted by women educational leaders and contextual power related issues and constraints, such as:

(a) working in highly centralized schools, (b) the prevalence of masculinist notions of strength, hierarchy and dominance, (c) the need to effect change among their workers, (d) political, ethical and moral dilemmas in their work, and (e) career paths shaped by men's rules. The question that begs an answer is: what resources do women educational leaders draw on to adopt the controlling approach to leadership. This is another question that motivates my study.

(c). The caring/controlling approach

Other studies have found that women educational leaders practice both caring and controlling practices, depending on the context at hand. Indeed, Blackmore (1999, p. 60) suggests that overall there are "women who are controlling, and women who are facilitating, and women who are both." A similar finding is evident in Edwards's (2000) study. She tells us that one respondent in her study, Florence Johnson, Principal of Bishop Otter, 1919-1930, "was able to temper the exercise of her masculine authority and command with a feminine warmth and sense of fun; to a new student in 1920, she appeared both formidable and motherly" (Edward, 2000, p. 413).

One study that describes the caring/controlling approach in terms of the feminine/masculine structure is that of Cherry (1993). She indicates that women managers can be both feminine and masculine in their approach to work. She points out, that women managers are people centred, but as they became more experienced, they use financial management skills and political processes associated with a masculine approach in order to broaden their skills.

Since the caring/controlling approach to leadership incorporates both feminine and masculine approaches it can be seen to fall within the category of androgynous leadership. Androgynous individuals are said to integrate aspects of femininity and masculinity into their self-concept and can enact whatever behaviour seems appropriate in a given situation. For example, androgynous female or male leaders could be both assertive at work and tender and nurturing with loved ones. In this regard, they are said to be more flexible than strongly sex-rolled people (Karsten, 1994). Gage, Mumma, and

Fritz tells us that “the aspect of androgynous behaviour as a whole needs further consideration, definition and research in order to determine the socialization process that creates it” (2004, p.48). Hence researchers need to seek an intricate understanding of the resources that women educational leaders draw on to adopt androgynous approaches to leadership.

Bourdieu, leadership and women

In the previous section I used Bourdieu’s insights to discuss various aspects of women’s lives including their leadership approaches. In this section I focus on how Bourdieu’s concepts have been used in leadership research. But I begin by providing an overview of dominant leadership theories including how they have been critiqued. Thereafter, I discuss Bourdieu’s theory in relation to leadership research including female leadership research.

(a). Overview of dominant leadership theories

I begin by providing an overview of the dominant leadership theories followed by a diagrammatic representation of these theories. The trait theories of leadership focused mainly on what leaders are in terms of their leadership qualities and psychological traits. These theories were largely discredited for their lack of precision and this gave way to leadership behaviour theories. Instead of focusing on what leaders are, the leadership behaviour theorists began to examine what leaders did. Extensive research in this field focused on what leaders did in terms of their concern for tasks and concern for people. The contingency theorists in this field went further and sought situational variables to discover what made leaders effective. Another theory, which shifted its focus from what leaders simply did, was the transformational theory. Transforming leaders were seen to embrace a mutually supportive relationship of moral and motivational engagement with their followers, where power bases become linked in the pursuit of higher and more worthy purposes.

In the field of education, there are two trends in transformational leadership, namely, charismatic leadership and political and activist leadership. Leithwood (1992), who best

articulates charismatic educational leadership, finds that transformational leaders pursue three fundamental goals: First they help staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture, second they foster teacher development and third they help teachers solve problems more effectively. Political and activist transformation, which puts emphasis on social justice, is evident in particular works such as those of Blackmore (1999), Gunter (2005), Foster (1989) and Lingard et al (2003) etc. Blackmore (1999) focuses on female leadership as troublesome in an era of dominant masculinities and modes of management. In a similar vein, Gunter argues that educational leadership is “not just the must of delivering efficient and effective organisations, but is also about changing the power structures and cultures that we inherit and that can act as barriers to democratic development” (2005, p.6). To account for leadership practices, researchers such as Foster (1989) and Lingard et al (2003) take cognisance of leadership as a relational and communal practice.

In order to highlight the general questions that these theories discussed above attempt to address I present them in the figure below adapted from Gunter (2001).

<i>Theories</i>	<i>Leadership based on the following questions</i>	<i>Illustrative texts</i>
Trait	What leadership characteristics differentiate the leader from the followers? (Some of these leadership traits have been viewed as capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation and status)	Stogdill (1948)
Style	What is the leadership behaviour of the leader in terms of goal attainment and group cohesion?	Halpin (1954)
Contingency	What is the interaction between the leadership style and the leadership situation? Leadership situation here refers to leader-follower relations, clarity of task goals, role assignments and positional power (power to punish or reward group members).	Fiedler et al. (1976)

Transformational	<p>What is the vision and mission of the leader?</p> <p>How do leaders influence followers to sacrifice their own self-interests in favour of organizational interests?</p>	Burns (1978)
Transformational educational perspectives	<p>How does charismatic leadership transform follower behaviour?</p> <p>How can leaders and their followers be freed from social injustice and the oppression of established power structures?</p> <p>What social values and contexts underpin leadership practices?</p>	<p>Leithwood (1992)</p> <p>Gunter (2005); Blackmore (1999).</p> <p>Foster (1989); Lingard et al (2003)</p>

Figure 1. Theories of leadership (Adapted from Gunter, 2001, p. 69)

(b). Critique of leadership theories

In developing a theoretical position based on the work of Bourdieu, Lingard et al (2003) have provided a critique of some of the existing dominant leadership theories. First they question the relevance of trait theories in the field of school leadership. They argue that leadership trait theorists “reflect idealized, masculinist, heroic myths, rather than the realities of what ordinary leadership is like in most organizations, including schools” (p. 55). Second, they argue that in as much as contingency theories bring the working context of the leader into prominence, they do not help us evaluate leadership in the context of the school; granted that the school is located in the “broader social configuration of the times, in which education policies are drawn up and implemented” (p. 56). Third, they argue that although the transformational theory has had considerable impact on studies of educational leadership, it is limited in scope in that it rarely takes into account fundamental changes in social organizational structures and practices. They also point to the lack of attention given to gender issues in major studies on transformational leadership with the exception of Blackmore’s (1999) research on women educational leaders

Like Lingard et al, other researchers have provided a critical perspective on some educational leadership perspectives. Storey (2004) argues that although the implications

of the distributive leadership perspective are underdeveloped, there is suspicion that much of this perspective reflects a re-labelling of the more established leadership concepts such as democracy or empowerment. On the other hand, Thrupp and Willmott (2003) have critiqued the pedagogical leadership perspective for leaving out the sociology and politics of education.

Thrupp and Willmott (2003) have also critiqued the managerial leadership perspective. They argue that this perspective overemphasises performativity, at the expense of understanding the power and social relationships in school leadership. For example they criticize Ramsey's (1999) book titled *Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way: How to be a More Effective Leader in Today's Schools* (1999) as an "unashamed sales job" (p. 146). They argue that the book provides checklists of tips for school leadership success without taking into account the social context of education and its implications on school leadership. They have also not spared Davis and Ellison's book (1997) titled *School Leadership for the 21st Century*. They argue that these writers uncritically support post-welfarist educational reform in the UK by emphasizing how smart school leaders should work within this managerialist framework. Bourdieu himself is also a critic of works that emphasize performativity at the expense of the social context of practices. He argues that, "People hardly ever talk about the social world in order to say what it is, but almost always to say what it ought to be. Discourse about the social world is almost always performative (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 22).

(c). Bourdieu and leadership

Having reviewed the critiques of leadership theories, I turn to Lingard et al's (2003) perspective of leadership, which draws on the work of Bourdieu. They posit that Bourdieu's theory is well suited to examine the leadership practices from a social and political perspective:

Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus', and 'field', when developed in the context of leadership studies, enable us to move beyond trait, situational and transformational leadership theories, emphasizing instead the recursive relationship between agency (individual habitus) and structure (field) in the

broader context. Habitus enables us to talk about the person of the leader not simply in terms of traits, character and personal influence, but also in relation to specific social structures. Field enables us to talk about the context of leadership, in this case the school, as 'structured social space' with its own properties and power relations, overlapping and interrelating with economic, political and other fields.

(Lingard et al, 2003, p. 59)

Lingard et al (2003) see the dispositions of educational leaders as grounded in learning acquired in their own schooling, university, further study and their time spent in school as educational workers. While they do not take into account the early childhood experiences that equip dispositions, they do take into account both primary and secondary socialization experiences in the development of leadership dispositions. And although this is contrary to Bourdieu who puts emphasis on formative experiences in the development of the habitus, this is not a major problem. Indeed, Bourdieu persuades researchers to put his theoretical notions into motion and make them work practically (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Lingard et al (2003) also propose that studies of school leadership that draw on Bourdieu's notion of field would need to take into account the position of the school leaders within the educational field. They argue that the school leader is located within the educational field at a point where she or he has to negotiate various logics of practice related to policy text production, school community politics, discourses such as new managerialism and market philosophies and various hierarchies and reward structures.

Further, they recognize that there is "very little work in the educational leadership literature that utilizes Bourdieu as a theoretical resource" (p. 60). They point out that while many researchers have used Bourdieu's theory to inform school-based research only a few have focused on his theory to understand educational leadership policy and educational leadership. One of these researchers is Helen Gunter whose book on this subject is titled, *Leaders and Leadership in Education*. Gunter uses Bourdieu's theory to theorize leadership in education thus:

By thinking with Bourdieu's tools of habitus and field I present the leadership territory as an arena of struggle in which researchers, writers, policy-makers and practitioners take up and/or present positions regarding the theory and practice of educational leadership. This provides opportunities to reveal positions that are being written into and out of the working lives of educational professionals. Furthermore, it enables a historical as well as a contemporary perspective to identify a range of approaches to understanding everyday work of educational professionals.

(Gunter, 2001, pp. 1-2.)

Gunter argues that research, theory and policy present particular positions and Bourdieu's theory enables these positions to be revealed.

Gunter (2000) has also used the field concept in her study titled *Thinking theory: the field of education management in England and Wales* to explore how field members in higher education institutions move forward professionally and intellectually. Her study uses the language and concepts of habitus and field to describe and explain intellectual positions and positioning within the academy. She shows for instance how intellectual positions and positioning is visible in field member activity such as the establishment of postgraduate courses, the winning of research grants, and the creation of chairs.

Likewise in their study on the methodological practice of educational research, Grenfell and James (2004) use Bourdieu's field notion to attend to the relative positioning of researchers and the impact of educational policy on educational research. They point out, for example, how Bourdieu's notion of field attends to the tensions they found between research agendas and the agendas of research contracts.

(d). Bourdieu and female leadership research

Bourdieu's theory provides us with an opportunity to examine female leadership approaches in the light of their everyday experiences. Moi (1999) argues that Bourdieu's theory draws our attention to social practices located in the most mundane everyday experiences of women:

I feel that Bourdieu's attention to the details of everyday life, to the ways in which we dress, walk, or decorate our living spaces is immensely valuable to anyone who really wishes to understand human cultural practices. Feminists have often pointed out that women's ordinary work and women's everyday practices usually fall outside the parameters of traditional cultural research. Bourdieu shows us one way to approach the seemingly insignificant, the most ordinary aspects of our everyday lives.

(Moi, 1999, p. 253)

A few researchers have drawn on Bourdieu in paying attention to the leadership practices of women educational leaders in the light of their social everyday experiences. A good example of such a study is that of Wilkinson (2002). Basing her study on women's everyday experiences, she utilises Bourdieu's theory to explore the interrelationship between gender, class and ethnicity in the construction of identity. In so doing she examines the everyday experiences of eight Australian female educational leaders to focus on the way in which these women were positioned as embodied individuals, first as women and second as leaders. She also explores the differing approaches that female educational leaders adopted to accommodate, resist and at times, potentially disrupt this construction. This study complements mine in its focus on the relation between leadership and social experiences.

Concluding comments

In this chapter I have discussed the gendered nature of women's social experiences. I argue that such experiences cannot be ignored in a discussion of female leadership approaches. However, leadership theories appear to have done that by failing to take cognisance of the social and hence gendered context of leadership. In the wake of leadership theories that fail to gain purchase on this context, Bourdieu's theory provides a new frame for leadership research granted that he situates practices in their social contexts. Thus Bourdieu provides us with an opportunity to situate the leadership approaches of women educational leaders within their social contexts.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

An invitation to think with Bourdieu is of necessity an invitation to think beyond Bourdieu, and against him whenever required.
(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. xiv)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that Bourdieu's theory could serve as a useful tool with which to approach the study of female leadership approaches from a social context. His theory of action describes social practices as explicitly oriented by socially conditioned experiences. For instance, his notion of habitus helps us to see that actions are historically and socially situated. In this chapter, I provide an overview of his theoretical notions, namely, habitus, capital, and field. These notions provide the conceptual frame for this study. In the final section I explain how I put these concepts to work within the conceptual framework for this study.

Bourdieu's theoretical notions

(1). Habitus

Bourdieu tells us that he developed his theoretical notions in order to address things that ordinary language could not express and thus break with the use of everyday words commonly used in the field of social philosophy (Bourdieu, 1993). The notion of habitus is central to his work. He tells us that this notion has a long tradition behind it.

The idea of habitus has long tradition behind it. The scholastics used it to translate Aristotle's *hexis*. You find it in Durkheim, who, in *L'Evolution Pedagogique en France*, notes that Christian education had to solve the problems raised by the need to mould a Christian habitus with a pagan culture. It's also in Marcel Mauss, in his famous text on the techniques of the body. But neither of these authors gives it a decisive role to play.

(Bourdieu, 1993, p.86)

Like those who used the old concept of habitus or similar ones such as Hegel's *ethos*, Husserl's *habitualität* and Mauss's *hexis*, Bourdieu's aim was to escape "from under the

philosophy of the subject without doing away with the agent [...], as well as from under the philosophy of the structure but without forgetting to take into account the effects it wields upon and through the agent” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 122). Although, Camic (1986) argues that the notion of *habit* is foregrounded in the work of various sociological masters such as Durkheim, Bourdieu is emphatic that his notion of *habitus* is different from that of *habit*: “I said habitus so as not say habit – that is, the generative (if not creative) capacity inscribed in the system of dispositions as an art” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.122).

Bourdieu gives his notion of habitus two decisive roles. First, he uses his notion of habitus to account for everyday practices by escaping both the objectivism of action understood as a mechanical reaction and subjectivism that portrays action as the deliberate pursuit of conscious intention. Second, he uses habitus to understand practices in their specific logics. This is because he sees practices as the product of constructed knowledge acquired from structured and structuring dispositions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In his book *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu defines habitus as,

[...] systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representation that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.

(Bourdieu, 1990a, p.53)

Elsewhere Bourdieu defines the habitus as: “a system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 13). These definitions can be unpacked to understand what the habitus is, what it does, where it comes from and how it works.

What constitutes habitus? Habitus is, in effect, expressed in relation to the notion of dispositions. Bourdieu refers to dispositions generally as “virtualities, potentialities and eventualities” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 135). Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1990a)

indicates that a disposition is a propensity and capacity to play the game. In a similar vein, Jenkins (1992) describes the notion of dispositions in Bourdieu's work as a set of outcomes (structures), a way of being, a habitual state, a tendency, a propensity or an inclination. To understand fully what dispositions are, one needs to understand what they do and where they come from. Indeed, Jenkins (1992) notes that dispositions appear to be identified and defined in terms of their consequences.

What are the products of dispositions? Jenkins (1992) points out that once the dispositions are acquired they underlie and condition all subsequent learning and social experiences. Indeed, Bourdieu (1984) tells us that the habitus (the system of durable and transposable dispositions) generate meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions. Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1990a) states that the habitus generates all reasonable and common sense behaviours, which are possible within the limits of their objective regularities. The implication here is that practices, commonsense or otherwise, are not isolated elements but rather they are generated by the system of dispositions, the habitus.

Knowing what the system of dispositions does, the next question is: where do the dispositions come from? The 'where?' question is answered in Bourdieu's assertion, that dispositions can be traced from the collective history of an agent. He discovers in habitus, history that has been "internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history [...], the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.56). Furthermore, "the slightest 'reaction' of an individual to another," writes Bourdieu, "is pregnant with the whole history of these persons and of their relationship" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 124). What Bourdieu is striving to establish, is the primacy of social history (itself embodied in dispositions) in the actions of an individual.

Accordingly, Bourdieu depicts an individual's actions as spontaneous because they have a historical life. Social conditioning, argues Bourdieu, has the power or inertia to make an individual's actions spontaneous. In this context, Bourdieu states that, "The habitus is spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of

subjects ‘without inertia’ in rationalist theories” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 56). He thus rules out mechanical structures or our individual interpretation of events as a basis for our actions.

How does the habitus work? Keeping in mind, then, that its dispositions (a) are produced by social history and (b) generate meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions; we can then see that (c) the habitus is a method or a medium that connects our past to our present. The ‘how?’ question is, therefore, answered in Bourdieu’s expression, that habitus is “a kind of transforming machine that leads us to ‘reproduce’ the social conditions of our own production, but in a relatively unpredictable way.” Different from the word habit, which is “repetitive, mechanical, reproductive”, the habitus is “something powerfully generative” which tends to reproduce while transforming (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 86 - 87). The point is that Bourdieu’s notion of habitus operates as a structuring structure or rather as a *modus operandi* (Bourdieu, 1984).

Bourdieu makes three fundamental claims about the habitus worth mentioning. He maintains that the habitus is: (1) systematic, (2) autonomous, and (3) operates through an unconscious mode. First, as a systematic system, Bourdieu tells us that the habitus makes systematic transpositions that give the practices of an agent stylistic affinity. He indicates, for example, that a handwriting disposition will always produce the same writing in an agent, while an ascetic ethos will express itself in the way an agent uses credit. He maintains that, “Systematicity is found in the *opus operatum* because it is in the *modus operandi*” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.173). Elsewhere Bourdieu (1993) uses the example of language to suggest that a linguistic habitus will not produce an aesthetic choice, but rather speech. Thus habitus is a system that produces structured products that are in harmony with its dispositions.

Second, we see that the habitus has autonomy. Bourdieu tells us that, “Habitus is the principle of a real autonomy with respect to the immediate determinations of the situation” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 87). In his thinking, habitus is self-corrective, adjusts constantly and adapts to new and unforeseen situations. In this regard, Bourdieu argues

that the habitus has assimilatory capacities. This implies that habitus is not a rigid structural concept.

Third, the 'unconscious mode' is a crucial part of the way the habitus works, according to Bourdieu. Practices are produced without conscious deliberation or rationality, because the habitus operates in an unconscious mode. Responses are first defined, without any calculation or deliberation, because the practical world inscribed in the habitus is already made up of realized ends, procedures to follow, or paths to take. The regularities inherent in the habitus continuously reinforce one's practices as necessary and even natural. We are thus not subject to rigorous rules of calculation typical of scientific estimations but to conditions of the subjective and social being (Bourdieu, 1990a).

Bourdieu however does not rule out an individual's rational choice particularly when her habitus has been brutally disrupted. In other words, agents who go through a crisis that severely affects their routine adjustment of their subjective and objective structures, according to Bourdieu, are likely to make rational or reasoned choices (Bourdieu, 1992).

Bourdieu's notion of capital is closely linked in his work to the concept of habitus as its socio-historical embodiment. It also helps to account for the dynamic way the habitus works in the field. This is the notion that I focus on next.

(2). Capital

Bourdieu conceives of capital as "the set of actually usable resources and powers" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.114). What is the relationship between Bourdieu's notion of capital and his notion of habitus? The notion of capital is part of Bourdieu's definition of habitus since he sees habitus as incorporated capital: "Habitus is a capital, but one which, because it is embodied, appears innate" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 86). At the same time he states: "habitus refers to acquired properties, capital" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 21). According to Bourdieu capital operates within the habitus and it is produced by history, which in turn produces more history (Bourdieu, 1993). As Mahar, Harker and Wilkes (1990)

explain, Bourdieu thinks of habitus as intimately linked to capital, as a capital in and of itself, and as a multiplier of various kinds of capital.

Integral to Bourdieu's notion of habitus is cultural capital as it refers to cultivated dispositions. Lingard and Christie (2003) point out that Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital refers to embodied dispositions toward various cultural goods and practices – one part of the habitus of durable dispositions – as well as to formal qualifications that can work as a currency, and to a variety of cultural goods" (p. 324). Swartz (1997) describes Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital as covering a wide range of resources that include verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system and educational credentials. In addition, he states that it can be embodied (acquired early in life), objectified (acquired from specialized learning) or institutionalised (educational qualifications). Other researchers describe Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital as distinction within the autonomous fields of art and science as well as intellectual or educational qualifications (Fowler (1997) and as legitimate knowledge of one kind or another (Jenkins 1992).

Other forms of capital such as social capital and economic capital augment cultural capital. For example, Hagen (2002) posits that Bourdieu's notion of social capital exerts its primary multiplier-effect on available economic and cultural capital. In a similar vein, Reay (2002) indicates that Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital is a relational concept in that it exists in conjunction with other forms of capital. She posits that cultural capital cannot be understood in isolation of social capital, economic capital, and symbolic capital as it can be transformed into these forms of capital. These forms of capital have been described as follows:

- For Bourdieu, social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrues to an individual by virtue of possessing a durable network of mutual acquaintances. He conceives this resource as a capital that can yield profits and privileges in a manner similar to economic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu (1993) social capital is reproduced through a labouring process. The example that Bourdieu

uses to exemplify his point is the high society gossip columns such as *Le Figaro* or *Jours de France*, a particular form of social labour, which ensures the reproduction of social capital. He tells us that in the intellectual field, the embodiment of social capital can be seen in publishers' cocktail parties or reciprocal reviewing. So there are people whose power and authority is based on social capital.

- Bourdieu (1977) refers to economic capital as money. He also tells us that the power of economic capital stems from the fact that it is easy to manage, calculate and predict (Bourdieu, 1990b). Fowler (1997) explains Bourdieu's notion of economic capital as ownership of stocks and shares, or in general terms, the ownership of monetary rewards. Similarly, Skeggs (1997) explains Bourdieu's notion of economic capital as income, wealth, financial inheritances and monetary assets.
- Symbolic capital according to Bourdieu (1998) is any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural, or social that is known, recognized and valued by social agents able to perceive this. For instance, honour according to Bourdieu is a typical form of symbolic capital, which exists only through repute and only among those who share this belief. In Bourdieu's (1990b) view, a capital becomes symbolic capital when it is endowed with symbolic efficacy, that is, when it is known and recognized.

Is gender a capital? Skeggs (1997) argues that gender is not a capital as such, but rather provides a relation in which capital can be organized and valued. In this context, she argues that masculinity could be a form of cultural capital as it is valued, particularly in the labour market. Femininity, she argues, can also be seen as cultural capital, as it is a discursive position available through gender relations that women are encouraged to inhabit and use. The implication is that gendered experiences can find a legitimate home in the notion of cultural capital.

In the next section I show how Bourdieu defines his notion of field and how this is related to his notion of capital.

(3). Field

Bourdieu (1993, p. 72) defines fields as “structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces.” This suggests that positions have a distinct place in his notion of field. Indeed, Bourdieu at times refers to the field as a “network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). The key positions that field members occupy by virtue of their field specific capital, as understood by Bourdieu, are dominant, subordinate or homologous positions. But Bourdieu implies that these positions are not static, given that field members individually or collectively seek to, “safeguard or improve their position and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favourable to their own products” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 101).

The point, then, is that the occupants of the various field positions engage in field struggles either to improve their positions or to safeguard their positions. Indeed, Bourdieu points out that, “Those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage but they must always contend with the resistance [...] of the dominated” (1993, p. 72). Further, in every field one can find a struggle between the newcomer that tries to break the entry barriers and the dominant agent that tries to defend her or his monopoly in the field (Bourdieu, 1993).

In addition, Bourdieu lets out a line of enquiry into the position of those who lead particular fields when he suggests:

If, in a study of the judicial field, for instance, you do not draw the chief justice of the Supreme Court, or if, in an inquiry into the French intellectual field of the 1950s, you leave out Jean-Paul Satre, or Princeton University in a study of American academia, your field is destroyed, insofar as these personas or institutions alone mark a crucial position. There are positions in a field that admit only one occupant but command the whole structure.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.243)

Thus Bourdieu recognizes the crucial position of those who lead particular fields. He helps us to see the danger that lurks when the positions of such leaders are ignored—

ultimately the field is destroyed. For Bourdieu, this does not mean that the positions of other field members are not crucial, only that the position of those who lead specific fields cannot be left out in a discussion of the field, precisely because they command the whole field. The leadership described here by Bourdieu is pertinent seeing as school principals command their schools, which can be considered to be sub fields.

Substantively, Bourdieu's analogy of the 'game' helps to illuminate the interplay between his capital and field notions. He suggests that, "We can indeed, with caution compare a field to a game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). The game has different properties—stakes, an investment (*illusio*), and players that bear trump cards (species of capital) and have a belief (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu's conception of the game is aptly a conception of competition. He suggests that the struggles, which take place within the field, are about the monopoly of the legitimate violence (or specific authority) characteristic of the field in question (Bourdieu, 1993).

Field struggles come out, as it were, as the struggle for capital or resources in the game. Specifically, for Bourdieu, the possession of capital helps field members to command "access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.97). In Bourdieu's view, players can play to increase or conserve their capital, by conforming to the rules of the game or by transforming, partially or completely, the rules of the game. Overall, he recognizes that the capital of agents shapes their position in the game, their relative force in the game and ultimately their strategic orientation toward the game (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Developing the conceptual frame

In the previous sections I defined Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital. In this section I relate Bourdieu's concepts to leadership. In particular I discuss three concepts, namely, leadership dispositions, positions in the field, and leadership practices. I also explain how the notion of capital functions within the concepts of leadership dispositions and positions in the field.

(a). Leadership dispositions

As indicated earlier Bourdieu describes habitus as a system of dispositions and describes these dispositions as potentialities, virtualities or tendencies. This concept needs to be defined in the context of leadership if we are to understand the leadership habitus of school principals. The context in which I am using the term 'leadership dispositions' and the meaning I assign to the term in this study is that: a leadership disposition is an objectified leadership competence that gives the school principal the capacity to lead in a specific way. This capacity is learned from the school principal's past social experiences and deposited in her⁵ leadership habitus. Leadership dispositions can be said to generate leadership practices so long as the conditions in which they are generated are compatible with those in which the equivalent leadership practices are actualised. In discussing the habitus Bourdieu indicates that actions are to habitus what (a_1) is to (A) (1990a, p.61). To extend his argument to the realm of leadership, it can be argued that the school principal's leadership practices (say l_1) are organised in reference to her leadership dispositions (say L).

Leadership dispositions can also be considered to incorporate cultural capital. Indeed Bourdieu refers to the habitus (the system of dispositions) as incorporated capital. Notice that another term he uses to describe capital is competency (Bourdieu and Wacquant). If we agree that a capital is a competence then it can be argued that leadership dispositions are incorporated with leadership competencies. In this case Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital becomes relevant as a means of unpacking leadership dispositions as it represents legitimate knowledge of one kind or another. Hence early family and schooling experiences that have particular weight in the formation of cultural capital can be useful in unpacking leadership dispositions. At the same time secondary socialization experiences such as career experiences can be useful in unpacking leadership dispositions formed later in life.

⁵ The terms *her* and *she*, are used in this thesis to refer to women principals and not as generic terms referring to both men and women.

(b). Positions in the field

Bourdieu recognises that the school system is a field: “the school system, the state, the church, political parties, or unions are not apparatuses but fields” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 102). This means that there are different fields, namely, the educational field, the religious field, the political field and so on. Indeed, Lingard and Christie (2003) maintain that the educational field cuts across other fields such as the economic field and the political field. Within the education field, the school can be considered to be a sub-field, but one that interacts with other fields. Notice that the school brings together the principal, students, teachers, parents, educational officials and politicians. These field members have diverse stakes, interests and field specific capitals, which could provide a recipe for contests and conflicts in the school. For instance, there are contests and conflicts between the principals and their teachers and students, and there are other contests and conflicts between the principal and the parents, educational officials and politicians. It is likely that amid these contests and conflicts, school principals will try to maintain or improve their positions in the school using the capital at their disposal. Hence Bourdieu’s field notion contributes to my conceptual framework as a concept that helps me to capture the position of women principals in the field.

Capital and positions in the field

Bourdieu mentions that capital can be used as a weapon of struggle as it allows its possessor to wield power in the field and access profits (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). I elaborate here on the relevance of this notion in my conceptual framework.

- (i) Cultural capital – Acknowledging that cultural capital can be viewed as a leadership competence, this notion is relevant in unpacking the leadership dispositions of the school principals. I propose that the position of a school principal can be linked to her leadership approach, itself constituted by her leadership competence, which has the capacity to yield profits in the field.
- (ii) Social capital – Within the conceptual framework, the notion of social capital serves to designate the social networks that a school principal draws on to wield power and access profits in the field. For instance, school principals can use

their formal and informal networks to access opportunities for their schools. I propose that the social capital of the school principal allows her to improve her position in the field and this can define the way she deploys her leadership approach.

- (iii) Economic capital – The conceptual framework takes into account the economic capital of the school in relation to the way it impinges on the position of the school principal in the field. For instance, two school principals can differ in their position, if one is in charge of a school that has low economic capital and another is in charge of a school that has high economic capital. The volume of economic capital in the school can therefore determine the position of the principal and hence define the leadership approach that she deploys.
- (iv) Emotional capital – This notion is included in my conceptual framework as a concept that helps me to unravel the emotional resources that school principals bring to their leadership practices. Reay (2000) has developed this notion from the work of Bourdieu, arguing that the notion requires “further refining both theoretically and empirically” (p.569). Within the context of her research, she defines emotional capital as “the emotional resources passed on from mother to child through processes of parental involvement” (p.569). Within my conceptual framework, emotional capital can be understood as the emotional well-being of the school principals. I propose that emotional well-being can position women principals in ways that can impact on their leadership practices.

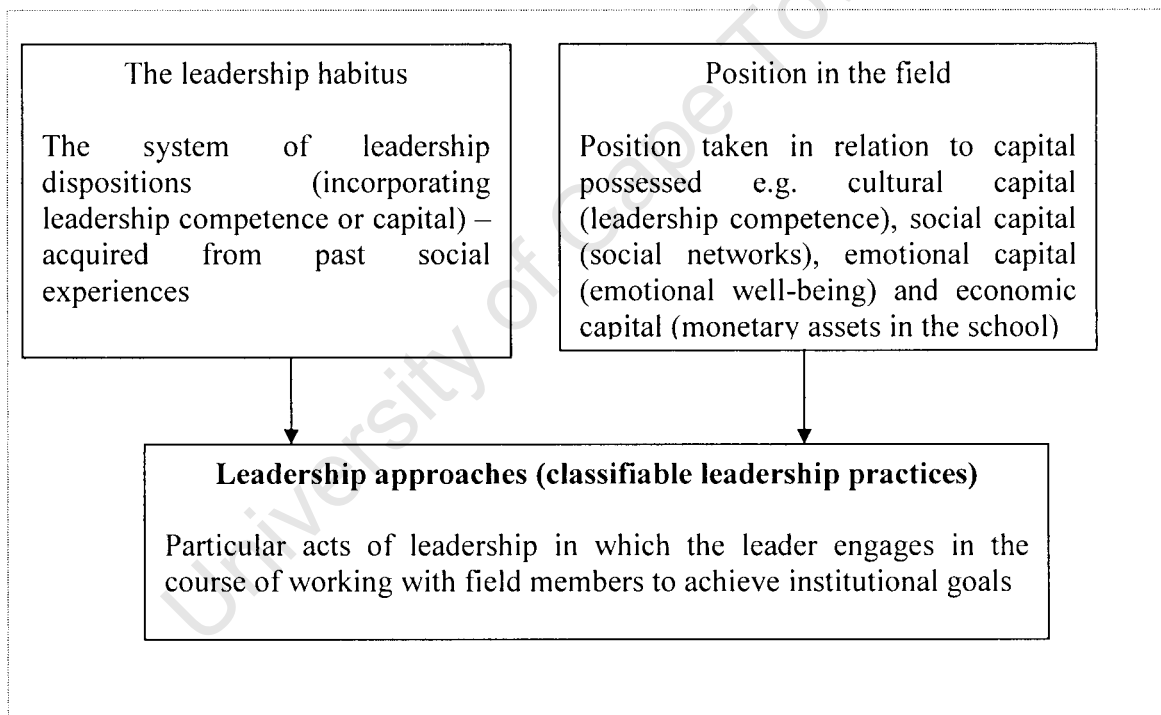
(c). Leadership practices in the field

Leadership theorists use terminology such as ‘concern for people’, ‘concern for the job’, ‘positional power’, ‘vision building’, ‘developing people’, ‘concern for pedagogy’, and ‘concern for shared leadership’ to depict specific clusters of leadership practices (see Halpin, 1954; Fieldler et al, 1977; Burns, 1978; Gunter, 2001; Lingard et al, 2003; Harris, 2003; Storey, 2004). In this study, the following six practice clusters will be used as organising referents for accessing data on leadership practices:

1. Positional power – maintaining the power inherent in the leader’s position
2. Relationships – concern for the welfare of field members
3. Motivation – elevating field members in pursuit of goals in the field
4. Sharing power – distributing leadership functions among field members
5. Tasks – emphasis on the accomplishment of tasks in the field
6. Vision – empowering field members to live the leader’s vision

Having described the various concepts within the conceptual framework, I now present the framework schematically:

Figure 2. The conceptual framework for this study



In a simple form, the conceptual framework above illustrates two main points. The first point is that the past social experiences of the school principal produce her leadership habitus – systems of leadership dispositions that can be linked to leadership approaches actualised in homologous structures. Note that the habitus functions in identical or similar conditions in which it is constituted (Bourdieu, 1990). The second point is that the position of the school principal can be linked to her leadership approach, itself inscribed

with her leadership dispositions (cultural capital). Similarly, the leadership approach of the school principal can be related to her position in the field, resourced by her social capital and emotional capital as well as the economic capital of the school.

Conclusion

In conclusion I suggest that Bourdieu's theory provides a language and logic for understanding leadership approaches in a social context. In practice this can be illustrated by revisiting the story of Nangurai presented in chapter one.⁶ To briefly recap the story: I indicated that Nangurai works in a school environment where girl education is not valued. I mentioned that resistance to dominant male values that threaten girl education in her school looms large in her leadership approach. I also suggested that her networks to powerful government officials and politicians and her past experience of being the only girl in her family to acquire secondary and university education were some of the resources at her disposal in her quest to promote girl education in her school.

Following Bourdieu, it can be argued that Nangurai is not overwhelmed by the male interests in her school that threaten girl education, if at all her habitus is incorporated with a past social experience in which she triumphed over male interests. To use Bourdieu's words (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127) she can be said to be like a "fish in water" which "does not feel the weight of the water" because she encounters a world of which she is a product. In resisting such male interests, we also see how she improves her position in the field by drawing on her social capital, constituted in her networks to dominant male figures – powerful government officials and politicians. Having said this, I contend that when references to habitus, capital and field are placed in the analysis of Nangurai's story, one is able to break with the use of everyday words and logic to understand the relationship between her leadership approach and her social experiences.

⁶ I am stimulated by Wedekind (2001) who in his 'conceptual framework chapter' returns to three stories presented in his introductory chapter to illustrate what he thinks is gained by bringing an Eliasian perspective into the analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I set out the conceptual framework for this study based on Bourdieu's theoretical notions of habitus, capital and field. My aim in this chapter is more domesticated. I mean to open up the kitchen of my study to uncover the *modus operandi* (empirical method) behind the *opus operatum* (finished product). In other words, I seek to make transparent the methodological processes involved in doing this study.

One of the difficulties in communications between the sociologist and his readers lies in the fact that the readers are confronted with a product and very often have little idea how it has been produced. Now, strictly speaking, knowledge of the conditions of production of the product is one of the conditions of rational communication of the findings of social science [...], the finished product, the *opus operatum* conceals the *modus operandi* [...]. What is conveyed by the great vehicles of cultural celebration, is, at best, the results, but never the operations. You are never taken into the backrooms, the kitchens of science.

Bourdieu (1993, p. 158)

This chapter provides an account of the research design chosen for this study. I describe the process of selecting the respondents for the study. I also present an account of the design of the research instrument used in data collection and of how the data was collected. The process by which I managed the data is detailed. I then illustrate how I tackled the issue of validity in this study. Finally, attention is focused on how I dealt with research ethics.

The research design

The life history narrative approach

A life history narrative research approach was used to investigate the relationship between the leadership practices of women principals and their lived experiences. A useful definition of the life history approach comes from the work of Watson and Franke (1985, p. 2): "life history research involves studying retrospective accounts by

individuals about their lives in whole or part, in written or oral form.” Life experiences can also be expressed through songs and plays or the voices of other people that are familiar with the subject (Smith and Thompson, 1993). Further, life histories can be used on their own or in conjunction with other methods such as participant observation or the use of documents (Becker, 1970). Atkinson (1998) points out that when an oral history focuses on a person’s entire life it becomes a life history. He also argues that a life history and a life story are different terms used to mean usually the same things. And as Jovchdovitch and Bauer (2000) indicate, narrative inquiry uses life histories to investigate specific events and projects from a socio-historical perspective. In this study I use the term life history narrative to refer to an account emerging from an extensive set of interviews.

Various researchers have highlighted the value of the life history approach for a range of purposes. Hatch and Wisniewski argue that it “offers exciting alternatives for connecting lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena” (1995a, p. 114). Another advantage is that life histories attend to the past or the lapse of time that is crucial in understanding the present (Dex, 1991). Further, Mirza and Strobel point out that life histories “offer the opportunity to observe a particular society through the lens of individuals” (1989, p.1). For Jovchdovitch and Bauer (2000), life histories are useful in capturing marginalized voices. In a similar vein, Ngaiza (1991) argues that life histories make women’s past lives and current progress visible and this, she says, has a bearing on enabling change in social relations. And Plummer (1983) suggests that life histories provide valuable insights into ways in which educational personnel come to terms with the constraints and conditions in which they work.

The life history narrative approach is suitable for the purposes of this study in that the notion of habitus, which forms the backbone of the study, is suggestive of a life history approach. I argue that the highly abstract notion of habitus can be translated into an empirical object by means of this approach as both the notion of habitus and the life history approach involve a historical perspective. According to Bourdieu the habitus is a

“product of all biographical experiences so that, just as not two individual histories are identical, so no two individual habitus are identical” (1993, p.46).

Female life history studies

Female life histories are inspired by the need to tell the stories of women whose voices have for a long time been hidden and silenced. The voices that have dominated biographical research have been those of white, western, middle and upper class men. Women’s stories are therefore emerging from the margins of these dominant male biographies. Thus female life histories contribute to a more collective awareness of the marginalized voices of women (Plummer, 2001).

In the academic field, women’s narratives have brought out various issues. Some have been concerned with the private and personal lives of women. Guy (2005) for instance used women’s narratives to examine sexual abuse among female adolescents, while Krehbiel (2005) writes about aggression in high school dating relationships. A study of female circumcision by Khaja (2004) examined the lived experiences of Somali Muslim women living in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Toronto in Canada, in order to consider how female circumcision had affected their lives and whether or not it would always be an integral part of their lives. A study that focused on diverse abortion stories is that of Marianna (2000). In her narrative study, she asked thirteen women to relate their experiences in a way that best represented their memories of their abortions. Plummer (2001) posits that life history studies that focus on issues such as sexual abuse have the potential to turn private worries of such into public problems.

Other female life history studies have focused predominantly on the public and personal lives of women. In a feminist-inspired and hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, Charlesworth (2005) explored the lived experiences of five women who brought about significant change for themselves, their families and their communities. A female life history study that focused on the researcher herself is that of Cardinal (2005). She began her dissertation by narrating the loss of her immediate family and her search for healing. She then used her indigenous life history to challenge stereotypes of Aboriginal women

and Aboriginal students and to understand the impact of major federal government policies upon Aboriginal people, in addition to examining the role of Aboriginal parents in their children's education. In a different study, Kelly (2004) explored the life experiences of four women athletic leaders across four decades (1960s-1990s), as they travelled through careers in athletic leadership, to gain insight into their coaching experiences from childhood to adulthood. While some of these studies raise issues of female agency and race or gender stereotypes, others focus attention on the experiences of women in male dominated spheres.

Within the African context, female life history narratives have focussed on a variety of issues ranging from resistance to the dominant order to accounts of everyday working lives. One African based narrative study that brings to light patriarchal oppression in the everyday lives of ordinary women is 'The Unsung Heroines: Women's Life Histories from Tanzania' by Ngaiza and Koda (1991). An African based study that pays attention to women's activism is that of Geiger (1996). She explored the life histories of Tanzanian women activists and suggests that they informed and spread a nationalist consciousness for which TANU (Tanzania African National Union) was the vehicle. A study that focused on the career narratives of African women is that of De la Rey (1999). She obtained the narratives of twenty-five women professors in South African universities in order to explore why they entered academia and what their experiences of being in the university were.

In the field of education, some life history studies of women have focused on either their public lives or their public vis-à-vis private lives. For example, Mogadime (2003) examined the life histories of teachers to find out how they were working toward emancipatory/transformational practices in the classroom as intellectuals and as transformational educators. A study that used a narrative inquiry to investigate the personal and professional lives of five women educators is that of Samson (1998). She specifically examined the conflict of roles in their private and public lives. Also using a narrative inquiry, Obeng-Darko (2003) examined the leadership experiences and contributions of women faculty who held the rank of full professor in educational administration in the

United States of America. More recently, Crenshaw (2004) examined the lived experiences of African American female school principals with the intent of generating a substantive theory of educational leadership grounded in their experiences. These studies uncover the experiences of women educators and educational leaders in the context of power, social, and theoretical issues.

These narrative studies resonate with my study in that their central focus is on the everyday world of women. Using life history narratives, they bring the lived experiences of women from the margin to the centre, to provide insights into women's gender, social and power issues.

Constructing female life histories

Bourdieu (1999) himself has used some female narratives in his collaborative work, *Weight of the World*. The empirical detail contained in these specific narrative interviews focused on the lived experiences of women from schools and other social institutions. In this work, Bourdieu invites us to understand the reality of social lives through conversations. He advises: "Do not deplore, do not laugh, do not hate—understand" (p.1). Through a simple juxtaposition, he brings together narratives that can be read as self-sufficient wholes. Indeed, the book is made up of portions of interview transcripts and accompanying brief analyses of these texts.

In other academic research, constructing female life histories is done in a variety of ways. Some researchers utilise female narratives to engage in language or textual analysis. It is typical of these researchers to be concerned with the processes by which people make sense of their lives (Weiler, 1997). For example Merle (2000), in her study of the narratives of incarcerated women, analyses the language they used in naming their strengths and gifts. In a similar vein, Saturday (2000) uses a feminist, autobiography and linguistic theory to analyse the autobiographies of five contemporary women to create knowledge about problematics that are created in women's lives by the expectations of a patriarchal society and how they influence the formation of self. In a different study, Dowd (2003) examines how early modern dramatists and women writers represented the

working lives of seventeenth-century Englishwomen. Looking at texts by William Shakespeare, Lady Mary Wroth, Thomas Heywood, and Aemilia Lanyer, among others, she analyses how writers of the period used fictional narratives to grapple with the social problems produced by women's work in early modern England.

Other researchers in the academic field are concerned with understanding the lives of women in relation to social, economic and political issues (Weiler, 1997). Such researchers use narratives as sources of data to analyse the lives of women. A good example is Rubinoff (2004) who analysed the stories of women to examine the impact of technology on their lives. Using an actor-network theory (ANT) she obtained life histories situated on the internet (in addition to other methods such as participant observation) to explore the impact of donor-funded cyber-networks on the lives of rural women in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras.

Life history knowledge

What kind of knowledge can life history data produce? This question has been the subject of debate among various researchers. One group of researchers prefers to focus on life history data as subjective knowledge. Watson and Franke (1985), for instance, see life histories as generating an understanding of the subjective meanings of women's experiences. Some life history scholars suggest that life history and narrative methods are unapologetically subjective and are a way out of the dominant scientific paradigm (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995b). Other researchers prefer to see life history data as partial truths. Scott and Alwin argue that "people have imperfect memories of their past lives, and thus it seems unwise to rely on retrospective data as the sole basis for information on the past" (1991 p. 125). Bellaby (1991) goes a little further and points out that life histories are partial truths and facts can only be extracted from them if they are subjected to triangulation (a form of cross validation). In a similar vein, Ngaiza (1991) argues that life history data can be objective so long as life historians focus on group life histories, seek general patterns from a number of life histories, and relate life histories to macro-data such as demographic or economic surveys.

Having highlighted the subjective/objective dilemma, I turn to Bourdieu's perspective on this matter. Bourdieu assesses the gains that can be made from both subjectivist and objectivist knowledge. He argues that a respondent's story is true evidence, but only at a primary level. He gives primacy to the narrator as the primary knower: "the sociologist is dealing with people who know better than he does, in the practical mode that which he wants to know" (Bourdieu, 1993, p.164). Bourdieu argues metaphorically that people know the geography of the area within which they live. Accordingly, they can do away with street plans to organize their routes from place to place. In short, they know what is going on in their lives and their practical experiences are familiar to them (see Robbins, 1991; Bourdieu, 1990a; Jenkins, 1992). Overall, the kind of knowledge that the primary knower can give us is phenomenological knowledge, that is, knowledge that is experiential, native, primary and subjective by nature (Bourdieu, 1990a).

What the respondents do not know, according to Bourdieu (1990a) are their objective structures and internalised structures, or rather the conditions of possibility for their primary knowledge. In other words, the respondents do not include in their native experiences any inquiry into the social conditions of possibility of their primary knowledge. Thus Bourdieu tips the balance from the very beginning in favour of an analysis of primary knowledge. According to Bourdieu, the analyst is best placed to offer readers the means of understanding the experiential knowledge of the primary knower granted that s/he is in a position to perceive and rigorously assess the totality of the actions of local agents in a way that is not accessible to the respondent. Hence successive moments of practice that were protected against logic by the gradual unfolding of time can be grasped (see Robbins, 1991; Bourdieu, 1990b).

According to Bourdieu, the analyst has a synoptic vision of the game given that s/he has the time to totalise practices that have already taken place and to thus control the effect of time and urgency in practices. Bourdieu tells us that a player makes decisions based on the impending positions of his or her opponents on the one hand and her team mates on the other. As Bourdieu puts it, this is done "on the spot," "in the twinkling of an eye," and "in the heat of the moment." In short, practices are formed in the urgency of the moment,

which is the product of playing the game (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 81-82). The analyst can stand outside the game to sweep away the urgency, the appeals, the threats, and the steps to be taken, to understand the real world. In other words, the analyst can withdraw completely from the game to break the spell and renounce all the stakes in order to create a synoptic picture of the game. As a result, the analyst who stands outside the game: (1) breaks the effect of urgency and time in the game, and (2) synchronizes the practices of the game and so brings to light relationships including contradictions that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. Again this is tied to an understanding that a player in the game cannot, within the hurly-burly of the game, master the cumulating and juxtaposition of relations of opposition and equivalence of her practices in the game (Bourdieu, 1990a).

For Bourdieu, it is by means of an epistemological break that the researcher can break with the primary experience of the primary knower to impose a structure on primary and unarticulated knowledge (Robbins, 1991). By granting the researcher the privilege of making the epistemological break, the researcher can be seen to have gained epistemic privilege. Bourdieu maintains that this privilege must be accounted for by means of a second epistemological break. In Bourdieu's words: "objectivist research must break with native experience and the native representation of that experience, but also by a second break, call into question the presuppositions inherent in the position of the 'objective' observer" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 27). The second epistemological break is on the whole a process that requires an observation of the observer by means of a reflexive process (Robbins, 1991).

So it was that I began my life history narrative research, attentive to the importance of the relationship between subjective and objective knowledge. That the life history (primary) data in this study was elicited for creating objective knowledge must be credited to Bourdieu's central insights, that the objective/subjective antimony could be overcome by means of epistemological breaks. And so by an epistemological break with the primary data in the interest of producing objective knowledge, I shall analyse the narratives collected in this study; and second, by means of a second epistemological break, I shall engage in reflexivity whereby I discuss the real conditions of realizing objective

knowledge. These two methodological procedures are discussed further in later sections of this chapter.

Data set and selection procedure

Life history researchers seek samples that are information rich and are less concerned with representativeness. They have little hope of gaining a large and representative sample from which they can make bold generalisations. Hence the traditional sampling method does not play an important role in the selection of life history respondents. Instead, these respondents are selected on the basis of pragmatism (chance encounters) or through selective sampling (based on theoretical or methodological criteria). A practical criterion that has to be met by the respondent is her accessibility in terms of place and time (Plummer, 2001).

On the whole, my selection of the respondents was guided by pragmatic reasons and by a desire to elicit a variety of rich and diverse accounts. Hence sampling was not carried out. At a practical level, I needed to include respondents who were willing to share their narratives with me. Again, this was tied to my interest in acquiring information rich narratives (that is narratives that are rich in depth and breadth). I felt that if the respondents willingly shared their life histories with me, then I was likely to obtain not only their cooperation but also to illicit rich life histories. The nature of my question was that I required rich and detailed data texts.

My interest in rich life history narratives also led me to select respondents from diverse settings. I identified five respondents for this study, namely, Iman, Tumaini, Amani, Furaha and Malaika. All of these are pseudonyms that will be used throughout the study. These respondents are in no way representative of a larger population hence the results of this study will not be generalizable. Instead, the purpose is to derive theoretical insights into the relation between subjects' past experiences and current practices in a particular context. I believed that a diverse range of experiences and contexts would both deepen these insights and illuminate them more richly. I now focus on the factors that drew me to select each of the respondents of this study.

1. Iman

Most important for selecting Iman was the fact that she was the first Afro-Asiatic woman from North Eastern province to head a girl's school there. North Eastern Kenya is an ASAD (Arid and Semi Arid) zone and is officially designated as a hardship zone by the government of Kenya. It is a zone characterized by poverty and insecurity. It is rare for women to work in hardship zones, let alone head schools in these zones. Her school had a student population largely from marginalized backgrounds. Furthermore, Iman herself comes from a marginalized ethnic community in this province. On these grounds, I felt that gender, marginality, and political issues unique to North Eastern Kenya would profoundly define her account. I met Iman through a former colleague at the Ministry of Education who had talked to me about her and her school.

2. Tumaini

I selected Tumaini on the grounds that she was heading a girl's school based in a slum. She was expected to take charge of students that faced the pressures of living in a slum environment. I therefore expected her narrative to yield unique gendered experiences and power dynamics. I had met Tumaini while I was working in the Ministry of Education, and through her I became acquainted with Furaha who also became a respondent in this study.

3. Amani

I selected Amani because she had stepped down from headship of a large provincial girls' school (situated in a rural area) under controversial circumstances. It was implied in reports that 'political forces' had played a role in removing her from headship. I was therefore interested in Amani's narrative by reason of the power dynamics that appeared to have engulfed her leadership career. I was also familiar with her school since I had been a student there during my youth. A former colleague at the Ministry of Education introduced me to Amani.

4. Furaha

In the case of Furaha, I selected her on the grounds that she was in charge of a co-educational school based in a slum. It is worth noting that women principals in Kenya are rarely posted to head co-educational schools, least of all co-educational slum based schools. Moreover, her school was based in an urban slum where crime is rife. Some important themes that I hoped would emerge in her narrative were the power dynamics and gendered issues unique to her school environment. I got to know her through Tumaini.

5. Malaika

In Malaika's case, a number of factors made her attractive as a subject for the study. First, she had retired as a principal, having served in this position for several years. I was thus confident that her long professional career would yield fruitful discussions on her career history. Second, she had been the head of a high cost national school. What this meant is that her school charged higher fees relative to other schools. Hence her narrative had the potential to illuminate social class dynamics. Third, hers being a national school meant that her school admitted the brightest students in Kenya. I therefore thought that her narrative might provide useful insights into these power dynamics and a contrast to the other narratives. I had heard about her when I was working in the Ministry of Education, but I did not know her personally. I made contact with her through a former colleague at the Ministry of Education.

The interview schedule

The interview schedule adopted for this study consisted of structured questions. Various researchers have developed highly structured questions for obtaining life histories (See History channel, 2001; Powell, 2002; Sobredo, 1999). The interview schedule for this study was made up of three parts, namely: (a) the cover sheet that required the respondents to fill in a form that covered such information as their age, professional qualifications, number of teachers and students in their school and the educational level and occupation of their father and mother, (b) twelve broad questions, and (c) 100 sub

questions that were related to the twelve broad questions. (The interview schedule is attached as Appendix B.) The areas of questioning were informed by Bourdieu's theoretical concepts and relevant literature on leadership. The broad and sub questions in the interview schedule were therefore developed to address the broad themes of the study, namely, cultural capital, social capital, power dynamics of the field, and the leadership practices as follows:

1. Under the broad theme of cultural capital, four broad research questions (Q. 1 - 4) were developed including their relevant sub-questions. These questions invited the women principals to recount their early childhood experiences, school experiences, professional trajectory experiences, gender-specific experiences, and emotional experiences. The information yielded from these questions served one major purpose, which was to enable me to discuss their leadership dispositions.
2. Under the broad theme of social capital, one broad research question (Q. 5) was developed including its relevant sub-questions. The purpose of asking these questions was to determine the social networks that women principals have. These included their friends, professional networks, mentors, and family relations. This line of inquiry was intended to yield data that I could use to determine how they used their social capital to position themselves in relation to field members.
3. Under the broad theme of power dynamics within the field, one broad research question (Q. 6) was developed including its relevant sub-questions. These questions were developed to capture the interests of students, teachers, parents and politicians in the school and the way the women principals handle challenges related to these interests. The aim of asking these questions was to illicit data that could be used to determine the approaches to leadership that women principals deployed to safeguard their interests

Two sub-questions in this section were also included to capture the socio-economic background of the students. The inclusion of these two sub questions served to yield

data on the economic capital of the school and the way the women principals dealt with the challenges of handling students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

4. Under the broad theme of leadership practices, six broad questions (Q. 7 – 12) were developed including their relevant sub questions. These questions were concerned with women principals' use of positional power, concern for relationships, concern for motivation, concern for sharing leadership, concern for field tasks, and building a vision. These dimensions of leadership were derived from a review of literature relating to existing leadership theory. They were primarily utilised as organising devices to enable me access data on a range of leadership practices.

Data collection procedures

I began my fieldwork by acquiring a research permit from the Kenya Ministry of Education. Next, the decision was taken to access potential respondents through former colleagues from the Ministry of Education. Although access to the respondents using the official research permit might have been faster, this approach was not pursued. I wanted to interview respondents on a willing interviewer - interviewee basis. I did not want the respondents to participate in the study simply because I had flashed out my research permit. The result was that I was able to win the confidence and cooperation of the respondents. They were not 'coerced' to participate in the study but they rather did so on a voluntary basis. I contacted the respondents using various means. Some were contacted by direct visits while others were contacted by phone.

As the researcher, the onus was on me to enable the respondents to feel comfortable about telling their stories to me. I felt that this was important because it would have an impact on my relationship with the respondents and the quality of the data that emerged from our conversations. From the outset, I made it clear to the respondents that I was carrying out the research for my PhD and future publications. Interviews were carried out either in the respondents' offices or in their homes. I carried with me the interview

schedule, a tape recorder, extra batteries, cassettes and a notebook. I also kept a journal, which I used to reflect upon the interview process.

Prior to the main study, a pilot interview was carried out in December 2003 with a woman principal from a rural mixed secondary school. I was able to revise my interview schedule with input from this study. Consequently, I added two-sub topics to the original interview schedule that captured the respondents' gendered and emotional experiences. The respondent in the pilot study mentioned her emotional experiences while dealing with an undisciplined teacher, which I thought could be captured in a more coherent form under a section on emotional experiences. I also noted that the questions that were related to gender were scattered all over the interview schedule. The disorganized way of eliciting this information convinced me that I needed a section that focused primarily on the gender specific experiences of the respondents. I therefore revised the interview schedule to reflect these changes.

My very first meeting with each of the respondents focused on familiarizing myself with them and planning the dates for the subsequent interviews. The second meeting was used to interview the respondents on the twelve broad questions of the study. Subsequent interviews focused on the sub-questions of the interview schedule. The interviewing process was one of asking questions and then listening, really listening, to what the respondents said. This meant that I had to be very alert to avoid asking questions that had already been answered by the respondents. The length of a complete interview lasted for about eight to ten hours. All together the conversations for the five respondents accounted for about 40 hours of tape recordings. After each final interview, I gave each respondent a copy of her transcribed interview and a thank you card.

Managing the data

Three major issues are discussed in this section. First, I discuss the data transcription process, second the data analysis procedures and third I show how the analysis is reported in this study.

Transcription of the data

The taped interviews for my study were transcribed in three stages. In the first stage of the transcription process I made complete transcripts of the recorded narratives. The second stage was the data cleaning stage, in which I re-listened to the tapes while reading the transcripts to check for accuracy and completeness. In the third stage of the transcription process I printed the primary documents and bound them. Each of my respondents received a copy of their narrative in primary form, as a token of gratitude and for them to also look them over themselves. Those who chose to go over the drafts did not suggest any changes or any corrections. Once these three stages were complete, I had the narratives of the respondents in primary form. The next step for me was to analyse the data obtained.

Data analysis

In analysing the narrative data of this study, I used Bourdieu's field analytical model. Bourdieu outlines three steps that need to be carried out in a study of a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

1. The first step that Bourdieu proposes in his analytical model is that one must analyse the position of the field vis-à-vis the field of power. He notes for instance that the literary field of artists and writers occupies a dominated position within the field of power. What this means is that artists, writers and intellectuals are a "dominated fraction of the dominant class" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 104).
2. The second step that Bourdieu mentions in his analytical model is that one must analyse the objective structure of the relations between positions occupied by agents or institutions competing for legitimate authority in the field. He also states that the analysis of these field positions must be done in tandem with position taking:

The field of positions is methodologically inseparable from the field of stances or position-takings (*prise de position*), i.e. the structured system of practices and expressions of agents. Both spaces, that of objective positions and that of stances must be analysed together, treated as “two translations of the same sentence” as Spinoza put it.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.105)

What Bourdieu drives at is the focus on the relationship between the positions of agents in the field in relation to the strategies that they deploy. For example, he notes that one can observe the relationship “between the objective position of banks in the economic field and the advertising and personnel management strategies they deploy” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 105).

He also notes that: “The strategies of agents depend on their position in the field, that is, in the distribution of the specific capital” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). Thus Bourdieu sees field positions as contingent with capital. He posits that: “Two individuals endowed with an equivalent overall capital can differ, in their position as well as in their stances (“position-takings”), in that one holds a lot of economic capital and little cultural capital while the other has little economic capital and large cultural assets” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 99).

3. The third step that Bourdieu suggests is that one must analyse the habitus of the agents:

One must analyse the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions that they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find a definite trajectory within the field under consideration and a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualised.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 105)

To account for practices in the field, he has devised a formula: [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101). According to this formula practices need to be identified in relation to the habitus (the practice-unifying principle and practice-generating principle). The habitus in this formula is considered to be embodied capital. The agent’s practices are actualised in a field

that has homologous conditions to those that generate her habitus (Bourdieu, 1984).

In analysing the narrative data of this study, I used Bourdieu's relational approach. This approach privileges the analysis of relations between practices and social contexts. Unlike a substantialist approach that reifies the social order, Bourdieu's relational approach privileges the investigation of practices within the context within which they are embedded (Mohr, 2000). The strength of Bourdieu's relational approach is that it "it emphasizes the interpretative character of institutional life, it relies on a structuralist method of interpretation, and it provides an empirical mechanism for linking the duality of culture and practice" (Mohr, 2000, p.1).

Bourdieu himself uses relational analysis in his 1984 work titled *Distinction* to discern the relationship between cultural dispositions and cultural competence, on the one hand and the nature of cultural goods consumed and the way they are consumed, on the other hand. He demonstrates that there is a relationship between cultural practices and educational capital (measured by qualifications) and social origin (measured by fathers' occupation). An example in which he discusses this relationship is seen where he shows how an agent's knowledge of the names of film directors is related to the agent's disposition (acquired through domestic or scholastic inculcation of legitimate culture) and structured by field members (such as critics mandated by the group to produce legitimate classifications and the discourse necessary for enjoying artistic work). Another example is seen where Bourdieu shows how an agent's artistic competence is shaped by the agent's aesthetic disposition (itself acquired by explicit learning or regular contact with works of art) and structured by the positions taken to legitimate certain types of art (Bourdieu, 1984).

Applying Bourdieu's analytical model

Bourdieu's analytical model was applied to the analysis of data in this study. The initial stage of the analysis compelled me to locate three categories of data, namely, leadership

dispositions, positions in the field and leadership practices. Bourdieu himself uses categorisation as an initial stage of analysis:

If, for example, my task is to analyse various combat sports [...] or different institutions of higher learning, or different Parisian newspapers, I will enter each of these institutions on a line and I will create a new column each time I discover a property necessary to characterize one of them; this will oblige me to question all the other institutions on the presence or absence of this property. This may be done at the purely inductive stage of initial locating.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 230-231)

What Bourdieu does is to organise his data into meaningful categories based on the properties of the data itself. I organised the data into three categories (leadership dispositions, leadership approaches and position of the leader) based on the properties of the data as follows:

1. Categorising leadership dispositions

In identifying data that illuminated the leadership dispositions of a respondent, I started off by creating a grid. Each column in the grid was filled with different leadership dispositions that could be discerned from the narrative data. For example, a respondent's caring disposition, understood as a tendency to be caring, was apprehended from the respondents' experience with caring or by regular contact with caring people. Hence each leadership disposition was informed by the respondents past experiences. Based on this understanding I made a list of leadership dispositions of the respondents based on their experiences acquired as young girls, teachers and emergent principals.

2. Categorising leadership approaches

Against the leadership dispositions identified in the initial stage, I then looked for homologous leadership approaches. If the respondent, for instance, had a disposition to do X, a disposition to do Y, and a disposition to do Z, then I searched for an X leadership approach, Y leadership approach and Z leadership approach from their narratives. Where I could not locate a leadership approach that matched a leadership disposition identified in the initial stage, then the particular leadership disposition was pulled out and declared

redundant. Nonetheless, interesting outliers or contradictions are discussed in the final chapter of the thesis. Only the data that was capable of showing a structural similarity between the leadership disposition and the leadership approach was apprehended for its analytical relevance. The leadership approaches were captured from the accounts of the respondents of their practices as school principals.

3. Categorising the positions of the respondents

To identify data that could shed light on the position of the respondent in the field, I grouped interactions in the field that reflected the position and positioning of the respondent relative to other field members. I then apprehended those groups of data that could be linked to the leadership approaches of the respondent identified in step two. For example, if an assertive approach was identified from the data in step two, then I would apprehend field interactions that positioned the respondent to become assertive. This enabled me to capture data relating to the position of the respondent in the field that was analytically relevant to her leadership approach. Data on the positions of the respondents was captured from their accounts of their experiences as school principals.

After this exercise was complete, and I had organised the three categories of data, namely, the dispositions, positions and approaches of the leader, the data was ready for interpretation. Broadly speaking, these data categories (leadership dispositions, leadership approaches and position in the field) are analysed using relational analysis. In this regard I take the leadership approaches of the respondents as the object and grasp them in relation to their leadership dispositions and their positions in the field.

My voice in the analytical process

Following Bourdieu, the primary knowledge of the respondents in this study is considered to form part of the truth and the onus is on me to reconstruct this primary knowledge. I therefore wrestled with the primary data to find relationships in a back and forth way, to unfold relationships between leadership practices and social experiences. In this endeavor I grounded the data analysis within Bourdieu's theoretical framework. For Bourdieu (1999) true submission to the data requires an act of construction and like a mid

wife, one can only scaffold the data provided one has the craft, itself the embodied product of all earlier research. The strength of analyzing primary data is that the analyst has a synoptic view of this data and can thus discern relationships and contradictions emerging from this data. The weakness with this approach is that the voice of the analyst is privileged vis-à-vis that of the respondent in the analytical process. However, this is a problem that is addressed through Bourdieu's insights on reflexivity, whereby the analyst engages in reflexivity on the real conditions of realizing objective knowledge.

Reporting the analysis

The account of the data analysis for this study is organized in five chapters. Specifically, chapters five, six, seven, eight and nine concentrate on the in-depth analysis of the narratives of Amani, Iman, Furaha, Tumaini and Malaika, in that order. A chapter is thus devoted to the analysis of each woman's narrative. As Wolcott (1994) stresses, the key to comparison of data is to look for systematic relationships within single cases in order to learn about each case in sufficient depth for the detail to have any significance. He thus recommends a separate chapter describing each respondent as more productive than a catalogue of similarities and differences across multiple cases.

The data is presented in two ways. On the one hand, data pertaining to the leadership dispositions and field positions of the respondents is presented through narrative excerpts. On the other hand, data pertaining to the leadership practices of the respondents is presented through brief narrative excerpts in boxes and in a different font. The purpose is to highlight this data as the centre of focus given that it will be related to not only the leadership dispositions of the respondents but also their field positions.

Validity

Validity has been a subject of debate in discussions pertaining to the legitimacy of qualitative research. Maxwell (1982) tells us that there is no standard means of assuring validity. Although he attempts to develop five categories of validity, namely, descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, generalizability and evaluative validity, he admits that this

attempt is based on taken for granted structures and “may seem unoriginal or even old-fashioned, and lacking in philosophical sophistication” (Maxwell, 1982, pp. 284-295). In a similar vein, Atkinson (1998) argues that because of the lack of formal procedures for narrative validity, the validity process is itself a highly subjective process. However, Brinberg and McGrath (1985) go a little further and state that validity designates an ideal state that cannot be attained, but only pursued:

Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques [...]. It's a concept designating an ideal state – to be pursued, but not to be attained [...]. Validity has to do with truth, strength and value [...]. Validity is like integrity, character, or quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances.
(Brinberg and McGrath, 1985, p. 13)

This conceptualisation of validity can be usefully applied to this study in relation to Bourdieu's notion of epistemic reflexivity. This is the topic that I focus on next.

Epistemic reflexivity and validity

If we accept that validity is truth, strength and value, an ideal to be pursued as outlined by Brinberg and McGrath, then Bourdieu's notion of epistemic reflexivity can be viewed as a tool for pursuing validity. Epistemic reflexivity according to Bourdieu is a systematic critique of the presuppositions inscribed in the research process. These presuppositions can be likened to the threats to validity. He maintains that there are distortions or presuppositions built into concepts, instruments of analysis and practical operations of research. Other presuppositions, he maintains, originate from the researcher's social origin and coordinates such as class, gender, and ethnicity; the position the researcher occupies in the academic field; and finally, the intellectual bias which entices one to construe the world as a set of significations to be interpreted (see Bourdieu, 1998; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Overall, the aim of Bourdieu's notion of epistemic reflexivity is to increase the scope and solidity of social scientific knowledge. A good place to see Bourdieu's use of epistemic reflexivity is in his work, *Distinction*. I quote here just one example:

Only a research diary could have given an adequate idea of the countless choices, all equally humble and derisory, all equally difficult and decisive, and therefore the countless theoretical reflections often minute and unworthy of the name of theory in the ordinary sense of the word, which had to be made, over several years, when I was faced with a questionnaire difficult to classify, an unexpected curve, a badly phrased question, a distribution that was incomprehensible at first sight, in order to produce a text whose success must be measured by the extent to which it allows a reader to forget the thousands of revisions, alterations, checks and corrections which made it possible, while manifesting at every point the high 'reality' content which distinguish it from the 'not even wrong' sociological essay.

(Bourdieu, 1984, p. 509)

In this quotation Bourdieu critically reflects on the tensions present in the methods he uses in his work. Ultimately his main concern is focused on scientific practice.

Pursuing validity using epistemic reflexivity

In this section, I present a reflective account of tensions in the design of the study. More specifically, I reflect on tensions in data generation methods and interpretation of data.

- *Reflecting on the interviewing process*

I reflect here on the effects that I unwittingly produced during the interview process, chiefly through my ethnic, academic and professional identity. These three coordinates impacted on the accounts that emerged from the interviews.

- (1) The following excerpt from one of the interviews is presented to illustrate how my ethnic background was drawn into the interview process:

Amani: My favourite story is that of 'Muthuri gutura' [blacksmith]; you know that one? Of the giant and the blacksmith?

Myself: That one I don't know; maybe I've heard it.

Amani: You have heard it! Muthuri ugu tura, eh cagararai ca (sings).

Myself: I've heard that song in musical festivals.

Amani: Okay, it's the story of the ogre [...].

In the above excerpt, the respondent practically insisted that I knew her favourite story. Her insistence might have been based on the fact that we both came from the same ethnic community, which is the Agikuyu. I became a bit anxious in the beginning, as I was not sure that I knew her favourite tale. But, when she sang the song in the tale, I instantly recalled that I had heard the song during the drama and music festivals. My ethnic knowledge was thus drawn into the conversation and this effectively positioned me as a researcher from the Agikuyu ethnic community.

- (2) My academic background was drawn into the interview process during an incident where one of my respondents rebuked a teacher in my presence. This incident took place just before I was about to interview her. When the teacher had left her office, she asked me to tell her how I would have handled the teacher if I had been in her position. She said, “You are doing a PhD, tell me how you would have handled that situation, just tell me?” This question was obviously framed with my academic background very much in mind. I responded in a non-committal way, but the respondent would not have it. In the end, I supported her stand on the matter bearing in mind that I still needed her cooperation in the present and subsequent interviews. I found this particular encounter very stressful as the respondent had now shifted my position from that of the researcher to that of a consultant.
- (3) My professional background was drawn in the interview process when a respondent asked me during the interview whether I had ever been a teacher. The excerpt that follows is illustrative.

Amani: [...] and by the way, girls' schools these days are very different from the secondary schools that we had then. I know you have not heard – were you a teacher.

Myself: I was a teacher then I went to the ministry of education.

Amani: Okay, life is different.

In this particular case, the respondent asked me in the middle of our conversation whether I had been a teacher. Initially I felt that the respondent was attempting to draw my professional background into the conversation in order to position herself – to either talk to me as an ‘insider’ if I had been a teacher or an ‘outsider’ if I had never been one. By telling her that I had been a teacher in the past, a social symmetry was set up that placed me as an ‘insider’ within the interview process.

- (4) My gender was an advantage in the interview process given that the respondents seemed to feel comfortable narrating their stories to a fellow woman. In reviewing plans for the fieldwork with colleagues, I had been cautioned about the vulnerability that women of high power status might feel at being asked to reveal intimate details about their lives. I felt that the respondents revealed intimate details to me by virtue of my gender. Nevertheless, the relationship between the respondents and myself was not a neat sisterly one as I became aware of power issues coming up in the interview process. The excerpt that follows is illustrative.

Myself: What are the practices and strategies that you used to win the support of the teachers and students?

Malaika: Openness. Transparency [...] What I didn't like I said point blank, I don't like it. If I thought Caroline is not doing her things properly, I would call you—I'd tell you I believe 12345 has happened, can you give me your views, you know we discuss, we agree or disagree, where we disagree, I say think this is the route to follow, take it or leave it. Of course there are some who are very, very difficult but my policy was, as long as the teacher will teach and do what is required within the specifications, whatever he or she does after school, that's their problem but when you are in school, I expect everyone to follow the laid down rules and regulations.

In this extract the respondent (Malaika) used me as an example to illustrate how she reprimanded teachers that did not do their work properly. Notice that she uses my name to do this. In this respect she positions herself as a figure of authority and subtly positions me as a subject to authority. In spite of this power relation, I

felt that she still revealed to me intimate details about her life that she would not have otherwise revealed to a male researcher.

It is clear from the four examples presented above that the interview process was not neutral. The respondents played on their social proximity to me during the interview process to ask me questions that indicated their awareness of my social, academic and professional background. And although my gender was drawn into the interview process, there were power issues that cropped up between the respondents and myself. The narrative data obtained was thus structured by the interactional nature of my relationship to the respondents. This in itself was not a disadvantage. On the contrary it enabled me to obtain culturally rich and thick accounts from the respondents.

- *Reflecting on the transcription process*

The transcription process was subject to two constraints, the use of English and the conversational nature of the interviews. English was used as the medium of communication in the interview process given that it is the dominant language of the educated elite in Kenya (Laitin and Eastman, 1989). The respondents in this study are drawn from the educated elite in Kenya in so far as they have high levels of education and are in positions of leadership. It was therefore expected that we would communicate in English. But since these respondents are multilingual there were sentences in their narratives that had African language words and grammatical computations where for example, 'I' and 'you' referred to the speaker. Clearly, the respondents incorporated cultural devices that allowed them to speak beyond the confines of 'standard' English. As Bourdieu (1993) points out, people are known to create a haven of freedom, and in so doing, they take liberties outside the laws of speech and so they feel free to speak freely. Although the African language words in the narratives have been retained in the text, an interpretation has been provided in English to make the narratives more accessible.

Due to the conversational nature of the interviews, the narratives of the respondents also had slang, jargon, unfinished sentences and repeated phrases. Bourdieu suggests that:

It is therefore in the name of respect due to the author that, paradoxically, we have to rid the transcribed text of certain add-on developments, certain confused phrases, verbal expletives or linguistic tics (the “rights” and the “ers,” etc.), even if they give their particular colour to the oral discourse and fulfil an important function in communication (by permitting a statement to be sustained during a moment of breathlessness or when the interviewer is called to support a point), nevertheless have the effect of confusing and obscuring the transcription, in some cases to such a point that it becomes altogether unreadable for anyone who has not heard the original.

(Bourdieu, 1998, p. 622)

I enhanced the readability of the extracts from the narratives of the respondents by using punctuation marks, adding in explanatory words in brackets and removing confused phrases and linguistic tics such as “you know” which I replaced with ellipses.

The little editing that I made during the transcription process obviously shaped the transcribed accounts of the respondents. First, the act of translating African phrases into readable English language was difficult, as direct translations did not make sense. Hence it is I (not the respondent) that made the judgement of discerning the words to use in the translation process. Second, by removing linguistic tics from the narratives of the respondents, the transcribed accounts lost a bit of their originality. Third, the non-verbal aspects of the interview such as the body language of the respondents are not captured in the transcribed accounts. Ultimately, then, the transcribed narratives of the study are not total identical records of the conversations held during the interview process. This however did not diminish the value of the narrative data used in this study.

- *Reflecting on the data collection instrument for this study*

To obtain data on the leadership dispositions, positions in the field and leadership practices of the respondents, an interview schedule was developed. I reflect here on the tensions that emerged during this process.

First, the broad themes that were developed to capture the leadership dispositions of the respondents were historical. This means that the past social experiences of the respondents as young girls, teachers and emergent principals had to be captured within

the limits of an interview schedule. For example, four broad questions and a series of sub-questions were designed to examine the childhood, schooling, emotional and gender-specific experiences of the respondents that were related to their leadership dispositions. It could not be assumed that these few questions would give a complete picture of the deep leadership dispositions of the respondents. Hence what the interview schedule could yield was a partial picture of the deep leadership dispositions of the respondents.

Second, the questions that captured the leadership practices of the respondents were organised around six leadership themes (derived from existing leadership theories) namely, positional power, concern for relationships, concern for motivation, concern for sharing leadership, concern for field tasks, and building a vision. It could not be expected that the leadership practices that were not related to these leadership themes could be captured. Hence the organising referents (the leadership themes) imposed on the questions shape the respondents' accounts of their leadership practices.

Bourdieu (1984) argues that in situations where difficulties arise due to the limits of data the researcher has to unlearn the unwritten rule that only data collected in socially defined scientific conditions may be used in scientific construction. By transgressing this rule, the researcher can bring all the relevant information that she inevitably possesses into the scientific discourse. This is a practice that I occasionally adopted to clarify the points raised by the respondents during the data analysis process.

- *Reflecting on the interpretation process*

To locate myself in the interpretation process, I was confronted with an epistemological problem. On the one hand Bourdieu (1998) tells us that people know better than anyone about their experiences and on the other hand he says that they do not have scientific knowledge of what they do. The narratives of the respondents of this study could be considered to be their subjective truths, given that they brought to the fore narrative memories or features from their lived experiences that were true for them. If the respondents chose to select stories of their lives to tell, I argue that it was because these stories were important for them. Thus the narratives of the respondents generated

subjective data and my dilemma was one of applying an interpretive framework on this data in order to generate objective data.

This dilemma was tackled by using Bourdieu's field analytical model to analyse the narrative data of this study. The difficulty then became one of trying to fit the subjective data into this analytical model to enable me to generate objective data. In a sense I was trying to link very specific aspects of the life histories of the respondents into the wider concepts of Bourdieu's theory. By imposing the analytical model on the narrative data, I was effectively conferring theoretical language such as dispositions, capital and field positions on the subjective data of the respondents. This means that I had privileged Bourdieu's academic language on the subjective knowledge of the respondents.

As the analyst, I had also gained a privileged position vis-à-vis the respondents given that I was the one making the analysis of their subjective knowledge. Nevertheless, I argue that this position enabled me to discern patterns and relationships in the respondents' subjective knowledge, which were not readily accessible to the respondents themselves (as Bourdieu lauds in his discussion of the synoptic vision). But it is undoubtedly the struggle I feared of imposing my viewpoint on the respondents' viewpoint that begged my objectivism. Bourdieu suggests that rigour in the interpretive process:

[...] lies in the permanent control of the point of view, which is continually affirmed in the details of the writing (the fact, for example, of saying "her school" not "the school," in order to signal the fact that the account of what happens in this organisation is given by the teacher interviewed and not the analyst. [...]). Sociologists cannot be unaware that the specific characteristic of their point of view is to be a point of view on a point of view.

(Bourdieu, 1998, p. 625)

For me the process of data interpretation involved using extracts drawn from the narrative data to present the point of view of the respondent. The selection of the extracts was based on the analytical model. My interpretation was thus based on the point of the view of the respondent in tandem with the analytical model of this study. Hence it is expected

that the results of the analysis of the data will be defined by the concepts that I derived from Bourdieu's theory.

Summary of the reflexive process

In critically reflecting about the tensions in the research methods used in this study, I agree with Brinberg and McGrath (1985) that attaining validity is an ideal to be pursued but not to be attained. In pursuing validity I have reflected upon the methodological procedures used in this study and opened to scrutiny my awareness of the threats to validity and the "implications surrounding the production of knowledge" as Wedekind (2001, p.14) puts it. In so doing I have discussed the impact of social proximity in the interview process on the research process, the limits of the transcription process and data collection instruments and the implications of interpreting the data obtained from the respondents.

Overall my reflexivity had two aims. First, by exposing to scrutiny the threats to validity and the implications surrounding the production of knowledge in this study, I hoped to enhance the integrity of the knowledge that is produced using these methods. I find it pertinent that Mauthner and Doucet (1998) should suggest that, "data analysis is our most vulnerable spot. It is the area of our research where we are most open to criticism. Writing about data analysis is exposing ourselves for scrutiny," (p. 123). Second, by checking and tackling the threats to validity using Bourdieu's theoretical and analytical concepts and insights, I hoped to enhance the strength of the knowledge that is generated in this study.

Ethics in the study

In his introduction to his collaborative narrative work in *Weight of the World*, Bourdieu laments, "How can we not feel anxious about making private words public, revealing confidential statements made in the context of a relationship based on trust that can only be established between two individuals?" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.1) This question alerted me to the issues of trust and confidence in the interview process. I made three conscious decisions regarding trust and confidence in my study.

- First, I obtained consent from the respondents of this study before I collected data from them. Indeed, their participation in this study was on a voluntary basis. I had obtained a research permit from the Ministry of Education, as this is a legal requirement for conducting research in Kenya. This research permit is usually used to elicit the cooperation of the respondents in a study. However, I did not use my research permit in this respect. I relied on the consent of the respondent and this was also done on a continuous basis. For instance, all our interview meetings were based on the consent of the respondents. At no time were the respondents coerced to participate in the study or to attend the interview meetings. Similarly, I obtained consent from the respondents before I used the tape recorder to record their responses.
- Second, before each interview was carried out, I assured the respondents that their names and those of their schools would be treated with confidentiality. In this regard, I have used pseudonyms to refer to the respondents and their schools in this study. In the spirit of maintaining their confidentiality, I have chosen not to describe the respondents' schools in details that would make it obvious which schools these are. I have also used pseudonyms for all the people mentioned in their narratives.
- Third, I have made every attempt to faithfully reflect the content of the interview transcripts in my analysis, within the constraints of the analytic and theoretical interpretive approach described in this chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter described the research design used in this study. Processes such as the choice of the life history narrative approach, the items included in the interview schedule, and the organisation and analysis of the data have been highly influenced by Bourdieu's theoretical insights. Using Bourdieu's theoretical insights to guide methodological choices has been crucial since my theoretical framework relies heavily on his theoretical notions. What all this means is that Bourdieu's theoretical insights will largely shape the type of knowledge that my study will produce. In discussing all these methodological issues, I hope that I have opened up the backroom, or the kitchen, of my study.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF AMANI'S NARRATIVE

Introduction

This and the next four chapters will present the analyses of the narratives of the women principals who participated in this study with the aim of unfolding the diverse factors that shape their leadership approaches. This chapter presents the analysis of Amani's narrative based on the analytical framework outlined in chapter four. The chapter begins by providing a brief introduction to Amani and her school. I then discuss her leadership dispositions in relation to her lived experiences as a young girl and teacher. In the final section I discuss the relationship between her leadership practices and her leadership dispositions and position in the field.

Who is Amani?

Amani, 53 years of age, was born in a rural part of Kenya and lived most of her childhood during the colonial period. Her father was a businessman and her mother a housewife. After attending a co-educational primary school, she joined a girls' secondary school where she completed her secondary education. She then joined a teacher training college. After completing her teacher-training course she was awarded a Diploma in Education (S1 certificate). She then taught in a secondary school. It was during this time that she got married. During her teaching career she served as a head of department for two years, a deputy principal for one year and a principal for five years. Her highest professional qualification was Graduate Teacher I⁷. She stepped down from school principalship after six years due to what she describes as 'political' pressure. When she was transferred from her present station to head another school in a remote area, she refused to take up the post in protest. Instead she opted to move to another school to become an ordinary teacher.

⁷ Based on the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) scheme of service, secondary school teachers usually start off on the scale of Graduate Teacher III. After three years they are promoted to Graduate Teacher II, and after two years they are promoted to Graduate Teacher I.

Mapping the field: Amani's school

Amani's school is a single sex girls' school situated in a rural area. The school is situated in a province that is well endowed economically compared to other provinces in Kenya. Nonetheless, there exist pockets of poverty within this province. The school draws 85 per cent of its students from its district and fifteen per cent from its province. This method of admitting students means that her school is referred to as a provincial school. It also means the majority of the girls in her school are from rural areas while the rest are from urban towns.

Her school is also referred to as a high school because in the past the school offered advanced level education when the Kenyan education system was based on the 7-4-2-3⁸ system of education. Thus her school enjoys a high status compared to schools that previously did not offer 'high' school education. Moreover, her school is one of the oldest schools in Kenya, having been established during the colonial period by the missionaries. The school is therefore the alma mater of many girls in Kenya. What is more, her school has a history of performing well in the national examination. At the time that Amani was the principal, the school had a total enrolment of 720 students and 42 teachers.

Amani was principal of the school at a time when the field of education was riddled with corruption, nepotism and political interference in schools. The chairman of the school board was the leader of an opposition party. At the time, Kenya had two opposing political factions. These were the ruling party, KANU (Kenya African National Unity) and the opposition movement made up of various opposition parties such as FORD (Forum for the Restoration of Democracy), DP (Democratic Party) and SDP (Social

⁸ The current structure of education in Kenya is the 8+4+4 system in which eight years are devoted to primary education, four years to secondary education and four years to higher education. An examination is administered at the end of the primary segment (the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education) as well as at the end of the secondary segment. The previous structure of education was the 7-4-2-3 system, in which seven years are devoted to primary education, four years to ordinary level education, three years to advanced level education and four years to higher education.

Democratic Party). The opposition parties at the time hoped to defeat the KANU party in order to 'restore' democracy and install good governance in Kenya.

Amani's leadership dispositions

My intent in this section is to describe the leadership dispositions of Amani based on her lived experiences as a young girl and teacher. In this context, five of her leadership dispositions are defined and discussed, namely: her disposition to esteem benevolent males, assertive disposition, spiritual disposition, disposition to value shared leadership and caring disposition. Later in the chapter, I will track her leadership practices from these leadership dispositions.

Disposition to esteem benevolent males

Amani's narrative brings to the fore her disposition to esteem benevolent males. I draw on four extracts from her narrative to show how her experiences as a young girl and as a teacher engendered her disposition to esteem benevolent males. In the extract below, Amani talks about her father and her religious teacher.

Extract 1. "I expected him to beat me up. But he did not beat me"

I think what I remember most in my childhood is the freedom to play [...], and I remember one time my father [...] came and he found me - I was playing [yet] I had been left in charge of the small children [...]. So this time round, he returned and he found the house really chaotic. And I expected him to beat me up. But he did not beat me. I think the fact that he did not beat me and you know now I had not done what I was supposed to have done, somehow that still stands out. I have never forgotten that day [...], and that was good. I think it meant something to me. It's like I was more important than the work.

Extract 2. "If all church leaders today were like that man"

There is one [lay leader] who played a very significant role in my life – the lay leader who taught me catechism [...]. He was very humble and he was very loving. I think if all church leaders today were like that man, I think the church would be very different.

Amani's account implies that her father was benevolent in the sense that he withheld physical punishment that was within his power to impose. Likewise, in talking about the impact of her early spiritual teacher, whom she describes as humble and loving, we once again see the impact of a benevolent male in her early life. Hence her disposition to esteem benevolent males is founded on these early experiences. This is a theme that can be seen in the next extract as well.

Extract 3. "He said it with such finality. Its like I had nothing else to say"

I felt like I didn't want to go to Ushindi, perhaps another school, not Ushindi. And I said—God I will wait. When I talked to my husband, he used to ring at the end of every week; if he gives an okay, then I will know it is you [God]. He was going to ring on a Friday; I think it was a Monday that day; so when he rang, that's when I told him [...]. His response—immediate response was, "Praise the Lord." I asked him, "What are you praising the Lord for?" He told me, "Because he has answered my prayers. That's something I had been praying about." Then I told him all the difficulties [...], [yet] he says, "Praise the Lord," it means that the Lord says—go! Immediately, I enumerated the difficulties, transferring the children blab, blab, blab; transferring the household; before I finished [the sentence] he told me, "The headmistress of Ushindi will send a school truck to transport your things to the school," and he said it with such finality. It's like I had nothing else to say. And he also added, "She will also send people to help you pack," [...] 'She's going to send people to help you pack'—those words, I said, "Okay God."

Amani made the decision to accept a transfer to another school based on her husband's advice. When she describes, in the most natural way, what made her husband's advice acceptable and final, her view of male authority becomes clear. She creates a narrative parallel between her husband's advice and the voice of God. For example, in describing her husband's advice to accept the transfer to a new school she makes the assertion, "It means that the Lord says, go!" like a fate or destiny that must come to pass. And so her husband's voice and his advice appear to her as the ideal advice.

In the next extract she talks about her early favourite story. While I do not interpret what this story means to Amani, I would like to point out parallels between this story and

Amani's relation to significant males. By virtue of these parallels and the significance the story has for Amani, the story can be seen as an allegory for Amani's relation to males.

Extract 4. "Blacksmith, smith, smith, smithing away"

My favourite story is that of 'Muthuri gutura' [blacksmith [...]]. It's the story of the ogre and the woman 'with a child' whose husband was a blacksmith; he went to blacksmith away from home and put the ogre in charge of his wife. So when she gave birth, the ogre was supposed to be cooking for her. She gave birth when the husband was away; the husband did not know that she had given birth. The ogre did as he was supposed to, but what he would do is cook food and give it to the nursing mother, saying, "Nursing mother, mother with the child, take this food." When she was about to [take it] he would eat [it]. So, the ogre tortured her [and] nearly starved her to her death. But one day she saw a dove; there was a dove that used to eat her seeds, palm oil, no, castor oil seeds that she used to spread outside. She asked the dove [...], "You eat my castor seeds—if I [...] send you to some place would you go?" And it said, "Yes." So she sent the bird, and it took the message to the husband [...]. He finally rescued her. It's the bird that sang the song, when it reached to the blacksmiths place. It sang, "Blacksmith, smith, smith, smithing away, your wife has given birth and is being taken care of by the ogre. And it repeated everything that the ogre used to say, to do.

The significance of Amani's favourite childhood story is that while, in reality, the woman in the story is rescued by her husband (a blacksmith) from the ogre, it allegorically represents a struggle between an, 'evil' male (ogre) and a 'benevolent' male (husband). The triumph of the benevolent male over the malevolent male is patently obvious in this story. Allegorically speaking, the benevolent males that Amani holds in high regard can be compared to the blacksmiths in this story as they in one way or another shield her.

Assertive disposition

Amani's narrative shows that she acquired an assertive disposition as a teacher. She was willing to assert herself in relation to males in positions of authority that she believed were malevolent. Indeed, this assertiveness emerged in particular contexts in which she believed she was unjustly treated. Two extracts from her narrative are illustrative.

Extract 5. "But I stood my ground; I would not go"

I did not want to be an assistant games mistress at a time when I was commuting. But I was made the games mistress, and even when I was expectant I would be expected to go to the field; and of course I would not go [...]; and the head really harassed me and he would write letters to me, letters of negligence of duty [...]. But I stood my ground; I would not go. So I remember I went to the TSC one time when I was like this [expectant]; and when [...] the officer turned my file and read one letter of [negligence of duty] [...], as an assistant games mistress; he looked at me and said, "Amani—how much of games can you do." (Laughs) [...]. That is how un-understanding that head teacher was! But I survived. I never went to the field when I was expectant.

Amani recalls that, as a young teacher, she refused to take up the position of games mistress while she was pregnant and while commuting daily to school. It is clear that in spite of repeated warning letters from the headmaster, she did not budge. She recalls that an official of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC), a more fair-minded, benevolent official, was appalled to see several warning letters in her personal file referring to her refusal to be the games mistress, in view of her pregnancy. It is evident that she considered her headmaster to be insensitive to her plight ("That is how un-understanding that head teacher was"). It is in this context that her assertiveness emerged. The following extract captures another encounter in which Amani can be seen to have asserted herself as a teacher in relation to the male principal whom she perceived to have adopted an unjust position.

Extract 6. "I had a very sympathetic chairman of the board"

Again, when I was breastfeeding—another big problem; I could not be able to leave my child very early. Already it was difficult to leave the child behind, but I was expected to be there at eight a.m. But I asked him [the head teacher] to have me at least begin [classes] at around nine a.m. He wouldn't allow this, he wouldn't, and because I insisted, I mean not really insisting, I could not, I really could not, I would usually be late for the first lesson; and he summoned me to the board. And he reported me [...]; then I told the board I was breastfeeding a baby [...]. I had a very sympathetic chairman of the board, and the board listened. It is the board, which said, "From now on Amani should start teaching at 9 am, do not teach before 9 a.m." And my head teacher had nothing to say.

Amani recollects the difficulty that she experienced, being a mother with a newborn baby who was pursuing her teaching career at the same time. For example, she described the difficulty of leaving her baby in the mornings when going to work. While the message of the principal seemed to be that she was expected to be in school by 8 a.m., Amani's stand was that she had a newborn baby and could only be in at school by 9 am. In this struggle, she tells us that she was taken before the school board in view of her defiance. She also spoke of the support of the chairman of the school board (a benevolent male) who allowed her to arrive at a convenient time in the mornings. Thus the characteristic that emerged earlier of a just and benevolent male authority who comes to the rescue of a woman reappears here.

Spiritual disposition

Amani's narrative indicates that she acquired a spiritual disposition as a young girl and teacher. The extract that follows captures her early experience with spirituality.

Extract 7. "I can still hear his voice as we recited the prayer book"

There is one [person] who played a very significant role in my life—the lay leader who taught me catechism [...]; we called it—'gucharia ritwa' [looking for a name] [...] and that old man [the lay leader] was of the same age as my grandfather [...], but when I look back I see that that man was a very dedicated person. He taught us catechism seriously [...]. I can still remember what he taught me. Some things that I later came to seriously believe in! I can still hear his voice as we recited the prayer book. He was very humble; and he was very loving [...]. He really impacted on me very positively.

Amani recalls that she received catechism classes that allowed her to acquire a Christian name. It is evident that this was her spiritual induction into the Christian faith. For Amani, the spiritual learning she gained during this time impacted on her positively and guaranteed her later spiritual beliefs. In my earlier discussion of her disposition to esteem benevolent males, I mentioned that she had a high regard of her male catechist teacher. In the above abstract, we can see the impact of this catechist teacher on her spiritual nourishment when she says, "I can still hear his voice as we recited the prayer book." Her experience with spirituality in school is captured in the extract that follows:

Extract 8. "I guess it was because of the Christian tradition in the school"

Secondary school, what did I remember most. What I remember most are my experiences as a Christian; the spiritual development in the school. I mean my personal spiritual development. My secondary school being a mission school put emphasis on Christian worship. I got saved when I was in primary school. When I went to secondary school I wanted to backslide because I thought I had become saved too early in life or perhaps because I didn't know what I was doing. But by the end of the year I had to confess that I was different. It was significant for me when I went home for mid term, for the Lord spoke to me. I guess it was because of the Christian tradition in the school.

Amani presented herself as a devoted Christian during her schooling years. She attributed this to the Christian tradition of the secondary school she attended. She remembers growing in her spiritual faith during this time. Clearly, this experience equipped her with a spiritual disposition. The extract that follows captures her experience with spiritual leadership as a teacher.

Extract 9. "So that opened me up to leadership"

Everywhere I went I would get involved in the Christian Union, and I found myself even preaching even to the whole school, in different schools. So that opened me up to leadership, you know, when you are talking to people there are things that come out – you also realize your potential in a very different way. So that in my third school I was actually identified by [some] people without my knowledge that I would be a useful person [leader] somewhere.

Amani tells us that her early contact with leadership can be attributed to her involvement with the Christian union. In this respect, she recalls that she often preached Christian sermons to the school. This, according to her, provided her with a platform to develop and realize her leadership potential. She explains that this made her visible and provided others with insights about her leadership potential. Her experience with spiritual leadership was therefore profitable and can also be said to have equipped her spiritual disposition.

Disposition to value shared leadership

Amani's disposition to value shared leadership can be discerned from her narrative. This means that she held shared leadership in high regard. As a teacher, she viewed her predecessor as a participatory leader, admired her and specifically saw herself as 'inheriting' her participatory practices from her. But she also says that she learned from her predecessor's mistakes.

In the two extracts below, Amani talks about how she felt her predecessor influenced on her.

Extract 10. "She was – I don't know whether this is the right word – consultative"

She [the predecessor] was democratic and she was accommodating. She was – I don't know whether this is the right word – consultative. She used a lot of consultation and she respected individual differences. She had an attitude of live – and–let–live; rarely did she interfere. In fact she never interfered in peoples personal lives, and I thought that was very good. She was democratic, she respected individual differences and views and she made the members of the staff participate fully in the running of the school.

Extract 11. "That is something I inherited from my predecessor"

What I did was to ensure that staff meetings were not my own staff meetings; the staff meeting was our own staff meeting. That is something I inherited from my predecessor. I feel that I owe so much to her style of leadership because she was the kind of a person who allowed people to speak and never muzzled people during the staff meetings.

Amani perceived her predecessor's leadership style as: accommodating, consultative, respectful, live–and–let–live, democratic, and participatory. She values this style of leadership: "and I thought that was very good." It is also evident that Amani identifies with her predecessor's style of leadership. She talks about her own consultative approach with her eyes on her predecessor's style of leadership. This can be deduced from her rhetoric: "I inherited from my predecessor" expresses affirmation regarding this acquisition, while "I feel that I owe so much to her" represents a disclosure of debt. It is

obvious that Amani viewed the participatory tactic of her predecessor as being worth emulating.

In the next extract Amani talks about the lessons she learnt from the mistakes of her predecessor on an occasion when a less consultative approach was adopted.

Extract 12. "Mistakes that had been made in the previous administration"

It's the students who choose prefects; I used that system, I continued with that system and it helped a lot because of some of the things that I had learnt, mistakes that had been made in the previous administration, like the one that led to a near strike; we learnt that we were to blame for that strike in so many ways [...]; we had imposed the head girl on the students. The outgoing prefects had chosen the girl. The one that the students had chosen had no comparison with this other one [the students' choice]. We knew she was tough and she would do it. Little did we know that she was too tough on students because she actually took up the role of a teacher; she would beat them out there; she would remove their blouses, if their blouses were torn. She even went beyond the teacher. So I had learnt from this. So I really did try to listen to the students as much as possible. And we would agonize especially on the [election of the] head girl; we would agonize over the choice of students and our preference. And finally, we would sometimes very reluctantly we would go by the students' choice to avoid an unpleasant situation.

Amani recalls that her predecessor had tried to institute a change that took elective powers away from the students, with disastrous consequences. What can be inferred here is that the change from a participatory approach to a non-participatory approach in the school had had negative repercussions. The students demanded a participatory approach. Amani tells us that she upheld this demand when she later became the principal of the school, but not without some bouts of distress ("we would agonize over the choice of students").

Caring disposition

It is evident from her narrative that Amani developed a caring disposition during her years as a teacher. Caring here refers to being warm and supportive toward the students. In the extract that follows she spoke about her experience as guidance and counselling teacher.

Extract 13. "I was a teacher, a sister to the students, a mother, maybe a preacher"

As guidance and counselling teacher, whether head of department or a member of the guidance and counselling committee, I have [...] been called and been told, "Student X has refused to go to attend classes because the lord has told her to go out and preach." And I have had to stop what I am doing, sit with that child, and talk with the student and I see that child change, get refocused. It is like the teacher, as a teacher—I was the focus. I was a teacher, a sister to the students, a mother, maybe a preacher, I don't know, so many things.

Amani recalls that as a guidance-counselling teacher she took on the roles of 'sister', 'mother', and 'preacher' to the students. She conceptualises her counselling work as caring work. She gave an example of a case she attended to, of a student who had opted to drop out of school in a bid to embark on a preaching career. She mentioned that through her counselling efforts, she managed to get the troubled student refocused. She paid attention to the social, emotional and academic development of the students. This experience can be said to have equipped her caring disposition. In the next extract she spoke about her decision not to use corporal punishment on students as a teacher.

Extract 14. "I decided I would never cane any student"

[As a teacher] I remember the kind of punishments they used to give to students. And they would cane the girls at the back. And it used to pain me. But the head teacher knew it was really affecting us ladies and every time we tried, we made an effort to try to tell him to avoid it, he would say nasty things; because he was the head teacher, there wasn't much that we could do. But there's something I decided to do. I decided I would never cane any student in the school whether a boy or a girl. So even when I was on duty I would never cane. I would give other kinds of punishments because they are there. And that did not augur very well in the eyes of the head teacher and the male teachers especially because they felt that I was being soft. I was not conforming.

Amani recalls that she opposed the beating of students with a cane as a means of instilling discipline in them. She experienced pain and anguish when she witnessed female students being caned on the buttocks. She resisted this form of punishment and adopted non-corporal forms of punishments, much to the dismay of her male colleagues.

Because she refused to ‘cane’ students, she came to be viewed as ‘soft’ by her male colleagues.

Analysis of the factors that shape Amani’s leadership approaches

In the previous section I discussed Amani’s leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences acquired as a young girl and teacher. This section analyses the correspondences between the leadership approaches that Amani adopted later, when she was a principal, and her leadership dispositions and position in the field. This section is organised as follows. First of all, I unpack each of Amani’s leadership approaches on the basis of her experiences as a principal. I then proceed to discuss the homogeneity or correspondence between these leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions⁹ including the ways in which her leadership approaches are patterned by her position in the field. The leadership approaches of Amani discussed in this section include her: male-supported leadership approach, shared leadership approach, assertive approach, spiritual approach and caring approach.

Male-supported leadership approach

It is evident from her narrative, that as a principal, Amani adopted a male-supported leadership approach. The following collection of excerpts, focus on instances that illustrate her male supported approach.

⁹ Notice that practices “can only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the habitus that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented, that is, the scientific world that the habitus performs, while concealing it, in and through practice” (Bourdieu 1990, p. 56).

Instances of practice that reflect Amani's male supported leadership approach

As a principal, Amani seemingly welcomed the involvement of male teachers in her school. For example: (1) she said that she relied on them: "And I know without them [teachers], I don't know what I would do and especially men teachers."

(2) She indicated that they were cooperative: "I think there were things I was able to do because of the gender, especially in getting cooperation from men."

(3) She praised them as supportive, "I think generally speaking men [teachers] except a few; men are very supportive"; as generous, "men [teachers] are generous with ideas. I think they don't feel like—I withhold so that she can fail"; and as valuable, "my experience is that I benefited a lot from men [teachers] in a way perhaps they would not have been able to help one of their own."

(4) On the other hand, she complained about her female teachers: "I did not find ladies very much out in giving constructive criticism, but men did."

It is clear that Amani depicts male teachers as highly supportive. Female teachers on the other hand are portrayed as most likely to stand in her way. Her high regard for supportive male teachers and her more general disposition to esteem benevolent males are thus closely related in that they both appeal to benevolent male support. Both her male supported leadership approach and disposition to esteem benevolent males emerge from a field characterised by patriarchal conditions that perpetuate male dominance. Her early learning performed within two institutions that are highly patriarchal, the family and the church, inculcated in her an esteem for benevolent males. As a young girl, she had a high regard for her father and her male spiritual teacher in view of what she considered to be their benevolence. Indeed, later on as a married woman, she depicts her husband as a benevolent male. It is therefore no accident that as a principal she should make a similar representation of the male teachers' virtues in her school.

Her male supported approach can be linked to her position in the field. Her male-supported leadership approach is consistent with a patriarchal context within which women rule through men. If her leadership approach can be read off this patriarchal background, this is only because she is positioned in a subjugated position, but is able to shift to a more dominant one by virtue of the support she draws on from 'dominant' but benevolent males. The extract that follows is presented in illustration.

Extract 15. "I don't feel I need to struggle to outdo my husband or men in general"

So what I feel, for us women, if we understood the unique role, we are a unique creation [...], and God has given us power, what I call influence, that just comes—we don't have to fight for it. Without even being told I think that my husband will not do certain things because he knows I don't like it. But I never told him that I don't like that [...], and recognizing that position, I feel that I don't need any other weapon. I don't feel I need to struggle to outdo my husband or men in general. I do not need to be aggressive because my presence, my being is influential enough [...]; we really don't need to be aggressive unless we are meeting some personal needs. That's my approach to it. But there are so many other people who advocate very controversial gender issues that are actually meeting their needs [...]. On the other hand we know that there are situations where men are oppressing women, then let's handle those cases as unique cases, so that we do not generalize; because when we do that we demoralize the men who have been upholding the dignity of women.

In this account, Amani indicates that her power comes from the respect she receives from her husband; and so she sees no need to combat this benevolent male authorial power. Further, she sees a paternal privilege in her account, the reliance on a paternal God who gives her power ("God has given us power, what I call influence"). Thus her view is that her authority emanates from benevolent male authority. Moreover, she implies that she has reservations about gender activists and goes on to imply that female oppression is not universal but rather case specific. According to her, insisting that female oppression is universal is bound to demoralize men (benevolent males) that uphold the dignity of women. It is clear that Amani has incorporated the importance of the 'benevolent male' concept in her perception of male authority as a device that places her in a dominant position.

Shared leadership approach

Amani viewed herself as a leader that used a shared leadership approach. The collection of excerpts below illustrates instances that reflect her shared leadership approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Amani's shared leadership approach

Amani's shared leadership approach in the school is evident in the following comments: (1) She consulted heads of departments—"during these meetings [...], we would come up with approaches," (2) She involved teachers—"What I did was to ensure that staff meetings were not my own staff meetings [but rather] our own staff meetings; so I did not tell them what to do—we discussed," (3) She consulted prefects—"especially prefects, they gave a lot of input," (4) She consulted the deputy principal—"I would set the agenda [...] often in consultation with the deputy," (5) She shared responsibilities—"when we received the bursary from the Ministry [of Education], we shared out the bursary in such a way that we involved the class teachers," (6) She delegated responsibilities—"if an issue came up that I thought, a head of department can handle, I would throw it to him or her," (7) She sought contributions; she prided herself in asking teachers: "you have succeeded in your subject, by way of performance, can you share this with us, your approaches," (8) She encouraged the sharing of ideas—"I would let teachers correct one another; when you let teachers talk they actually correct one another."

Amani's remarks about involving others and delegating power to others in the school indicate that she was highly concerned about sharing leadership. She developed a disposition to value shared leadership by virtue of working with her predecessor in an apprenticeship relationship. She valued her predecessor's participatory approach and found it applicable in her case. Recall that when Amani's predecessor attempted to adopt a non-participatory approach, a student strike almost took place. This is a mistake that Amani recalls learning from. It is therefore not surprising that Amani appears to adopt a shared leadership approach as a principal. Bourdieu (1998) tells us that people who share a restricted space will be both closer in their properties and in their dispositions.

Furthermore, Amani's participatory approach has to be seen as a response to a field whose members demanded a participatory approach, if they were to contribute their efforts positively to the school. So it appears that Amani had to fulfil the conditions that the field tacitly required of her. This means that she had to use a participatory approach, the lack of which would have condemned her to the resistance of field members. I will use two extracts from her narrative to illustrate this point further:

Extract 16. "If they were not given enough room to participate—"

My predecessor, the problems that she experienced from—were coming from teachers from Area D and especially men, not women [...]. I was aware of that when I took over, and I was particularly alert, but incidentally I received a lot of support from the same [men], from Area D. One is because they are hardworking. I think it's because - this is my observation, they were very ambitious, if they were not given enough room to participate in the running of the school, they felt uncomfortable. In fact I am thinking of about two. One was very involved in music and that gentle man worked hard [...], but previously they really made themselves a nuisance and they gave her [the previous principal] a hard time. I imagine now, it's because they were not very involved in the administration [...], being given responsibility, where they would get busy enough, not to get involved in those small groupings.

In this account, Amani gives an example of how two teachers reacted before and after they were involved in the running of the school. She tells us that these teachers were a "nuisance" during her predecessor's tenure and attributes this to their energies not being utilised. Under her leadership, she says that these teachers did not give her any trouble granted that she had given them added responsibilities. When Amani positioned herself as one who shares leadership, these teachers who were considered to be troublesome shifted their position and became cooperative. Another extract that illustrates that field members tacitly demanded that Amani make use of a shared leadership approach is presented below.

Extract 17. "Students begun to question authority"

But as you are aware since you have been in education, toward the end of the millennium there was a general tendency of I can say defiance to authority; you are aware—a defiance to authority. It was like a swarm that swept all over the country; and students begun to question authority, so that if you told them to do something, it's like they would not want to do it your way [...]; they wanted to do it their way [...]; when you failed to consult them first it became very difficult to get them to cooperate. I noticed that this [consultative] approach worked very well with the first two groups of my students, [but] towards the end, there came a group of students that felt, "No, no this is [...] we don't have to do it that way; she is telling us to do that, that is too hard, we don't have to" [...]. You see, it did not come up as a challenge to the authority directly [...]; but it was a general, can I call it a rebellion, a general attitude and the same was transferred to the prefect

body; so that they did not respond to the authority of the prefects as well as they had been responding before.

Amani remarks that toward the end of the twentieth century, students began to question authority. She tells us that the students demanded to be consulted if they were to be cooperative. It is in this context that she seemed to privilege a consultative approach in her relations to her students. She recalls that indeed the consultative approach worked for her with respect to two cohorts of her students. Nevertheless, she maintains that this approach did not work well with her third cohort of students, who remained rebellious toward authority. While it is clear that Amani used a participatory approach, it is evident that student resistance positioned her to make use of this approach.

Assertive approach

Amani's narrative shows that she adopted an assertive approach. The collection of excerpts, that follow indicate instances that reflect her assertive approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Amani's assertive approach

Amani refused to play ball with 'corrupt' education officials: "So people would come to my office from education offices and they would come and do a few things and they would expect [a gift]." Because she declined to give 'gifts' to educational officials she narrates that, "Only to hear later on, 'Madame wa Ushindi ni gum' [Madame of Ushindi school is stingy]."

She denied contractors building contracts in her school: "[For the multipurpose hall project] I went to the Ministry of roads and construction [...]. I did not have to get a contractor; yet there were many contractors out there [...], but we decided to go that way and save money. Ha! I think that did me in (laughs)."

She contradicted her superiors. She recalls an incident in which a parent made a false claim to the DC and other educational officials that her daughter had been wrongly sent home for fees. She says that she responded in writing to the education officials: "When they read my letter at the PDE's office [...], the fact that I had written to contradict what they had said was not taken well [...], and that's when I begun really to see there is more to it than this." As she recalls, "The story stuck with those officers. I learnt later on that she [the critical parent] was a friend of the DC."

She tells us that when she was transferred to another school in 'bad' faith, she stepped down from leadership: "Then I received a letter in December—you have been transferred to Msitu School." She described Msitu School thus: "It's very far; it's actually the next school to the forest. It had been a very problematic school, real, real difficult. Men had found it difficult to handle, because of the discipline problems." This took its toll on her, and she made a decision to quit leadership: "I decided I wasn't going to go at all [to Msitu school], so I decided to step down. Yah, I stepped down. I told them, I want to go back now to the classroom." The reason for this: "I felt that the transfer was not given in good faith [...]. I looked at it and I felt betrayed; I felt very disappointed."

In the school Amani appears to adopt an assertive approach as a form of resistance to what she considered to be the 'unethical' motives of field members', particularly male figures that held positions of power or authority. Like her assertive approach adopted as a principal, her disposition to be assertive developed as a teacher is also interwoven with the logic of morality and resistance. Through the operation of this logic, it becomes clear that when her moral ethics are at stake, her assertive disposition is triggered. If we look at the authority that she defies both as a teacher and as a principal, it becomes clear that this authority is held by male authority figures that transgressed her moral ethics. For example, as a teacher she defied her male principal and refused to become a games mistress when she was pregnant, and while commuting to the school. Similarly, she defied her male principal when she had a newborn baby by insisting on going to school one hour later every morning. This pattern is again reflected in her professional life as a principal, in her defiance against what she considers to be the unethical practices of her male superiors. These figures represent malevolent males, by virtue of their unethical behaviour, in contrast to the benevolent male figures that Amani holds in high esteem.

I now focus on Amani's position in the field in reference to her assertive approach. In her struggle to resist 'unethical' people, her resistance can be seen to bear certain profits in that she is able to reposition herself from a subjugated position to a dominant position. Her account of her interaction with politicians provides a good example of how her resistance stance reaps profits:

Extract 18. "They bring their donations"

I was able to work with some [politicians] who were already in the ruling party [...]. The Minister of Education was very, very supportive. He helped me organize a harambee that was presided over by the president. Without his help, I don't think I would have done much. By then, our MP [Member of Parliament] was an opposition leader, not only an opposition MP, but [also] a leader. And by the way I was working very closely with him. He was a frequent visitor in the school and he would make a lot of donations [...]; we reasoned this way—although we were in the opposition party we were paying taxes to the government. Actually that's the way we looked at it. And if we managed to organize a harambee that would bring these people [ruling party politicians] to the school and they bring their donations, they will only be returning to us what we have given them. Moreover, I had a member of the board who was a very close friend of the then Minister of Education.

In this extract, Amani makes a claim, in defence of her move to take donations from ruling party members. Note that taking donations from the ruling party was deemed to be unethical because it was considered to be a corrupt party. Her claim was that the ruling party was not using the taxpayers' money properly, hence what better way to get it back than by inviting the politicians from the same party to donate this money ("they will only be returning to us what we have given them"). It is this claim that can be considered to be her call for resistance. In other words, it is this reasoning on her part that expresses her subtle resistance to the ruling party that works to her advantage.

Spiritual approach

From her narrative it becomes clear that Amani as a principal adopted a spiritual approach to leadership. The following collection of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrate instances that reflect her spiritual approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Amani's spiritual approach

- Amani spoke about her leadership challenges and how she turned to God for guidance: "I can say that God was guiding me because I think in headship, however trained you may be; you cannot anticipate the daily problems." Likewise, she narrated: "It's like within the same day you become a lawyer, a judge, a parent, a teacher, a counsellor, I mean, name it, that is administration and you don't know when each will be required [...], you need God (laughs)."

- Amani relied on prayers, and, in her own words, "Everything I did was based on prayer [...]. I depended on prayer." She also encouraged prayer in the school: "Many times I would go to the students and tell them we need to pray [...]; in our staff meetings we would pray; in our board [of governor] meetings we would pray. For me it was prayer that worked."
- Amani constructed issues using spiritual language: "I noticed at one time, I think my third year—political interference came in so forcefully because they knew I was a Christian. It came with a religious dimension." In this context, she further mentioned: "I see that it's somebody who wanted me out of the school but that did not work [...]; they are using spiritual forces, which did not work."

Spiritual language and rituals play an important role in Amani's leadership approach. Not only do these spiritual devices play a role in her responses to leadership challenges, they are also a motif in her day-to-day leadership practices. Amani's disposition to be spiritual can be attributed to her religious experiences acquired from very a young age. Indeed, her spiritual disposition is first a product of her experience as a young girl, when she was inducted into the Christian faith through specific Christian rituals. What is more, she attended a school that had a Christian tradition and this further developed her spiritual disposition. Recall that, as a teacher, she gained access to leadership when she took charge of the Christian union society in the school and thus gained spiritual leadership experience. She then moves from the position of spiritual leader in the school to that of the principal of the school. Ultimately she adopts a spiritual-based approach as a principal of her school.

I now focus on the link between Amani's spiritual approach and her position in the field. It is evident that in certain contexts she adopted a spiritual approach to secure her interests in the field. The following extract is provided in illustration.

Extract 19. "Hey! That was not an easy one coming from a student"

I remember during that incident, the fire incident, when [...] we called the students [...] to begin investigations -when we did I remember there was one student who stood up and openly challenged my authority; I cannot forget what I had said [...]. And a student stood up and she asked, "How can you guarantee us security? How sure are you, how sure are you that we are secure in this compound?" Hey! That was not an easy one coming from a student; kwanza (one) that we already knew was an undisciplined student who could also almost be a

suspect. Yah, you see now she is telling the others, the place is not secure. [...] Actually I told her, "I cannot guarantee maximum security but I can guarantee you security within the limits". And I told them, "Maximum security is given by God. Even when you have walls and security guards, it is God finally at the end of the day; it is God who protects us." But you know, she had already stolen the show and considering the mood of the students. I felt that was a real challenge, but I was still able to handle it at the level so that the students were able to sleep and a new day arose.

Amani tells us the story of how she responded when a student challenged her following an arson attack on a student cubicle in the school. First the student placed Amani in a difficult position by asking her if she was sure that she could guarantee the safety of the students following the arson attack on the school. In this case the student was clearly bringing Amani's authority into question. Second, the field at this very instance appears to have been very tense as the students' safety was at stake. By implication Amani's position in the field was insecure. Third, by responding to the student's question to the effect that maximum security was in God's hands, she clearly takes the heat off herself and diverts it to a spiritual authority that is beyond question. She therefore enhances her own authority by drawing on the authority of God (just as on other occasions she enhances her own authority by drawing on the support of benevolent males). Hence she uses her spiritual approach to reposition herself from an insecure to a secure position in the field.

Caring approach

From her narrative, it is evident that as a principal Amani adopted a caring approach with respect to disciplinary issues in the school. The following collection of excerpts, derived from her narrative, shows instances that reflect her caring approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Amani's caring approach

Two examples from Amani's narrative illustrate her caring approach.

First, Amani's caring approach led her to require teachers to justify their disciplinary actions to students: "I also insisted to the teachers that any time they give punishments to students, they take time to explain why." According to Amani, if this was not adhered to "it leaves them [students] with question marks that will lead to unfairness" particularly in cases

where "different forms of punishment for the same offence to two different students" were given.

Second, Amani noted that an interactive disciplinary system gave more control to the students and enabled them to defend themselves and voice their concerns: "Because of my approach to students, the fact that they were made to understand [the position of the teacher], they knew that now they can explain themselves." And if Amani felt that the students were justified in committing an offence, she explained that she altered her decision: "If I found that a reason [for an offence] was very good, I would either not punish you, or just counsel you, or give you a light punishment."

Amani's caring approach is visible in the way she handled student discipline in an interactive way. This can be seen in the way she enforces students' rights, specifically their right to know why they were being punished. Because of the need for fairness, she indicates that it was important for students to be told why they were being punished. This, in her view, empowered the students in two ways. First, they saw this as a discursive space where they could explain their point of view, and secondly, they were less disruptive when they were made aware of the reason for their being punished.

Amani's disposition to care was acquired from her experiences as a teacher. She seems to value the use of warmth and fairness in handling students both as a teacher and as a principal. Indeed this is the homology between her caring disposition and her caring approach. As a teacher, she developed a caring disposition by virtue of her position as guidance and counselling teacher, a position that enabled her to handle students in a supportive and highly interactive manner. Recall that as a teacher she was also appalled that girls were beaten on the buttocks and she refused to adopt corporal forms of punishment. Likewise, as a principal, we see that she emphasizes the need for students to be punished fairly and with a more interactive approach.

Amani's caring approach has to be seen in the context of her position in the field. She seems to deploy her caring approach to secure the interests of the students. The extract that follows is illustrative:

Extract 20. "This did not augur very well with some teachers"

I also insisted to the teachers that any time they give punishment to students, they take time to explain why. This did not augur very well with some teachers, I've just remembered, some teachers who felt—why, should a student be told why she is to be punished, she already knows, she made noise in class, I mean it is wrong; she doesn't need any explanation. But then I tried to make them understand that you may give one form of punishment, different forms of punishment for the same offence to two different students depending on reasons that you have, if you don't explain to them it leaves them with question marks that will lead to unfairness. [...] I became aware of unfairness. A teacher would be having his own problems and he displaces on the students unconsciously, so he becomes too harsh. Because of my approach to students, the fact that they had known, they knew that now they can explain themselves. You see when you explain they also explain themselves to you. They tried to do the same with the teachers: 'I did this because of 1,2,3,4'.

These remarks indicate that punishing students in the school was a highly contested issue. Whereas the teachers preferred to use an authoritarian approach in handling student discipline, Amani is insistent that an interactive approach was more suitable. In making a case for her approach, Amani tells us that her experience is that some teachers tended to be very harsh and inconsistent in the punishments that they gave to students. Her account thus illustrates that she preferred teachers to adopt a caring approach, but negotiates rather than imposes this approach in a field where the established practice regarding punishment was more authoritarian.

Summary

This chapter has provided an analysis of Amani's narrative in an endeavour to gain insights into the factors that shape her leadership practices. The analysis of Amani's narrative suggests that:

1. She adopts a male supported approach that is manifested in her high regard for her male teachers' support. It seems that she draws on their support to occupy a dominant position in the field. She learned to esteem benevolent males from her contact with her father, her early spiritual leader and later on her husband.

2. She emerges as a leader that deploys a distributive leadership approach, but it is also evident that teachers and students tacitly demanded that she deploy this approach. She learned to share power from an apprentice relationship with her female predecessor as a teacher.
3. Her assertive approach is manifest in her resistance to unjust male authority. When her moral interests are threatened she deploys an assertive approach. She learned to assert herself against the unjust practices of a male principal as teacher.
4. She adopts a spiritual approach that is visible in her use of spiritual language and rituals in the school. When a student challenges her authority in the school, she deploys her spiritual approach. She acquired her spiritual disposition from her early experiences in church, school, and college and later on as a teacher and spiritual leader in the school.
5. She emerges as a caring leader particularly in the way she emphasises a more interactive approach in handling student discipline. She learned to be caring from her experiences as guidance and counselling teacher and her resistance against corporal punishment as a teacher.

Interwoven in Amani's field of practice are diverse interests held by members of the school such as educational officials, teachers and students. Amani positions herself in relation to these interests and this structures her leadership approaches. She utilizes her leadership dispositions to her advantage particularly in countering competing interests in the school. But in doing so she suffers low emotional well-being that eventually leads her to relinquish school principalship to become an ordinary teacher.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF IMAN'S NARRATIVE

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of Iman's narrative to derive insights into the factors that shape her leadership approaches. As in the previous chapter, I continue to use the analytical framework outlined in chapter four. I begin this chapter with an introduction to Iman and her school. The chapter then draws on her lived experiences as a young girl and teacher to discuss her leadership dispositions. Finally, I discuss the relationship between her leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions and position in the field.

Who is Iman?

Iman, aged 46 years, was born in North Eastern province. Her father had an Islamic education and was the chief of the local community. Her mother was a housewife and had no formal education. She was raised mostly by her mother since her father died when she was a young girl. She attended a coeducational primary school in her province. She then joined a boys' secondary school, as there were no girls' secondary schools in her province during her time. After completing her secondary education she joined a coeducational high school in order to pursue A-level education. Subsequently she joined a university where she attained a Bachelor of Education degree. She returned to her home province to work as a teacher. It was during this time that she got married. She rose up the ranks to attain her highest professional qualification, which was Headmistress 1 (HM1). She served as a deputy principal for two years and a principal for nine years. She is currently pursuing a Master degree in education.

Mapping the field: Iman's school

Iman's school is located in North Eastern province, an area designated by the government of Kenya as a hardship zone. This means that the province faces formidable challenges. The province is considered to be an Arid and Semi Arid (ASAD) region, and it is characterized by poverty and insecurity. The area also has a poor road network. Nomadic

pastoralism is practised by most of the people living in this region, yet it is a lifestyle that yields poor economic returns. Overall, the people living in this region are marginalized. Iman's school therefore attracts students from the marginalized communities of the province. For a long time, hers was the only girls' school in the province. Her school was therefore important to the girls of the province as it provided them with an opportunity to pursue secondary school education. At the time that Iman was the principal the school had 320 girls and eleven teachers.

Iman's leadership dispositions

In this section I focus on Iman's leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences as a young girl and teacher. In this context, five of her leadership dispositions are discussed, namely: her achievement-oriented disposition, competitive disposition, gendered disposition, strict disposition, and caring disposition. Later in the chapter, I will track her leadership practices from these leadership dispositions.

Achievement disposition

It is evident from her narrative that Iman developed an achievement-oriented disposition during her early family and schooling years. She posits that her brother and her teachers inspired her to be achievement-oriented. In the extracts that follow Iman talks about these experiences.

Extract 1. "My brother is the one who helped me"

One of my brothers is the pioneer of education in the province. He was the first to go to school and then became a teacher; then he became an AEO [Assistant Education Officer], [and later] a PEO [Provincial Education Officer] [...]; he was like my father actually because my father died when I was in class four. He is the one who brought me up. I looked at him, you know as a person who has done a lot for the province. And he is the one actually who encouraged me to aim higher.

Extract 2. "My dream at that time was to [...] be a leader like my brother"

My dream at that time was to finish my education and be a leader like my brother, that was what I was aiming for; because all my brothers that time—one had gone

to Russia to study medicine, another one was a cashier, this one was a DEO. So I was seeing them doing very well and that is what I was aiming for.

Iman says that, as she grew up, she found her role model in her brother who started his career as a teacher and rose up the ranks to take charge of district education and, later on, provincial education. She also indicates that her other brothers, one pursuing medical studies and one who was a cashier, were a source of encouragement for her to aim higher. Thus, she learned early to aspire to succeed with her eyes on her brothers' success. In the next extract Iman spoke of the teachers that made an impact on her as a young girl.

Extract 3. "Will I reach that level one day?"

You know I had a lot of teachers who taught me in the primary school, who today one of them is, a senior person at the TSC, Mr. D. He is a commissioner of the Teachers' Service Commission. He is the one who taught me in the primary [school] and I used to admire him, you know, because he was among the first Somali's who had gone to school. There were two of them and another one who became a member of parliament. [...]. I used to ask myself, "Will I reach that level one day?" (Laughs) you know. So I can say Mr. D is one of the people I admired a lot because he was among the first Somali men who went to school.

Iman recalls that some of the teachers who taught her in primary school rose to senior positions later in their lives. She tells us that one of them rose to become a member of parliament, while another one went on to hold a senior position in the Teachers' Service Commission. She says that she admired these achievers and hoped that a day would come when she too would be like them. This experience appears to represent her fundamental belief in achievement.

Competitive disposition

It is evident from her narrative that Iman developed a competitive disposition during her early schooling years. Consider, for example, the role of her teacher in stimulating her competitive disposition in the extract below:

Extract 4. "Make sure you beat these boys"

Mr. D, he is the one who taught me in primary at an early age. I looked at him as somebody who was really, imparting knowledge to me [...]. I think he was a good teacher at that time [...]. I liked him because he was somebody who was very responsible; and he was a very good teacher and he encouraged me, actually. We were many girls in that class but he used to tell me every time—"Iman work hard, make sure you beat these boys," and whenever I had a problem he is the one I used to share with. So he used to give me a lot of encouragement.

Iman describes her favourite teacher and recalls that he encouraged her to work hard and beat the boys in her class. Thus the competition between Iman and her fellow students was set up in terms of gender in that she was encouraged as a girl to outperform the boys. The extracts that follow capture other incidents in her early life that shaped her competitive disposition.

Extract 5. "They were thinking also that girls were not bright"

When I was in the mixed school [...], the boys teased the girls a lot. That was one of my biggest problems; sometimes they could be very rude, they would abuse you and they were thinking also that girls were not bright. If you defeat them in a subject, they will say, "Oh that teacher likes the girl that is why he is giving her more marks!" You see that type of behaviour, that is what I didn't like [...]; in fact I had a nephew and an elder brother who we happened to be in the same class and [one day] when we came home, my brother, asked me "where are the tests you did yesterday, bring the results," and I happened to be leading, they said, "No, no, no she cant beat us, the teacher must have given her extra marks." Even my own brother used to tell me that because they had that mentality of boys that they cannot be defeated by girls, by a girl. So in the boy's school where I attended, that was the worst thing, I hated most. Sometimes they tease you, make fun of you and they think you are doing well because your teachers are supporting you.

Extract 6. "Let me work hard, so that I show these boys that I have the brains"

What I liked about mixed schools is that you compete you know, actually it taught me a lot [...] to work hard. And you know every time I was saying let me work hard, so that I show these boys that I have the brains.

Iman described her early schooling life in a co-educational school as plagued with negative gendered attitudes. She recalls that there was a widely held belief that girls were

not as bright as the boys. In this respect she seems to have encountered boys who constantly abused and teased her when she outperformed them in school. She recalls that if she performed well in school, then in the eyes of her male classmates and male relatives, the teacher had favoured her. Her motivation to work hard as a young girl was thus based on her desire to show the boys that she too was intelligent. It is clear that she was responding to a gendered competitive culture that was prevalent in her school

Activist disposition

Iman's narrative renders visible her activist disposition. Three extracts from her narrative are illustrative. In the extract below, Iman recalls an early experience that exposed her to women's rights.

Extract 7. "They taught us a lot about the religion and the rights of women"

One sheikh who was teaching Islamic studies in one primary school, I used to admire him a lot because he was a sheikh but he was also the type of person who will advocate for the education of girls [...]. The sheikhs, I actually admired them because they taught us a lot about the religion and the rights of women [...]. Before this some teachers at the Koran school would hide from us our rights. You see in the Koran there is a chapter, which has the rights of women.

Iman recalls with admiration the sheikh who gave her early Islamic religious classes, given that he openly discussed women's rights. She finds fault in those Islamic religious teachers that concealed this kind of knowledge. By acquiring early knowledge of her gender rights, she gained a potentiality to assert her rights. This predisposes her to occupy a position oriented towards activism. The extract that follows illustrates an early experience that seems to reinforce her activist potential.

Extract 8. "I attended the boys school"

So he [her brother] is the one who started the first girls' school in the province because he realized that there was a need for a girls' school. I attended the boys' school [...]; we were only three girls [...], since there was no girls' school in the province and the nearest one was Tatu girls' school in Usingizi town. It is very far [...], so they decided that we go to a boy's school. So the three of us girls attended the boys' school; by the time I was in form three, the other girls had left.

They got married (laughs). So this is the time now he [her brother] realized, its better he starts a girls school in the province and he is the one actually who took that initiative [...]. He just took a loan and said lets build one class for the girls. And that's how the girl's school started [...]. I thank God to be where I am today because without him I would have got married maybe after standard seven.

Iman recalls that during her early schooling years there was no girls' secondary school in her home province. She remembers that she had to join the boys' secondary school with two other girls in order to pursue her secondary education. While these two girls later dropped out of school, Iman remained in school and attributes this to the encouragement of her eldest brother. She tells us that it is her brother that was instrumental in starting the first girls' secondary school in her home province. By implication, Iman's schooling was supported by her brother who seems to have been pro-women where education was concerned. This experience no doubt shaped her gendered activist disposition. In the extract that follows, Iman talks about her struggle to pursue A-level education.

Extract 9. "She's getting old [...] she might become a Christian"

When I finished form four, the family members wanted me to get married, but then my brother said – no. And then the PEO [Provincial Education Officer] that time [...] told my brother, "There is no way [...]; she has to go for her A-levels." He is the one who took me from Motomoto town and admitted me in Barua high school; he took me, he made sure that I had gone there [...]; the extended family said – no, no, no; and then my mother was being told by other ladies, "She's getting old, if you take her to [...] down country [...], she might not become a good Muslim. She might become a Christian." A lot of nonsense! The PEO said, "No, she has to go. And I will make sure that she finishes her school [...]." But my brother and the PEO, they made sure that they convinced my mother and she left me alone. But she was so scared, you know, very scared [...]. It was my first time to leave home.

Iman's activist disposition is also constituted in conditions that see her profit from the activist practices of other people in her life as young girl. She recalls that after completing her secondary (O-level) education, she found herself in the centre of a struggle between conservative members of her family who wanted her married and avant-garde members who wanted her to further her education. What would become of an old girl who was not married? What if she became a Christian or just a bad Muslim? These

were some of the issues raised by the conservative members of her family. It turns out that her right to further her education is upheld by her mother under the pressure of her brother and the Provincial Education Officer.

Extract 10. "I have gone that far and I am still a good girl, I am not spoilt"

Sometimes we [Iman and other university students] would go to the houses to encourage the mothers by telling them that, "I have gone that far and I am still a good girl, I am not spoilt." In fact there are times we used to go from door to door, to campaign, (laughs) to talk to the mothers to allow their girls to go to school. And then we'd go to the Provincial Commissioner to explain the problems in the province and how we can help, you know. There are times, we used to contribute money and buy books for the libraries; some school didn't have even a library.

As a university scholar, Iman says that, together with other colleagues, she engaged in door-to-door campaigns with the mission of talking mothers into allowing their girls to attend school. One of the examples she gave is particularly poignant. She explained to mothers: "I have gone that far and I am still a good girl, I am not spoilt." The use of the word "spoilt" signals a deeper moral understanding; a feeling that an educated girl was at risk of acquiring low morals. This experience of encouraging girl education during her university years can be seen to have nurtured her activist disposition.

Strict disposition

In her narrative, it is clear that Iman gained a strict disposition as a young girl. Her strict disposition refers to her disposition to uphold strict discipline. The extract below is illustrative:

Extract 11. She was somebody who was very strict

Well, my mother was committed to her work. She took care of her children well; she was very harsh with us especially when it came to the discipline side. She was somebody who was very strict and that's what I liked about her. Even today that's what I practice with my children; you know that discipline comes first.

Iman recalls that during her early life, her mother demanded an adherence to strict discipline in their household. It is thus evident that the spirit of strictness was prevalent in her early life. The durable inclination of this tendency is evident in the way she says she disciplines her own children: “Even today this is what I practice with my children.” Her social upbringing into the strict disciplined world of her family can be said to have contributed to her strict disposition.

Caring disposition

Iman’s narrative brings to the fore her caring disposition acquired as young girl and university scholar. Her caring disposition refers to her disposition to care for the disadvantaged. In the extract below, she talks about her mother’s caring ethos:

Extract 12. “She used to take care of people who were not well off”

In fact she [her mother] has taught me a lot when it comes to discipline, how to take care for a house, how to respect people [...]. She used to take care of people who were not well off. So I learned a lot and you know, up to today, when I see people who are needy, I like helping [them] because that is what she taught us – that whenever somebody is in a problem, try to help. She was very generous also.

Iman spoke of how she learnt from her mother to treat other people with respect and to care for the needy. She went on to say that she saw her mother as a generous person who also took care of people who were “not well off.” She implies that it is difficult to separate her caring disposition from this early childhood experience: “when I see people who are needy, I like helping because that is what she taught us.” As will be seen in the extract below, Iman’s actions as a university scholar also reflect her caring disposition.

Extract 13. “We had Islamic associations”

We had Islamic associations and we used to go out to help the poor people; sometimes we’ll go after we close the university; we go back to the province to teach for three months as UT’s – untrained teachers; so in the university that is the activity that we had. And in fact those who were from North Eastern [province] we had our group and we made sure that all of us go back to the province to work there so that we can help our people.

In solidarity with other university scholars under the auspices of the Islamic association, Iman says that she actively engaged in helping the poor people in her community over the university holidays. Thus we see in her account the efforts she invested in caring for needy people as a university scholar. This experience can be said to have nurtured her caring disposition.

Analysis of the factors that shape Iman's leadership approaches

Thus far I have discussed Iman's leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences acquired as a young girl and teacher. This section analyses the relationship between the leadership approaches that Iman adopted later, when she was a principal, and her position in the field and leadership dispositions. In this section I unpack each of Iman's leadership approaches on the basis of her experiences as a principal. I will relate these leadership approaches to her position in the field and her leadership dispositions. The section discusses five of her leadership approaches, namely, her achievement-oriented approach, competitive approach, strict approach, activist approach, and caring approach.

Achievement-oriented approach

It is evident from her narrative that Iman adopted an achievement-oriented approach. I begin the analysis of her achievement oriented approach by presenting a collection of excerpts, derived from her narrative, that illustrate instances that reflect her achievement approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Iman's achievement-oriented approach

- Iman mentioned hard work and commitment as ingredients of successful leadership: "Headship is not an easy thing. It's very taxing. It needs a lot of work. You have to be committed in your work. Unless you are committed then you will never succeed."
- She spoke of rewarding high achievers: "When their [teachers] students get A's or B's or something like that, I used to write to them letters congratulating them and praising them for their achievement." As for the students, she said: "those students who were very bright and used to do well, I used to give them bursaries."
- Her approach seems to be exam-oriented: "I taught those girls well and I managed to take them to university." She adds, "I have made the school [...] conducive for learning [...]; so that the girls can, you know, can study well and pass the exams. That one I accomplished."

- She spoke about producing successful students: "And every time I am thinking, even in the night I am thinking—I want this girl to do well. I want them to be good citizens. So I should make them successful and I have to work very hard."
- We see her high energy level in the various school projects she saw to completion: "I managed to get some funds from DANIDA about 4 million (R 400,000) and I managed to build a laboratory, a home science laboratory, 2 dormitories and a water tank. So I managed to finish that project successfully."

Iman's achievement oriented approach is manifest in her goal to be successful. She implies that one is only as good as her success. She has a vision of commitment and hard work as critical ingredients for success. She for example mentions several school development projects that she saw to completion. She rewards high achievers in her school. Her focus on student performance is exam oriented and takes on board the aspect of further learning and access to university education for her students. Thus, her perception of achievement is long term. She learned to be achievement oriented as a young girl, inspired by her brother and male teachers. She esteemed their successes particularly when they took on various leadership positions in the society.

I now focus on Iman's position in the field in relation to her achievement-oriented approach. In particular I use one extract from her narrative to discuss how field members subtly demand that she deploy an achievement-oriented approach.

Extract 14. "If you are successful, well and good; if you fail then you go down the drain"

Sometimes you are asked, how come the school is not doing well, you know. How come that your results are not good? As a headmistress, you have to work hard because you as the headmistress, you know you are looked upon, you know, the whole school is you actually. If you are successful, well and good; if you fail then you go down the drain.

Iman tells us that school community members usually demanded an explanation when the school did not perform well in the national examinations. This implies that she was in a sense accountable to members of the school community with regard to the examination performance of the school. This accountability is what puts her under pressure to succeed. In the field of education in Kenya, high stakes are invested in exam

performance. Indeed, the education system is generally exam oriented.¹⁰ It is hardly surprising then that field members of Iman's school put pressure on her to succeed in the national examinations.

In the next extract, Iman talks about the support she got to embark on her successful school projects.

Extract 15. "So he just talked to DANIDA and they just gave us Kshs. 4 million"

No it was over 3 years, you know. The DANIDA project, what I did was [...] we had one of the leaders from Garrisa, who was the Chief of General Staff, you remember—General X, yah. I had talked to him and then he told me, "Okay, I'll get some funds for you". So he just talked to DANIDA and they just gave us Kshs. 4 million, so we built. In fact after that, since I left the school, I hear no development project, so we managed to get home science lab-well equipped, a dinning hall well equipped, 2 dormitories and science lab and a water tank. So I managed to finish that project successfully.

The success of Iman's school projects can be attributed to the support she obtained from the Chief of General Staff of the Kenyan army. Iman's association with the Chief of General Staff, which incidentally is the highest position in the Kenyan Army, constitutes part of her social capital. Using this social connection, she was able to access funds to put up several projects in her school, such as a well equipped home science laboratory, a dining hall, two dormitories, a science laboratory and a water tank. She clearly draws on this social capital to achieve her ambitions.

Competitive approach

From her narrative, it is evident that as a principal, Iman adopted a competitive approach in her school. Her competitive approach is also highly gendered. The following collection of excerpts that featured in her narrative illustrates instances that reflect her competitive practices.

¹⁰ Schools are classified into: national schools that admit the 'brightest' students from the whole country, followed by provincial schools that admit the 'brightest' students from their provinces and districts, while district schools admit the 'brightest' students from their districts. Students that do not make it to any of these schools, end up in community schools traditionally known as 'harambee' schools.

Instances of practice that reflect Iman's competitive approach

- Iman's vision was competitive oriented: "We had the neighbouring school [and] there was that competition also. You know you make sure that your school is better than the other one." She added, ""Being the only girls school [in the province], I wanted to show the men that women also have brains! So I didn't want to let down the women."
- She also hoped to outperform the boys' schools: "In fact academically we were even leading the boys' schools." In this endeavour, she pointed that: "we had to look at the class, the top ten students; we made sure that we concentrated on those top students to make sure that we give them extra work, extra time so that they could do well."

Iman's competitive approach is visible in her vision of proving that a girls' school could perform just as well as a boys' school. She makes this her gender project: "I didn't want to let down the women." She thus makes a concerted effort to improve the performance of her students, even it means improving the performance of the top ten students in the examination class. She learned to be competitive during her early schooling years. What she acquired from her early schooling is the message: 'you can beat the boys' which was nothing other than instilling in the young Iman a sense of belonging to a gendered competitive world; a world in which defeating the boys was lauded. Thus, as a young girl she forged a perception of competition, to prove that girls 'have brains'. It is hardly surprising that as a principal she is keen to outclass the boys' schools.

I now focus on Iman's position in the field in reference to her competitive approach. I specifically focus on her perceptions of the subjugated position of women in relation to her competitive approach. The extract that follows attests to this.

Extract 16. "Let's compete with men"

So what I would say for women is – respect yourself, as a human being not as a woman. You have your right to be. If you are a woman you have the right; God created you – so take yourself, as a person, a human being and work very hard to be a good leader and let's compete with men. We are all the same level. We are not lower than them [...]. I think a woman is like any other human being and she can be a good leader if she is given the chance. The only problem is we have this interference, we have these stereotypes with men saying, *huyu ni mwanamke sio* [meaning] she is a woman after all! What can she do?

Iman seems to have acquired a complex understanding of the position of women in the field. She intimated that femaleness, in and of itself, was a marker of subjugation, acknowledging that gender stereotypes were a serious problem for women. Nonetheless, she suggests that women can compete with men but they need to see themselves as 'human beings' (equal to men) and not as women (subjugated people). Overall one can detect from her account her discontent with the female subjugated position. It is in the context of this logic that her competitive approach has to be understood.

Activist approach

It is evident from her narrative that Iman adopted an activist approach with regard to the rights of female students, specifically the right to continue with their schooling in the face of other demands. The following collection of excerpts illustrates instances that reflect her activist approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Iman's activist approach

- Iman's activism is present in her opposition to parents' interests: "Somebody would come and tell you—I want my daughter to come home over the weekend. I tell them—no, it is not midterm, you know; even Saturday's we have our own program. 'You know I want her to come and help us with housework, you know, that type of thing.'" Elsewhere she said, "The parents would come and say, 'We want the girls at home over the weekend,' but I would say, 'No!' I was very stubborn; I was very strict with them. I told them, 'once you have given the girls to me; it is up to me to do the administration.'"
- Iman's activism is present in her opposition to politicians' interests: "Sometimes I even used to collide with the members of parliament, because them being the people up there, they will come and say, 'Admit this girl for me,' or 'this girl is an orphan, she is not supposed to pay any fees [...].' During the elections they would ask for the girls to go and vote for them. And I told them, 'you can't do that! [...].' And our men, up north—the nomadic, they believe that a woman's place is in the house. So why should a woman tell us this and that."

Iman's activist approach appears to be clearly infused with resistance toward those who threaten the interests of her students. It is evident that the parents and politicians presupposed that she run in their direction, toward their objectives and their interests. But she resisted their interests, which strictly speaking were male interests. For example, the parents' requests for their daughters to go home over the weekends to attend to domestic

duties bespeaks the patriarchal culture that gender-marks domestic work as girls work. Iman developed her disposition to be an activist as a young girl in a field where the welfare and rights of girls are at stake. As a young girl, she learns about the rights of Islamic women and she also profits from the activist practices of her brother in her early life. Her efforts to promote girl education in her community as a member of the Islamic association (as a university scholar) can also be seen to have cultivated her activist disposition. As a principal she resists dominant interests in the struggle for the welfare and rights of her students.

I now focus on Iman's position in the field in relation to her activist approach. Iman is located in a field where the education of girls is not valued. This plugs into the way she positions herself in the field. It becomes clear that in securing the interests of her students she draws on support from various sources. The following extract illustrates her struggle to secure the interests of the students in the school using the justice system.

Extract 17. "The boys were convicted for harbouring the girls"

There was this problem—it was a discipline case involving some of the girls and the neighbouring boys' school. What the boys were doing is that they were renting rooms and then the girls would sneak out and stay with the boys, in fact for a whole week [...]. When I suspended them for two weeks, instead of going home, they would go to those rooms and stay with those boys. So I discovered that problem and [...]. I took them first to the chief's office because it was just next to the school and then I took them to the police station, where they were locked up. It was a big case; it was a court case. The parents were actually against that idea of me going to court, you see, but in the end I succeeded because at least the boys were convicted for harbouring the girls, and they were expelled from their school; and I actually managed to contain the problem [...]. So it was not easy because the parents first of all didn't want me to go court because they didn't want to spoil their names and they didn't want the others to know that their girls had been caught. You see, and for me to succeed I had to convince these parents to accept to go to court [...]. It was not easy. It took me time and there were a lot of temperatures.

As Iman points out, the interests of the parents were not always in harmony with her interests. She described some parents of students at her school as uncooperative when she took some boys to court for cohabiting with her students in boarding rooms outside the

school. On the one hand, the parents had an interest in safeguarding the reputation of their daughters in view of the publicity associated with a court case. Hence the stake for the parents was symbolic. On the other hand, Iman was concerned about securing the rights of the students. She turns to the justice system to help her bring to justice those that threaten the interests of the students.

Below is an extract that sheds light on the way she draws on her social capital to encourage parents to take their girls to school.

Extract 18. "Go and talk to the other women"

We had a women's club in Ukame town and these were women who were educated, even if it means going up to standard six or seven. We had our own club and we used to contribute money then we pay fees for some of the needy girls [...]. They were helpful because when it came to problems in the school, I could talk to those women. It was a way of even talking to the parents through this women, to go and talk to the other women and tell them – let the girls go, take the girls to school, leave them alone, you know, in the school. Let them complete four years of schooling.

Iman's caring approach is oriented towards promoting girl education in her province. As is shown in her account, she networked with other women in her community to raise funds for poor girls to pursue education in her school. Apart from that she seems to have utilised this network to mobilise community members to not only take their daughters to school but also to allow them to complete secondary education. It is clear that she uses her social capital, comprising her network with community women to promote girl education. To make sense of this mission, one has to take into account the cultural dispositions of the community members with respect to girl education. The following extract is provided in illustration:

Extract 19. "I am just looking around to see if I can get a bride here"

When you look at the people we had there, they didn't understand why, girls should go to school. They didn't understand. In the middle of a class, you'd see [...] an old man coming to say, "Oh – I am just looking around to see if I can get a bride here." You know that type of mentality. They didn't understand what a

school was. It was very hard to make them understand that this is a school with rules and regulations.

Iman recalls an incident in which an old man strolled into her school in search of a bride. The implication here is that girls were seen as future brides for men. Thus the cultural dispositions of the community members seem to be defined by a reverence for male interests. Iman believes that girls should not fall prey to such male interests and resists them.

Strict approach

It is evident from her narrative that Iman adopted a strict approach. I present a collection of excerpts, derived from her narrative, that show instances that reflect her strict approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Iman's strict approach

She spoke of: (1) her strict adherence to rules: "I tried not to be very stubborn but I was a bit strict actually when it came to administration [...], rules have to be followed. I made sure that I was not lenient." (2) Her emphasis on discipline in relation to the students' academic performance: "if the students were not disciplined, then we could not improve their academic work." (3) Her emphasis on rote learning of the rules: "the rules is what they [students] have to follow, they have to know the rules by heart. So that is how we were checking on them." (4) Her no-nonsense approach: "You see you have to be very strong and you have to tell—like the students you tell them all the school rules and you don't entertain any nonsense." (5) Instilling fear and respect: "and you should be the type of person that can shout at students and tell them this is wrong, you see. They will fear you; in fact they will fear you and they will respect you." (6) Her emphasis on physical punishment: "I used to cane them [...]. I believe sometimes you have to use corporal punishment to discipline these students."

Iman's strict approach can be discerned in the way she puts emphasis on strict adherence to school rules and her enforcement of punishments for rule breakers. She implies that physical punishment, such as beating with a cane, is a feature of her way of disciplining students. Her focus on strict discipline also appears to be her staple for the academic achievement diet of the students. Her approach to discipline is distinguished in her

emphasis that rules were mandatory, if the students were to respect her. Iman's familiarity with strict discipline was acquired from her mother's strict disciplinary approach. This learning also underpins her life as a mother as she implied that she adopted her mother's strict disciplinary approach towards her own children. It is hardly surprising that she adopts a strict approach as a principal.

Iman's position in the field in relation to her strict approach is the subject that I now turn to. The field in which she actualises her strict approach is characterised by patriarchal interests. Some of these interests are evident in the extract that follows.

Extract 20. "She doesn't respect us men"

I remember one time when I was very pregnant [...]; my brother who was now the PEO came to my house because there was a discipline problem. I had suspended a girl and the mother went to his house and cried about it [...]. He came with her to plead with me now to allow the girl to go back to school [...]. I told my brother, "Even if you are my brother and you are the PEO, rules still have to be followed." And the father [of the suspended girl said], "You see, even you as her brother, she doesn't respect you, she doesn't respect us men, and this is not what a woman is supposed to do."

As Iman explains, some parents, unhappy with her decision to suspend their daughter, asked her brother who was the Provincial Education Officer to tell her to rescind her decision. There seems to have been an assumption that if a dominant male asked her to rescind her decision then she would do it. Furthermore, she acknowledges that she was pregnant at the time and this is a condition that may have been associated with weakness or vulnerability. Iman defied her brother's request to rescind her decision and readmit the suspended student and we see that the father of the suspended student is left bewildered: "She doesn't respect us men, and this is not what a woman is supposed to do." It is clear that Iman was being placed in a subjugated position relative to men in the field. By standing firm on her decision to suspend the student, Iman was thus seen to have defied male authority. But this defiance is what places her in a dominant position in the field.

Caring approach

Iman adopted a caring approach toward needy students in her school. The following collection of excerpts, derived from her narrative, provide illustrative instances that reflect her caring approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Iman's caring approach

Iman's caring approach is visible in the following instances:

(1) Her concern for her students' gender related problems: "You would see a very bright girl, she wants to complete her education and she is taken out of school. It used to affect me so much; she's married off to an old man, which used to affect me a lot." She also intervenes to help out students facing gender related problems: "Some girls would be free with me and come and tell me, 'Mwalimu [teacher] I have this problem, my father wants to marry me off'. And I would intervene." She said that she intervened by reporting the matter to the DEO (District Education Officer).

(2) Her motherly relationship to the students: "I had a sort of motherly relationship with the girls, you know. I used to treat them like my own girls so much. [...]. I used to support them."

(3) Her financial support for students: "In fact I used to support many girls with my own money because even when it comes to buying soap they don't have it." She spoke of retaining non-fee paying girls in her school: "I had to allow them [needy students] to stay for the whole term and maybe look for bursaries."

(4) Her sympathy for the students: "some of them come from poor families and a lot of problems you know in terms of fees, actually when it comes to that; I used to feel so bad."

Iman's caring approach for needy students stands out clearly in her concern for their welfare. As a young girl she learned about caring for the deprived from her mother and as a university scholar she spoke of helping needy community members. It is therefore understandable that as a principal she adopts a caring approach for the needy students in her school.

I now focus on her position in the field in relation to her caring approach. The students in her school are clearly disadvantaged by their poor family backgrounds and this affects the economic capital of the school. The extract that follows is instructive.

Extract 21. “Three quarters of those girls are from needy families”

There is a time I just decided I should quit and my husband was working on this side [of the country], and I just told him [...], I am fed up of being a head. You know [there were] a lot of issues that you cannot solve [...] fees – have not been paid by the students and [yet] you have to feed them. There are electricity bills, the telephone bills – how do you run the school with all these problems, and then pressure from the community, also the leaders – you see you ask yourself: what are you doing, especially when you have worked for long. And you look at the girls – these are innocent girls, you want to help them but I do not have the funds. You get frustrated especially in my province. Three quarters of those girls are from needy families; nobody pays fees, so how do you run the school. And the grant [that] was coming [...] was little money coming from the ministry. And the PTA is not like the ones here [in Nairobi that organise] fundraisings - harambee. There to even organize a harambee will take a whole year. Even if you prepare you know those tickets and those books to sell most of the people there are nomads—they will tell you, “Oh the rains failed, so we don’t have any money”. Even if they have animals they have no market.

The struggle that Iman goes through has to do with the low economic capital of the parents of her school. She says that the problem becomes most acute when three quarters of the parents fail to pay fees. Her struggle also takes place in a field where the grant given by the ministry of education was too small to have any impact on her school. It is apparent that she was running a school amid difficult economic constraints. In view of these economic difficulties, she implies that the students in her school are vulnerable. Her response to the students disempowered position blend caring and frustration. Clearly she does not like the predicament of her students.

Summary

The chapter has provided an analysis of Iman’s narrative in an endeavor to gain insights into the factors that shape her leadership practices. The analysis of her narrative, presented demonstrates that:

1. She adopts an achievement-oriented approach manifest in her strong desire for her students to succeed. She also came under pressure from community members to succeed. As a young girl she learned to be success-driven from male figures that occupied dominant positions in society.

2. Her competitive approach is gendered. She is not content with the subjugated position of women in society. She became familiar with gendered competitiveness as a young girl.
3. Her resistance to the patriarchal interests of parents and politicians characterizes her activist approach. She deploys this approach to protect the interests of her students. She acquired an activist disposition as a young girl from a religious leader and her brother and her activist activities as a university student.
4. She adopts a strict approach characterized by strict enforcement of rules in her school. She opposes field members that resist her efforts to enforce school rules. Her familiarity with strictness was gained from her mother.
5. She emerges as a caring leader with regard to the marginal students in her school. She learned to care for the disadvantaged from her mother and later on she supported disadvantaged community members as a university student.

There was a fury of competing interests of politicians, parents and community members in Iman's school. Some of these interests were patriarchal by nature and threatened girl education in her school. In challenging these competing interests Iman utilizes her cultural capital (leadership dispositions) and social capital (social networks). Due to the poverty of the parents in her school, her school had low economic capital making it challenging for her to run the school and this affected her emotional well-being as well.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS OF TUMAINI'S NARRATIVE

Introduction

The central concern of this chapter is to analyse the narrative of Tumaini around the factors that shape her leadership approaches. As in the previous two chapters, the analytical framework outlined in chapter four guides the analysis of her narrative. I first of all provide an introduction of Tumaini and her school. Thereafter I provide a discussion of her leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences as a young girl, teacher and principal. Finally I discuss the relationship between her leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions and position in the field.

Who is Tumaini?

Tumaini, 49 years of age, grew up on a farm in a rural area. Her mother was a housewife and farmer while her father was a teacher. Both her parents had primary education. She attended a co-educational primary school and thereafter entered a girls' high school. After completing secondary education, she joined a teacher training college and obtained a Diploma in Education. Then she began teaching. During this time she got married but some years later her husband died. Before becoming a principal, she had served as a deputy principal for six years and head of department for three years. By the time of the interview, she had served as a principal for six years. Her highest professional qualification is Approved Graduate Teacher I.

Mapping the field: Tumaini's school

Tumaini's school is located in an urban slum. The school neighbours are thus slum dwellers. While some of these community members are appreciative of the school, others consider it to have taken too much land. The school environs are prone to flooding during the rainy season due to the black cotton soil in the area and this is exacerbated by the lack of drainage facilities in the area. This is especially problematic, as the road leading to the school is not tarmacked.

The school was initially established as a co-educational school and later converted into a girls' school. The school is thus important for the girls in the slum area. The majority of these girls are from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The slum is located in the deep hinterland of an industrial area. Thus parents living in the larger urban town (outside the slum) are reluctant to bring their children to this school as it is situated in an isolated area. This explains why the school has a current enrolment of only 40 girls. It also has thirteen teachers, of whom three are male and ten are female.

Tumaini's leadership dispositions

My aim in this section is to discern Tumaini's leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences as a young girl and teacher. Four of her leadership dispositions are discussed, namely: her survival-oriented disposition, assertive disposition, counselling disposition, and caring disposition. Later in the chapter, I will track her leadership practices from these leadership dispositions.

Survival-oriented disposition

Tumaini's narrative brings to the fore her survival-oriented disposition. Three extracts from her narrative are illustrative.

Extract 21. "I remember one day, we were marooned – water surrounding the house"

In our place there were floods. I remember one day, we were marooned – water surrounding the house. Our homestead was raised but the other homesteads were being submerged. So everybody was coming to our home. You know in our tradition everybody lives at the grandfather's place; so two of my uncles had moved out; the elder ones, they had now to come back [...]; the rest [of us] were still at our grandfather's place. And it [house] was [built on] raised [land] but the two [uncles] were in the lower [lands], so they had to come. I can remember that incident, you know like one of the children was shouting across [...] the river, not even a river, this is not a river this is now a flood! The two homes have been separated with a flood. And I can remember us being given very funny samaki [fish] from abroad. It was bad. And that's [...] the first time we ate the yellow maize.

Tumaini recounted that her most memorable childhood experience was that of surviving floods. In this account, she recalls three things that imply that survival was at stake here. First, she recalls that floodwaters surrounded her early homestead since it was built on slightly higher ground. Second, she recalls that their homestead offered refuge to her relatives whose homesteads had been submerged in the floods. Third, she recalls that they received food aid following these floods. Overall, her account emphasises that they survived the floods. This early historical moment of surviving harsh living conditions can be said to have engendered her survival-oriented disposition. In the next extract, Tumaini spoke about the economic hardships she faced as a young girl.

Extract 22. "We have to work for us to raise the fees"

No. I never used to spend time outside the family. From school – home, from home – school! You know we are a big family and [for] our family to keep us going – holiday was a working holiday. No visiting because he [father] said we have to work for us to raise the fees. And he [father] was the only breadwinner and he managed to educate us all.

Tumaini emphasised that her early life was devoted to schooling and working during the school holidays. It is clear that her early family faced economic hardships and hence she had to work during the school holidays to help her father raise school fees. This very specific experience is indicative of a more general resilience in dealing with challenges that is evident in her description of her later experience as a teacher, as the following extract suggests.

Extract 23. "You are the only one in the province (laughs) who can survive in that area"

The PDE told me "We are taking you to Majengo girls. Your services are needed there and we have been told that you are the only one in the province (laughs) who can survive in that area [...]." Which means people had seen my qualities? So here I am up to date; I am here (laughs) surviving in this hardship area [...]. So the people [community members] were told, "We have brought you a head teacher, now that you refused the other one; we hope this one, you will work with." If I take you around there was nothing in this school, even the chair I was sitting on was borrowed. But the students were there in home clothes, picked from all over [...]. I think the desks were borrowed from somewhere; and there were a few chairs [...]; so I looked at the place, I said my God! Believe you me, that time

you have already balanced on stones through some dirty water on the road to reach here.

Tumaini recalls that when she was selected by the Provincial Director of Education (PDE) to become a principal of a slum-based school she was made to understand that she could 'survive' in this school. What issues in the school necessitated 'survival'? According to Tumaini, the school lacked basic facilities such as chairs and desks. School uniforms for the students were non-existent. Furthermore, the school was partially inaccessible. In addition, members of the community had rejected the previous principal. Tumaini was thus expected to head a school that had a hostile environment and it seems that the educational officials encouraged her to take on the challenge and literally 'survive' in the school. I argue that this encouragement by male officials holding positions of power fed her a disposition to survive.

Assertive disposition

Tumaini's account of her early family and career experiences renders visible her assertive disposition. To illustrate this I present two extracts from her narrative. In the extract below, she talks about her early family experience:

Extract 24. "My father brought me up as a boy"

Okay as a child, I was a fourth born in our family and second girl, but I don't know what happened, somehow my father expected a boy instead of a girl. I don't know. Because when I start to look at my life, though I was a girl my father brought me up as a boy [...]. Yah – and my mother expected me to do the girl business. So most of the time I was doing both [gender roles]; in fact there could be a fight over me because here is my father [who used to say] go and do this, this and that; [then] my mother comes [and tells my father], "You have your boys why are you taking my girls." So I ended up doing both [gendered] jobs [...]. I ended up growing up more like a boy than a girl. So like my girl duties were rough; secondly I was growing too fast. I was bigger than the people [siblings]. I was following [...], so somehow I didn't have playmates. So I ended doing more [...]. I became commanding. You know when you are big, within your age mates and you tend to do a lot than them, you end up being a leader. So from primary [school days] I was a leader; [in] secondary [school], I was a prefect.

Tumaini provides an account of how her father compelled her to fulfil male gender roles as a young girl, yet at the same time, her mother made her perform female gendered tasks. Bourdieu (1977) tells us the relationships with the mother and father constitute opportunities to internalise, inseparably, the schemes of the sexual division of labour and of the division of sexual labour. Tumaini acknowledges that she ended up taking on both male and female gendered roles, but felt that she was more inclined toward male gendered roles (“I ended up growing up more like a boy than a girl”). Moreover, she recalls that being larger in her body frame than her older siblings and age-mates meant that she could handle additional responsibilities. These early experiences can be said to have equipped her with an assertive disposition (“I became commanding”). The following extract also brings to light her assertive disposition as a teacher.

Extract 25. “I was usually vocal”

Okay, in most staff meetings, I was usually vocal, I don’t know. So sometimes the head will always ask, “Tumaini, what do you say about this?” If I am quiet, they will wonder why: “Tumaini you are not contributing today? Give us your opinion!” (Laughs) Something like that; at least I don’t believe in keeping quiet.

Tumaini recalls that she was vocal as a teacher. She remembers that she was often called upon to give her opinion. Her account implies that her input became valued. This placed her in a dominant position in the staff meetings. Indeed, she says that if she was quiet then the other teachers wondered what was amiss. Thus, her experience as an outspoken or vocal teacher contributed to the development of her assertive disposition.

Counselling disposition

Tumaini’s counselling disposition can be discerned in her narrative. The extract that follows is illustrative:

Extract 26. “She was a good counsellor”

I can’t reach my mother’s standards (laughs), that one was good. More on the church things, she knew her bible well, she knew. What I mean is she was a good counsellor; this guidance and counselling—she could handle superb. I can’t reach

her, ah-ah! I don't know. She was so good in counselling women and even men. They would come. She would go when she hears that there's a problem in a certain house, she'll take her bible, go and pray with them, sit them down, give them counselling.

In this account Tumaini tell us that her mother was a good counsellor. She remembers that her mother used a Christian approach to counsel community members. She admits that she could not possibly attain her mother's standards of counselling. Her daily contact with a parent who was a counsellor provided her with familiarity with counselling. This experience can be seen to have nurtured her counselling disposition. Her experience as a teacher also provides her with an experience that nurtured her counselling dispositions as the following extract suggests:

Extract 27. "The teaching career prepares you"

The teaching career prepares you because with the teaching career you deal with pupils. You have to learn to understand character, difficult ones [and] easy ones and so on and somehow to deal with the public; teaching career prepares you a lot. I think even if I am taken to an office I will handle the public better than somebody who has been in the office without a teaching career. I think it helps a lot. It also removes some hardness from us. You are able to have an able judgment.

Tumaini acknowledges the impact of her teaching career in removing the element of rigidity ("hardness") in her. She maintains that her teaching experience gave her the opportunity to resolve diverse issues not only among students but also with members of the public. Her focus on understanding the character of individuals can be said to have cultivated her counselling skills.

Caring disposition

Tumaini's narrative indicates that she developed a caring disposition as a young girl and as a teacher. Her experience of caring her father was important in this regard. The following extract is demonstrative:

Extract 28. “My father is sick and I am doing so much at home, I will not make it”

When I was made a prefect, I declined that prefectship because that year (pause) why did I decline—I went and talked to the teacher, my father was sick, we had the problem with the bank. I was the eldest in the family by that time, as the rest [older siblings] were in [boarding] secondary schools. I was in class seven, so I had a lot of responsibility at home. So I went and told the teacher, “If you give me this work now, you know my father is sick and I am doing so much at home, I will not make it.” Then he looked at me and said, ‘*Wache tu wache huyu* [let’s leave this one]; something like that. So when I went to secondary [school], I was made a prefect, a dormitory prefect, in form three, and there, I coped!

Tumaini recalls that her decision to decline a position of leadership during her early schooling years were due to the responsibility she bore for caring for her ailing father. Her elder siblings were in boarding school at the time. She willingly accepted this responsibility, as well as the responsibility of helping to support her younger siblings, as the following extract suggests:

Extract 29. “We had to support our father paying fees for the younger ones”

Because I was an S1 [diploma holder], I wanted to go to the university. The problem I had was my family background; we had to support our father paying fees for the younger ones [...]. I tried applying; in fact it was so difficult. Otherwise my main aim was to stay in the field for two years, then join the university.

In view of her family’s socio-economic background, Tumaini implies that the personal sacrifice of postponing her further studies was necessary so that she could assist her father with funds to educate her younger siblings. This sense of personal sacrifice resonates with her sacrifice to give up leadership to care for her ailing father as is indicated in the earlier extract.

Analysis of the factors that shape Tumaini’s leadership approaches

Thus far I have discussed Tumaini’s leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences acquired as a young girl and teacher. This section analyses the correspondences between the leadership approaches that Tumaini adopted later, when she

was a principal, and her leadership dispositions and position in the field. This section is organised as follows. First of all, I unpack each of Tumaini's leadership approaches on the basis of her experiences as a principal. I then proceed to discuss the correspondence between these leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions including the way her leadership approaches are patterned by her position in the field. The leadership approaches of Tumaini discussed in this section include her: survival-oriented approach, assertive approach, counselling approach and caring approach.

Survival-oriented approach

From her narrative, Tumaini can be viewed as a survival-oriented leader. The collection of excerpts that follow illustrate her survival-oriented approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Tumaini's survival oriented approach

- Tumaini spoke about her determination to make her school accessible in the wake of flooding: "This swamp [points] used to be a river of sewage—it used to be a permanent blocked sewage, there was no bridge. You had to balance on stones [...]; twice I fell in the sewage water [...]. I contracted some people to pour a lot of black cotton soil to block the water so that the water would not flow into the school."
- She also led by example: "Like if it has just rained, it floods [...]; I learnt early on to put on my gumboots [...]. I have to find a way [...], so when the teachers see I've gone they come with their rubber shoes, they follow me. So somehow you are dealing with it by example."

Tumaini's story is one of survival. Her survival-oriented approach prevails in her battle with floods in the school. She demonstrates how she led-by-example, by walking to school through the floods in gumboots, so that her teachers would follow suit. Her survival-oriented approach and disposition agree on the same fundamental logic in that they are brought to fruition in a harsh environment. As a teacher she received encouragement by dominant males to 'survive' prior to her appointment as a principal of a slum-based school. Similarly, as a young girl her familiarity with survival in difficult living conditions is clearly evident. These experiences seem to prepare her to adopt a survival-oriented approach when confronted by harsh conditions in the school.

I now focus on Tumaini's survival-oriented approach in relation to her position in the field. It is apparent that the low economic capital of the school and her low social capital needed to access to economic capital places her in a weak position in the field but even then she manages to overcome this challenge as the following extracts illustrate:

Extract 30. "I was thrown in jail"

So we didn't have toilets. We had pit latrines, which were almost collapsing. So now the health people came. The parents were given one month to put up a toilet. We had no money. When we couldn't we were taken to court. This is another emotional part. The chairman BOG [Board of Governors] did not understand. To him I am the cause of all these problems. Imagine even when we were called to court, he refused to turn up in court. I was thrown in jail for failure to comply with the health act. I was thrown in jail for my first time; to be thrown in jail – it's because of a school toilet not because I have stolen. And the chairman doesn't want to listen. He doesn't want; he never stepped in the court even a single day. The chairman [of the] PTA used to come but not the chairman [of the] BOG [...]. I had to pay Kshs. 5000/= [bail fee]. And you know where the money had to come from—my pocket. The school had no money.

Extract 31. "I begged and begged"

So for the building materials we begged from one place to another [...]; because you see building toilets was not that easy. Until you joined them to the sewage well, it is not easy. It's expensive. Those toilets cost what you can use for a house [...]. I sweated but I managed and I felt I have achieved. The day I finished I felt something. I begged and begged and begged until the last minute I had achieved and succeeded.

Tumaini recalled that health inspectors had given her an ultimatum: to build school toilets within a month. When she could not do this on account of a lack of funds she was thrown in jail for failing to comply with the health act. The low economic capital of the school made it difficult for her to meet the most basic needs of the students and this put her in conflict with the health ministry. However she solicited donations to pay for the school toilets and so triumphed over adversity. She was clearly delighted with her achievement. In the next extract she tells us that she lacked the networks needed to access grants for her school.

Extract 32. "I felt if I was a man, I would have gotten more for this school"

Being a woman, there are things, which you find you can't [do]. You could find that a man will go with another man (education official), they sit, talk, he buys him drinks and then he liases on how his school will be handled; while you as a woman will not go to that extent, you will just go to that man in the office—say that problem there in the office and leave, full stop. Then it is ignored. But the man would have gone an extra step. I think there are some things, which I felt if I was a man, I would have gotten more for this school, and I did not get. Because I remember there is a time, I went to Jogoo house [ministry of education] [and] I met another head from the school; he was in another office that issues education grants and he got a lot of those funds. But I don't think they just talked in that office and stopped there. I think he was told, you apply the same way – the way I did; but he got the grant and we are both in the same province; my school was more needy than his.

Tumaini tells us that male principals were able to network with educational officials in the evenings and thereby access grants for their schools. This form of social capital is reminiscent of the 'boys' networks' that men use to access profits in the field. Given that Tumaini could not apprehend the social capital in question, her position in the field can be said to be weak. Without this social capital, she is conscious that she could not access the much-needed economic capital for her school.

Assertive approach

Tumaini's narrative indicates that she adopted an assertive approach. The following collection of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrate instances of practice that reflect her assertive approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Tumaini's assertive approach

Her assertive approach is visible:

(1) When initiating change in the school: "Like I remember we had to dictate this idea of having two teachers on duty [...]; they [teachers] didn't like it because it will mean being on duty several times in a term. We said - no way, we had to dictate that one (laughs)."

(2) When handling difficult teachers: "I think you saw her, the one who was limping; she is very difficult and also sickly [...]. I just shout at her and fume a little [...]; most of the time when she is difficult I just shout at her."

(3) When confronted with a conflict of interests: "You saw it, here are people pushing people to me and there's a decision to be made—each way looks bad—you get it! [...]. So you have to weigh and you have to dictate."

(4) When handling difficult community members: "Like now I want to insist on that taka-taka [rubbish] getting out of there; you have seen the taka-taka [rubbish] at the gate [...]. I'll have to involve people here. I'll have to be harsh, that week; I'll not be friendly with anybody."

(5) In her administrative work: "Being a head I made it through [thick and] thin because I don't know how to be a dictator and being in administration you have to dictate."

Tumaini's assertive approach is visible in the way she effects change, handles difficult field members and tackles difficult decisions. Her words "no way," "we have to dictate," "I shout at her," "I'll have to be harsh" all imply that her approach is threatening and forceful. She establishes her dominance by adopting an assertive approach. The interplay of assertiveness and dominance is visible in both her assertive approach adopted as a principal and her assertive disposition acquired as a young girl and developed later on as a teacher. She learned to be assertive from her father who imposed masculine roles on her as a young girl. As a teacher she was outspoken in staff meetings.

I turn to Tumaini's position in the field in reference to her assertive approach. She secures her position by deploying an assertive approach in dealing with those who challenge her as the following extract illustrates:

Extract 33. "If I am in a government school, what is my role?"

So when I reached here [the school] I found this lady called—Mrs. Pendo. This Mrs. Pendo had already gone to the PC and the PDE, to say that she was ready to sponsor the school and she was talking of millions of shillings and these men were good at listening to millions of shillings by mouth [...]. I found these volunteer teachers from the slums were collecting money from the girls; this money was being given to her in the name that she is going to sponsor the girls with everything [...]. I started collecting [fees], she was not amused [...]. I also insisted on being told, if she is a sponsor, what is her role? Am I in a private school or a government school and if I am in a government school, what is my role? The unfortunate part is that the old PDE left; a new PDE was brought in. The new PDE told her, "First and foremost this is a government school, which must be run under government policies. You are a sponsor. Sponsors are supposed to give aid to the school, not to run the school [...]." The PDE called all the

village elders [and said], “Today I am here to tell you the function of this school; this is a community school which is also a government school and this is how it has to be run.” The DO insisted the he was the one chairing that meeting. He was told – no, officially you can’t chair this meeting. You are an ex-officio [member]. In the absence of a chairman of the BOG, the only person who can chair this meeting is a PDE representative and nobody else. So I am the one chairing this meeting. You are in attendance.” The DO said, “If I am not chairing the meeting, I am not attending.” And he walked off! The lady remained alone. She was told – if you have to sponsor the school, this is what you have to follow. She refused – she walked off! That was the last time I saw her.

Tumaini talked at length about her struggle to assert herself as a new principal in her school. As Gunter (2001) points out, the first year of headship involves positioning of and by the head teacher and this sometimes leads to isolation and distance. Tumaini recalls that she was up against a ‘sponsor’ who was highly ‘connected’ to powerful public officials. On this basis, the sponsor can be seen to have had considerable social capital. Tumaini asserted herself and liased with supportive education officials to get rid of the ‘sponsor’ in a volatile meeting that saw a DO (District Officer) storm out on learning that he could not chair the meeting. This account highlights the reality of power dynamics in the field, which stood to threaten Tumaini’s position if she had not been assertive. Her use of an assertive approach can be seen as an entry fee that she pays to enter the field and play the game. In the next extract, she talks about her resistance to the government tendering policy.

Extract 34. “At the moment I am going against the government policy of tendering”

Before I thought I would run [this school] like other schools by tendering. The first person I gave a tender to bring me exercise books—he charged me Kshs. 4000/=. I can buy the same books at Kshs. 2200/= or Kshs. 2300/= sometimes at Kshs. 1800/= per carton. So what do I do? What the tenderer can give me at Kshs. 4000/=: I can get at Kshs. 2000/=. At the moment I am going against the government policy of tendering [...]; it is not practical. Fortunately there is a policy that allows me to spend below Kshs. 35000/=. When I am only spending Kshs. 10000/= [...], that one covers me. Anything beyond Kshs. 35000/= I have to tender [...], and when you tender it you have to pay more because the supplier will bring, they will charge you for that transport. They will charge you for the delay in giving that cheque and whatever. Sometimes they will give you the highest market price because they will have to cater for when the times are hard and when the times are busy. While here I will buy at the market price of that time

and the transport I pay only 30 bob [...]. The only thing which I get from outside is firewood [...]. I don't also tender. I ring somebody with a bargain [...]. I asked schools, those who tender—they get it [firewood] at Kshs. 15000/= for a seven ton lorry. Me I get it at Kshs. 9000/= [...]; so there I differ with other schools.

Tumaini rejects the government tendering rules, as they require the school to pay high prices and leave no room for bargain deals. She explains how she takes the liberty of making her school purchases from local sources where she gets fair prices and does not incur high transport costs. It is clear that she considers the government tendering system to be rigid as it works against bargain deals that would benefit a school with low economic capital. Her decision to reject what she considers to be 'unworkable' government rules reinforces the idea that when her interests are threatened she takes up an assertive stance.

Counselling approach

Tumaini's narrative indicates that she adopted a counselling approach. The following collection of excerpts illustrates her counselling approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Tumaini's counselling approach

Tumaini's counselling approach is visible in:

- (1) Her belief that counselling is an important aspect of leadership: "Administration in a slum school (pause) is not just by the book. It's by the book, by the head, by the heart, all your emotions, all your resources; you do more guidance and counselling than teaching.
- (2) Her counselling of students on gender and sexuality issues: "Over assemblies we have a group who come here once a week; this counselling group talks about pregnancy, AIDS [...], because when you deal with students from the slum [...]; they are very, very weak so far as morality is concerned."
- (3) Her handling of moral issues: "It was bad last week; we had to rescue one [student] from the police after her parents took her to the police for sleeping out [...]; the parents were angry. So we applied to the police to release her." Following this incident, she said, "So now we are going under guidance and counselling trying to find out, how much damage has been done—it's bad, morality here is bad."
- (4) Her handling of difficult teachers: "So far the most difficult teachers I have had were three. Three of them - one we have tried guidance and counselling and it seems to be working."

Tumaini's counselling approach is evident in the way she handles gendered issues and problems, which take a variety of forms ranging from HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, prostitution and pre-marital sex among her students. She gained familiarity with counselling from her mother as a young girl. As a teacher she also handled diverse students by focusing on their personal qualities. These early experiences are inscribed in her counselling disposition.

In deploying a counselling approach, Tumaini is positioned by the gendered dynamics in the lives of the students in her school. The following extract is presented in illustration.

Extract 35. "So that was the dowry for my sister"

She's [a student] crying, because in form three, no fee is coming, so we had to put [sit] her down [and ask her], "Why is your brother-in-law who was paying your fees [not paying]. So she cried, we talked, talked, [and] counseled her. Then she tells us, "You see we agreed with my father that he [brother-in-law] was going to pay fees [as] the dowry for my sister. So when I reached form two, he said he has paid enough [the dowry]. He is not paying any more, so I don't have any fees. [...] Because you keep on sending her home, she comes without [fees] you see you have to put her down and ask her: "can you tell us what is the problem? Who do you stay with? Where is your father? What is this [problem]? What does your sister do?" You see this is now counseling. [...] [Then] you just tell them [her and her family members], you have to keep on raising [the fees] little by little. So like now if the sister gets some money, she brings – from little business here and there.

Tumaini recalls that in her school there was a girl whose fees were being paid by her brother-in-law in return for her sister's hand in marriage. This arrangement had been made with the blessing of the girl's father. It appears that the father had commodified one of his daughters to raise fees for the other. The advantage of deploying a counselling approach is that Tumaini is able to grasp the economic hardship facing the student in question. Using this knowledge she stops sending the girl home for fees and encourages the family members to pay the fees in small instalments as the money becomes available. To safeguard the interests of students such as these, Tumaini's counselling approach appears to be fruitful.

Caring approach

It is evident from her narrative, that Tumaini adopted a caring approach. This is illustrated in the instances listed below.

Instances of practice that reflect Tumaini's caring approach

- (1) Tumaini recalls helping a guardian of needy students: "He can't buy the uniform. He can't even pay the fees [...]. I gave him a letter to go to J uniform shop, so if they can help [donate] the girl with the uniform; so he has been given the uniform."
- (2) She spoke of not sending students home for school fees: "Like I dare not chase these girls away for school fees. I dare not do it twice; you will find some in the houses [brothels] here [...], in sex (pause) I dare not."
- (3) She said that she allowed school fee payment by instalments: "So like now if the sister of this student gets some money from little business here and there, she brings."
- (4) With respect to HIV positive students, she commented: "Right now here is risk, knowing a few of them live with HIV, but you still accept them in school and believe tomorrow we will move forward."

Tumaini adopts a caring approach toward marginal students. She is sensitive to the plight of financially handicapped students and the plight of HIV positive students in her school. Her sensitivity to the plight of those in need is visible in both her caring approach as a principal and her caring disposition acquired as a young girl and developed later as a teacher. Very early in her life, she sacrificed a position of leadership to take care of her ailing father and later on as a teacher she sacrificed her ambition to further her education in order to help him pay fees for her younger siblings.

Her caring approach can also be related to her position in the field. The students in her school face difficult economic and gendered constraints that range from financial difficulties, early marriages, being exposed to brothels, and insensitive parents. Tumaini deploys a caring approach to safeguard the interests of her students in relation to these conditions. The extract that follows is illustrative.

Extract 36. "If I chase her, I will condemn her to this [slum] life forever"

The nature of the children I am dealing with are – a child who cannot even study at home, a child who didn't even get supper, a child who slept in a boyfriend's house the whole night. Are you getting the point? The other day a child was dozing here all the time, sleeping – that's when we discovered that the girl was sleeping in her boyfriend's house [...]. Each situation differs because I know if that girl were in Jambo girls' school she would have been chased away [suspended]. If I chase her I will condemn her to this [slum] life forever, isn't it? So you see the situation differs. The student in a good school is suspended straight away for two weeks suspension. Here I can't suspend [...]. So you can't say I will administer in the same way as other schools. I know if I went to a good school where I know, if I'm to suspend a student the parents are going to take care of the girl I will suspend. Here you suspend a student, the parent's then chase the girl – she will go to the boyfriend forever. The man will just have another wife and maybe he has another wife at home [rural home]. Yes, some of them have wives at home. So you suspend that child – you are giving that one a second wife. Then they move from here to another slum – they will not stay here.

Tumaini indicates that part of her job, as the principal of the school, is to support students and protect them from the negative effects of their social and economic environment. She for instance says that she cannot use conventional procedures to suspend undisciplined students, as their parents are likely to chase them out of their homes, which is a recipe for early marriages. The different threats to boys and girls in this environment are explored further in the following extract.

Extract 37. "If a girl is chased away for fees, it's not as bad as if a boy is chased for fees"

You find that when my girls are out here the way the society handles them is quite different from the way they handle boys [...]. You might even find a father here – who'd pay fees for the boy first [...], mothers do the same. To them a boy loitering around here will smoke bhang. A girl they can contain in the house; so even if a girl is chased away for fees, it's not as bad as if a boy is chased for fees [...]. They tell me, "Mwalimu [teacher] you know if these boys, if they are in the house they will start smoking Bhang [...], so we have to make sure their fees is paid [...], the girl we can control [...], she can train as a tailor. Somehow people have the mentality that those girls can behave maturely when left loose than the boys, I don't know why.

Thus girls in Tumaini's school community are perceived to be at less risk than boys as they can be controlled; better still they can take 'suitable' courses such as tailoring. These community beliefs offer a fine illustration of taken for granted patriarchal beliefs justified with 'commonsense' observations. Tumaini's desire to support her students is thus framed against a backdrop of a field that does not value girls' education. Her struggle to support girls is illustrated in the extract that follows.

Extract 38. "Imagine I found myself in tears!"

Out of twenty-four girls in form four, only eight of them could [afford to] pay examination fee [...]; as a teacher you have to be emotional [...]. Yah, what could I do? [...]. I went to the PDE [Provincial Director of Education]; he didn't seem to care [...]. I felt so discouraged, then I just got courage and went to Jogoo house [...], then they agreed and paid for the girls. I bought the banker's cheque and took it to the PDE's office. Here I was told that I could not register the school—"you have not paid activity fund." Can you imagine! I have felt bad, but not as bad as that day. Imagine I found myself in tears! You know the way you just feel yourself just crying [...]. Are these my children? Is this my school? [...] I was told *ati* [that] I had failed to collect funds! I should be able to collect fees! Can you believe it? Here is a situation where somebody [a parent/guardian] tells you, Mwalimu [teacher]—I'll be paying 200/= and is it for you to say no? Here is a situation where I had to make food, because without food the girls were not coming back in the afternoon [...]; so that day I was so emotional.

Tumaini recounts here how she struggles to persuade provincial education officials to register students whose fees had not been paid for the national examination. Failure to pay the registration fee for the national examination in Kenya automatically bars a student from sitting for this examination. Her account highlights how the low economic capital of her students weakens her position in the field. It also shows the high emotional cost she seems to bear on account of being placed in such a position. Her caring approach has to be understood within this context. In other contexts, she refuses to work with dominant structures in order to support the parents of her school in view of their low economic capital.

Extract 39. "Some of them don't even know where that bank is"

Because like that Kshs. 700/=, if he [guardian of a student] was going to buy a bankers cheque, how much would he have paid in the bank [...]—Kshs. 600/= to get a bankers cheque of Kshs. 700/= (laughs). So that is one difference. I collect cash unless it is an able parent, that's when you ask for the banker's cheque. You ask them to deposit the money into the account. [But] some of them don't even know where that bank is [...]; and you know banks charge for deposit; so someone paying Kshs. 700/= will have to pay another Kshs. 150/= for deposit.

Tumaini indicates that her school's ability to use banking services is constrained by the low economic capital of the parents of her school. She therefore breaks with conventional procedures to collect fees on a cash basis. In so doing she enables the poor parents in her school to pay fees without incurring bank charges. It is clear that in deploying her caring approach she refuses to work with dominant structures (banks) that have no sympathy for the poor parents of her school.

Summary

The chapter has provided an analysis of Tumaini's narrative in an endeavour to gain insights into the factors that shape her leadership practices. The analysis of her narrative demonstrates that:

1. She adopts a survival-oriented approach that is visible in the way she overcomes the hardship conditions of her school. Her school's low economic capital needed to meet the most basic needs of her students' puts her in a weak position and it is in this context that she works to ensure that her school survives in a hardship setting. Her familiarity with survival is accrued from her exposure to a harsh living environment as a young girl and the encouragement she got from male educational officials to head a slum based school and be survival oriented.
2. She emerges as an assertive leader in the way she effects change and handles difficult teachers and community members of the school. When field members threaten her position or interests she deploys an assertive approach. Her familiarity with assertiveness

was gained from her exposure to masculine roles imposed on her as a young girl and her outspokenness as a teacher.

3. She adopts a counselling approach particularly in the way she handles gendered issues and problems in the school. She deploys this approach to secure the interests of her students. She gained familiarity with counselling from her mother and her experience of dealing with diverse students as a teacher.

4. She emerges as a caring leader, particularly towards marginal students. Her caring approach is a response to the economic and gendered constraints affecting her students. Her familiarity with caring is acquired from her experiences of caring for her ailing father as a young girl and supporting him financially as a teacher.

A number of features of Tumaini's positioning in the field have emerged in this analysis. First, the interests of community members and educational officials were not in harmony with Tumaini's interests. Second, the parents were poor and this presented difficulties for the economic capital of the school. The struggle that Tumaini endures to counter competing interests and run the school with little economic capital and social capital needed to access funds, positions her in a subordinate position in the field. This struggle impacts on her emotional well-being and the leadership approaches she adopts.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ANALYSIS OF FURAHA'S NARRATIVE

Introduction

In this chapter, I use the analytical framework outlined in chapter four to gain insight into the social factors that shape Furaha's leadership approaches. I first introduce Furaha and her school. I then discuss her leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences as a young girl and teacher. Finally I discuss the relationship between her leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions and position in the field.

Who is Furaha?

Furaha is 46 years of age. She grew up in an urban area. Her father was a teacher and her mother a housewife. Her mother had high school education and her father was university educated. She attended a co-educational primary school. After primary school she attended a girls' high school. Thereafter, she was accepted in the university where she pursued a Bachelor of Education degree after which she became a teacher in a slum-based school. While teaching, she got married. She also became a deputy principal and served in this position for five years. She then moved to another slum based school to take up the position of principal. Her highest professional qualification was Graduate Teacher III. She served as a principal for ten and half years. During her final year as a principal, her husband was killed near her school. Shortly after this, she gave up school principalship. At the time of the interview, she was working for an education association.

Mapping the field: Furaha's school

Furaha's school is a coeducational secondary school that is located in an urban slum. Most of the students in her school are of working class origins though a few of them are from middleclass backgrounds. Some slum dwellers are slightly better off than others in the sense that they own slum dwellings, which they often rent out to other slum dwellers. Her school is affected by the crime that occurs in the neighbouring slum. Furaha and her teachers have occasionally been victims of the slum dwellers' criminal activities on their

way to school. There are very few social amenities in the slum area and this is made worse by the crowded conditions. Furaha's school is thus situated in a location that is characterised by social and economic deprivation. At the time that Furaha was the principal the school had an enrolment of 640 students, of whom 389 were boys and 251 girls. She was in charge of 41 teachers, of whom eight were male and 33 were female.

Furaha's leadership dispositions

In this section I focus on the leadership dispositions emerging from Furaha's lived experiences as a young girl and teacher. Four leadership dispositions are discussed, namely: her assertive disposition, moral disposition, caring disposition and disposition to build support. Later in the chapter, I will relate her leadership practices to these leadership dispositions.

Assertive disposition

In this section I discuss Furaha's assertive disposition and illustrate this discussion with two extracts from her narrative. These accounts give a description of how she developed an assertive disposition as a young girl and as a deputy principal. The extract below captures her early schooling experience:

Extract 1. "Being with boys taught us how to be tough"

I think being with boys taught us how to be tough because you know boys are bullies most of the time. They are the ones who bully you as a girl. For me it taught me how to really toughen and to tell them that, "You know, you may be a boy, but girls can beat boys, don't joke about it." It also taught me about adjustment, when you have two sexes you know boys and girls, because boys tend to be boys; they write letters. So depending on how you treat their letters, then they respect you or they start looking down upon you. So that now prepared me for later life.

Furaha's memories of learning alongside boys are very much about learning to be tough. She recalls that the boys in her school often bullied the girls. She remembers learning two things from this experience: first to be tough and competitive and second to relate to boys in way that earned her their respect. Her assertiveness is founded on this early period of

school life. The extract that follows captures Furaha's assertive disposition as a deputy principal.

Extract 2. "Two teachers left, got transfers in protest"

I remember once the teachers went on strike because of me, yah and what was their grievance? That I am bullying them—telling them to do things! And I didn't think I was bullying; you know, a few times you have to put your foot down. [...]. There was a sit-in and my principal was called; and they said I was bullying them. And the principal said – I would like anyone of you to tell me: "has Furaha asked you to clean her shoes [...]. If she is saying you must go to class, if she is saying you must come early, that is work, so if you are not happy, sorry." Two teachers left got transfers in protest because I think they were behind all this. And these were the teachers who were interviewed with me for the deputy [principal's] job. So you can see the complications [...]; we had been friends and yet they got transfers out of the school; but the principal said, "I will get replacements."

Furaha tells us that as a deputy principal, she was often misunderstood as being a bully, yet she was asserting herself. Her account indicates that to get the teachers to work an assertive approach was necessary. And even if this position seems to be resisted by the teachers, Furaha's adoption of an assertive approach is clearly supported by her (male) principal. This experience no doubt nurtured her assertive disposition.

Moral disposition

Furaha's narrative shows that she acquired a moral disposition as a young girl. The extract that follows captures her early familiarity with a particular moral ethos:

Extract 3. "Growing up as decent women, decent girls"

My mother always told us about growing up as decent women, decent girls; that we had to go to school; we really didn't have a choice. "You have to go to school for you to succeed, if you don't go to school then you will be like a house girl [domestic workers] and or you'd be like the mama [woman] who toils in the shamba [farm] the whole day [...]; if you don't go to school that is the life that you are going to lead," she told us. And that really scared as because we didn't want to be house girls [domestic workers]. We didn't want to toil in the shamba [farm] [...]. And then morals—she always told us that "even that day when you are really ready to get married and you want to bring a boy home, please don't

bring me a footballer or a musician”; [...] so we never got across their path, none of my sisters came up with them.

Furaha recalls that her mother insisted on particular moral values such as hard work and educational achievement and associated these with particular social aspirations. This experience is also significant in providing the young Furaha with moral norms regarding female decency or what decent women ought to be. Her favourite childhood story conveys moral lessons, as the following extract illustrates:

Extract 4. “There was this one story about the devil and the angel”

Favourite story – it was more or less a bible story which was told by my mother [...]; it’s in the bible and there was this one story about the devil and the angel, where she would show us a picture of the heart and a few times there were flowers in the heart, there were birds singing in the heart, there were people clapping and praising, choirs so to speak – so she’d tell us, “That is when your heart is good, you are doing good things, you know. You are kind, you are very good to people and its like that’s when the angel is in you.” And then she would also show us another picture of the heart with somebody very, very dark, with long ears, and a spear and a snake and a rat; all the bad, bad things you know in the heart. And then she’d tell us that, “That is when you are stealing, gossiping, hatching bad plans, [and] saying bad things about people.” You know, so that really struck me. And as a child, a few times when I was doing bad things, now the snake was in my heart and I would want to get it out, by doing the positive things; and when I was really doing nice things, I would be very happy because I’d say now the dove is in my heart, singing; nice flowers too; that has really kept me going even up to now.

Furaha’s favourite story of the devil and the angel shows a social world comprising good and evil forces, the angel and the devil. Each force had its own logic: the good angelic forces were suggested by positive images such as flowers, birds singing, people clapping and praising, and choirs. On the other hand, the evil devilish forces were represented by evil images such as darkness, a force with long ears, a spear, a snake, and a rat. For a person to experience the good images in the heart, good actions had to be produced. However, bad images invaded the heart of those whose evil actions included stealing, gossiping, hatching bad plans, and saying bad things about people. Her early childhood story renders visible her early moral learning. Later in the chapter, I will discuss a particularly interesting resonance between this story and her leadership approach.

Caring disposition

It is evident that a caring disposition is integral to Furaha's habitus. Two extracts from her narrative illustrate this. The extract below is presented to illustrate how she acquired a caring disposition as a teacher.

Extract 5. "I saw a lot of her caring attitude and a lot of devotion in her work"

I was a classroom teacher for about five months. Yah, so in the course of these five months, there was a sister, a nun who was the deputy principal of the school [...]. And I saw in her what I had learnt in secondary school because I went to a nun's school [...]. I saw a lot of her caring attitude and a lot of devotion in her work. As I was admiring all this, I really didn't know that five months later I was going to land in her job as the deputy principal of the school. So I would say she started me off, because its like I was [...] seeing somebody caring, somebody who is in touch with the people [...]; she was in touch with the student's problems, teacher's problems and the situation at that time, because the school was based—situated in Slum J, not the friendliest part of town. And she would go out walking with students, so freely you know; while people would get scared about their watches and handbags, she was not. So I admired that in her.

As a teacher, Furaha had observed that a nun, who was also the deputy principal of the school, was caring, devoted to her work and people-oriented. She considered this experience to be a source of inspiration in handling students when she too became a deputy principal. This account therefore emphasises the caring values she acquired from her contact with female caring figure. In the extract that follows, she talks about her own experience of caring as a teacher in the slum-based school.

Extract 6. "I had a lot of sympathy"

For me what struck me [in her first school as a teacher] was just the poverty not the children because I had prepared to take care of the children whether boys or girls. Just the poor surroundings! And then later on I also realized the students also come from poor homes; I had a lot of sympathy, you know, they had poor dressing, uncombed hair, general lack of hygiene; until I found myself talking to them about their hygiene. But I'd say they were very sincere children. Yah apart from that disability they were very sincere children.

Furaha's memories of teaching students in a slum-based school bring to light her caring disposition particularly her sensitivity to their disadvantaged circumstances.

Disposition to build support

Furaha has a disposition to build support within her community. Two extracts from her narrative illustrate this. The extract below is presented to illustrate how she acquired a disposition to build support by following her mother's example.

Extract 7. "Just women things"

In church she [her mother] kept their money – [she was a] treasurer at one time or the other. Just women things – those are the groups that she led because my father really wanted her to be a housewife, nothing else. [...] I find myself involved with my many groups that I am in. We have one group in my estate; I am the treasurer. We have another bigger group not in the estate, just with friends in K town; I happen to keep their money but this is for welfare [...] – so I keep their welfare money. And when I was a principal, I was the treasurer for [an educational organization] in G province.

Apart from her housekeeping role, it appears that Furaha's mother also assumed leadership responsibilities in the church and women's welfare groups. Her mother's active role in societal organisations can be said to have provided Furaha with an early familiarity with leadership and networking. Not surprisingly, Furaha says that she too has taken on leadership roles in welfare organisations later on in life. This is a good example of disposition that appears to underlie her subsequent social experience. In the next extract, Furaha talks about the support she received within the slum environment when she was a newcomer teacher in a slum based school.

Extract 8. "This is our teacher"

And they sort of give you the kind of welcome that – oh there's a nice girl in the neighbourhood you are more or less a girl. You are attracting attention more or less as a girl. [In other words] you are attracting attention more as a girl than as a teacher, than a professional. So the ridicule of people by whistling [is there]! Those who really don't know you until you say you are a teacher they are looking for a date so to speak. And it took a bit of support; once people knew you were a

teacher, they are settled, they'll greet you, they'll protect you a few times if there's a struggle; they'll say this is our teacher – huu ni mwalimu wetu [this is our teacher] you know – don't bother her.

Furaha acknowledges that she received the support of slum dwellers as a newcomer teacher in a slum based school. She perceived this support as being particularly helpful in the face of hostilities related to the slum environment. The phrase “huu ni mwalimu wetu [this is our teacher]” made by the slum dwellers masks a deeper meaning – it implies that Furaha was not only considered to be just their teacher but also a part of their slum ‘family’ or community. It is not uncommon for people who bring benefits to a community to be affectionately accepted as community members. This form of community support can be seen to have nurtured her disposition to build support.

Analysis of the factors that shape Furaha's leadership approaches

So far, I have looked at the lived experiences of Furaha as a young girl and teacher to gain insights into her leadership dispositions. In this section I analyse her leadership approaches developed later as a principal, in relation to her leadership dispositions and position in the field. I begin by unpacking her leadership approaches individually from her experiences as a principal of her school. I then proceed to discuss the relationship between these leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions and position in the field. The leadership approaches of Furaha discussed in this section include her: assertive approach, moral approach, caring approach, and support building approach.

Assertive approach

Furaha adopted an assertive approach to her leadership practices. The following set of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrates practices that are related to her assertive approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Furaha's assertive approach

Furaha's assertive practices are manifested in the way she:

(1) Attempts to get work done: "Even the teachers, when they really know that you are just insisting on work, they will grumble to begin with, but with time they will be on your side. So you have to put your foot down."

(2) Subdues disruptive teachers: "When we had somebody who was really trying to disrupt, we would shut them down. This is because you can't have one person taking the attention of forty teachers and nothing is really moving. So we would shut them down." She said: "With time [...]; people knew when to say what and when."

(3) Subdues her opposition: "But I realized they [critics] can be a real thorn if you don't know how to handle them. They can pull you back and behind the scenes; even the few 'ayes' that you have might finally be drawn away. So a few times you have to take such people head on [...]. You really have to shoot them down."

(4) Advises others: "If you are right and you know that what you are doing is right and you are not doing it for personal gain, you are doing it for these people, say it and say it again and don't feel guilty."

Furaha's assertive approach is manifest in her efforts to get work done, to disable resistance and hence exercise control over the field members. Her assertive approach and assertive disposition are both oriented towards exercising control. She developed an assertive disposition as a young girl and as a deputy principal. As a young girl, she learned from her male classmates to be tough and to relate to them in a way that earned their respect. As a deputy principal, she developed an assertive disposition by exercising her control over the teachers with the support of her male principal. Likewise, as a principal, she adopts an assertive approach to exercise control over her teachers.

Furaha's assertive approach can also be related to her position in the field. When field members seem to threaten her interests, she adopts an assertive approach. Thus her assertiveness begins with conflicts of interests between herself and field members.

The following extract is presented in illustration:

Extract 9. "These sponsors were Italians—very stubborn"

In line of duty, I think one time I disagreed with my sponsor, not very badly; but sponsors a few times you have to show them the real way forward. There was a new sponsor coming in [...]; we had started on some program with the earlier

sponsor. So when this one comes, he wants to overhaul the whole project. We were trying to build a wall round the school because of insecurity. The sponsor said, “This is not a priority—these are poor people, what will this wall add to them; they need food, they need clothes; how can you spend two million shillings on a wall?” So I said, “Well for me, I’m here to work and I’m here to guide you on what is good for the school. If you feel you know what is good for the students, this is my seat—you come and sit here.” You know these sponsors were Italians—very stubborn and they think they are really smart [...]. We really disagreed in that way; later on we became friends because he realized, really I was doing this for the good of the school. We needed a wall, security first because we cannot also not teach when outside you are seeing policemen chasing thugs with guns and a few of them run through the school and children are screaming [...]; once I made my point of view known and he refused to take over my seat and he went back to the church, I said, fine—let me do my work and I didn’t follow it up for two-three or more days. But later on, he came back, and we discussed and we built the wall and things went on very well, thereafter. Sometimes you have to really make people know what you feel; they accept you, and then they also know you really mean well. It was nothing personal and we became very good friends. Thereafter we built the kitchen together; we built the music/French room and a lot of other things.

The focus of this account is a struggle between Furaha and the school sponsor, each with different interests. They disagreed about priorities for school development. Whereas Furaha was interested in building a wall around the school in view of its insecure neighbourhood, the sponsor of the school was interested in feeding and clothing the poor. It is clear that the sponsor eventually gave in and supported Furaha when she deployed an assertive approach. Thus her account suggests that when her interests were threatened she became assertive and was able to secure her interests. The extract that follows shows that when she was confronted with opposition, her assertiveness served to subdue her opposition.

Extract 10. “We are all teachers but in every group there has to be a leader”

I remember there was a teacher who was two years ahead of me in college [...]; she had been in the school for three to four years; she felt that the teachers in the school should have been promoted [to be the principal of the school] and not somebody from elsewhere coming to head the school; that is what I gathered out of her kind of talk. So a few times we had staff meetings where we talk, discuss, and agree on things; but thereafter she would hold her own [informal] meeting with the teachers—to undo everything we had discussed. So the deputy told me once and I called her and we sat her down with the deputy, we said, “My friend

you have been doing this and that, and it is not good, I think let us be teachers and professionals. If you have any issue, please raise it in the meeting. But if you are going to do it after we have left—that is insubordination.” She didn’t seem to see our sense [but] she said, “Okay.” Next time again she did it. So I told her, “In this school, we are all teachers but in every group there has to be a leader and maybe assistant leader. And at this time in point, this man and me are the two leaders here. If you are going to undo what we have done, can we really work together? You have only two choices—to stay and work with us and do things the way they are done in this school or get out!” You know, so I think that was the second time, then she did it a third time. So this time, I didn’t need to talk to her; I got her out of the school because she was bringing in very bad blood.

Furaha recalls that there was a power struggle between herself and one of her teachers. The bone of contention was that Furaha was considered to be an, ‘outsider’ in that she had come from another school. Further, the teacher who was her major source of opposition was also her senior in college. To safeguard her position in the field, she deploys an assertive approach to subdue the challenge.

Moral approach

As a principal, Furaha adopted a particular moral stance with regard to matters such as sex, crime and dress. The following set of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrates this approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Furaha's moral approach

- (1). Furaha made reference to inculcating moral values in students: “So we tried to instil those values that students must be morally upright.” In a similar vein, she said, “We also tried to encourage a situation where girls would respect their bodies [...]; we were also bringing in the aspect of AIDS and HIV.”
- (2). Education as a moral tool of empowerment was central in her narrative: “so you also want to remove them from what is normal in handling a gun, a knife and [...] tell them, they have a choice, their education can empower them.” Likewise, she mentioned: “We encouraged them to look at their current situations and make an unwritten promise in their hearts that, at the end of my education, me and my parents will lead a better life than this.”
- (3). She spoke about ‘appropriate’ dress for teachers. She mentions: “We actually called a meeting of all the ladies and then we guided them on decent skirts, decent dresses, we allowed them to wear trousers but we discussed it in that meeting—If you want to wear trousers they must not be too tight.” As for the male teachers, Furaha commented: “Even

the men had a meeting [...]; we talked of tight trousers [...]; we didn't insist they wear ties but we insisted on shirts, clean well ironed, that kind of thing."

(4). She spoke of moral issues in her relationship with the students: "little frequent visits by boys to your office may not be the best; they could be very innocent visits but you wonder what else people will see in it; even girls, so you just want to do what you can and discourage what is bad."

(5). She spoke moral issues in her relationship with teachers. Of a teacher that was 'too friendly', she commented: "I wouldn't say she [the teacher] was my very good friend, we related at a very normal level but once she came to my office and said—'please tie my scarf for me the way you tie your scarf' [...]; of course I was left startled but I did it." Furaha expressed concern about this kind of behaviour: "Of course if it was a man, I would have refused [...], but she was a lady, a married lady; so I wouldn't even suspect she was a lesbian; sometimes you want to look at all angles."

Furaha's moral approach is related to upholding particular moral values such as decency, respectability, modest dress codes, and 'appropriate' gender relations. She learned to value moral ethics as a young girl. Her mother instilled in her values of decency and values of education as a means of emancipation from a lifestyle of turmoil. Interestingly, her favourite early childhood story is about rejecting immorality and embracing good ethics. As a principal she continues to link moral values to emancipation from social degradation.

A particular normative vocabulary is threaded through Furaha's moral stance. As a principal, she creates a social distance between herself and her students and teachers on account of 'normative' issues. She asks: "What else will people see in it?" if she had close relations with her students. Likewise, her fear of transgressing what a 'normal level' of friendship ought to be with her teachers weaves in a normative stance. This is consistent with her moral disposition, which is infused with a particular view of what 'decent girls' and 'decent women' ought to be. Her favourite childhood story, incidentally, is expressed in moral imperatives of what good morals ought to be.

Furaha's moral approach can also be related to her position in the field. Her active intervention in the dressing codes of the teachers seems to be about enforcing moral discipline through dress. Nonetheless, she does so in a field of struggle as the following extract shows:

Extract 11. "The children were actually seeing their breasts"

Through our suggestion box, we would find notes [from students] talking about the way some lady teachers dress. Some were noted to wear very high slit skirts, very tight skirts or dresses, very low-necked things so that perhaps when a teacher was marking books or bent forwards the children were actually seeing their breasts. Such things! Gentlemen – they [students] could have complained about smoking or you know doing things that were not supposed to be done in class, receiving mobile phone calls in class, carrying their phones to class that kind of thing. So whenever students complained about such things we did not take them lightly. If they mentioned specific teachers [...], you would call the person and [...], we would talk about it. We would guide them. A few of them would actually feel surprised – oh you mean my skirts are actually short [...]; it's like they were not realizing it [...]. I had a problem with one, who never saw that high slit we were all talking about. She never saw it. It was quite high and she never wore a petticoat; [she] really refused to see sense in what we were saying. In fact she thought we were very old fashioned, we are becoming too personal. And I eventually I told my deputy, you know, you can only go so far, you can't undress this lady and put on her a better skirt.

While female teachers were criticized for wearing "high slit skirts," "very tight skirts or dresses" and "very low-necked" clothing, male teachers were criticized by the students for their smoking habits and use of cell phones in class. Furaha was thus located in a field where students criticised teachers on moral and gendered grounds. For instance, the students' criticism of the female dress codes subtly touches on the female sexual body ("bent forwards the children were actually seeing their breasts"). On the other hand, the students' criticism of male teachers relates to objects usually associated with power—smoking and using of cell phones. Furaha comes out in support of the moral panic of her students and even so she encounters the opposition from a female teacher.

Caring approach

It is evident from her narrative that Furaha adopted a caring approach as a principal. The following set of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrates instances that reflect Furaha's caring approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Furaha's caring approach

- Furaha spoke about the support she gave to a student who had been involved in prostitution: "We once had a case of a girl who wasn't really coming to school [...]; her mother was engaging her in the same business [prostitution], you see. Its like she would now bring her clients, yes and some clients are persistent." So Furaha contacted the local priest for help: "So I talked to the parish priest and eventually we discovered he could help the girl by getting her out of the home. And the church would help her financially to stay somewhere [else]."
- She spoke about leading with a human face: "we had a case of a stepfather who wanted to rape the daughter, because this was a stepchild. [...]. This girl was always absent, always late or not doing her work; she had problems at home." She says that she addressed this problem by being supportive toward this girl: "So whereas the teachers wanted me to punish this child, I refused to be hard on her." She added, "So I was able to talk to other people to help her [...]. I had to manage with a human face."
- She spoke of her concern for the welfare of the students: "We have a sponsored lunch program, sponsored in the sense that the students pay so, so little." She added: "We found the lunch program very helpful because most of our students would go home [during the] lunch [hour] and not come back. So it helped us keep them in school."
- Furaha spoke about allowing non-fee paying students in her school: "Our kinds of parents were very poor parents, very poor! A few students [...] were parents themselves, they had been orphaned [...]; they were responsible for the younger ones." In this context, she said that, "You really don't know how to ask such a child to pay fees; so a few times we had students who went through school without paying fees; we would look for people to help them, sponsor them."
- Furaha spoke of herself as a missionary in the school: "In fact in our school, we talked of ourselves as missionaries; that's what I told the teachers—if you don't have that missionary heart you cannot work here."

It is evident that Furaha sought to help students that had been disadvantaged by their social backgrounds. This can be seen in her efforts to help sexually abused girls in her school. For instance she brings home dramatically the concept of leading with a 'human face' while handling students going through sexual abuse. Furthermore, she makes concerted efforts to retain economically disadvantaged students in the school. She sees herself as a missionary in the school, out on a selfless mission to take care of her students. It is hardly surprising that she sees herself this way, given that she learned to be caring from her contact with a caring nun who was her deputy principal when she was a teacher. She also learned to be caring from her own encounter with disadvantaged students as a teacher.

Fundamental to Furaha's caring approach is her position in the field. The following extract from her narrative illustrates this clearly.

Extract 12. "Her mother was engaging her in the same business [prostitution]"

We once had a case of a girl who wasn't really coming to school; would be in two days, another three days, she is away. And we got curious; we got interested. When the class teacher tried to follow up, the girl wasn't willing to talk, so we insisted that [her] parents must come [...]. Then the mother doesn't really come. So we said, this is not working; let's try to get the mother through other means! So in our school we are in contact with the village elders [...]. So we used one of the village elders to try and sermon the mother to come [...]. The village elder came and told us, "Mwalimu [teacher], I hope you know who you are dealing with; she will come here but she will not say anything because she is drunk almost all the time; she will not talk sense. She is a prostitute." [...] So we said hold it, we have to lay now new strategies [...]. I think we now have to talk to the girl [...]. So we tried to talk to her [the girl] and we told her, "we know the situation at home and we understand that's why your mother cannot come but now we want to help you because it is you who can get your mother out of that situation. You can go to school and get a job and you know get your mother out of that situation." So she relaxed and she talked to us. And she says the three days that she wasn't really coming to school, her mother was engaging her in the same business [prostitution], you see. Its like she [her mother] would now bring her clients, yes and some clients are persistent [...]. So pathetic! [...] This little girl has gone through so, so much [...]. Luckily the school and the church have a program. Whenever we have difficult cases we discuss; so I talked to the parish priest and eventually we discovered he could help the girl by getting her out of the home. And the church would help her financially to stay somewhere.

Furaha's story of a girl in her school that was involved in prostitution, with the help of the mother who was also a prostitute, brings home the difficulties facing her students. Her story draws attention to the vulnerability facing the girls in her school. Yet, even within these adverse conditions, Furaha found ways to support her students. She networks with a religious organisation and with 'villagers' who brief her about the social backgrounds of her students. Drawing on the support she is able to support her students facing gendered constraints.

Support building approach

As a principal, Furaha adopted a support building approach. The following set of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrates practices that are related to her support building approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Furaha's support building approach

(1). Furaha recalls how she often won over parents into helping her complete the school projects: "I managed to build a fourth stream of classes and I'm happy that I started off with little money." Thereafter she recalls calling the parents to a meeting and told them, "We are admitting our form ones next year, but they will be rained on, we need a roof." She remarked that the parents responded positively: "The parents said, 'we must have a harambee [fundraising effort], and they organized one."

(2). She spoke of rallying support for her school projects. After she had put up classrooms in the school, she pleaded with the parents: "The contractor is going to auction the school. You have to pay this debt, it is a debt." She told me that the parents then paid their fee dues: "So again the parents hassled themselves to pay fees."

Furaha's support building approach is primarily about securing the support of various members of the school to support her projects. Her support building approach relates back to her disposition to build support acquired from her experiences as a young girl and teacher. As a young girl she learns about support building from her mother's involvement with women's groups. Similarly, her experience as a young teacher in a slum-based school exposes her to the benefits (for example protection) of securing social support from the slum dwellers. Hence support systems are valued in both her support building approach and her disposition to build support.

Furaha's support building approach can also be linked to her position in the field, which can be clearly seen in the way she draws on her networks to secure her interests. The extract that follows illustrates this:

Extract 13. "Once you make enemies with them, you are in big trouble"

My Member of Parliament (MP) helped me to get a guest of honour and the harambee [fundraising] was very successful [...]; he also came and we raised a lot

of money; this money we used for finishing our classes. But many times he brought interference, not interest. He would request, “Don’t send student C home; he has a very poor parent,” or “for this indiscipline case, forgive the boy”; [...] so they would send letters of requests, that were purely political; they are not looking at the administrative point of view. But all in all they are people we need as administrators because sometimes you can hide behind them and let them do a lot of fighting for you. So you really can’t do without them. So you always have to keep them by your side despite all those letters, you still have to call on them and ask, “*Mheshimiwa* [honourable] how are you?” once in a while you know just to keep things going [...]; so they are our friends and foes and we really can’t do without them. Because once you make enemies with them, you are in big trouble. So you always have to fight with them, of course a little, because they always have to interfere but also send them a greeting when it’s not necessary.

Furaha’s account helps us understand how she relates to politicians. First, she sees them as useful (friends) when and where it suits her interests. Second, she sees them as powerful members of the field who must not be antagonised. Third, she actively cultivates them as part of her network (“send them a greeting when it’s not necessary”). And fourth, she sees them as people (foes) that have vested interests in the school. The extract that follows illustrates how Furaha uses another type of network to secure her interests in the school.

Extract 14. “Now chairman, your people are complaining about class work”

I also remember one who was such a poor teacher, everybody was complaining. We took away [his] form three lessons; left him with form two, form one [lessons]. Oh, they kept complaining [...]; so we sort of created other things for him in the school. He would teach some lessons but we also gave him a very powerful position—chairman [of the] welfare [association] and he was doing a good job [...]. And we were always calling him ‘chairman’ also to boost him up a bit. He is my chairman-welfare, you know, I am below him. And that really helped him, such that even if he had problems with class work, we would still not stop talking but we would call him and say, “Now chairman, your people are complaining about class work. We must do something about this,” you know, and we would encourage him to even talk to the other staff members. They also have a problem—the fact that they are quite old, they find it very hard to go and approach another teacher so that they share and go through this very hard shairi [Kiswahili poem]; he was teaching Kiswahili and oh—very bad, even me I can do better.

When faced with an older teacher that was reportedly teaching poorly, Furaha tells us that she gave him a position as the chairman of the staff welfare association. By using the title 'chairman' to address him, she was able to prop up his dignity and then reprimand him 'diplomatically' for performing his duties poorly: "Now chairman, your people are complaining about class work." It is not unusual for people in Kenya to address older folk by means of titles as it is considered to be a form of respect.

Summary

The chapter has provided an analysis of Furaha's narrative in an endeavour to gain insights into the factors that shape her leadership practices. The analysis of her narrative, presented demonstrates that:

1. She adopts an assertive approach, which is visible in the way she gets work done and disables resistance toward her in the school. She deploys this approach when her interests are threatened in the field. She learned to be assertive from her contact with male figures such as her male classmates as a young girl and male principal as a deputy principal.
2. She adopts a moral approach related to upholding particular moral values such as decency, respectability, modest dress codes, and 'appropriate' gender relations. She deploys this approach to secure the moral interests of her students. She acquired her moral values from her mother.
3. She emerges as a caring leader particularly in relation to marginal students. By drawing on her social capital she is able to support these students. She learned about caring from her contact with a female missionary and her contact with disadvantaged students as a teacher.
4. She adopts a support building approach that is visible in the way she builds support for her school projects. She draws on her social capital to build support for her interests. Her familiarity with support building was acquired from her mother and the social support she got from slum dwellers as a newcomer teacher in the slum based school.

A number of features of Furaha's positioning in the field have emerged in this analysis. First, it emerged that there were competing interests in the field. Second, to counter these interests, it became clear that Furaha utilized her leadership dispositions (cultural capital), and social networks (social capital) to counter these interests. Third, it emerged that her capital improved her position in the field and this impacted on the leadership approaches that she adopted.

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CHAPTER NINE: ANALYSIS OF MALAIKA'S NARRATIVE

Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the analysis of the final narrative of my study. As in the four previous chapters I continue to be guided by my analytical framework outlined in chapter four. I begin this chapter with an introduction to Malaika and her school. I then discuss her leadership dispositions derived from her lived experiences as a young girl, teacher and principal. Thereafter I discuss the relationship between her leadership approaches and her leadership dispositions and position in the field.

Who is Malaika?

Malaika, age 59, grew up in a rural part of Kenya. Her father was a construction worker and her mother a housewife and farmer. After completing her early schooling in Kenya, Malaika went to the USA where she completed her secondary education. She then proceeded to a USA based university where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree. Thereafter, she came back to Kenya and did a postgraduate diploma in education. Then she became a teacher in a rural school. It was during this time that she got married. After teaching for one year, she became a school principal. She served as a principal for 30 years until her retirement. When she retired she was at the highest professional grade of 'Chief Principal'.

Mapping the field: Malaika's school

Malaika's school is a national girls' school located in an urban area. A national secondary school in Kenya is one that admits the best students from all the provinces in Kenya using a quota system. Since the school admits the best students from the country, it also performs very well in the national examinations. In the past, her school was referred to as a high cost school given that it was allowed by the government to charge higher fees than other national schools. Hence the school attracted and continues to attract students from upper class origins. The school has therefore come to be associated with prestigious

people. The school is also well staffed and enjoys better physical facilities than other schools. For example, the school has facilities such as a swimming pool and gym sadly lacking in the majority of public schools in Kenya.

Malaika's school was established during the colonial era as a purely 'white school' solely for the children of colonial rulers. During this period, schools in Kenya were segregated along racial lines in the sense that there were schools designated for European, Asian and African children, each with different facilities and curricula. It is not surprising that as a former 'white school', Malaika's school had better physical facilities than other schools. At the time that she was the principal, the school had 850 female students and 73 teachers.

Malaika's leadership dispositions

In this section I focus on Malaika's leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences as a young girl, teacher and principal. In this context, four leadership dispositions are discussed, namely: her assertive disposition, confrontational disposition, reformist disposition, and caring disposition. Later in the chapter, I will track her leadership approaches from these leadership dispositions.

Assertive disposition

Malaika's narrative brings to the fore her disposition to be assertive or willing to take a stand and to be firm. A pattern can be discerned in her description of the people she looked up to as a young girl – they all adopted a firm approach to leadership. In the extracts that follow she talks about the leadership approaches of her family members:

Extract 1. "He was fair but firm"

He [her father] would insist on doing things right. But at the same time he would listen to others and even with his little children [...], and he would instil the punishment you know. So he was fair but firm.

Extract 2. "My brother – he was firm"

My brother – he was firm; he had the personality in such a way that you see him and say uh mm! It fits him you know. He was charming, he was a listener too and he was endowed with a very pleasant personality.

Extract 3. "I like the manner in which he led, quiet but firm and effective"

My uncle was a mayor in Majimbo for a long, long time. He was authoritarian and at one time we crossed over swords because of the way he would handle people. He was magnanimous in his own way. That is one uncle. I had another late uncle who was the Chairman of a foundation. A calm person, he was a leader in church. I think he was in the synod and I like the manner in which he led, quiet but firm and effective.

In the three extracts above, Malaika states the word 'firm' three times in her description of the leadership orientation of her family members. According to Malaika her father was "fair but firm," her brother "firm" and her late uncle "quiet but firm and effective." It is significant that her early perception of firm leadership is also of male relatives. Her early familiarity with the firm approach of her family members who occupied positions of leadership can be said to have nurtured her assertive disposition. In the next extract, Malaika talks about the leadership approach of her role model:

Extract 4. "She was firm, no-nonsense"

The person I used to admire most is the prime minister of Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher [...]; she was firm, no-nonsense. You know I don't think there was any man who would *kumba-kumba* [mess with] her. I mean she got things done. Oh yes, oh yes and she was brave. No-nonsense!

Furaha talks about her role model as Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of Britain. She, in Malaika's view, used a firm, no-nonsense approach to assert her authority and because of this, men did not mess with her. For Malaika, this approach "got things done."

Confrontational disposition

Malaika's narrative provides some evidence of her disposition to be confrontational. In the three extracts listed below she describes her experiences as a teacher:

Extract 5. "This looks like a military camp and they will get it from me"

Now when I was posted to my first school, it was very interesting [...]. I still did not know the country very well. But I was posted to a 'bush' school, (laughs) way in *Vunja Mifupa*, where there was no transport and I didn't have a car [...]. It took us a whole day to get there [...]. Anyway eventually I got there, and I was already negative. I said, "This looks like a military camp and they will get it from me!"

Malaika describes her first school as a teacher in terms related to combat: "this looks like a military camp." Her assertion "they will get it from me" is confrontational. It is an assertion that poses a challenge to the authority of the school. In her account we see her disposition to be confrontational emerging. In the next extract she describes her confrontation with the nuns running this particular school.

Extract 6. "What I do after the teaching period is none of your business"

Then eventually I had a boyfriend and they were riotous of this boyfriend coming to see me. I told them, "You know what your business is, [it's] to see that I go to class and I teach. What I do after the teaching period is none of your business. I am a young person, I have a [boy] friend and when my [boy] friend comes, you have given me a house, don't even come to peep, because what goes in that house in none of your business." So they looked at me and said, ah! —They have a revolutionary around here.

Malaika's account shows how she demanded that the nuns give her what belonged to her, her right to privacy. In reference to this incident, she recalls the nuns saying that they had a revolutionary in the school. Her confrontation with the nuns running the school is also visible in the next extract.

Extract 7. "I am going to get married and I am not coming back"

Eventually I told them [the nuns - managers], "Look I'm not coming next term." They looked at me; they refused to give me a letter for transfer and I went to the office and told the lady [the principal], "You know what, letter or no letter, I am

going to get married and I am not coming back.” The funniest thing was that on the day I was getting married and I had not invited them, they came to my wedding; they brought me the most beautiful flowers and thereafter we were the best of friends (laughs).

Malaika confronted the nuns running the school when they refused to give her transfer letter to another school. It is clear that her interests were threatened. This is because her intention was to move to another school that would be nearer to her future husband’s workplace. To have her victory, she takes a confrontational stance against the school authority.

Reformist disposition

Malaika’s reformist disposition can be discerned from the following two extracts of her narrative. The extract that follows is listed in illustration:

Extract 8. “You people have got to change the [students] dish”

Then I noted the children and the way they were behaving which was rather odd. I watched the kind of food they were getting [and] I thought that was very odd. And one day I did actually challenge these people [school management]. I told them there is no way you can feed these children with this kind of food. But they said you know this is what, what, what—I said no! You got to improve this dish. So we fought first and foremost about the food the children were eating. And then one day they invited me for lunch in their house; those sisters [nuns]—and I still told them, “You know irrespective of you inviting me here; you people have got to change the [students] dish. The days are gone when you can feed children with this type of Ugali. You can get proper flour for Ugali, proper beans for Ugali, but not this kind of food.” Anyway it went on and on. And do you know they changed a little bit.

As a teacher, Malaika was shocked at the kind of food that was consumed by the students in the school and so she demanded that this be changed. Her account shows that her efforts for reform were not in vain as the nuns eventually responded to her demands. In the next extract, Malaika talks about how she started a ‘revolution’ in the same school.

Extract 9. "Do you know we started a revolution"

The head of the school, apparently any time, the teachers got their salary; she would keep the pay slips. So I went to her one time and I said, "Look, from the time I got here, I don't know what I get; can you show me where my pay slip is." So she said, "Well you know, Malaika I cannot give you these [payslips]. I said, "But let me tell you one thing, that is my right, it is not yours. Why would you keep my pay slip? What would you do with it? It is mine and if you want to keep for the other people, you can keep them! But for me, that is the only evidence I have to show that I get paid." So she got out files and files of pay slips that she had been keeping. I said, "Ah! Ah! It is wrong and you got to start giving them out." Do you know we started a revolution; she started giving us pay slips.

In this account, we see that Malaika was able to challenge an unjust practice of withholding payslips and soon the principal begun to issue the teachers with their pay slips. These experiences can be said to have nurtured her reformist disposition.

Caring disposition

Malaika's narrative brings to the fore her caring disposition. She narrates her experience as a mother in the following extract:

Extract 10. "I've got to take care of them"

The other thing is that being a mother also and being a principal is also very, very challenging because once again you got to treat your children like your own children who have very special needs, that is the mother and child relationship. You got to avail yourself and [yet] the job of a principal is so hard, that one has got to be very conscious of the fact that you have to create time to be with your children. Otherwise you can be out of the home mentally and physically when you think you are in. So I have to be aware that when I am with the children I am their mother and I've got to listen to them and I've got to take care of them. So you got to create time in such a way that you also go out with them, drive them to school when you can rather than leaving them to a driver all the time—because you can alienate yourself from your own children, if you are not careful.

Malaika recalls that she was aware of the constant need to listen to her children and spend time with them. She explains that she was aware that supplying her children with care and attention was necessary in spite of the difficult nature of her leadership work. Her anxiety about losing touch with her children is evident in view of her leadership

responsibilities. Thus, her caring commitment for her children is one expression of her nurturing disposition. In the next extract, it emerged that Malaika also cared about the students that she taught.

Extract 11. "What touched me was the poverty amongst the school children"

I think the second school I went to teach which was a rural school [...], what touched me was the poverty amongst the school children. [...]. You get some children who'll come, who had almost nothing [...]. Having been educated in a country where kids could say whatever they wanted and do whatever they wanted and then here you are, you have a different group of children who are very submissive and you know very tender. You fall for them! And you become one of them, you know; and you become involved.

Thus Malaika spoke about experiencing affectionate emotions for needy students in the second school she worked.

Analysis of the factors that shape Malaika's leadership approaches

Thus far I have discussed Furaha's leadership dispositions based on her lived experiences acquired as a young girl and teacher. This section analyses the relationship between the leadership approaches that she adopted later, when she was a principal, and leadership dispositions and her position in the field. In this section I unpack each of her leadership approaches on the basis of her experiences as a principal. I will relate these leadership approaches to her leadership dispositions and position in the field. The section discusses four of her leadership approaches, namely, her assertive approach, confrontational approach, reformist approach and caring approach.

Assertive approach

It is evident from her narrative that Malaika practiced an assertive approach. The following set of excerpts illustrates instances that reflect her assertive approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Malaika's assertive approach

Furaha assertive approach appears to be visible in the way she:

(1) Resolves issues: "If we [Malaika and the teachers] came to a loggerhead—I would tell them, the decision is mine and I think this is the best decision to take [...]; this is the route to follow, take it or leave it."

(2) Counters opposition: "Of course you go there, [to a meeting] and some of them [teachers] will say absolutely — no. And then you try to sell the idea; still they'll say—no. You tell them, okay you say—no; this is the way things are going to go. I respect your feelings, you respect mine, but this is the policy, we are moving."

(3) Asserts her authority: "As long as the head will remain dignified as a head and commands the respect of everybody, things will work."

Malaika's assertive approach is visible in the way she resolves disagreements, disables her opposition and asserts her authority. This assertive approach also reveals itself in an analogous situation. Margaret Thatcher who was her role model as a young girl inspired her because of the way she disabled opposition using an assertive approach. Furthermore, dominant male relatives in her early life adopted firm approaches to leadership. Not surprisingly, she appears to adopt an assertive approach as a principal to place herself in a position of dominance.

I move to discuss her assertive approach in relation to her position in the field. Drawing on two extracts from her narrative, I shed light on the resources that she utilises to assert herself and conserve her dominant position in the field.

Extract 13. "Of course I had the final vote"

You know, once in a while, you get a person who is very outspoken and he will more or less tend to influence the others [...]; there were those who never thought for themselves [...]. As the head or the chairperson of such a meeting, you got to know how to keep the balance. When I had one person who was really outspoken, the minute you see that others tend to follow him or her, you change the tactics, otherwise you will be left alone [...]; with the disagreeable staff member, you also become disagreeable at times [...]. If you find that somebody is always opposing, I became very transparent and said, "This is the way I want things done; if this is the way teacher X wants things to be done, you tell me if you are actually really

using real sense and real reasoning! Which way do you follow? Those who want to follow that side, you can follow but you will not go with me, because my way is this one.” And of course I had the final vote [...]; and of course you’ve got to do it very tactfully.

In staff meetings Malaika asserted herself against teachers that held rival views from hers. In such situations, her positional power (“final vote”) represents the resource that she draws on to safeguard her interests in the game and maintain her dominance in the field. The next extract also captures her positioning in relation to teachers.

Extract 14. “If you lose the majority, you lose the school”

Once in a while you go to a staff meeting and you find things did not work out properly or you did not satisfy [...] some aspects of the people. Then in such a case I would hope that there will be some representatives of the staff members so that whatever they feel disgruntled [about] [...], they come to you and say—you know we felt you did not tackle this issue properly [...], and then I will tell them, “This is the way I feel [...], and then can you go and tell the staff members, this is the way I feel; that is the way you feel, this is the course that you are going to follow.” Because you must always make sure that you carry the majority with you because if you lose the majority, you lose the school or you know you lose the institution.

The appeal system described by Malaika allowed the representatives of teachers to appeal her decisions. However, Malaika used the appeal system to make the teachers feel that they were part of the decision making process. But strictly speaking, the appeal system appears to serve her interests, as she seems to use it to clarify her decisions to the teachers and not to make concessions or compromises.

Confrontational approach

It is evident that Malaika adopted a confrontational stance against dominant authority. The following set of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrates instances that reflect her confrontational approach.

Instances of practice that reflect Malaika's confrontational approach

(1) Malaika faced opposition from parliamentarians and even her own teachers when she levied funds in her school soon after the withdrawal of government grants from schools and the precise way to raise funds for schools had not been made at all clear¹¹. She eventually succeeded: "Eventually it [the matter] went to parliament and it was passed that levies must be paid to run the institutions. Then I went and I cut it [the press release] and I stuck it on the notice board—the levy must be paid."

(2) She takes on the government and fights for her school: "One bright morning, we woke up to find ourselves with no school. The government had taken it over and it had been changed from a high school to a teacher training college without consultation [...]. Of course, I had been told to keep my mouth shut, but if anybody [the press] wanted to write, I said yes, here is the information go and write. So they went and wrote and one article actually did it, beautifully written! And one day we were told, okay come over for tea, at the big place [state house]—'you can have your school back.'"

(3) She confronts her superiors - education officials: "Sometimes you'll get somebody who will call you and tell you to do the wrong, something that you think is wrong. Unfortunately, I was very transparent. I'd say absolutely no if it is wrong [...]. I think I was a rebel [...]. And in fact when I felt aggrieved, I didn't have to hide it at all. I had to say it. Oh yes. And of course our people when you do it, they consider you extraordinary rude. Many a times I was mistaken as being rude, insolent".

Malaika takes on dominant authority head-on. She does not shy away when confronted with state policies that are in conflict with her interests. She appears to shoot from the hip and is not easily undermined. She has no qualms about confronting her superiors when they make demands that she considers to be unethical. In this respect she considers herself to be a rebel. It is apparent that she speaks her mind at will and as she explains many of her superiors considered her to be rude and insolent. She learned to be confrontational during her years as a teacher. For instance, when she felt that the principal of her school threatened her interests, she confronted her and was able to secure her interests. To be more precise, when the nuns (school authority) appeared to meddle in her private life and even denied her a transfer letter, she confronted them head-on.

¹¹ Note that these grants were used to meet the development expenditures of schools.

I now focus on Malaika's confrontational approach in relation to her position in the field. In the extract that follows, it is apparent that in adopting a confrontational approach, Malaika draws on her social capital in the school.

Extract 15. "I was running a school that had very able parents"

Interviewer: You could easily have done without them (education officials)?

Malaika: Many times, ah – many, many, many times, oh yes many times. I think many of us did exactly that. Oh yah, you just pray and you hope what you are doing is the right thing; or you look for other sources to support you, so that you don't drown alone; because for example for me I was running a school that had very able parents. I had very, very able people. People like Prof. B [...] Chairman of my P.T.A for 10 years. Educationists, people like Madame G [prominent educationalist/gender activist] – my chairman of the board. People like Madame J [relative of a former president], another chairman of the board, you know that support.

Malaika is able to challenge education authorities because she is supported and buffered by her network of influential members of the school. Her support pillars were 'able' parents, elite community members, and the PTA chairman. She thus enclosed herself within a social network of socially recognized people endowed with high legitimate culture. Her social capital therefore reinforces her capacity to adopt a confrontational approach toward educational officials. In the next extract, it is apparent that Malaika occupies a senior position in the field.

Extract 16. "You became almost a player"

During the early days, yes – they [education officials] were very useful, they were. I don't know what I can say about later on. Because things changed, as you know in the country – you became almost a player, because the people who were there [educational bosses], I just look at them and say yak [...], well it was a very unfortunate business; because what happened was that some of us were very senior in the field [...]. Even more senior than the some of them – people who are supposed to be your bosses. And it created a gap in such a way that even when they were addressing you or they want to talk to you, they – you know there was something.

Although in terms of positional power education officials were her seniors, Malaika held a dominant position in relation to educational officials, by virtue of her senior professional grade. This is possible because the grading systems for teachers and education officials are not aligned.¹² It is therefore not surprising to find teachers that hold a higher professional grade relative to that of the education officials who are in effect their superiors. Malaika holds a senior professional grade relative to that of the educational officials and this strengthens her capacity to adopt a confrontational approach in resisting them when they threaten her interests.

Reformist approach

As a principal, Malaika adopted a reformist approach. This is best typified by her approach to changing her school from a high cost school to a regular school.¹³ Below is an excerpt, which reflects this reformist approach.

Instance that reflects Malaika's reformist approach

Malaika spoke about the need for reforms: "I realized that within the next three years I was going to leave the school and all along there were some things that I felt needed changing." She added, "Having been in a national school, having been in a school that was very, very high up, there were some traditions that I felt I did not need to pass them on to somebody else."

She spoke about persuading the parents to accept reforms: "Time for reform is here [...], so I am begging you that we agree to change for us to be just like any other school [a regular school] because even the children who are coming to this school are ordinary children."

She spoke of the resistance to these reforms: "Immediately they left the assembly the parents went and engineered their children [to resist the changes] [...]; by the time I got to my house the whole school was after me; they had rioted!" She described it as, "the biggest challenge of my life, and also "one of the most stressful, because it cost me my health"; yet in the same breath she said, "But still I said it was worth it. Oh yes it was worth it."

¹² Specifically, the Teachers' Service Commission's grading system used to promote teachers in Kenya is not harmonised with the Civil Service Commission's grading system used to promote education officials.

¹³ Notice that as a high cost national school her school admitted children largely from elite families that could afford the fees charged in these schools. A regular public school on the other hand charges much lower fees and is hence accessible to all students regardless of socio-economic background.

Malaika instituted reforms in her school and still had to contend with the resistance that threatened to undermine these reforms. Her reformist approach and reformist disposition share the same fundamental logic, which is the reform of repressive conditions. As a teacher, she gained a reformist disposition by engaging in a series of protests about food for students and the issuing of payslips to teachers. As a principal, she reformed her school from being a high cost school to being an ordinary school that was accessible to students from all social classes and not just upper class students.

Malaika's reformist approach can be understood in relation to the social capital that she draws on in the field as the following extract illustrates:

Extract 17. "Fortunately my executive committee was on my side"

Unfortunately because the majority of the parents were still feeling that they enjoyed the privileges that did exist, I knew during the AGM that I would have a lot of, oh dear (sighs) problems [in instituting reforms]. But fortunately my executive committee was on my side and they also felt the same. So we went on a bang! We said things are changing and this is how they are going to change.

Malaika was emphatic that her reform process was largely dependent on the support of her executive committee. She acknowledges that persuading the parents to accept her reforms was an uphill task. One of the implications of reforming her school from a high cost school to a regular school was that certain privileges enjoyed by the students had to be withdrawn. As a regular school, Malaika's school would have to charge the fees charged by other public schools. Such fees could not sustain certain privileges enjoyed by the students. This explains why the interests of the upper class students were clearly threatened. For Malaika to initiate reforms that threatened the interests of a dominant class in society, she obtained support from the executive committee. Because the executive committee was also made up of parents, it is evident that not all the parents opposed her reforms. As the next extracts show, some members of the school supported her reforms.

Extract 18. "We will support you quietly"

For the next day, things were very bad – very tense but fortunately there were girls who were for the change [reforms] but they would not talk – so they wrote to me, memos and memos, and memos and dropped them in my office. And they said we support you. Read such and such a verse in the bible, we are for you, irrespective of the naughty ones, we will support you quietly.

Extract 19. "The staff members were for me"

The rest of the year I remained alert, I remained a prisoner of that institution without going anywhere, just keeping my eyes open. Fortunately the staff members were for me, both teaching and non-teaching [staff].

Support for Malaika's reforms came from some of her students. Other support came from the teaching and non-teaching staff. While the resistance to her reforms alienated her, the support she obtained from various members of the field ultimately strengthened her dedication to the reform process in the school.

Caring approach

Malaika adopted a caring approach, which is visible in the way she handles working class students and 'mothers' the students. The following set of excerpts, derived from her narrative, illustrates instances that reflect her caring approach.

Instances of practice that reflect her caring approach

(1) Malaika was concerned about the marginal students in her school. She recalls a student saying to her: "You have been sending me home to go look for the money [fees], I go home but I come back still with no money [...]. I wish you would leave me to do my work and I'll promise you that I'll do very well."

Malaika responded: "I decided to do exactly that; I sourced for money from other sources, and do you know that girl did so well; today she is a lawyer."

(2) Malaika implied that she 'mothered' her students: "The first thing that comes in your head is – I also have children, they are in a school, how would I like my children treated? [...] If you say I'd love my child to be mothered then you mother the children."

She added, "You are dealing with human beings you are a mother, there is that touch; there is no way you can separate it. Of course you want the best even for this child."

Malaika adopted a caring approach that is characterised by her sensitivity to the plight of the students that could not afford to pay school fees. She also makes reference to her caring approach as a ‘mothering’ approach in which she lavishes the same care and attention on the students that she gives to her own children. Her familiarity to caring was acquired from her experiences as a teacher and a mother. As a teacher, she developed a disposition to care from her contact with marginal students. Her mothering experiences also provide her with a disposition to care.

I now look at her caring approach in relation to her position in the field. Specifically, I look at the social class of the students in her school and how this positions her to be caring. The extract that follows is presented in illustration.

Extract 20. “The upper class would have everything”

I had a lot of children from the upper class of our society. I also had children from the lower class. The upper class would have everything—everything, more than I would even have [...]. One thing I know is that those who have does not mean that they will necessary do better than the others. The others had a problem or used to have a problem in such way that when those who have are in school at all times, there are some who do not have, who would be walking home to go look for school fees. Even if a child is away for a day looking for school fees, that child is disadvantaged [...], but you know poverty is not a disgrace, it is only inconvenient. And many of those children who would know who they are actually—whenever they were in school, they would utilize their time to the maximum. And many of them crossed the bridge, to the other side. However, there were some who had everything who could not cross the bridge. It is really the determination in whoever is concerned.

Malaika’s school had a student population of both upper class and working class origins. She explains that the upper class students were clearly advantaged since they did not have school fee problems. On the other hand, working class students lost a lot of learning time when they were sent home in search of school fees. Her words “poverty is not a disgrace, it is only inconvenient” imply that she was aware and sensitive to the plight of the working class students. She even comes across as hopeful that these students were likely to “cross the bridge” of poverty if they invested their time wisely. In the next extract Malaika comes across as sympathetic toward working class parents.

Extract 21. "All I can remember is seeing huge cars coming to school"

All I can remember is seeing huge cars coming to school (laughs) to visit the children. And children would feel mighty and big, when some would never be visited, you know. Some would never get anything good, throughout the time they would be in school. Or you would have for example open day, when some [parents] would even come with chairs to sit on and something to even warm the food and really sit comfortably when some will walk to school dignified to come and see their daughters. How did they feel, I cannot tell you! All I know is that they all had children in that great school. And those who actually did work [hard], irrespective of their status, they came out and came out very well.

In this extract, the words "huge", "mighty" and "big" used to describe the actions of upper-class parents, construct a recurring theme of the dominance of upper class parents in Malaika's school. Her account of the actions of upper class parents and students indicate that she was critical of their flashy lifestyles. Her description of the working class parents as 'dignified' contrasts markedly with her description of the upper class parents whom she presents as 'big' in everything that they do. Overall, she has sympathy for working class parents and wants to see their children 'succeed'.

Summary

The chapter has provided an analysis of Malaika's narrative in an endeavour to gain insights into the factors that shape her leadership practices. The analysis of her narrative demonstrates that:

1. Malaika adopts an assertive approach that is visible in the way she resolves disagreements, disables her opposition and asserts her authority. She deploys this approach to establish and maintain her dominance in the field. She learned to be assertive from her contact with dominant male relatives and inspiration from her role model, Margaret Thatcher.
2. She emerges as a confrontational leader that tackles dominant authority head-on. In adopting this approach, she draws on the support of her social capital (socially recognized people). She learned to be confrontational as a teacher in a bid to secure her interests.

3. She adopts a reformist approach manifest in her efforts to reform her school from a high cost school to a regular school. This approach is strengthened by the support she got from some members of the school. She learned to be reformist as a teacher by demanding for change of unjust practices in her school.

4. She emerges as a caring leader particularly in regard to the working class students in her school. She also spoke of 'mothering' her students. Her familiarity with caring was acquired from her contact with marginal students as a teacher and her own mothering experiences.

There were conflicting interests between Malaika and members of the school such as politicians, educational officials, teachers and students. She successfully confronted these interests by making use of her leadership dispositions (cultural capital) and her connections to socially recognized members of the society. However, she incurred low emotional well-being in her efforts to deal with some of the competing interests in the field.

A puzzling piece of data that has not been addressed in this chapter is Malaika's passive reaction to prejudice in her life as a young woman and later on as a school principal. This passive tendency is an antithesis to her assertive and confrontational leadership dispositions. Yet these dispositions appear to co-exist within her habitus making it fraught with paradoxical dispositions. This issue will not be explored here, but will be taken up in the final chapter under the section titled 'directions for further research.'

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSIONS

Overview of the study

The goal of this study has been to examine the leadership approaches of women principals in relation to their social contexts. My argument has been that unless we enter the lives of women principals, we cannot begin to understand their leadership approaches. My inquiry began with the research question: what is the relationship between the leadership practices of women principals and their lived experiences, in three phases of their lives, namely, as young girls, teachers and principals? I sought to understand the leadership approaches of women principals in relation to their lived experiences, which included their early family, schooling, career path, emotional, and gendered experiences, as well as their social networks, and the power dynamics and economic capital of their schools. Bourdieu's theory has guided my attempt to relate the leadership approaches of women principals to their socially produced leadership dispositions and their positions in the field. His theory is concerned with constructing the practices of agents in the context of their social lives.

I reviewed literature on gender and leadership in the second chapter. This included a review of Bourdieu's work on gender in which he argued that women's experiences are socially and historically different from those of men and that these experiences are affected by male domination. The broader literature on female leadership reviewed concurred that women's social and workplace experiences, including their leadership approaches, are gendered. I also reviewed literature on leadership theories including studies that have brought Bourdieu's theory to bear on leadership.

Chapter three presented the conceptual framework developed for the study. This was derived from a review of Bourdieu's notions of habitus, capital, and field. His notion of habitus is based on the premise that practices are structured in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences. For Bourdieu, capital is a usable resource incorporated in the habitus while the field is a network of objective relations between

positions that follow specific logics. My conceptual framework adopts these notions to focus on how leadership dispositions and positions in the field can be related to leadership approaches. The framework proposes that leadership dispositions are leadership capacities or competencies derived from the social historical experiences of the subject. It also suggests that the subject draws on her capital (leadership competence, social networks and economic capital of the school) from her position in the field and this enables her to pursue particular interests and to strengthen her position.

Chapter four outlined the research design for the study. This research was conducted as a life history narrative study. This was based on the premise that the notion of habitus could be translated into an empirical object by means of this approach. Life history research involves studying retrospective accounts of individuals' lived experiences. This approach has been widely used in researching the lived experiences of women (see Guy, 2005; Krehbiel, 2005; Khaja, 2004; Marianna, 2000; Charlesworth, 2005; Cardinal, 2005; Kelly, 2004; Mogadime, 2003; Samson, 1998; Crenshaw, 2004). I adopted Bourdieu's notion of the epistemological break to draw out objective knowledge from the phenomenological life history data. Five respondents were selected for the study, namely, Iman, Tumaini, Amani, Furaha and Malaika (all pseudonyms). The selection of these subjects was based on the information richness of their narratives and their willingness to share their narratives with me. Data was collected by means of a structured interview. My approach to validity issues in this study was framed by Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity.

The analytical framework for the study was developed from Bourdieu's field analytical model. The three elements brought together in the model were leadership dispositions, positions in the field and leadership approaches. The analysis involved linking the leadership approaches of women principals to their homologous leadership dispositions and their position in the field. This involved finding correlations between particular experiences that emerged as salient with the subjects' own memories, their relations to others in the field, and their practices. Chapters five to nine presented the analysis of the narratives of the women principals.

Reflections on the findings of the study

In this section I focus on what I have learned from the narrative analysis of this study. I have identified seven factors that shaped the leadership approaches of the women principals in this study, namely, their androgynous leadership dispositions, their gendered attributes, their subjection to patriarchal interests, their subjection to competing interests in the field, their capacity to utilise their individual social and emotional capital, and their capacity to utilise the economic capital of the school.

1. Androgynous leadership dispositions

All the women principals in this study incorporated masculine and feminine characteristics into their leadership dispositions. From their contact with male figures in their past, the women principals acquired assertive, activist, competitive and survival-oriented dispositions. On the other hand, their contact with female figures in their past generated their strict, caring, counselling, support building, sharing leadership dispositions. Hence their dispositions can be said to be androgynous in character. Kartsen (1994) maintains that androgynous individuals integrate aspects of femininity and masculinity into their self-concept and can enact whatever behaviour seems appropriate in a given situation.

The specific features of these androgynous leadership dispositions differed from one principal to the next. Tumaini acquired a disposition to be assertive from her contact with her father who imposed masculine roles on her as a young girl. In addition, her survival-oriented disposition was developed in her contact with male educational officials who encouraged her to head and 'survive' a slum based school. Furaha acquired an assertive disposition from her contact with male classmates. Her male principal also played a significant role in supporting her assertive approach as a deputy principal, particularly when the teachers staged a protest in response to her 'authoritarian' approach. Malaika learned to be assertive from her contact with male relatives occupying positions of leadership. There is, however, an exception here as Malaika's assertive disposition is also nurtured from the inspiration of her role model, Margaret Thatcher. Iman benefited from the activism of her brother to develop an activist disposition. Amani nurtured her

assertive disposition, as a teacher, through her resistance to unjust male authority in her school.

Each of the women also drew on different experiences of feminine strategies. From their mothers, Iman learned to be strict in relation to discipline, Tumaini acquired a disposition to counsel and Furaha became familiar with support building and a particular moral ethos. As teachers, the women principals were also influenced by female figures in their lives. In an apprenticeship relationship with a female predecessor (a former principal), Amani acquired a disposition to embrace shared leadership. Likewise, a female missionary, who was also the deputy principal, was significant in nurturing the caring disposition of Furaha. On the other hand Malaika drew on her own mothering experiences to develop a disposition to care for her students.

2. Valued gendered attributes

The analysis highlighted the role of the principals' valued gendered attributes¹⁴ in shaping their approaches to leadership. Women principals manifested 'male authority' in their leadership approaches to disable resistance and assert their dominance in their schools. While male authority was referenced in dealing with challenges, female authority was manifest in practices deployed to secure the interests of marginal students.

Each principal referenced male authority in a different way in her leadership practice. Amani led in the name of benevolent males but also in resistance to malevolent males. She esteemed the support of male teachers in her school but was assertive toward male authority that she considered to be unethical. Iman led in opposition to male interests. She deployed an activist approach to resist the patriarchal interests of parents and politicians. Tumaini, whose assertive disposition obeys the masculine roles imposed on her by her father, incorporated a 'commanding' (male) approach in relation to those who opposed her in the school. Furaha, who acquired a disposition to be assertive from her interactions with male classmates and a male principal, led in an assertive way when her interests

¹⁴ In his 1984 study, *Distinction*, Bourdieu concluded that the dominated classes had valued or advantageous attributes such as their sense of labour power, courage and manliness, while the dominant classes attributed to themselves spiritual and intellectual strength, self control and strength of soul.

were threatened. Likewise Malaika, who acquired a disposition to be assertive from male relatives, took on dominant (male) authority head-on when her interests were threatened.

As mentioned earlier, morality and caring were at the core of the leadership dispositions acquired by the women principals from their contact with female figures in their past. In most instances these dispositions emerged when principals attended to students who were disadvantaged by gender and class. Furaha, who acquired a moral disposition from her contact with her mother, went on to put emphasis on particular moral values in her school with respect to female sexuality. With a disposition to care nurtured in a relationship with a female missionary, she led 'with a human face' in support of students that had been sexually abused. Likewise, Iman, armed with a caring disposition acquired from her mother, deployed a caring approach toward female students threatened with early marriages. Malaika on the other hand drew on her own mothering experiences to deploy a caring approach particularly toward working class students.

3. Patriarchal interests

The analysis suggests that the leadership practices of the women school principals do not float free from the patriarchal interests in the field. The interests of some of the community members of the schools headed by Iman and Tumaini are defined by patriarchy. Iman held that girls should not fall prey to patriarchal interests prevalent in her school community and actively recruited the support of a women's group to secure the interests of her female students. In a similar vein, Tumaini's desire to support her students is framed against a backdrop of a patriarchal culture that does not value girls' education. Her students are affected by gender inequalities in the slum environment of her school and her leadership approach is one of enabling the students to 'survive' amid these challenges.

While Iman and Tumaini both contest patriarchal interests in ways that represent a promising basis for gender transformation in their schools, the same cannot be said for Amani and Furaha. The leadership practices of both Furaha and Amani seemed to reinforce patriarchal behavior in their schools. Furaha, in her support of patriarchal dress

codes in her school, plays a role in facilitating patriarchal behaviour. Amani's male supported leadership approach reflects a positioning that helps her to secure her dominant position within the androcentric society. As French (1991) argues women who are accepted in the male dominated world have to demonstrate allegiance to the institution's values.

4. Competing interests in the field

The competing interests in the field constituted general struggles that the women principals had to contend with. In these struggles the principals promoted and safeguarded their interests from threats, such as opposition to change or reform, demands for rules to be overlooked, unethical demands by educational officials, unfair government practices and the interference of school sponsors. The leadership approaches deployed by the women principals were defined by their response to these interests as well as by the reservoir of their dispositions.

Many of the women principals adopted an assertive approach in response to threats. Iman deployed a strict approach to ensure that her school rules were respected. Tumaini resisted a school sponsor (that had high social capital) when the sponsor tried to run her school. In a similar way, Furaha told off an Italian sponsor that disagreed with her over the priority of a project in her school. While Furaha wanted a wall built around her school to improve the security of her students, the Italian sponsor wanted to feed and clothe the poor. Malaika on the other hand challenged the government over its policies when they threatened her interests. Similarly, when students resisted reforms that she had instituted in the school, she did not back down. Amani held her ground against the unethical demands of educational officials.

Other approaches that were deployed by women principals to safeguard their interests were less assertive. For example, Amani deployed a spiritual approach to defend herself: when a student questioned her ability to provide security in the school, she responded to the effect that God provided ultimate security. In comparison to the other women principals, she deployed a caring approach in a slightly different way. Her main concern

in her caring approach was to protect her students from unfair punishments. All the other women principals deployed their caring approaches to secure the interests of the marginal students in their schools.¹⁵

While the dispositional resources available to them shaped the women principals' practices, it is evident that their responses were adapted to the play of interests in the field. For example, the teachers and students in Amani's school tacitly demanded that she deploy a participatory approach, the lack of which would have provoked their resistance. At this point it was clear that the interests of the field members shaped her distributive leadership approach. Similarly, community members in Iman's school put pressure on her to ensure that her students succeeded in the national examination.

5. Social capital

In the process of leading, the women principals drew on the social networks available to them. These social networks were significant in providing them with support and enabled them to deploy particular approaches to leadership.

While some women principals had high levels of social capital, others were deprived of social capital. Malaika, who was in charge of students who were mainly from upper class origins, gained access to social networks and connections to socially recognised members of the society. In contrast, Furaha, whose school was located in a slum, networked with slum dwellers and the priest from a neighbouring church. While Iman armed herself with both local networks and contacts with well-connected individuals, both Furaha and Amani networked with politicians. Tumaini, on the other hand, was conscious that she had been deprived of the social capital or boys' network that male principals allegedly deployed to acquire grants for their schools.

Malaika used her social network as a source of strength in her confrontational approach toward educational officials when they threatened her interests. When she instituted

¹⁵ I discuss the plight of marginal students later in the chapter in relation the economic capital of the parents.

reforms in her school, she drew on the support of her executive committee. Other women principals drew on their social capital to support their students in a caring way. Furaha was occasionally briefed by slum dwellers about the social and gendered constraints of her students and this enabled her to handle the problems of her students in a caring way. Furthermore, she relied on the support of the priest in a neighbouring church to help her deal with difficulties facing her students. Similarly, Iman relied on the support she got from women's groups to persuade the community members to allow their daughters to attend and finish school. This support was useful considering that the community members did not value girl education. It was not uncommon for some of her community members to venture into her school in search of future brides.

Further, there were instances where the women principals used their social capital to access economic capital for their schools. Both Amani and Furaha deployed their social networks with politicians to access donations for their school projects. While Amani was concerned about 'reclaiming' taxes paid to a 'corrupt' government, Furaha recognised that politicians were her friends (as donors) and foes (as individuals with vested interests in her school). Iman's achievement oriented approach was grounded on her social network with a senior army officer who helped her access donations that enabled her complete her school projects successfully. In contrast, Tumaini who was endowed with very little of the social capital needed to access grants deployed a survival-oriented approach that enabled her to survive despite her weakened position in the field.

6. Economic capital of the school

The marginal economic status of some or all of the students was taken directly into account by four of the women principals in their caring approaches to leadership. These students occupied a marginal position by virtue of the low economic capital of their parents. Their economic necessity was most marked in their poor payment of school fees. The financial need of these students meant that the women principals could not send them home for fees, but rather retain them in school and look for other sources of financial support.

Iman deployed a caring approach toward marginal students by retaining them in school even when they could not raise school fees. The majority of the parents in her school could hardly afford to pay school fees, as they were very poor. For Tumaini sending marginal girls home for fees was risky, as they were likely to drop out of school granted that their parents or guardians were unable to raise their school fees. She allowed students to pay fees as money became available. Furaha found it difficult to send orphaned students home for fees, as they had no source of income and so she retained them in school as non-fee paying students. And although Malaika was in charge of students from upper-class origins, she was sensitive to the plight of students from working class backgrounds that were disadvantaged because they lacked school fees. She exempted some of these students from paying school fees. Hence the caring approach of these women principals was exercised in particular ways in relation to the low economic capital of their marginal students. On the other hand, Amani's caring approach focuses on the right for students to be punished fairly in the school.

The level of economic capital available within the school positioned both schools and principals in relation to the field. The relatively strong position occupied by Malaika, who was in charge of upper-class students, contrasts with the weaker position of Tumaini whose school was not well endowed with economic capital. Banking services that could be employed in Malaika's school were not utilized in Tumaini's school as the parents in her school could barely afford school fees let alone bank charges. While a school such as Malaika's has adequate school facilities, Tumaini found herself in jail when she failed to put up school toilets and thus contravened the health act. In the absence of social capital needed to access funds, Tumaini had to 'beg, beg and beg' to raise money for her school's toilets. Unlike other school principals, she also defied the government tendering policy, as it did not allow her to obtain school purchases at bargain prices.

7. Emotional capital

The women principals in this study required considerable emotional resilience to cope with their responsibilities, suggesting that emotional capital is a significant resource for leadership. Poignant emotions were evoked when some of the women principals

deployed a caring approach toward marginal students. It was an emotional affair for Tumaini when educational officials refused to register her students for the national examination as her school owed money to the provincial education office. In frustration she broke down in tears, unable to understand why there was no sympathy toward the plight of her students. Likewise the low economic capital of Iman's school elicited an emotional response from her. She spoke of wanting to give up the headship, as funds for running her school were not forthcoming, yet she was sympathetic to the plight of the marginal students in her school. Hence the low economic capital of the school activated a sense of powerlessness and frustration among these women principals.

The assertive response of some women principals to opposition in the school has to be understood in relation to their emotional well-being. For Malaika reforming her school from a high cost school to a regular school and having to deal with the resistance of her students to these reforms was an intense emotional experience that cost her, her health. In a similar vein, fighting education officials incurred an emotional cost for Amani. She spoke of stepping down from leadership when she could not take it any more. Hence frustration is a glaring feature of these women principals' efforts to be assertive when their interests were threatened. Less often, there were emotional moments of triumph. When, Tumaini completed her school toilets, after first of all being jailed for failing to comply with the health act and then 'begging' for funds to build the toilets, she spoke of feeling a sense of elation.

It thus became clear from the analysis that the emotional well-being of some of the women principals is affected by the low economic capital of their schools and their battle against competing interests in the field. Some writers suggest that women principals are constantly assailed and constrained by emotional demands in their schools (Blackmore, 1999; Sach and Blackmore, 1998). This study suggests that emotional well-being can be theorised as an emotional resource but concurs with Reay (2000) that future research is needed to further enhance the conceptual development of the notion of emotional capital.

Concluding comments

In the previous section I outlined insights regarding the relations between the particular histories, leadership dispositions and practices of five women principals. In this section I focus on insights that have emerged from the study with regard to the use of Bourdieu's theoretical and methodological resources. The conceptual framework for this study, adapted from the work of Bourdieu, was presented schematically in chapter three (figure 1). In this framework I proposed linking leadership approaches to leadership dispositions acquired in the past and positions (dependent on capital) held in the field. To make this link, I indicated in chapter four that a relational approach, which I adapted from the work of Bourdieu, would be utilised. I will now focus on the theoretical and methodological implications of this approach.

(a). Habitus

Bourdieu's theory helped me to gain some purchase on the social character of the leadership approaches of the five women principals. This represents a departure from dominant leadership theories and positions that have tended to neglect the social context of leadership. The analysis demonstrated how Bourdieu's notion of habitus provides the conceptual tools to examine the structural similarities between leadership practices and leadership dispositions. For Bourdieu, everyday practices are the product of constructed knowledge acquired from structured and structuring dispositions, the habitus. He posits that these dispositions can be traced from the collective history of an agent. Accordingly, Bourdieu depicts our actions as spontaneous as they have a historical life. The analysis suggests that the leadership approaches of the women principals are informed by their social historical experiences.

The analysis showed how leadership dispositions are interconnected with the gendered contexts within which they have been formed. In sexually characterizing the habitus, Bourdieu acknowledges the impact of gendered socialization in the formation of the male and female habitus. As he puts it, the sexually characterized habitus has "historical and highly differentiated structures, arising from a social space that is itself highly differentiated, which reproduce themselves through learning processes linked to the

experience that agents have of the structures of these spaces” (Bourdieu, 2001: 104). Thus, Bourdieu understands the practices of women and men as constituted by historically acquired dispositions that are highly gendered.

The analysis also showed how agency is grounded in habitus and available forms of capital. Some women principals were able to contest patriarchal interests and bring about social change in their schools. For example, the acts of resistance of Iman and Tumaini in their schools were informed by their leadership dispositions acquired from their past social experiences. Further it emerged that the success of Iman’s activist approach was dependent on her social capital (social network to a women’s group). The implication here is that her agency is boosted by the use of her social capital in the field. Notice that a criticism leveled against Bourdieu’s theory is that it is deterministic and hence compromises the agency of social agents. For example, Jenkins (1992) posits that actors are more knowledgeable about the social world than Bourdieu is prepared to allow, while Butler (1997) argues that social norms and institutions are open to disruption. On the basis of the analysis of this study, it is suggested that agency, resistance and activism are founded in habitus and available forms of capital.

While Bourdieu (1990a) asserts that early experiences have particular weight because the habitus tends to ensure its own constancy and its defense against change, the analysis of this study suggests that both formative and secondary experiences are crucial to the development of the habitus. Indeed, it emerged that the leadership dispositions of the women principals in this study are generated by not only their early childhood and schooling experiences but also their experiences as teachers. In this regard, it is suggested that a comprehensive analysis of a leadership habitus is strengthened by taking into account both formative and secondary experiences.

(b). Field and capital

Bourdieu’s notion of field and capital provide the conceptual resources to unpack the ways in which leadership practices are responsive to both the play of competing interests in a particular social environment and the availability of individual resources. Bourdieu

sees fields as structured spaces of positions that are dependent on field specific capital (resources that can be used in the field to wield power and access profits in the field). While Bourdieu views these positions as dominant, subordinate or homologous positions, he does indicate that they are not static as they can be improved or safeguarded through the use of field specific capital.

The women principals in this study were positioned in overlapping fields, as they had to engage with patriarchal, political, personal and social interests. It emerged that politicians, education officials, community members and parents had powerful interests in the school. Competing agendas also emerged between the women principals and their teachers and students. As Bourdieu states “there is not an interest, but there are interests, variable with time and place, almost infinitely so: there are as many interests as there are fields” (1990b, p. 87). This is an insight that has also surfaced in the work of Lingard et al (2003) who argue that the school leaders are located within the educational field at a point where they have to negotiate various logics of practice. The analysis suggests that the competing interests in the schools were challenging for the women principals. To respond to these competing interests, the women principals relied on their leadership dispositions (cultural capital) and social networks (social capital). But it was evident that lack of money in the school (economic capital) and low emotional well-being (emotional capital) positioned some women principals at a disadvantage in the face of competing interests in the field.

(c). Relational analysis

Bourdieu’s relational approach privileges the investigation of relations between actions and social contexts within an interpretative framework. This approach enabled me to link the leadership practices of the five women to leadership dispositions acquired in the past and to positions taken in the field. It also highlighted the relation between positions taken in the field and field specific capital. By means of these methodological steps, I was able to construct an insightful explanatory account of the practices of leaders within a particular historical and social context through analysis of the primary accounts of the

respondents. Overall, the analysis of the narratives of the five women principals in this study instantiates the relational approach.

(d). Reflexivity

This study instantiated the pursuit of validity by means of Bourdieu's notion of epistemic reflexivity. For Bourdieu, epistemic reflexivity is the systematic critique of the presuppositions inscribed in the research process (Bourdieu, 1998; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Unlike other forms of reflexivity such as autobiographical, sociological, individualistic and narcissistic reflexivity, it takes as its focus the object, methodology, data and data analysis of the research. Autobiographical reflexivity comprises a brief narrative of the author's journey to the research, sociological reflexivity addresses the social relation of knowledge, individualistic reflexivity comprises an individual's effort to overcome own biases, and narcissistic reflexivity focuses on the individual author to the exclusion of everything else (Maton, 2003). Epistemic reflexivity enabled me to address the distortions and presuppositions inscribed in the interview process, the narrative data and the data analysis in the study.

Directions for further research

Four directions for future research emerge from this study.

1. Although the analytical framework for this study provided for a rich socio-historical analysis of leadership approaches, it did not make use of all the narrative data obtained. The analysis blocked from view data that did not illicit straightforward relationships between leadership practices and leadership dispositions, and thus failed to bring contradictions to center stage.

An example of this can be found in the analysis of Malaika's narrative. Malaika adopted an assertive approach that was structurally similar to her assertive disposition acquired in her past. Yet at the same time, her narrative shows that she was passive toward prejudicial actions toward her. In her narrative she tells us that upper class parents in the school were condescending and prejudicial toward her, yet she does not speak of resisting their actions. This reveals a passive approach very unlike her assertive approach seen in

other contexts. While her passive response is most marked in her response to the prejudices of upper class parents, her assertive approach is most marked in her opposition to the interests of politicians, education officials and teachers. She thus seems to handle opposition toward her assertively, but prejudice toward her passively.

Her narrative also indicates that as a young woman she wanted to pursue a career in tsetse fly research but was advised by the Kenyan government that such a career was too difficult for a woman. Instead she was offered a chance to pursue a post-graduate diploma in education that would prepare her for a career in the teaching profession. While gender discrimination bears considerably in her entry of the teaching profession, it is clear from her narrative that she did not resist the government's 'patriarchal' decision to reject her original career choice on the basis of her gender. She seemingly endured this decision and passively took on a teaching career. These passive features of her disposition are the very antithesis of other more assertive and confrontational features of her dispositions.

If leadership practices are consistently patterned by habitus and field dynamics, as this study suggests, it would be fruitful to consider contradictions within leadership dispositions. Further research is thus needed to make sense of contradictory leadership dispositions as this could help us understand the dynamics of conflict in the leadership habitus.

2. My study focused on the narratives of women principals. A similar study of male principals and the ways in which their dispositions and practices are gendered presents an area for future research. Unless adequate research is carried out in relation to the practices of both male and female leaders, we are unlikely to understand the gendered dimension of leadership.

3. It is hoped that the findings of this study can contribute to the growing body of research that is grounded in the work of Bourdieu. Future research can go beyond

leadership and examine socially formed dispositions that structure learning competencies of female and male students and the teaching competencies of female and male educators.

4. This study was conducted in Kenya. It is suggested that future research can build on the results of this study to develop a study of gender and leadership in other social, geographic and political contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Background information about the education management system in Kenya

(1). The Ministry of Education (MOE)

The MOE is responsible for the provision of administrative and professional services in education at the national, provincial and district levels. The minister for education provides political leadership of the ministry. Beneath the minister is the permanent secretary of education who is the accounting officer of the ministry. Beneath the permanent secretary is the education secretary, the directors of education, provincial directors of education, the district and municipal education officers. These officers are responsible for the professional matters of education. Within the ministry of education is also the quality assurance (inspectorate) section that is in charge of quality assurance and control of educational programmes in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1999). Note that the old title for the Provincial Director of Education (PDE) was Provincial Education Officer (PEO).

(2). The Teachers Service Commission (TSC)

The function of the TSC is to recruit and employ registered teachers, assign teachers employed by the TSC for service in any school in Kenya, and to promote or transfer or terminate the employment of such a teacher (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

(3). Boards of governors

The Education Act provides for the appointment of boards of governors in secondary schools by the minister of education. Each board is answerable to the director of education on matters concerning management of schools and is answerable to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) on matters concerning behaviour, promotion and discipline of teachers. (School committees in primary schools play a similar function). The members of the BOG constitute elected members, the principal manager or head of

the institution, the sponsor or founder of the education institution and co-opted members (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

(4). Sponsors

The responsibility of school sponsors is to maintain the religious traditions of the school and where possible to assist in the physical development of the schools. Primary sponsors are those organisations that built the schools they sponsor. Secondary sponsors are those who are invited by the communities to sponsor the schools that were community projects (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

(5). The Parents Teachers Association (PTA)

The PTA, which includes all parents and teachers in a school, provides for the school's general development, maintenance and welfare (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

(6). The Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI)

KESI is responsible for developing the managerial capacity of staff in the ministry of education (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

Appendix B: The profiles of the women principals of this study

In this appendix, I provide some background information on the five women principals of this study. In particular, I present: (1) the biographic summary of the five women principals of this study, and (2) a brief sketch about their lives.

Figure 3: Biographic summary of the five women principals

Name of the respondent	Ethnic community	Age	Educational qualification	Professional qualification	Experience	School headed
Amani	Agikuyu	53	Graduate teacher I	Diploma in education	5 years	Rural/provincial/girls school
Iman	Somali	46	Headmistress I	Bachelor of education	9 years	Rural/district/girls school
Tumaini	Dholuo	49	Graduate teacher I	Diploma in education	6 years	Urban/community/girls school
Furaha	Dholuo	46	Graduate teacher III	Bachelor of education	10 ¹ / ₂ years	Urban/provincial/co-ed school
Malaiika	Agikuyu	59	Chief principal	Bachelor of science, post graduate diploma in education	30 years	Urban/national/girls school

Brief sketch about the lives of the five women principals of this study

1. Amani

Amani experienced her early childhood phase during the colonial era in Kenya. She attended a co-ed primary school soon after the colonial state of emergency. She says that her father also taught her how to read and write. She recalls going to school with much older students. The teacher whom she remembers most is teacher G, whom she describes as tough. She also remembers a male school captain in her early school that behaved like a teacher.

Her notable memories of life in secondary school were that of her personal spiritual development. Amani decided that she wanted to become a teacher when she was in secondary school because she enjoyed teaching children in Sunday school then. After

completing her secondary education, she was admitted to Kenyatta College, which is now Kenyatta University. She attained a Diploma in education and was posted by the government to teach in a rural school. In total she worked for four schools and became a principal in the fourth school.

Right from the beginning she became interested in counselling and noticed that the students would come to her for advice in spite of the fact that she was a very young teacher. She gradually joined the guidance and counselling team in the school and later on she was asked to become the head of the guidance and counselling department. Other leadership responsibilities that prepared her for leadership include her involvement in the Christina Union (CU). She also benefited from attending courses on chaplainry sponsored by Christian Churches Association (CCA).

Amani says that God gave her favor in the sight of her principal and the school board of governors so that she took responsibilities in positions that she was not fully qualified for ahead of time. Hence she became an acting head of department early on in her career. After serving for only one year as a head of department, she became a deputy principal. Amani's predecessor was later to hand over her position to her upon her early retirement. In a period dominated by corruption and lack of goodwill, Amani's biggest challenge to her principalship came from political interference. It is due to this problem that she eventually relinquishes school principalship to become an ordinary teacher.

2. Iman

Iman came from a polygamous family. Her father had many wives and so she had many siblings. When her father passed away, her mother brought her up and her elder brother played an important part in her life. She went to primary school at a time when girls' education was not valued in her community. However, her elder brother and teachers encouraged her to pursue education. Her most memorable moment in school was the shifter war brought about the Somali people in Kenya who wanted independence from the British colonialists. She recalls being stuck in school for three days as the war took place, not knowing where her relatives were.

Her dream was to become a leader like her elder brother. Her brother rose along the ranks to become a provincial education officer. She credits her brother in particular for preventing family members from marrying her off at a young age. Early marriage for girls was a prevalent cultural practice in her community at the time. She attended a boy's secondary school, as there were no girls' secondary schools in her home area at the time. Later on she attended a co-ed high school (away from her home area) to pursue her A-level education. She then joined a university and attained a degree in education.

After her university education, the government posted her to teach in a school in her home province. She wanted to teach in her home province so that she could make a contribution in the province. First, she hoped to be a role model for young girls and second she hoped to improve the standards of education in her home province. After four years as a teacher, she became the principal of her school. Confronted with negative stereotypes of women in the Somali culture, she had to contend with getting beyond these gendered constraints. She recalls that her greatest accomplishment was enabling girls in her school to pass the examinations and proceed to the university.

3. Tumaini

Tumaini was the fourth born in her family. She recalls that her father brought her up as if she was a male child. Her father was a headmaster of a primary school. She recalls that her father often told her stories about resolving conflicts in the community. Her mother was a housewife and a church leader. She admired her mother's counselling skills in the community. Her most memorable childhood memory is that of surviving flooding in her home area.

She attended a co-ed primary school. She recalls being given a tough time by the boys because she used to beat them in class work. She says that she was always among the top five best pupils in her class. After primary school education, she joined a boarding secondary school. During this time she became a dormitory prefect. Her favourite teacher in secondary school is one who inspired her to succeed. Inspired by her father, her ambition was to become a teacher. She later joined a teacher training college to pursue a

diploma in education. During this time she was very active in sports and received the 'best sports lady' of the year award.

After completing her diploma in education, she was posted by the government to teach in an urban school. After a few years she became a deputy principal and shortly after that she was appointed to head a slum based school. She talks about her inclination to overcome the formidable challenges in her school environment and her efforts in empowering girls living in the difficult circumstances of the slum environment.

4. Furaha

Furaha said that as a young girl she admired her father and wanted to be like him. Her father began his career as a primary school teacher. Later on he pursued university education and became a lecturer at a tertiary college of management. She recalls that he often rewarded her and her siblings for performing well in school. Her mother was a housewife but she sometimes worked as a traditional birth attendant. She says that her mother was a treasurer for church and women's groups. She also taught her about morality. Her favourite early childhood memories were the visits that she made to her grandmothers home. As a young girl, she admired renowned people such as Michael Jackson and later on Martin Luther King and Margaret Thatcher. She also dreamt of becoming a pilot or a lawyer or a doctor.

She attended a co-ed primary school and then proceeded to a secondary school run by missionaries. She spoke of her admiration for the missionaries' strict enforcement of discipline. She even says that she wanted to be like them and engage in the activities that they carried out. Her favorite teacher in school was her math's school that encouraged her not to be intimidated by the subject. After her secondary education, she joined university to pursue a degree in education. On completing her university education she was posted by the government to teach in a slum based school. She says that she was not keen about teaching and so she hoped to change her profession after two years. She however, changed her mind and remained in the teaching profession. Interestingly, two of

her sisters were teachers. While one of her sisters was a deputy principal before migrating to another country, the other sister was a principal until her retirement.

Furaha taught for five months before she became a deputy principal. Shortly after becoming a deputy principal, she became the principal of a slum-based school. She spoke of her unwavering determination to manage a co-ed school, saddled with the harsh realities of the slum environment. However, her career ends on a tragic note when her husband is shot while dropping her to school in the slum area. Shortly after this tragic incident, Furaha relinquishes school principalship and opts to become an ordinary teacher in a different institution.

5. Malaika

Malaika was the second born child in her family. She admired her mother whom she says worked harder than her father. Her mother was a housewife and farmer, while her father worked in the construction industry. As a young girl, she says that she bewildered villagers by riding a bicycle, as it was not common for girls to ride bicycles during that time. As an elder sibling, she recalls that she took command of the household chores in her mother's absence. She remembers her upbringing as cloistered with chores and so she saw her school life as more enjoyable than her home life.

She attended a co-ed primary school. She recalls that she was elevated to the position of the bell ringer in her school, privileged by the fact she came from a family that had a clock in the house. She spoke of being deeply devoted toward acquiring an education. She recalls that her male classmates often bullied her because she performed well in her class. In spite of this, she says that she managed to excel. She spoke about her achievements especially when she represented the East African region for an education camp.

She completed her secondary education in the US, where she says that the environment was female-friendly compared to the Kenyan environment. After completing her university education in the US, Malaika came back to Kenya hoping to pursue tsetse fly

research near Lake Victoria. However, she says that the government told her to pursue a teaching career as a tsetse fly research career was too difficult for a woman. She thus pursued a post-graduate diploma in education and on completion was posted to teach in a rural school by the government.

By the time Amani became a principal, she had the burden of just one year of teaching experience. She headed a provincial girls school and later went on to head a national girls school. She said that her greatest challenge during her career was one of transitioning her school from a high cost school to a regular school.

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Appendix C: Interview schedule for the women principals

Face sheet:

Interviewee's Name (optional):.....

Date of interview:.....

Place of interview:.....

Age:.....

Marital status:.....

Number of years as a:

Principal.....

Deputy/principal.....

Head of department.....

Highest professional qualification.....

Highest academic qualification.....

Number of students in the school:.....

(If the school is mixed) Number of boys..... Girls.....

Number of teachers in the school: Total: (Males.....Females.....)

Occupation of father.....

Level of education of father.....

Occupation of mother.....

Level of education of mother.....

Broad questions of the interview schedule

1. Are there lessons that you learned on leadership from people in your family, outside your family, and in school?
2. Are there people or groups that you find helpful or supportive to your work and the school?
3. Tell me about the history of how you became a teacher and subsequently a principal.
4. In the course of your career, would you describe the schools that you worked in as being 'female - friendly'?
5. During your career progression, do you think that being a woman was an advantage to What situations in your teaching and leading career have affected you emotionally/or deeply touched you?
6. In every community sub groups emerge that do not always agree. Can you tell me what groups have emerged in this school? What do these groups disagree on?

7. As a principal, do you find that there are challenges to your authority? If so where do these challenges come from? How do you deal with them?
8. Tell me about some of your practices that help you to win the support of the teachers and students?
9. In what ways do you recognize the contribution of outstanding teachers and students in the school?
10. Who makes the important decisions in the school?
11. What is different about the way you like work done in your school compared to other schools?
12. What are your favourite projects in the school? What challenges do you face with regard to these projects? How do handle them?

Sub questions of the interview schedule

Segment 1: Social origin

Broad question: Are there lessons that you learned on leadership from people in your family, outside your family, and in school?

Family experiences

1. What did you learn from the way your father worked in his occupation?
2. Was your father a leader in any capacity?
Who did he lead?
How did he handle leadership matters?
What did you learn from him on leadership?
3. What did you learn from the way your mother worked in her occupation?
4. Can you recall any leadership role that your mother played?
What did her leadership role entail?
Would you want to lead in the way she led?
5. What other members of your family were leaders?
How did they lead?
What did you learn from them concerning leadership?
6. Tell me about the leaders that led in the cultural and religious gatherings.
Who were they?
How did they lead?
7. Can you recall people outside your family who spent a lot of time with you?
Who were they?
What did you learn from them regarding leadership?
8. Which of your siblings was in charge of family chores?
Were you expected to be in charge of any family chores?
How was discipline handled in regard to your siblings?
9. What would you consider to be a memorable moment in your childhood?
Who were your childhood heroes/heroines?
What were your hopes and dreams as a child?
What were your favourite childhood games?

What were your favourite stories?

School experiences

1. What schools did you attend at primary and secondary education level?
Were they single sex or mixed schools?
If you attended both single sex and mixed schools, how would you compare the experience?
If you attended single sex schools, were there any interactions between your school and boys schools?
2. What was school like for you?
What do you remember most about your school?
3. What was your first experience with being given responsibility in school?
What did your responsibility entail?
What did this feel like?
4. Which teachers left a strong impression on you?
What did the teachers expect of you?
5. What was your ambition while you were in school?
Who motivated you in your career selection?
6. Describe some of the activities you engaged in at college?
What did you learn from these activities?

Segment 2: Professional trajectory

Broad question: Tell me about the history of how you became a teacher and subsequently a principal.

1. What attracted you to the teaching profession?
2. Did you teach single sex or mixed schools?
What did you like/dislike about these schools?
3. Describe your first days as a teacher?
Describe a typical day in your teaching career?
4. When you entered the teaching profession, what were you thinking of in terms of career growth?
5. What was your greatest accomplishment as a teacher?
Were you awarded any prizes for work well done?
How did you get them?
6. How were you treated in school meetings?
Did you sit on school committees?
7. What special assignments or responsibilities did you handle as a teacher?
Did you take on any acting role of any post in the school?
9. Where did your interest in heading a school come from?
10. In what ways do you feel your teaching career prepared you for principalship?
11. Have you benefited from additional training opportunities on management?
12. Did you interact with your predecessor prior to your taking over as principal?
What leadership qualities do you think your predecessor had?
13. Do you recall being inducted in the school upon appointment as a principal?

Tell me about this experience

Segment 3: Gender specific experiences

Broad question: In the course of your career, would you describe the schools that you worked in as being 'female - friendly'?

1. During your career progression, do you think that being a woman was an advantage to you?
2. What did you observe about other female teachers regarding promotions and deployment?
3. What was the hardest part in trying to get a leadership position in the school as a female teacher?
4. What kind of female leadership stereotypes did you encounter?
5. What challenges do you face in your multiple roles as a wife, a mother and a principal? (*Wife and mother where applicable*)
6. What advice would you give to young female principals about handling their private and professional lives?
7. What advice would you give to female teachers who are aspiring to become school principals?
8. Would you feel comfortable heading a boy's school?

Segment 4: Emotional experiences

Broad question: What situations in your teaching and leading career have affected you emotionally/or deeply touched you?

1. Which situations would you say have been the most stressful/distressing/frustrating?
How did you handle them?
2. Are there situations in the course of your career where you followed your heart/feelings (or what people like to call a 'mothers heart')?
3. Is there anything about the schools you have worked in that you still remember fondly?
4. If you were given a second chance to start your career over again, what would you change?
5. Tell me about any particularly humorous event in the course of your career?
6. Was there something special you did for "good luck" in the course of your career?
7. Were there moments when you felt lonely as you took on your leadership roles?

Segment 5: Social capital

Broad question: Are there people or groups that you find helpful or supportive to your work and the school?

1. Are their friends that you made as a child, in school or at work that have been helpful to you as a principal?
2. In college, did you belong to any student organization?
Do you still know any people from these organizations?
Have they been helpful to you as a principal?
3. Were you a member of any women's clubs, groups or organizations?
What kinds of activities did your post or associations have?
How have they been helpful to your career?
4. Have you been an active member of education related organizations?
Which organizations?
How have they been helpful to you as a principal?
5. Who were some interesting and important educationalists that you knew or worked with?
How did they help you in your career?
6. Are you a member of an association of fellow school principals?
In what ways does this association help you as a principal?
7. How often do you speak to education officers/inspectors of schools?
How do they support you as a principal?
8. Do you relate to any political leaders on school matters?
How do they help you as a principal?
9. Who were the mentors in your life?
Is there a person that really impressed you by something that they did?
10. Who did you turn to for assistance when in difficulty?

Segment 6: Power dynamics in the field (school)

Broad question: In every community sub groups emerge that do not always agree. Can you tell me what groups have emerged in this school? What do these groups disagree on?

1. Do the teachers disagree on matters pertaining to school goals?
Tell me about this.
2. Which teachers talk more during staff meetings?
Do you think that they are capable of influencing their colleagues?
3. Do you have meetings with the any groups of students?
What agendas do students bring up during these meetings?
4. Are there social groupings among the teachers?
What makes these groups different?
5. Do male and female teachers sometimes differ?
What issues do they differ on?
6. Do you have teachers from different ethnic-cultural communities?
Are there tensions among these teachers?

7. Do you find differences in the students' socio-economic backgrounds?
Do you find differences in the way they approach school tasks?
8. Do you deal with the parents who have different income levels?
What are the challenges?
9. In what ways do teachers and parents work together?
What are the challenges?
10. Describe some crises situations you were involved in the school?
What did you resolve it?
11. Are there school community members who insist on being heard in the school?
What kinds of issues are they particularly interested in?
12. Do you recall any politicians showing an interest in the school?
What were their interests in the school?

Segment 7: Leadership approach

(a) Focus on positional power

Broad question: As a principal, do you find that there are challenges to your authority? If so where do these challenges come from? How do you deal with them?

1. Has being a woman in a leadership position presented any challenges?
2. In what ways do you make the chain of command work in the school?
3. How do you maintain order when chairing staff meetings? And student meetings?
4. I understand that corporal punishment has been outlawed. How do you handle highly undisciplined students?
5. Give me an example of when students have complained about something in the school. How did you handle this and what was the outcome?
6. Tell me about the most difficult teacher that you had to deal with. How did you handle this case and what was the outcome?
7. What are the situations that have prompted you to disagree with a superior?
8. As a principal how do you handle teachers who are older than you?

(b). Focus on relationships

Broad question: Tell me about some of your practices that help you to win the support of the teachers and students?

1. What fun activities do you allow students to engage in?
2. What social activities do you carry out together with the teachers?
3. How do you make the school an enjoyable place to work in for the teachers?
4. How do you assist young teachers cope in the profession?
5. Do you have teachers that are disadvantaged e.g. handicapped? How do you assist them?
6. How do you assist new students cope in the new school environment?
7. What about academically weak students. How do you assist them?
8. How do you handle personal problems/favours of the teachers?

9. Which is the best time for teachers to consult you with regard to their personal problems? And students?
10. How do you handle the teachers that perform their duties poorly?

(c). Focus on motivation

Broad question: In what ways do you recognize the contribution of outstanding teachers and students in the school.

1. In what ways do you reward the teachers that assist you in administrative tasks (e.g. deputy head or head of departments)?
2. How do you reward the prefects in the school?
3. How do you reward the teachers that are loyal to you?
4. What kind of incentives do you give teachers?
5. What opportunities for advancement do you help your teachers with?
6. What kinds of training opportunities do facilitate for your teachers?

(d). Focus on sharing power

Broad question: Who makes the important decisions in the school?

1. In your absence who in the school can make decisions on your behalf?
2. Is there anyone in the school that you can discuss with important matters before discussing them in staff meetings?
3. What kinds of decisions are made in staff meetings?
4. How is the agenda set for staff meetings?
5. What steps do you take to introduce changes in the school?
6. What issues do you prefer to get group (teacher) consensus before going ahead?
7. Are there occasions when teachers or students get additional responsibilities?
8. Who distributes the various administrative duties to teachers and students?
9. In meetings with student groups such as the prefects what kinds of decisions are made?

In what ways do you let the teachers know what is going on in the school?

(e). Focus on tasks

What is different about the way you like work done in your school compared to other schools?

1. In which areas of school activity have you managed to maintain high standards?
2. What dilemmas do you face in ensuring that work is done promptly?
3. How do you ensure that the teachers do there their work?
4. How do you make the teachers aware that 'this is how I like work done'?
5. In what ways do you ensure that the students follow the school routine?
6. Are there times/situations when the school has had to break its routine?

7. What values do you support when running the school?

(f). Focus on the vision

Broad question: What are your favourite projects in the school? What challenges do you face with regard to these projects? How do handle them?

1. What risks do you take towards improving teaching/learning in the school?
2. As a principal what is the most important factor that motivates you to wake up every morning and come to work?
3. Where do get new ideas about how to run the school?
4. Do teachers and students give you new and interesting ideas on how to run the school?

Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

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