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## Leadership traits and characteristics of elected California women political leaders

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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ELECTED CALIFORNIA  
WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Ennette Y. Morton

April, 2013

June Schmieder, Ph.D.—Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Ennette Y. Morton

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation research project to:

My mother and father for instilling the love of learning, importance of education and are my lifelong role models.

My daughter Ashley, my precious girl, and a constant source of entertainment, joy, and love and who gives my life purpose.

My wonderful husband James, for his unconditional love support and always believing in me no matter what.

My BFF Kristin, who listens to me, encourages me and is always on my side.

My sister Dee, she is my little angel.

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Thank you to my friend Garnet – the use of the island condo for my own private writing retreat was huge. Because of your generosity, I had a pleasant and private location to write the foundation for this study.

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## ABSTRACT

From the beginning of women's entry into government and politics, namely the suffrage movement, the male lead political system did not embrace women's involvement. While women have played an influential role in the political system, they were largely relegated to supporting roles. However, within the past century, women have become a stronger force in policy making and continue to shatter the stereotypes that has persisted through the years.

The purpose of this study was to examine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the career progress of 6 elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. By exploring the leadership traits and characteristics of women political leaders, this research can (a) contribute to the scholarly studies of women political leaders, (b) provide information for women who aspire to serve in a political office, (c) offer an oral history and a rare personal perspective of current-day women political leaders, and (d) further the dialog regarding women's participation in the political arena.

This study used a qualitative design and an ethnographic research methodology to evaluate and elicit information on the shared experience of the elected women. The researcher used a purposive sampling strategy to select the participants who were women currently seated in elected positions at the local, state, and federal level of California government.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Each participant was videotaped and the transcripts of the videotape, along with the notes were the data source for the study. The information was analyzed and grouped by themes. The data yielded 7 themes the

participants self reported as the key traits, skills, and characteristics that are important to their political success: (a) responsibility, (b) sociability, (c) relationships, (d) consensus building, (e) self-confidence, (f) cooperativeness, and (g) persistence. The video analysis produced results that showed participants' nonverbal mannerisms were consistent with the themes they identified as important in their success.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Women's Introduction into Politics**

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, established Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United State of America. (Papan, 1981)

The adoption of the United States Constitution in 1787 by the founding fathers established one of the oldest democratic forms of government in the world, in which the people have the right to select those who will represent their voices when establishing government policy (Papan, 1981). Until the end of the Civil War, the only voices that were eligible to represent American society were white male property owners. With the adoption of the 15th amendment in 1870, all American men regardless of race were granted the right to vote (Calkins, 1975).

Although women were also integral participants in the development of early American society, their voices were excluded from governance. In an Apfelbaum and Hadly study (as cited in Bass & Stogdill, 1990), the researchers conclude that the failure of women to move en masse into positions of political leadership compared to their level of success in the private sector may be due to the fact that women were granted the right to work before they were allowed to vote. They further conclude, women leaders of social movements such as Margaret Sanger, Emma Goldman, Simone de Beauvoir, or Betty Friedan have been but a small percentage in comparison to the men who have sparked and organized social revolutions and reforms. The ratification of the 19th

amendment on August 18, 1920 granted women the right to vote and subsequently the opportunity to join their fellow male citizens in the governance of the United States of America (Calkins, 1975).

Throughout United States history, women have played an influential role in the political system even though they were largely relegated to supporting roles. However, within the past century, women have become a stronger force in policy making and continue to shatter the stereotypes that has persisted through the years. The first woman elected to hold statewide office was Soledad C. Chacon (D-New Mexico) who served as secretary of state for New Mexico from 1923 to 1926. Delaware, Kentucky, New York, South Carolina, and Texas also had women secretaries of state in the 1920s. The first elected woman treasurer, Grace B. Urbahns (R-Indiana), also served from 1926 to 1932. The first woman elected as a state governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross (D-Wyoming), was elected to fill her deceased husband's seat. In 1925 the first woman elected governor, without following her husband, was Ella Grasso, who presided over the State of Connecticut from 1975 to 1980 (Carroll, 2004).

Beginning in the 1970s, women sought and attained public office in record numbers, and in the late 1990s they made significant inroads. As noted in Figure 1, the number of state elected women officials has steadily grown during the last 3 decades, although in the earlier years, the growth was small and incremental. Significant gains were made from 1983 to 1995, and a slight decline occurred from 2000 to 2004 (Carroll, 2004).

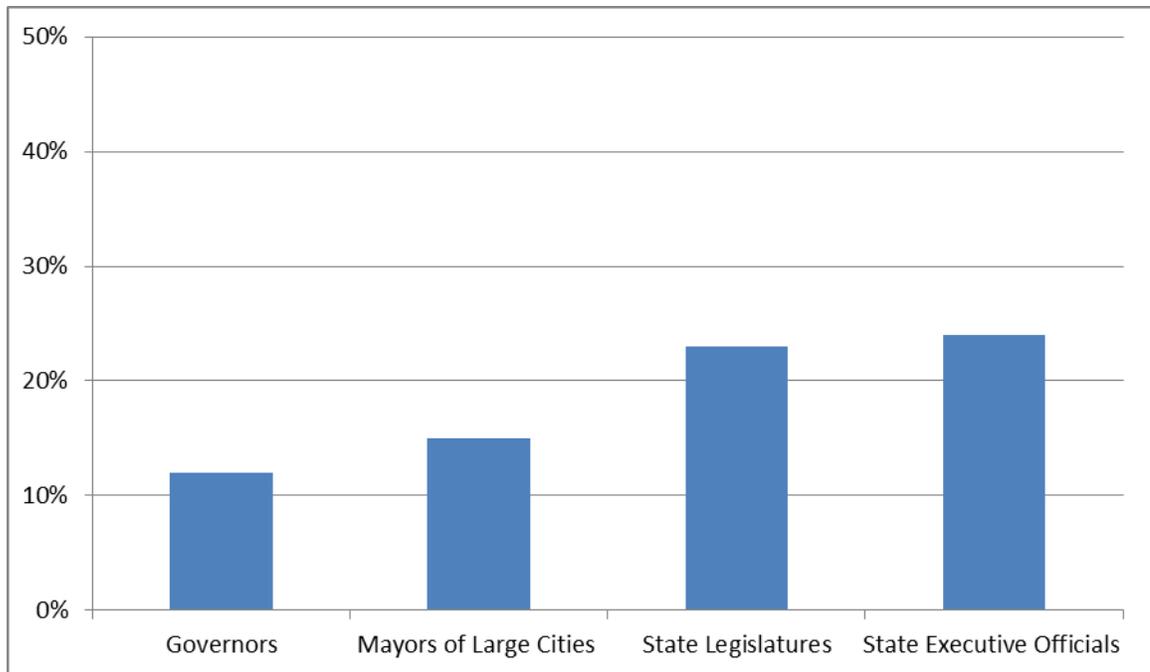


Figure 1. Proportion of women among statewide elected officials. Adapted from *Center for American Women and Politics Fast Facts*, 2009. Copyright 2013 by the Center for American Women and Politics Eagleton Institute of Politics. Adapted with permission.

Despite gains in certain areas, the right to vote has yet to translate fully to equal representation of women in the governing system. This disparity exists at every level of government, from local to federal (Procopio, 2005). Women have voted at higher rates than men in various presidential elections since 1980. In the 2004 elections, 8.8 million more women than men turned out to vote (Corporate America Women's Program [CAWP], 2008). According to U.S. Census Bureau data, in 2008, 10 million more women voted than men (Kronholz, 2009). While women vote at higher rates than men and make up approximately 51% of the population of the United States, the proportion of women in state legislatures is merely 23.6%. This small pool of women on the state level of government translates to a larger disparity on a national level. As of June 2009, women elected legislators constituted fewer than 17% of the U.S. House of Representatives, up only 4% from a decade ago, and women in the U.S. Senate constitute

only 17%, up 8% from the last decade (CAWP, 2009). Figure 2 shows the percentages of women elected to the U. S. House of Representatives and Senate.

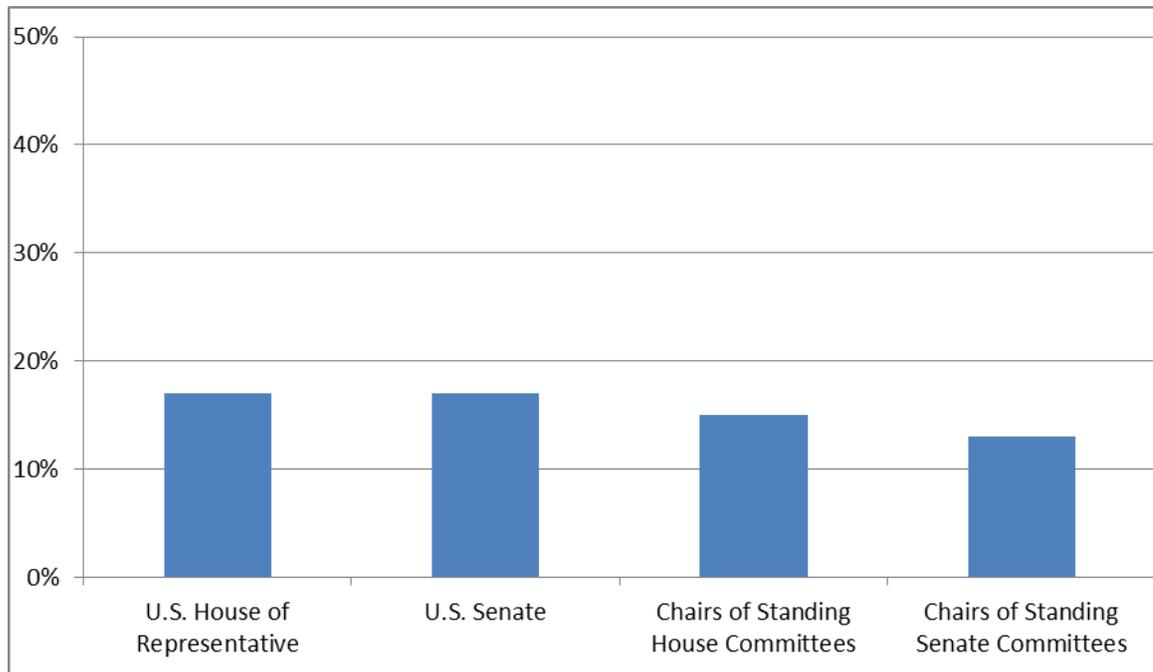


Figure 2. Percentages of elected women in the U.S. Congress. Adapted from *Center for American Women and Politics Fast Facts*, 2009. Copyright 2013 by the Center for American Women and Politics Eagleton Institute of Politics. Adapted with permission.

Women are beginning to change history again, this by assuming and coming close to some of the highest posts in the American political landscape. In 2002, Nancy Pelosi (D-California) became the first female House Minority Leader and then in 2007, Americans witnessed Nancy Pelosi take the oath of office and become the first woman to assume the responsibility of Speaker of the House, the third highest political position in the U.S. (Daly, 2007). Later, in the 2008 election year, Americans had the opportunity to make history again when Hillary Rodham Clinton become the first women almost to win the Democrat party nomination for president (Halperin, 2008).

## **The Study of Leadership**

Researchers continue to feature the topic of leadership in empirical studies, often concentrating on the history of various leaders' behavior and the factors that contributed to their effectiveness. The sheer preponderance of topics and features in almost every textbook on organizational behavior demonstrates the demand for studying leadership. Academic books, journals, reports, essays, and articles on leadership number in the thousands. Sociologists in the early 1900s tended to explain leadership as stemming either from a specific role or from the individual's environment. Later in the century, sociologists viewed leadership as an aspect of role differentiation or an outgrowth of the social interactive process (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

The general study of leadership can be traced to the emergence of civilization and can be considered one of the world's oldest preoccupations, as Bass and Stogdill (1990) note, "Leaders as prophets, priest, chiefs, and kings, served as symbols, representatives, and models for their people in the Old and New Testaments, in the Upanishads, in the Greek and Latin classics, and in the Icelandic sagas" (p. 3). The authors further observe that all social and political movements require leaders to begin them. Myths and legends about great leaders are passed down through generations and have contributed to the development of civilized societies. From the initial studies of leadership conducted by philosophers, history can essentially be viewed as the study of what leaders did, how they did it, and why.

As women leaders have increased their visibility, so has interest in gender-related differences become more prominent in the study of leadership. Some researchers have suggested that since societal changes regarding women in leadership roles are occurring

rapidly, previous leadership research that was predominately male oriented may not apply across genders (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Stogdill (1990) barely addressed gender differences in his 1948 review of leadership and in the first edition of his leadership handbook in 1974.

In contrast, the past two decades have seen a surge in books, articles, and studies of gender-related leadership differences. From this surge in research, opposing positions have emerged, one that concludes women differ fundamentally on how they lead (Helgensen, 1990; Loden, 1985; Rosner, 1990). Other studies conclude that women have yet to find their own female voice (Gilligan, 1982; Hare, 1996; Kibbe, 1996). While other literature and researchers claim that men and women lead in similar ways (Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Klenke, 1993).

Eagly and Johnson (1990) published findings on gender differences in leadership styles based on studies conducted between 1961 and 1987. They concluded that in organizational studies, female and male leaders did not differ in terms of whether they adopted a more interpersonal or task-oriented style. However, they found that women tended to adopt a more democratic or participative, less autocratic style than men. Usually authors studying only women have cautioned that they do not wish to compare men and women as leaders. Instead, they study women from a woman's perspective or voice, and such studies tend to focus on the diversity of women as leaders. However, differences do exist between male and female leaders, a conclusion usually attributed to social and cultural influences (Willemsen & Van Engen, 2000).

## **The Problem**

From the beginning of women's entry into government and politics, namely the suffrage movement, the male lead political system did not embrace women's involvement. Women struggled to balance conflicting demands stemming from their various roles as politicians, wives, and mothers, and often suffered harsh treatment from their male counterparts. Running for political office also presented women with the challenge of how their constituents would perceive them; in other words, how masculine or feminine they should be in order to be perceived as effective. Further aggravating the issue, when women first entered the political landscape, information on a woman's legislative potential or accomplishments was of little interest to the press. Mass media did not pursue articles and stories unless they dealt with a woman's superficial personal characteristics. For example, when Jeannette Rankin, the nation's first congresswoman, arrived in Washington in 1917, the reporters sent to interview her were instructed to ask if she could make a pie. The *Nation* gave an account of her appearance for the opening day of the 65<sup>th</sup> Congress, describing her as the typical woman from top to toe, paying special attention to her hair color and style, nose, chin, cheeks, jaw, small figure, and well-fitting garments. It was the late 1960s before the press, journalists, and political scientists began to compile relevant biographical data and conduct serious interviews with women elected officials (Flammang, 1997).

Despite society's lack of serious interest in women's leadership style, traits, characteristics, and abilities, women persisted and continued to participate in politics. Today, women leaders are making their mark on history at the national, state, and local levels of government. Their voices, leadership styles, and power have significantly

impacted almost every facet of the political arena (Rosner, 1990). Women have proved that they have the capacity to be effective, ardent, capable, and strong political leaders who can get the job done. They have cultivated a political leadership style that successfully utilizes specific traits such as initiative, persistence, and confidence. These powerful political women vary in age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Women are presently making their way into the top levels of business and politics, not by adopting the styles and habits that have proved successful for men, but by drawing on the skills and attitudes, they have developed from their shared experiences as business women, community organizers, mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives. Women are succeeding because of certain characteristics generally considered feminine and inappropriate in leaders, such as charisma, interpersonal skills, hard work, and relationships. When discussing successful leadership performance, men were more likely to define the leadership traits that made them successful as having derived from their organizational position of power and formal authority. Whereas women who were surveyed were more likely to describe their successful leadership traits as charisma, interpersonal skills, hard work, and relationships.

The problem is studies comparing the leadership styles of men and women reveal evidence of both similarities and differences between the two, but rarely document specific traits and characteristics that women believe are important for successful leadership. Researchers theorize that women and men have fundamentally different leadership traits and characteristics and have prominently documented these in leading articles, books, and seminars on leadership. These traits and characteristics will be covered in the review of literature in this study. Additionally, experienced researchers in

the field have developed the theoretical notions that the masculine mode of management is characterized by qualities such as competitiveness, hierarchical authority, high need for control, and unemotional, analytic problem solving. While what could be viewed as the female mode of management is characterized by qualities that are identified as more interpersonally oriented style, and less task-oriented forms of motivation (Willemsen & Van Engen, 2000).

The increasing focus in the media and in research on women in politics is well deserved not because women are at war with men, nor because they are aliens in their leadership behavior, but because women are an overwhelmingly powerful and influential force in politics today. They make up the majority of voters, turn out to vote at higher rates than men, and make formidable candidates, winning as often and raising as much or more money as men in similar races (Seltzer, Newman, & Leighton, 1997).

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the career progress of six elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. By analyzing structured interviews, this dissertation will seek to discover the key traits and characteristics that elected women will self-report as important to their political success as leaders. This dissertation will also analyze video recordings of these interviews to document visually the participants' verbally and nonverbally communicated traits and characteristics.

As Carroll (2004) notes in her landmark study on women in politics, those interested in increasing the number of women serving in political office often refer to the

political pipeline from which women candidates for higher level offices emerge. This pipeline draws from the pool of women who have gained political experience at the local or state level. However, if the number of politically experienced women declines, those with the visibility and contacts necessary to obtain a seat in the U.S. House or Senate are likely to stagnate or decline as well.

Carroll (2004) further indicates that, more often than men, women tend to seek political office after receiving encouragement to do so. One study showed that only 11% of women politicians, compared with 37% of men, said the idea to enter political office was entirely their own. In the same vein, the study showed that 37% of women, compared with 18% of men, reported they had not seriously thought about running for office until someone made the suggestion.

Findings such as those from Carroll (2004), and Bass and Stogdill (1990) indicate the need for a renewed commitment by educators, advocacy organizations, and incumbent women politicians to provide tools and resources to help actively recruit women for both elected and appointed positions with the political system. The intent of this study is to contribute to the effort of grooming women to become leaders in their own right, to ensure that the accomplishments of the women in the past are not lost, and to promote the continued growth of future generations of women holding office. The researcher hopes readers will identify with the information and insights gleaned from the participants—women currently seated in elected positions—inspiring readers to build on their strengths, traits, and characteristics and become leaders in their own communities.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the specific leadership traits and characteristics that have contributed to the career progress of several elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions help develop a composite of the key leadership traits women political leaders participating in this study have self-reported as important to their achievements and their current level of success:

1. What are the key traits, characteristics, and skills that the participants believe enabled them to achieve their current position?
2. What are some of the barriers that these women feel impeded their progress?
3. Based on analysis of interview videotape data, do any perceivable visual traits relate to the participants' leadership styles?

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terminology will be used consistently throughout this study.

**Characteristics of Leaders:** For the purpose of this research, characteristics of leaders are identifiable traits and behaviors that those perceived as leaders possess or that aspiring leaders wish to cultivate. Some identifiable traits include intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability.

**Federal (National) Government:** The U.S. Constitution outlines the federal government's powers of authority, which consist of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The people elected the president, who serves as the commander in chief and

oversees the development of the U.S. budget and armed forces. The legislative branch is composed of elected members of congress from each state who serve in the House of Representatives and Senate. The judicial branch consists of the national court system. the president appoints Federal judges. Several participants in this study are elected members of Congress currently serving in the House of Representatives and Senate.

**Leadership:** For the purpose of this study, leadership is a process in which one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004a).

**Local Government:** This term refers to city and county governments. The U.S. Constitution does not mention local governments. Instead, states must outline the powers of municipal and county governments within their charters.

**Politics:** Politics is broadly defined as a power relationship that involves the ability to influence the behavior of others and relies on the belief that politics works for the betterment of all those who are at the margins as well as those who are at the center (Rogers, 2005).

**State Government:** The U.S. Constitution outlines the powers of authority for state governments. The governor of the state operates as the executive authority, and commander in chief of state resources and budget. State governments operate similarly to the federal (national) government in that elected officials represent citizens in the state house of representatives and senate. Women in this study are elected officials who currently serve in the legislative branch as state congress members and senators.

**Trait Theory:** Trait theory focuses solely on the leader and not the leader's followers or situation. It is essentially concerned with the traits that leaders exhibit.

Women Political Leaders: For the purpose of this study, women political leaders are women who currently serve in an elected capacity as a senator, representative, or city council member in the local, state, or federal legislative branch of government.

### **Significance of the Study**

Much of the current research and literature about women and gender-related issues provides only generic information about women and how-to leadership formulas. Conversely, there is scant literature geared toward helping women build the traits, capabilities, and characteristics that will translate into successful leadership roles in politics, business, or their communities.

As Steven Procopio (2005) discussed in his dissertation *The Emergence of Women Candidates*, increasing the number of women politicians would protect the legitimacy of the political system. Even if male politicians adequately represent women's substantive concerns, the legitimacy of the political system is called into question if people believe women are underrepresented. As the world continues to change and expand into a globally connected society, the role of women in American politics will be a key factor in developing successful relationships with other world leaders, many of whom are women. This study contributes to the study of women political leaders by developing a composite of successful leadership characteristics and traits for this group. The study furthers the research on the process of becoming a woman political leader, contributes to the research literature, and, the researcher hopes, inspires women to participate in government and politics, thereby increasing women's participation in the political arena.

**Significance for women.** This study provides a current view of women leaders who are making a difference in society. This information might be used as a road map for younger generations that are interested in leadership, public service, or even political office. This study also serves to reinforce the positive efforts of women who serve as role models for our society's future women leaders.

In general, negative stereotypes and images often characterize prominent women leaders and females in high-ranking political offices, which can discourage other women from pursuing such high-visibility positions. This study provides information for women who aspire to achieve a prominent role in politics.

**Significance for educators.** Educators who are seeking real-world examples of women in political leadership roles for students will find this study beneficial, as it offers an oral history and a rare personal perspective of current-day women political leaders in addition to general theories of leadership.

**Significance for researchers.** This study offers researchers information that will help with future studies on women, politics, and trait leadership. Although this study is limited to elected California women political leaders serving in the legislative branch at the local, state, or federal level of government, further studies can focus on women political leaders serving in the judicial or executive branch of government, other states, on school boards, on county boards of supervisors, and in other elected public office positions.

### **Assumptions**

This research is based on the following assumption:

The researcher assumed participants were forthcoming and truthful.

## **Limitations of the Study**

This research is bound by the following limitations:

- Participants in the study were limited to six elected women: two from the local government, two from state level offices, and two from the federal government. This sample selection will limit the generalization of the study.
- Participants in the study were elected to the legislative branch, not appointed.
- Participant racial identity was not ascertained, as it is not a focus of this study.
- Participant religious identity was not ascertained, as religion is not a variable included in this study.
- Marital status and socioeconomic status were not included as variables in this study.
- Political party ideologies were not included in this study.
- Specific political issues are used only as background for understanding and discussing leadership, traits, and characteristics.
- Details related to campaign elections are used only as examples of the participants' leadership traits and characteristics.

## **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduces the topic of elected women leaders, describes the problem, presents the research questions, outlines key definitions, highlights the research limitations and assumptions, and discusses the significance of the study.

- Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature relevant to this study, which includes a history of women in politics, an examination of gender differences, and an overview of the existing body of work regarding leadership styles.
- Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, which includes research design, an overview of the interview process, and criteria for selecting participants.
- Chapter 4 includes profiles of the participants and a discussion and analysis of the collected data.
- Chapter 5 summarizes the study and discusses the conclusions based on the collected data. Recommendations for future research are included in this chapter.

## **Summary**

Chapter 1 focused on: (a) the problem, (b) purpose of the study, (c) research questions, (d) significance of the study for various populations, (e) assumptions made regarding the study, (f) limitations of this study, (g) definition of terms used for the research, and (h) how the study is organized. Women have become a significant force in politics and continue to contradict the stereotypes of women leaders that have persisted for centuries. Their leadership and power have made an impact on almost every facet of the political system. The purpose of this study is to determine the specific leadership traits and characteristics that have contributed to the career progress of several elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. political system. Three research questions provide the framework for this study and guide the development of a composite of the key leadership traits and characteristics that the participants self-reported. The research questions focus on discovering key traits,

characteristics, and skills; identifying possible barriers to success; and addressing nonverbal behaviors that contribute to the success of California women political leaders.

## Chapter 2: Review of Selected Literature

It is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of the United States for women to serve as political leaders at the local, state, and federal levels. For either gender, leadership is one of those rare qualities that most people know when they see it, but is difficult to describe. A multitude of definitions of this term exist, many of which describe leaders as people who are able to think and act creatively in nonroutine situations and who set out to influence the actions, beliefs, and feelings of others (Doyle & Smith, 2001).

While women are moving into highly visible leadership political positions, they remain in the distinct minority. As a result, women's behaviors as high-ranking leaders in the political arena have come under added scrutiny. Although more women are seeking political office, relatively few empirical studies have examined women's rhetorical leadership in these powerful positions (Bligh & Kohles, 2008).

The following literature review comprises four sections. The first involves an overview of leadership styles, including trait leadership. This section includes a discussion of the emergence of trait theory and the benchmark research conducted by key researchers, including Stogdill (1974) Mann (1959) Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986) and Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991). The results of their landmark studies have led to further examination of the differences that might exist between men and women in leadership. The second section focuses on the literature that discusses gender leadership. The third section reviews the body of work regarding female leadership in government and how the media portray women leaders. The fourth section reviews political leaders and the impact of nonverbal communications on their followers.

## **Overview of Trait Leadership Theory and Other Leadership Styles**

According to Warren Bennis (1989) leaders are extraordinary people who are able to express themselves fully; they know what they want, why they want it, and how to communicate what they want to others. Once one begins to study people whom society has labeled as great or effective leaders, it becomes evident there are qualities that make these individuals different from others.

Since Bennis (1989) conducted his studies, leadership has changed. The information revolution has transformed politics and organizations. Hierarchies are becoming flatter and embedded in networks of contacts. Most people respond to different incentives and political appeals. Polls show that people are less deferential to authority in organizations (Nye, 2008). Other management experts report that their studies observe an increase in the use of more participatory process of leadership (Vroom, 2000). Further, skeptics deny leaders make a difference at all and claim that people make the mistake of leader attribution error. This error occurs when people see something going right or wrong with a group or organization and then attribute the result to the leader. For example voters reward and punish politicians for economic conditions that often were created before the leader took office (Hackman, 2002).

Leadership is then attributed to the people or general public, which believes its ability to reward or punish incumbents through the vote implies this influence (Nye, 2008). Other leadership theorists claim leaders matter a little more or a little less, depending on how they diagnose those problem situations for their political communities, what responses they prescribe for meeting them, and how well they mobilize the political communities' support for their decisions (Tucker, 1995).

**Definition of leadership.** In his review of leadership research, Stogdill (as cited in Northouse 2004a) notes there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it. In one of his early landmark studies, Bennis (1959) describes leadership as the process by which an agent induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner. Katz and Kahn (1966) described leadership as any act of influence on a matter of organizational relevance. Tannenbaum, Weschler, and Massarik (1961) defined leadership as interpersonal influence exercised in situations and directed through the communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal. Leadership is actions that focus to create desirable opportunities (Campbell, 1991). Cashman (1998) notes leadership is authentic self-expression that creates value. Maxwell (2002) defines leadership as influence and states a person will never be able to lead without influence. Leadership has been defined as a social relationship with key components—leaders, followers, and the contexts in which they interact. Leader in this context are defined as those who help a group create and achieve shared goals (Nye, 2008).

Leadership has been conceived in a variety of ways: as the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a form of influence, as an aggregate of behaviors, as a form of persuasion, as an aspect of power relations, as an instrument to achieve goals, and as an effect of interaction (Wren, 1995). Many of the definitions of leadership are ambiguous. However, while the definitions remain ambiguous even after 30 years, there is sufficient similarity among definitions to establish a broad classification for leadership qualities (Pfeffer, 1977).

Social psychologist Richard Hackman (as cited in Ciulla, 2004) concluded that the field of leadership is still unformed. There are no generally accepted definitions of

what leadership is, no single approach for studying it, and little agreement about the best strategies for developing and exercising it (Hackman & Wageman, 2002). To this point, Thayer (1988) argues that leadership and communication are inseparable; Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) define leadership as meaning creation through discourse; and Conger (1991) suggests how leaders craft and frame their messages through language is a vital component of leadership that has true impact.

In the past 50 years, leadership scholars have conducted more than 1,000 studies in an attempt to determine definite styles, characteristics, or personality traits of leaders, and yet none has produced a clear profile of the ideal leader (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007).

**Trait leadership.** Although thousands of leadership theories exist and many pages of literature have been written to explain the role of leaders, trait leadership remains one of the most referenced, yet most contentious, of the leadership theories. The trait approach to leadership resulted from one of the first systematic studies conducted to determine what made certain people great leaders. The innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political, and military leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, and Napoleon Bonaparte were considered the basis for trait theory or what has become known as the great man theory. It was believed these types of leaders were born with their leadership traits and hence were natural leaders (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Thomas Carlyle originally proposed that great leaders possessed unique qualities or traits that allowed them to rise to high positions of power regardless of the setting or situation (Carlyle, 1907, as cited in Bass & Stogdill,

1990). This theory provided the basis for further studies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that began with the development of measures of individual differences. As noted by Binet and Simons' seminal work on early intelligence measures in 1905, there are other aspects of behavior or performance that can be measured, such as traits (Binet, 1905). Cited in Bass and Stogdill's 1990 *Handbook of Leadership*, Bernard, Bingham, Tead, Page and Kilbourne all used traits of personality and character to explain the actions of great leaders (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Bird (1940) originally compiled a list of 79 traits from 20 psychology students. In 1947, Smith and Krueger completed a similar study of traits for educators, and Jenkins completed a study for military leaders (as cited in Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

The early research studies from 1904 through 1947 on traits of leadership identified specific personality characteristics. In research conducted by Gibb (1958), he concludes that leadership has usually been thought of as a specific personality trait that some persons possess and others do not; or some achieve in high degree and others scarcely at all. A few of the primary methods these studies employed were: (a) observation of behavior in group situations, (b) choice of associates (e.g., voting), (c) nomination or rating by qualified observers, (d) selection and rating of persons occupying positions of leadership, and (e) analysis of biographical and case-history data (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). In many of the studies conducted during this period, observations and time sampling of behavior in group situations, analysis of biographical and case-history data, and various supplementary measures were employed in an effort to determine the traits associated with leadership.

The next substantial development in terms of the great man theory of leadership studies began in 1947 when Max Weber proposed trait theory was closely aligned with the theory of charismatic leadership (charisma is the Greek word for gift). Borrowing from a description in theology, Weber (as cited in Bass & Stogdill, 1990) described a charismatic leader as a religious savior, an innovative prophet with personal magnetism, promoting a specific doctrine. Weber's charismatic leadership theory triggered heated discussions among sociologists, psychoanalysts, and political commentator.

When Stogdill (Bass & Stogdill, 1990) conducted the most prominent of studies of leadership traits, he began by carrying out two separate reviews of previous trait studies. Stogdill (as cited in Parker, 2001) and others in the early 1900s believed that anyone could cultivate and develop leadership traits. In his first study conducted in 1948, Stogdill reviewed 124 studies on the great man or trait leadership theory published between 1904 through 1947. In the second study, Stogdill (1974) analyzed another 163 studies completed between 1948 and 1970 in order to determine if certain traits are held exclusively by those in leadership positions. Through his first study, Stogdill was able to identify a group of important leadership traits that demonstrated how individuals became leaders. The findings of the second study validated the original idea that a leader's traits and characteristics are indeed an important aspect of leadership (Northouse, 2004d). Additionally, as cited in Bass and Stogdill (1990), Mann published research that examined more than 1,400 studies. Mann's review found positive relationships between leadership and personal traits such as intelligence, adjustment, extroversion, dominance, masculinity, and sensitivity in 71% to 80% of all the studies.

Stogdill's (1948) extensive reviews support the views of early researchers such as Bird and Jenkins, who concluded that although leaders possess certain qualities that differ from those possessed by followers, traits required for leadership differ from situation to situation, and personality traits alone cannot accurately predict leadership abilities.

After Bass and Stogdill's (1990) landmark studies, the trait approach fell out of favor. However, within the last 20 years, the trait approach to leadership has taken on renewed interest. DeVader and Alliger (as cited in Northouse, 2004d) conducted a meta-analytic study to reassess Mann's findings. They determined that intelligence, masculinity, and dominance were significantly related to how others perceive leaders. The authors argued strongly that personality traits could be used to distinguish leaders from followers. In their qualitative review of previous studies, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) contend that leaders are not like other people. Their study identifies six traits they believe leaders possess: drive, the desire to lead, honesty, confidence, cognitive ability, and task knowledge.

More than a century of research on leadership traits has produced an extended list of traits that can be associated with leaders or cultivated by those who would like to be perceived as leaders. According to this research, individuals can be born with these traits or learn them or both (Northouse, 2004d). An overview of the leadership research studies by Stogdill, Mann, Lord, DeVader, and Alliger and Kirkpatrick, and Locke (as cited in Northouse, 2004d). reveal several major traits shared by their findings: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. Table 1 presents a summary of the key traits identified in each of the noted studies (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Eagly & Makhijani, 1992; Gardner, 1989; Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005; Helgensen, 1990;

Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Stogdill, 1974) and provides an example of the varied traits that are perceived as instrumental for leaders to possess.

Table 1  
*Leadership Traits and Characteristics as Defined by Various Researchers*

Stogdill (1974)	Gardner (1989)	Kirkpatrick & Locke (1991)	Bennis & Nanus (1997)	Helgesen (1990)	Greenberg & Sweeney (2005)	Eagly & Makhijani (1992)
Intelligence	Intelligence and good judgment	Cognitive ability	Analytical			
Responsibility	Willingness and eagerness to accept responsibility		Considerate			
Insight	Knowledge of the task at hand		Perceptive and empathetic	Maintains a big-picture view		
Persistence	Courage, resolution, and steadiness	Drive	Persistent	Work at a steady pace but with breaks built in	Rebounding and learning from setbacks	Task oriented
Sociability	Skills in dealing with people			Prefer live-action encounters	Inclusive, team-oriented approach	Collaborative
Self-confidence	Confidence	Self-confidence	Self-reliant			
Influence	Capacity to motivate	Leadership motivation			Distinctly persuasive	
Tolerance	Understanding of followers and their needs		Intuitive			
Cooperative	Capacity to win and hold trust	Integrity and honesty				
Achievement	Capacity to manage, decide, and set priorities		Nurturing	Make time for nonwork related activities		
Initiative	Need to achieve		Perceptive		Willingness to take risks	
	Ascendance, dominance, and assertiveness		Curious	Proactive in sharing information		Share in decision making
	Adaptability of approach			Open to unscheduled tasks or interruptions		
Alertness	Physical vitality		Enthusiastic and energizing	Maintain network outside the organization		

*Note.* The data in this table are from *A Composite of Leadership Characteristics of Athletic Leaders at the University of Tennessee* by Paul Pinckley. Copyright by Paul Pinckley, Sr 2007. Adapted with permission.

More than a century of research and comprehensive studies support the strengths of trait leadership theory. Northouse (2004d) notes the theory fits clearly with society's notion that leaders are ordinary individuals with extraordinary drive, ability, and knowledge. The trait approach is consistent with this perception because it is built on the premise that leaders are different and their differences reside in the special traits they possess. Last, the theory has a breadth and depth of studies supporting it, and offers benchmarks for the necessary qualities of a leader.

Although an enormous number of studies have been conducted on trait theory, this approach to identifying leaders has also earned its fair share of criticism. Newstetter, Feldstein, and Newcomb (1938) report that acceptance or rejection of a leader is not determined by how they may treat their followers. The followers accept or reject the leader based on some or all of his or her traits and behaviors, but the researchers cannot successfully measure what those traits and behaviors are. Furthermore, the authors conclude that these findings provide devastating evidence against the concept of the operation of measurable traits in determining social interactions. Newstetter and his associates' findings do not appear to provide direct evidence either for or against a theory of traits, but they do indicate that the factors that determine an individual's status in a group are most difficult to isolate and evaluate (Newstetter et al., 1938).

After conducting his first review of studies, Stogdill (1948) pointed out that the trait approach failed to consider situations. He noted that people who possess certain traits may be leaders in some situations, but not in others (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Another criticism of trait theory is that it is highly subjective in what it identifies as the most important makings of an effective leader. Aggregated findings from a wide range

studies have produced extensive and broad list of traits, as shown in Table 2. Although multitudes of studies have emphasized the identification of traits, researchers have not linked leader traits with other outcomes such as productivity, employee satisfaction, or methods of teaching others how to develop specific leadership traits (Northouse, 2004d).

According to a Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) study, traits were preconditions of leadership that do matter. They determined that six traits differentiated leaders from followers: drive or the desire to lead, honesty/integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business, and motivation. Further studies by Stogdill suggest that leadership exists in relationships between people in social situations, and that people who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in another situation (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). The traits-centered approach to leadership has not vanished from studies of leadership, but it has become broader and more flexible. Traits have come to be viewed as consistent patterns of personality rather than inherited characteristics. Leaders are described as energetic, risk takers, optimistic, persuasive, and empathetic, but these traits are affected partly by a leader's genetics and the environments in which the traits are learned and developed (Zaccaro, 2007). This is the premise that forms the foundations of situational leadership theory.

**Situational leadership theory.** At present, and standing in direct contrast to trait theory, situational leadership theory is currently the most widely used leadership model. First called the Life Cycle of Leadership by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), situational leadership theory argues that the situation dictates a leader's style. The basic premise of this theory states that different situations call for leaders to utilize different forms of leadership, and in order to be effective, an individual must adapt his or her style to the

specific situation . Situational leadership theorizes that the leader must apply both directive and supportive actions in a given situation (Northouse, 2004b).

Whereas trait theorists believe leaders are born, situational theorists assert the leader is a product of his or her situation. Situationists support the view that great leaders are developed over time, place, and circumstances (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Since the early 1900s, theorists such as Murphy, Schneider, Hook, and Spiller conducted studies and published articles supporting the notion that certain situations called for certain types of action; the leader did not interject leadership but was the instrumental factor through which a solution to the issue was reached (Bass & Stogdill,1990).

The situational leadership II model, a refinement of the original situational model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), separates the situational leadership approach into two categories: leadership style and development level of subordinates (Northouse, 2004b). In this updated model, leadership style describes the behavior pattern of individuals who attempt to influence others and consists of directive or task behaviors and supportive or relationship behaviors. Directive behaviors help individuals meet established goals, whereas supportive behaviors help individuals feel comfortable in relationships with other team members and are mostly job related.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) further refined this model to include four possible combinations of directive and supportive behaviors: high directive/low supportive; high directive/high supportive; high supportive/low directive; and low supportive/low directive. According to the developers, leaders adjust their approach according to the category that best suits the individual's needs. In conjunction with providing supportive and directive behaviors, Hersey and Blanchard argued that leaders utilizing the situational

model also must determine the individual's competence and commitment to a given task or activity. Once the leader determines this development level, the style of leadership is adapted to match directly the individual. These two approaches are summarized in Figure 3. As individuals move back and forth and between categories, the situational leader must be flexible and adapt quickly to changing environments (Northouse, 2004b).

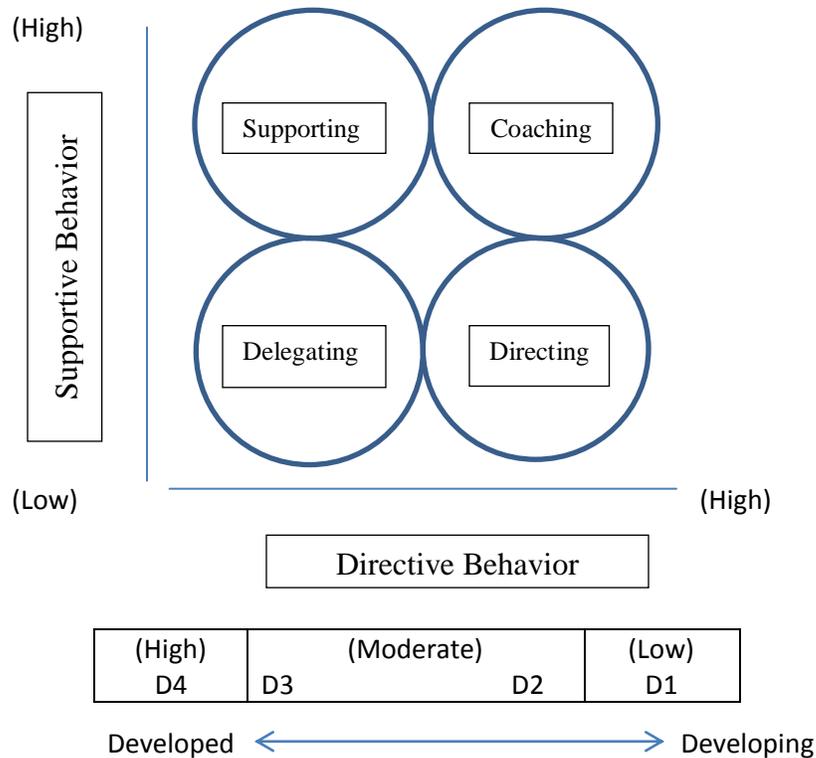


Figure 3. Hersey and Blanchard's four leadership styles and development level of followers. The data in this figure is from *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* by Kenneth Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi, and Drea Zigarmi, 1985 p 47, 50. Copyright 1985 by Harper Collins Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

**Contingency theory.** While the situation leadership theory contends that the situation dictates a leader's style, the contingency theory states that a leader's effectiveness is relative to how the leader's style fits the context in which he or she operates (Fiedler, 1967; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). The studies Fiedler conducted are the earliest and most recognized of all contingency theories. Fiedler further states there must

be a fit between the style of the leader and the situation in order for the leader to succeed. A leader may be successful in a given situation but unsuccessful in a different situation (Fiedler, 1967; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974, Fiedler & Garcia, 1987). Therefore, the contingency theory is concerned with styles and situations.

The contingency theory has several strengths. First, the theory is grounded in a great deal of empirical research to support the theories. The theory has been repeatedly tested and offers a reliable and valid approach to explaining how effective leadership can be achieved (Strube & Garcia, 1981). Second, the contingency theory has expanded the way people view leaders by emphasizing the impact of situations on leaders instead of focusing on a single best type of leadership. People view leaders in light of the situation in which they operate (Fiedler, 1995). Third, this theory is predictive and provides useful information regarding the type of leadership that will most likely be effective in certain situations (Fiedler, 1967). Finally, the contingency theory argues that leaders should not expect to be able to lead in every situation, thus relieving the leader of believing he or she must perform admirably in every context (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987). The primary criticisms of the contingency theory argue that the theory does not explain why leaders with certain characteristics are more effective in certain situations than in others or how an organization handles a leader-situation mismatch when one occurs (Fiedler, 1993).

**Transformational leadership.** As the name implies, transformational leadership refers to a process that changes and transforms individuals. Emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals are the focus of this form of leadership. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that inspires followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them (Northouse, 2004e).

Transformational leadership emerged as an important approach to leadership with political sociologist James MacGregor Burns' (1978) classic work . In his book, *Leadership*, Burns attempted to link the roles of leadership and followership. According to Burns, leaders are those who tapped the motives of followers in order to reach the goals of leaders and followers. To him, leadership was different from wielding power; it is inseparable from what followers need (Northouse, 2004e).

By the 1960s, the study of leadership had evolved from research on traits and situations to something more dynamic. Leadership was seen to be contingent on both traits and situations, involving an exchange between the leader and follower (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). According to Hollander (1992), leaders need followers and followers need leaders. This leadership exchange promises rewards and benefits to subordinates for their fulfillment of agreements with the leader.

However, Freud suggested that there was more to the concept of leadership than a mere exchange. In his view, leaders embodied ideals with which the follower identified. Barnard (as cited in Bass & Stogdill, 1990) noted personality played a role; Downton and Burns (as cited in Bass & Stogdill, 1990) presented the paradigm of the transformational as opposed to the transactional leader. The transformational leader asks followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society. In contrast, the transactional leader works within the framework of the self-interest of his or her constituents (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

In 1985, Bass (as cited in Northouse, 2004d) provided an expanded and refined version of transformational leadership that was based on Burns' prior works. In this revised approach, Bass gave more attention to the followers' needs rather than the

leaders' needs by suggesting that transformational leadership could apply to situations in which the outcomes were not positive, and by describing transactional and transformational leadership as a single continuum rather than mutually independent continua. Bass suggests transformational leadership motivates followers to do more than they expected by raising their levels of consciousness about the importance and value to goals, transcending their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and moving them to address higher-level needs.

Four common strategies transformational leaders use were identified in a Bennis and Nanus (1985) study. Bennis and Nanus asked 90 leaders basic questions about leadership, concluding that the four common strategies transformational leaders use include: (a) possessing a clear vision of the future, (b) being social architects who could create a sharp or form vision for the shared meaning, (c) possessing the ability to create trust in their organization, and (d) creating a way to use self-interest through positive self-regard. Bass and Avolio's (1990) research further suggested that individuals could learn transformational leadership and use it as a method for recruitment, promotion, and improving team development.

However, transformational leadership also has its critics. Its critics claim the model lacks conceptual clarity because it covers such a wide range of parameters, including creating a vision, motivating, being an agent of change, building trust, giving nurturance, and acting as a social architect. It is difficult to define clearly the parameters of the transformational leadership model since many of them overlap with other similar conceptualizations of leadership such as charismatic leadership (Northouse, 2004e). Others have asserted that transformational leadership is elitist and antidemocratic since

the leaders, rather than constituents, often play a direct role in creating changes, establishing a vision, and advocating new directions. This gives the strong impression that the leader is acting independently or putting himself or herself above the followers' needs (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Critics of the transformational leadership model also believe it has the potential for destructive purposes. As this model of leadership focuses on changing people's values and moving them to a new vision, there are concerns that solely the leader decides these views and they may not be the better vision or the right move for the followers. This puts a burden on individuals and organizations to be responsible for how they use their influence (Northouse, 2004e).

**Transactional leadership.** Closely linked to transformational style of leadership is transactional leadership, which refers to the leadership style that focuses on the exchanges that occur among leaders and their followers. The transactional leader does not individualize the needs of his or her followers nor focus on his or her personal development. Transactional leaders exchange things of value to advance their own as well as their followers agendas (Kuhnert, 1994). Politicians are often considered transactional leaders, since they win votes by promising no new taxes. Managers who offer promotions to employees who surpass their goals are utilizing transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). Burns further states that transactional political leaders, “approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. Such transactions comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers, especially in groups, legislatures, and parties” (p. 3).

Bass and Avolio (1990) note there are two factors of transactional leadership. First the contingent reward refers to the exchange between leaders and followers, with which the follower receives a reward for putting forth a specific effort. The leader then seeks agreement on what the task is and what the reward will be for completing it. The second noted by Bass and Avolio is management by exception, which refers to leadership that interacts with followers primarily to whip them into shape or put them on the right track. Management by exception utilizes corrective criticism, negative feedback, and negative reinforcement.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Tichy and Devanna (1986) used the transformational transactional differentiation as the basis for their research. They note that in exchanging promises for votes, the transactional leader works within the framework of the self-interests of his or her constituency, whereas the transformational leader moves to change the framework. According to Buckley (1979), a transactional leader is the successful political leader who crystallizes what the people desire, illuminates the rightness of that desire, and coordinates its achievement. The strengths associated with the transactional leadership style is in the ability of the leader to create quick results by appealing to the most basic instinct of his or her constituents—survival of self (Kuhnert, 1994).

The transactional leadership style has numerous negatives. A later study conducted by Bass (1990) notes commitment to the task or the organization is short lived under the transactional leadership model. Once a reward is received, the commitment may wane. Bass further notes that self-interests are emphasized beyond the good of the group or organization. Another weakness Bass suggested is discouraging of innovation

and risk taking. Once an employee-constituent has achieved the level of success to receive the reward, many may stop (Bass, 1998). Stogdill (1974) reports that transactional leaders are not the real movers and shakers of the world, since they do not have higher considerations and deeper motives; therefore, the leaders motives are hollow.

**Servant leadership.** Modern society is unaccustomed to thinking of leaders as servants. A servant leader is with or among people as well as being over them. Society tends to emphasize position rather than responsibility (Adair, 2002). Adair defines a servant leader as someone who works with the people, using his or her power like a carpenter works with wood grain or a fisherman with the tides. He further contends such leadership requires a deep understanding of human nature and why people behave as they do.

Greenleaf (as cited in Pinckly, 2007) defines servant leadership a practical philosophy that supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions. According to Greenleaf, servant leadership emphasizes that leaders will be attentive to the needs and concerns of their followers. Greenleaf created the model for servant leadership after reading Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*. In this story, the central character is a servant who is ultimately seen as a leader of great magnitude (Pinckley, 2007).

According to Northouse (2004d) research conducted by Greenleaf, Gilligan, Covey, and Kouzes and Posner, maintain that attending to others' general well being is the primary building block of moral leadership. Furthermore, Senge (1990) contended being a steward or servant leader means clarifying and nurturing a vision that is greater than one's self.

Covey's (1990) philosophy of servant leadership is deeply rooted in a belief that as people embrace universal principles, they will discover the freedom to negotiate effectively a wide variety of situations, solving problems based upon principle rather than practices. The outcome of such a leadership philosophy is that followers will become more skillful, creative, and willing to share responsibility. Covey further contends that the most important consideration for servant leaders is defining their values or principles, which are the cornerstone of their philosophy on life within the leadership arena.

Kouzes and Posner (1996) believe leadership must consider the needs and values of those being led, and that a community of shared values is necessary to generate action around a common cause. Furthermore, Wilkinson and Smith (1995) propose that the goal of the leader should be to learn and to create surroundings in which others want to learn, to create surroundings where all believe that they are, indeed, on the same side.

**Style leadership.** The style approach to leadership emphasizes a leader's behavior instead of his or her personality characteristics, focusing exclusively on what leaders do and how they act. This approach provides a framework for assessing leadership in a broad way using behavior and gives the leader a way to look at his or her behavior by subdividing it into two dimensions: task and relationship. Task behaviors help groups achieve their objectives whereas relationship behaviors help individuals feel comfortable with themselves, within teams, and within situations in which they may find themselves (Northouse, 2004c).

Ohio State University and the University of Michigan conducted some of the first studies on the style approach. The Ohio State University study was based on Stogdill's (1948) work regarding the importance of considering more than leaders' characteristics.

The University of Michigan studies explored how leadership functioned in small groups. Later Black and Mouton conducted further studies on how managers used task and relationship behaviors.

Through the use of Leader Behavior Description Questionnaires consisting of more than 1,800 items describing different aspects of leaders behavior, the Ohio State study identified cluster of behaviors typical of leaders (Hempill & Coons, 1957). In 1963 Stogdill (as cited in Northouse, 2004) published a shorter version of the questionnaire titled Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire-XII, which subsequently became the most widely used survey in leadership research. The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaires-XII identified two types of core leader behaviors: providing structure for subordinates and nurturing subordinates.

The University of Michigan study focused on leadership behavior and the impact of those behaviors on the performance of small groups (Cartwright & Zander, 1960; Katz & Kahn, 1951; Likert, 1961, 1967). The University of Michigan results were similar to the Ohio study in that it identified two types of leadership behaviors: employee orientation and production orientation (Northouse, 2004c). However, unlike the Ohio researchers who treated employee and production orientation as distinct and independent, the Michigan researchers conceptualized employee and production orientations as opposite ends of a single continuum. As more studies were completed, researchers reconceptualized employee and production orientations as two independent leadership orientations (Kahn, 1956). According to Kahn, when employee and production-oriented behaviors were treated as independent orientations, leaders were seen as being able to adjust to both production and employee needs.

The Managerial Leadership Grid is a well-known model of managerial behavior developed by Blake and Mouton in the early 1960s. The authors subsequently refined it several times (Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1978, 1985). This grid was designed to explain how leaders reach their purposes through two factors: concern for production and concern for people. Concern for production refers to how a leader focuses on achieving tasks. Concern for people refers to how leaders attend to those who are attempting to achieve the goals. By using a 9-point scale on which 1 equates to minimum concern and 9 represents maximum concern, scores for each of the Blake and Mouton major style leadership theories are shown (Northouse, 2004c).

Although a great deal of research has been conducted on the style approach, the results have not adequately shown how leaders' styles are associated with performance outcomes (Bryman, 1992; Yukl, 1994). Yukl concludes, "Results from this massive research effort have been mostly contradictory and inconclusive" (p. 75). He further notes that the only strong finding about leadership styles is that leaders who are considerate of individuals' psychological well being have followers who are more satisfied.

### **Gender in Leadership**

According to Stogdill (1974), times are changing for women. With the success of the women's movement, cultural shifts, and federal legislation that outlawed gender discrimination, and research on the subject of women in leadership have increased. Pinckley (2007) states the American woman is someone entirely different from her mother and grandmother: today, she is pioneering careers that women never thought of 30 years ago. Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani (1995) contend theoretical work on gender differences in leadership suggests that manifested differences may vary by occupation or

social realm according to gender congeniality. They define this as the fit between gender roles and particular leadership roles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, et al., 1995).

Gender has an important psychological and sociological impact (Ridgeway, Johnson, & Diekema 1994; Snodgrass, 1992). As Eagly and Johnson's (1990) meta-analysis studies concluded, sex differences in leadership have not diminished and gender difference in leadership style does exist. In fact, organizational studies imply that with the number of female leaders increasing, which is not as uncommon as in the earlier part of the century, women feel less obligated to adapt to traditionally masculine ways of leading.

Further, research in gender differences in any trait, behavior, competence, or skill can decipher two competing views: one that minimizes or ignores the differences; the other maximizes the differences. This feminist theory debate is known as the similarity-difference controversy, is based on the assumption of fundamental equality of the sexes, and considers sex differences a consequence of a long history of unequal treatment (Scott, 1988). Supporters of the differences claim that women's leadership is based on previously unrecorded dimensions of leadership such as spirituality (Hare, 1996), feelings (Fisher & Nelson, 1996), or care and friendship (Perrault, 1996).

Leadership research on gender reports the increased success of a feminine style of leadership. In terms of stereotypes, the masculine leadership style is considered assertive, competitive, authoritarian, and focused on commending the behavior of others (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). The feminine style of leadership is collaborative, participatory, integrative, and aimed at coopting the behavior of followers (Nye, 2008). Unger and Crawford (1992) contend, women who do become successful in the business climate

appear to share similar characteristics. Individually, they are highly capable, have high self-esteem, and possess a strong quest for knowledge. They also hold liberal opinions and values relating to women's roles in society. Women realize their potential and their gender does not restrain them. Further, these successful women can be described as possessing androgynous personality characteristics. They maintain feminine features such as warmth and openness, but also exhibit masculine qualities such as rationality, assertiveness, and independence.

Other research has examined women's effectiveness and likeability based on their leadership styles. Watson (1988) found that women are likely to reverse roles in leadership positions and behave more dominantly, particularly when dealing with men. Her research further explores how role reversal may undermine women's effectiveness as leaders. Results from her research indicate that women who enact a stereotypically masculine approach are less influential and positively received than women who take a more considerate, problem-solving approach when dealing with men.

A few studies found gender differences in leadership styles (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Helgensen, 1990; Henning & Jardin, 1977; Rosner, 1990), which substantiates strong and widely held perceptions that gender differences continue to exist (Lewis, 1998). Burns (1978) discusses the possibility of a cultural gender bias in his leadership theory. According to Burns, the male bias is reflected in the false conception of leadership as mere command or control. As leadership becomes properly seen as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers, women will be more readily recognized as leaders and men will change their own leadership styles.

The focus on masculinity and femininity suggests significant innate or ingrained socialized differences between the sexes. Although research does show some differences, there are far fewer differences than believed. From a performance perspective, male and female leadership are more similar than they are different (Schein, 1989). A major investigation at the Center for Creative Leadership concludes that as individuals, executive women and men seem to be virtually identical psychologically, intellectually, and emotionally (Morrison, White, & Velsor 1987).

The continued focus on attitudes associated with sex and gender has resulted in workplaces becoming gendered, meaning the allocation of responsibility in organizations and nearly all decisions are affected by the distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (Acker, 1992). During the past 20 years, researchers have generated a large body of work on women leaders, addressing three fundamental questions: (a) Can women be leaders? (b) Do male and female leaders differ in their behavior and effectiveness? and (c) Why do so few women leaders reach the top? (Northouse, 2004f).

Eagly and Johnson's (1990) landmark meta-analysis of these data conducted between 1961 and 1987 concluded that in organizational studies, female and male leaders did not differ in their use of interpersonal or task-oriented style. In laboratory and assessment studies, men were found to be more task oriented and women more interpersonally oriented. Also, women tended to adopt a more democratic or participatory style than men in all three types of studies. Further Eagly and Johnson studies found several reasons to suggest that male and female organizational leaders who occupy positions with the same title may differ in leadership style. The researchers suggest this

might be a result of ingrained sex differences in personality traits and behavioral tendencies. Other studies, Gutek & Morasch (1982), suggest that leader behavior may be somewhat sex differentiated in organizations that foster gender-role spillover, which is a carryover into the workplace of gender-based expectations for behavior. This concept suggests that gender roles may contaminate organizational roles and cause people to have different expectations for women and men leaders.

According to Larwood and Wood (1978) women have general traits that differ from men when it comes to leadership such as assertiveness, self-esteem, dependence, competitiveness, and risk taking. They further note that these differences are the traits perceived as necessary for strong leaders and the lack of these might result in women's failure when first placed in leadership roles. However, with experience in leadership roles, these gender differences disappear (Larwood & Wood, 1978). Sywensky and Madden (as cited in Stelter, 2002) argue that even when women have the skills and abilities necessary to lead effectively an organization, they may still have difficulty convincing others of their leadership capacity. Oakley (2000) suggests that pressure for women to lead forms a double-bind which means a woman leader must act tough and authoritatively in order to be taken seriously, but risks being perceived negatively when she acts in a more aggressive manner.

Often, women find themselves in solo roles, or in other words, the only woman in a group of men leaders, which puts them at a considerable disadvantage as well as under closer scrutiny of her male counterparts (Spangler, Gorden, & Pipkin, 1978). Placement in a solo role often inhibits women in leadership because they are under pressure to exhibit similar management styles and traits as their male counterparts. However,

Frantzve (1982) states women in solo roles learn to cope with their isolation by playing the game working hard and competitively, and relying on outside support systems. Several studies document that women leaders receive much less support than men who occupy similar leadership roles in terms of collegiality, acceptance, information, feedback, and flexibility (Morrison, White, & Velsor, 1987) . Furthermore, women have traditionally been excluded from informal networks that provide important resources such as networking opportunities and mentors.

Chaffins, Forbes, Fuqua, and Cangemin (1995) state that in the early 1980s, the term glass ceiling was coined to describe the invisible barrier with which women came in contact when climbing the corporate ladder. Morrison and Von Glinow (1990) state this form of discrimination has been depicted as a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy. Hillary Rodham Clinton (2008) referred to the glass ceiling in her primary election concession speech in Washington, D.C. when she stated:

Although we weren't able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it's got about 18 million cracks in it. And the light is shining through like never before, filling us all with the hope and the sure knowledge that the path will be a little easier next time. That has always been the history of progress in America. (p.4)

Though it is still reported to exist, the nature of the glass ceiling has changed; relevant statistics provide evidence that most females are now given token corporate positions that offer only the appearance of power and prestige rather than being blatantly excluded from such positions, as was the case mere decades ago (Chaffins, 1995).

Further research on gender and occupational stereotypes suggests that political office is perceived as a predominantly masculine occupation (Bligh & Kohles, 2008). Using this perspective, the legislature, as an institution created by men historically dominated by men, may reward and advance individuals who possess male qualities such as competitiveness and individualism (Jeydel & Taylor, 2003). These qualities may not be conducive to the style of leadership women have brought to the legislatures, which is more collaborative, integrative, and consensual (Carroll, 2001; Kathlene, 1994; Rosenthal, 1998; Thomas, 1994). Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (as cited in Rosenthal, 1998) suggest that privileging unspecified masculine traits in leaders has serious ideological consequences that result in women remaining particularly disadvantaged in these crucial domains of public life. They further note that women have been forced to master masculine traits and values to move successfully into positions of public leadership.

Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) found differing expectations among voters about the types of issues handled well by male and female politicians. These expectations have proved to be the most consistent form of political gender stereotyping. Other researchers found that voters are likely to attribute different traits, competencies, behaviors, and political beliefs to male and female politicians (Koch, 2000).

Recent studies suggest that women's differential orientation toward political power means that as committee leaders, women are more likely to place an emphasis on reaching consensus as a way to accomplish their political goals (Kathlene, 1994; Rosenthal, 1998). Rudman and Kilianski (2000) argue that negative reactions to women in authority positions may stem from society's implicit prototype for male leaders and belief that it is more natural for men to take control. As a result of this belief, powerful

women may be disliked for breaching a societal expectation. Swers and Caiazza (2000) conclude that women in policy-making roles are adjusting to institutional norms as their constituents guided their efforts to pursue gender-related issues.

### **Woman Leadership in Government**

Literature about political science and gender politics provides minimal guidance on how to study the impact of women in office. Most studies have assumed that the male norm of politics extends to women. Research into the masculinity or femininity of local, state, and national political offices suggests that all levels of political office are rated as more stereotypically masculine than feminine (Rosenwasser & Dean, 1989).

In the political realm, there is substantial research to suggest that women in political roles have traditionally dealt with stereotypical evaluations based on their gender (Alexander & Andersen, 1993; Deber, 1982; Sigelman, Sigelman, & Fowler, 1987). Further Rosenwasser and Dean (1989) studies show that masculine characteristics and tasks were rated as being more important to political office, suggesting it may behoove women to develop attributes traditionally considered stereotypically masculine. Other studies found a preference for stereotypically male characteristics were needed in order to reach higher levels of political office (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b). Additional research found that women who have been political leaders in the past have exhibited higher masculine characteristics such as self-confidence, dominance, and achievement (Constantini & Craik, 1972). Similarly, an Alexander and Andersen (1993) study suggests that successful women candidates feel a double bind of having to be both masculine and feminine:

Women are welcomed into the political fray, as long as they bring with them their traditional skills, capabilities, and vestiges of their roles as mothers and spouses...at the same time they have to demonstrate their power, toughness, and capacity to win, traits assumed by most voters to be inherent in most male candidates. (p. 542)

According to Rosenthal (1998), legislative leadership is situated conduct that is not gender neutral. In the U.S. legislature, the historic presence of male leadership has led to a perception that legislative leadership, which has stereotypically been deemed male behavior, “has been conflated as institutional behavior” (Rosenthal, 1998 p. 7). Thomas (1994) also notes:

Because women have traditionally been associated with nurturant, less individualistic values, some people assume that they will transform the political arena along kinder, gentler lines...bringing women into politics in far greater numbers is the key to rescuing politics from a rampant individualism that results in deadlock or inadequate policy-making. (p. 12)

Gender politics literature has historically concentrated on the gender gap between women and men voters or their levels of participation in political activities (Thomas, 1994). Scholars such as Kahn (1992), Kahn and Goldenberg (1991), Kelly (1983), and Rhode (2003) have examined a variety of potential reasons for the comparative lack of women in higher positions of political power. The 1992 U.S. election precipitated the Year of the Woman, which tripled the ranks of female senators from two to six of the 100 U.S. senators. This election also initiated a flurry of research into women as candidates, differential press coverage of men versus women in political campaigns, gender

stereotypes in voters assessments of male versus female candidates, and gender differences in the exercise of leadership (Koch, 2000).

Since the founding of the United States, only 26 women have served as state governors and only one has served as governor of a U.S. territory (Puerto Rico). States vary greatly in the numbers of females elected statewide and appointed officials; Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Tennessee have only one woman elected official statewide, the governor, whereas North Dakota has 12 (Carroll, 2004). In the legislative branch of government, California currently has two women U.S. Senators, 20 U.S. Congressional Representatives, nine State Senators, 22 State Representatives, and more than 50 women holding city council seats throughout the state (Awadalla, 2008).

Former Texas Governor Ann Richards knew the historic importance of women leading when she commented:

There will be a lot of little girls who open their history texts to see my picture—I hope along with Barbara Jordan’s—and they will say, “If she can do it, so can I.” The significance is enormous. It is sociological change, not just governmental change. It means the doors are going to be open to everyone. (Cantor & Berney, 1992, p.239)

Dolan and Ford (1997) report that contemporary women lawmakers have expanded their areas of activity, simultaneously maintaining a concern for their gender while increasing their attention to nontraditional areas.

The thought that women would lead or govern differently than men is not a new idea, as noted by the various studies on gender and leadership reviewed in the previous section of this study. A considerable amount of contemporary research shows that female

legislators introduce different types of legislation and have different perspectives on issues than their male counterparts (Patterson, 2000). Kathlene (1989, 1994) suggests that women conceptualize issues differently, define problems differently, and speak of political issues differently than their male colleagues. Female leadership has been linked with everything from enhancing world peace to reducing corruption, to improving the lives of those less fortunate (Schein, 1989). Stivers (1993) contends that leadership is an important cultural and ideological idea that functions to support and rationalize the continuation of existing political, economic, racial, and gender arrangements.

Indeed, legislation is an important source of power, and female congresswomen are bringing a unique set of concerns to the national agenda (Reingold, 2000; Swers & Caiazza, 2000). Woman political leaders acknowledge their effectiveness in both style and substance as a group on legislation they refer to as kitchen table issues. An Ammons and a Reingold exhaustive study found that women are more attuned to the needs of their female constituents than their male colleagues. Women's political agendas incorporate issues that women have championed for years such as children, health care and health concerns, education, the environment, and welfare (Ammons, 1999; Reingold, 2000). Additionally, a study that included interviews with more than 50 state legislators concluded that women in political office face the need for alternative role development that neither replicates the male model nor relies on traditional female roles (Thomas, 1997). The recent debate over U.S. Senator Clinton's campaign for the presidency is an example of the dilemma women politicians face. Gerber (2007) stated, "It's not that voters and her opponents think Clinton is experienced and competent and they don't like

her or trust her. It's that they think she's experienced and competent and that's why they don't like or trust her" (p. 382).

In their study of women legislators in the 103<sup>rd</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, Swers and Caiazza (2000) suggest that women are transforming the institution of Congress by introducing and supporting policies and issues that are significant to women. They are also adjusting to institutional norms, as guided by the limitations of party structures. This study also points to women leaders' continued efforts to have more women in elected positions in order to sustain focus on women's issues. However, Reingold's (2000) comparison of Arizona and California women legislators reveals that small numbers of women may reinforce solidarity in the political arena. Whereas the voting public simply expects women to change things for the better, bigger differences of opinion exist among women than between the sexes. The issue of abortion provides a good example of this paradox.

Kanter (1977) argues that the notion that women have yet to reach a critical mass in either chamber of Congress reinforces the ineffectual hypothesis regarding women political leaders. The essay further states that women could not really be considered effective until as a group they constitute at least 15% of the total membership.

Other literature suggests that women lawmakers are as effective as male legislators. Jewell and Whicker (1994) find that women are increasingly attracted to legislative positions in state legislatures. They further note that female legislative skills or style need not be an obstacle to accomplishments in the legislature. The more professional state legislatures are increasingly welcoming to the consensus building and coordinating approaches of female lawmakers.

According to Carroll (2003), it has been difficult to study women in political leadership positions in ways that would provide generalizable results. This is typically attributed to the lack of women holding formal or informal leadership roles; there has seldom been a concentration of women in particular types of political leadership that would yield meaningful comparisons among women or between women and men. Carroll further states that those who have concentrated on women political leaders to date, while accumulating much knowledge and insight, have also been constrained in terms of research development by the lack of women in elected positions to participate in studies.

### **Political Leadership and Nonverbal Communications**

One of the top concerns of political leaders is their own image with respect to their need for their followers to perceive them favorably. Nonverbal communications and behaviors can be potentially powerful forms of influence for political leaders. Lykken's (1995) study provides support for the trait approach: "One reason we admire 'high-talking chiefs' and are inclined to accept their leadership is that they have the unusual ability to function with apparent confidence before an audience of eyes" (p. 64). In an Emrich, Brower, Feldman, and Garland (2001) study, evidence of the impact symbolism behavior has on leadership is produced. In the study, U.S. presidents who utilized image-based speech as opposed to concept-based speech extensively received higher ratings of charisma and greatness from historians. House and Podsakoff (1994) contend that outstanding leaders have the need for followers to perceive them as credible, competent, and trustworthy. House (1977) further suggests that outstanding leaders possess the ability to be verbally articulate and nonverbally expressive, by effectively utilizing facial and body expressions with gestures to alter the affective-emotional reaction of followers.

DePaulo (1992) research documented the importance and impact of nonverbal expressive behaviors such as eye contact, facial expression, and gestures. Awamleh and Gardner (1999) provided direct empirical evidence of the importance of nonverbal behaviors on leadership. Their research findings reinforced the previous assertions of a Gardner and Avolio (1998) study, which contends that what a leader says may at times be less important to the followers than how it is said.

Charismatic leadership style has been described principally in terms of nonverbal behavior that conveys a sense of the leader's enthusiasm and confidence as well as in terms of the emotional needs of followers (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Riggio, 1987). Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) research suggests that nonverbal behavior maybe reciprocated by those who observe it, and Zajone, Murphy, and Inglehart (1989) contend racial feedback theory of emotion shows that facial expression can influence the experience of emotion. These studies suggest that a smiling leader may cause his or her followers to smile and thereby make them feel happier too (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Zaccaro, 2007). Prior studies further demonstrate that nonverbal expressiveness and control enhance the responses leaders make and indicate that a leader's physical appearance is a factor in the development of trait-like leadership skills (Cherulnik, 1995; Cherulnik, Turns, & Wilderman, 1990).

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study is to examine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the career progress of several elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. An examination of the literature on leadership theory and styles shows

a well-established documentation of studies regarding trait, situational, transformational, servant, and style leadership as a basis for successful leaders. The trait or great man theory of leadership has been studied by researchers for more than 100 years (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Through the years, leadership has been defined in various ways. The definition component most common to nearly all of the classifications is that leadership is a process of influence that assists individual and groups in achieving their goals (Northouse, 2004a). Although a great deal of leadership literature focuses on traits and characteristics, little published research exists from the perspective of women and the traits that they have specifically identified and embodied as essential for effective leadership.

Literature regarding gender in leadership has mainly concentrated on the gender gap between women and men voters or their levels of participation in political activities. A majority of the studies conducted assumed that the male norm extended to women and, as Gutek and Morasch (1982) stated, contributed to gender role spillover. Further review of the literature revealed few comprehensive studies that explore women's leadership styles and behaviors.

The reviewed literature on women's leadership within the political arena yields little specific information about women political leaders and their impact in political office. More studies that focus on the issues of leadership potential barriers, styles, goals, gender differences, and conduct across all levels of government are needed (Carroll, 2003). Recent studies suggest that women political leaders are effective leading women-related legislative issues to fruition. This is attributed to the women who have had or currently hold formal political roles.

Studies on nonverbal communications and symbolic behaviors have shown that they are a factor in the effectiveness of political leadership. The literature review concentrated on the impact nonverbal expressiveness may have on the responses that implicate the physical appearance of the leader and is a factor in the development of trait-like leadership skills. (Cherulnik, et al., 1990).

### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the specific leadership traits and characteristics that have contributed to the career progress of several elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. The following chapter presents the research design and methods used to conduct this qualitative study of elected women political leaders. The research chapter consists of a three-phase approach, which includes: (a) a description of the research design, (b) participants' biographical information, and (c) a description of the interview process and overview.

#### **Research Design**

The following chapter outlines: (a) the process of identifying a model for research; (b) the ethnographic study research design, research questions, and objectives (c) an overview of Pepperdine University's protection of human subjects policy (d) criteria for selecting study participants (e) data collection procedures and (f) the role of the researcher. These elements illuminate the decisions the researcher made regarding the methodology and gives the reader a comprehensive overview of the research design.

#### **Research Model**

This researcher focused on California women representing each level of the legislative branch of government because each level presents different political settings and challenges that may directly influence the leadership style and ultimately the traits and characteristics needed for each elected official to be effective. By conducting the videotaped face-to-face interviews in the interviewees' specific political environments,

the researcher observed how the participants naturally expressed their leadership style, characteristics, and traits with their colleagues.

By definition, research is a disciplined inquiry that must be conducted and reported so that information and arguments can carefully be examined (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). With this definition in mind, this researcher examined the criteria of the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodology research approaches prior to selecting which model would best address the purposes of this study. The key elements of this study revolve around gathering and compiling firsthand, personal in-depth accounts of the traits and characteristics that currently seated elected women political leaders in California self-reported are important for success. The purpose of a quantitative research design is to collect information from a selected sample and generalize it to a larger population. Since a statistically significant amount of data relating specifically to the traits and characteristics of currently seated California women political leaders does not exist, and the nature of the data is personal in-depth information, a quantitative and/or a mixed methodology research design would not suit this research project. Therefore, of the academically accepted research methodologies previously listed, the qualitative approach best suited the needs of this study.

The following information presents an overview of the criteria for qualitative research design. The intent of the qualitative research model is to obtain an in-depth perspective from selected participants' points of view. Research techniques such as semi structured interviews or direct observations were used to gather data for the study. Researchers utilizing the qualitative model purposely select participants who have the desired knowledge and are willing to help the researcher understand the specific topic

further. This model also requires the researcher to approach the study without preconceived or hypothesized outcomes. The data gathered from the resulting qualitative research are reported through the use of themes and trends instead of statistical analysis (Patten, 2002).

### **Qualitative Ethnographic Research Method**

As previously mentioned, a qualitative research design best captures the breadth and depth of the topic and participants chosen for this study. Determining the method with which to analyze the data is the next step in the research process. The following section defines further the qualitative ethnographic methodology used in this study.

Simply stating that the researcher collected data via in-depth semi structured interview techniques does little to describe what was done with the data once they were collected. The content and form of the interviews and what themes the researcher saw in them helped determine the method for data collection.

Qualitative research follows the traditional research approach of presenting a problem, asking a question, collecting data to answer the question, analyzing the data, and answering questions. The researcher began this process by posing a problem, a research issue, which ultimately generated an answer. Problems in qualitative research address topics in the social and human sciences, and a hallmark of qualitative research is a deep involvement in issues of gender, culture, and marginalized groups (Salas, 2005).

Ethnographic research can be presented in various forms, and depends on the scope, research questions, and perspective of the researcher. This study employs focused ethnography, which is used primarily to evaluate or elicit information on a special topic or shared experience (Morse & Richards, 2002). Focused ethnography earned its name

because it typically focuses on groups of participants that share some feature or features. The participants may not know each other, but the researcher focuses on common behaviors and experiences resulting from shared qualities and characteristics, such as being treated the same way by other colleagues or constituents. This enables the researcher to apply the assumptions for a shared culture. In this study, the focused approach combined with visual ethnography to record the interviews and events that field notes alone could not accurately record. Video ethnography can be used to record, catalogue, and gather data, as well as supplement observation of participants. In particular, this study utilized this methodology to explore nonverbal communication that contributes to the traits and characteristics that may be associated with the current positions of the women political leaders in this study.

Interviewing and observing participants are complementary methods, since both involve taking notes, asking questions, conducting interviews, collecting data, drawing up lists of behaviors, and constructing databases from interview data. It is never simply a matter of conducting interviews or observing (O'reilly, 2004). Furthermore, as O'Reilly suggests, researchers conducting interviews would benefit from permitting themselves to realize they are learning from the data they are collecting as people speak.

### **Research Questions and Objectives**

The following research questions form the foundation for this study, addressing the key leadership traits women political leaders believe have helped them achieve their level of success:

1. What are the key traits, characteristics, and skills that women believe enabled them to attain their current position?

2. What are some of the barriers that these women feel impeded their progress?
3. Does there appear to be nonverbal communication cues that relate to their leadership style?

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

This researcher abided by the posted policies and procedures set forth in Pepperdine University's Protection of Human Participants in Research policies and procedures guidelines. As stated on the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Web site, the primary goal of the Pepperdine University IRB is to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects (Kang, 2011). A secondary goal of the Pepperdine IRB is to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations. The required process includes completing an online National Institutes of Health IRB seminar and submitting an explanation of the research to the IRB prior to submission of the formal Pepperdine IRB Application for Approval of Research Project. The official IRB Full Approval Letter and application to conduct secondary analysis of public access for this researcher to move forward with this study can be found in Appendix A.

In accordance with sections 46.116 and 117 of the IRB policies and procedures guidelines, all participants in this study provided a signed letter of consent, giving this researcher legal documentation and authorization to proceed. The research plan, which is discussed in detail in the Interview Process Overview section of this chapter, provides adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects. As the women in the study are public figures, the signed consent letters adequately address the provision for privacy and confidentiality issues surrounding this study. In

order to participate in this study, the participants were asked to authorize the use of their names in the videotaped interviews, thereby waiving the strict provision for privacy and confidentiality. Each participant received a copy of the completed dissertation, transcripts, and video.

The researcher will maintain and save data for this study on a computer and a USB storage drive. As specified in the National Research Act and Pepperdine University's policies, regulations, and procedures, all consent forms, video files, and data will be kept in a secure location in the researcher's home during the period research is conducted. The researcher will maintain the information keep it safe for at least 5 years from the completion of the interviews. Once the study is complete and finalized in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined by Pepperdine University's guidelines for dissertation research, the researcher will erase any materials kept on the computer. Following the 5-year period, video files will be erased and interview materials will be shred and disposed of securely.

### **Data Collection Procedures and Instrumentation**

**Interview protocol development.** Interviews allow the participants and the researcher the opportunity to explore the meaning of questions and answers, and thus the best data collection approach for any study is one that yields data that best meet the research purpose and answers the research questions (Darlington & Scott, 2002).

An introductory letter was sent to each of the California elected women to invite their participation in this study (see Appendix B). The letter provided information on the purpose of the study; data collection procedures used, which includes videotaping of the interview; and the intended end result or product of the study. Once the participants

consented to participate in the study, a letter confirming their position in the study, a list of questions, and a copy of the Consent to Participate in Research (see Appendix B) form was sent to each of the six women selected.

For the participant interviews, seven questions were developed to support the three research questions in the study. Table 2 lists the interview questions and the research question to which each interview question correlates. The precise interviewing procedures is discussed in the Interview Process Overview section of this chapter.

Table 2  
*Relationship Between Interview Question and Code*

RQ	Interview Question	Interview Code	Video Code	How to be reviewed
1	What factors have contributed to your success as a political leader?	a	Int	Interview/Video
1	What skills do you believe contributed to your success as a political leader?	b	Int	Interview/Video
1	What skills to you believe contributed to your success as a woman political leader?	c	Int	Interview/Video
1	What do you believe are the characteristics that are important for you as a political leader?	d	Int	Interview/Video
1	Name the characteristics that you posses that you also see in other women political leaders?	e	Int	Interview/Video
2	What type of obstacles did you have to overcome to reach your political office?	f	int	Interview/Video
2	How did you choose to overcome the obstacles you described?	g	int	Interview/Video
3	Nonverbal communication/Visual characteristics and mannerisms	h	Eye contact = ec Hand movements for emphasis = hm Smiling = sm Interview answer = int Speech fluency = sp Attire: casual = cas Formal = for	Video

**Content validity.** An important component to the research design of this study is content validity. According to McGartland, Berg-Weger, Tebb, and Rausch's (2003) study on content validity:

Content validity refers to the extent to which the items on a measure assess the same content or how well the content material was sampled in the measure. Invaluable information can be received by conducting a content validity study. Using a panel of experts can provide constructive feedback about the quality of the newly developed measure and objective criteria with which to evaluate each of the items. Additionally, the panel offers concrete suggestions for improving the measure. (p. 1).

The validity panel consists of the following members:

- Kristin Tillquist is the Chief of Staff to the Mayor of the City of Riverside, CA. In that capacity, Tillquist is responsible for a variety of economic-development and quality-of-life programs, as well as international relationship development and community relations. Prior to working for the City of Riverside, Tillquist coordinated a mayoral campaign. Tillquist holds a B.A. degree in Political Science and a J.D. She is currently writing a book titled *Capitalizing on Kindness*, which focuses on the power of kindness as a personal and professional tool for success.
- Paul Pinckley, Ed.D., is the Executive Director of Student Recruitment for the Graziadio School of Business and Management for Pepperdine University. Pinckley completed the qualifications for doctoral studies at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology with a study on characteristics of athletic leaders at the University of Tennessee. Pinckley holds a B.A. degree in Communication Arts and a M.A. degree in Theatre and Communication Arts.

- Jennifer Darling is currently a doctoral student with Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology and is completing final qualifications for her degree in Organizational Leadership. Darling holds a B.S. degree in Economics and Politics from University California, Santa Cruz and an MBA from Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business and Management.

Following the format recommended by McGartland's et al. (2003) study on content validity, each of the panelists was initially contacted and invited to participate via e-mail. Upon agreeing to participate as panelists, they were sent a follow-up e-mail message that included a letter offering a brief introduction of the study and an explanation of what their participation would entail (see Appendix C). The interview protocol and validity assessment form was also attached, including instructions on how to complete the form as well as research questions and proposed interview questions for study participants. Panelists were asked to read each interview question and carefully compare it to the research questions posed for the study. If they felt the interview question as written effectively supported one of the research questions, panelists were asked to place an X in the "Expert Opinion" column to the right labeled, "Supports a research question as written." If they felt the research question did not support a research question, they were asked to place an X in the column labeled, "Does not support a research question as written." If they felt the interview question effectively addressed a research question but needed modification, they were asked to place an X next to that statement and add an example of the suggested modification in the space noted.

While researchers such as McGartland et al. (2003) suggest various mathematical methods to rate the content validity responses received from the panel of experts, this researcher chose to use the majority rule method, wherein recommendations that were made by two of the three panelists were incorporated. Pinckley and Tillquist recommended one minor change to the same question, which was incorporated. The responses received from Tillquist recommended significant changes to each of the remaining questions posed. After reviewing the recommended modifications Tillquist posed, the researcher chose to incorporate only the suggested change of the Pinckley, since they consistently matched throughout the survey. The researcher felt that the modifications Tillquist suggested altered the open-ended intent of the interview questions.

The minor recommendation received from the panelists related to the question about the participants' level of education. The panelists suggested modifying the question to solicit additional information on the usefulness of the education they received. The initial question as drafted read, "What is the highest level of education you have achieved?" The revised question reads, "What is the highest level of education you have attained, and how has this education affected your success?" This recommended modification improved the question by helping the researcher collect data that could link both the level and impact of education to the participants' current level of success. The researcher incorporated grammatical changes recommended by Darling for two of the questions.

**Locating and selecting participants.** The names of the eligible participants for this study will be identified through the use of several governmental directories, which

include the Congressional Yellow Pages, Riverside Chambers of Commerce Governmental Affairs Directory, United States House of Representatives Web site, and United States Senate Web site. The researcher found a total of 33 women currently serving in the California State Senate and Assembly, and 17 women currently elected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, California has two women Senators that represent the state in the U.S. Senate.

The compilation of eligible participants who serve in a local legislative elected office will rely in part on this researcher's personal knowledge and working relationship with these women and their staff members. Additional names of other eligible women participants on the local legislative elected office were compiled from the directories mentioned previously. The first six elected women—two each from the local, state, and federal levels of government—who responded to the request to participate were selected for interviews for this study.

**The participants.** Participants for this study are women currently elected to serve in California government at the local, state, or federal legislative levels. The researcher selected six women participants for this study using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling or judgment sampling is a method by which the researcher selects the participants based on the purpose of the study and the researcher's experiences or knowledge of the group studied (Patton, 1990). Using this sampling technique, the researcher outlined the primary criteria for selecting eligible participants for this study, which could include a city council member, county board of supervisor, California State Senator or Representative, or a national representative or senator.

Utilizing the purposive sampling, two of the participants selected currently serve in local elected government roles. These women were chosen because of this researcher's personal knowledge of their present position as some of the few females to hold an elected office in city councils within California. The next two participants were elected women leaders on the state level, and were chosen based on their length of service as elected legislatures on the state level, availability for this study, and impact they have as women in the political arena. The final two participants were elected women on the federal level, namely the federal representatives from the congressional districts surrounding this researcher's region.

### **Interview Process Overview**

This section provides a description of the steps the researcher used to gather data for this study, which included the interview process, recording and transcription of the participant interviews, and data analysis.

**Interviewing the participants.** Interviews are particularly important when the researcher is interested in gaining the participants' perspectives using the language and meanings constructed by individuals (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Using the notion that people are experts on their own experiences and are, therefore, best able to report how they experienced a particular phenomenon in their life, the researcher utilized broad, open-ended questions to elicit the participants' perspective on the topic under study. The seven interview questions and one visual observation notation served as the foundation for the interviews. Probing follow-up questions based on the responses given by the participants allowed the researcher to continue the discussion.

**Interview process.** The interview process for this research follows the ethnographic research interview recommendations made by O'Reilly (2004). According to O'Reilly, the ethnographic interview process covers all stages of an interview, including setting up the interviews, timing of the interview, the interviewer's role as a researcher, location where the interview is conducted, conduct of interviewer, how the interview is begun and closed, and the manner in which the interview is recorded.

Once the participants are selected based on the study criteria, O'Reilly (2004) recommends the researcher use a formal approach when inviting the participants, in accordance with the high-level office they hold. Correspondence with the participants should also include the time the interview will take from set up to closing. In-depth interviews usually last approximately 30 to 45 minutes; however, the interviewer must watch for signs that the participant is getting tired or is ready for the interview to end.

To prepare for the interview, O'Reilly (2004) recommends that, as a sign of respect, interviewers should obtain relevant personal information about the participant prior to the interview, including the interviewee's life, hometown, and areas of interest. This researcher prepared for participant interviews by reviewing a number of sources that are relevant to the ethnographic data collecting process noted by O'Reilly, which include newspaper articles, journals, Internet sources, and press releases regarding the participants' political activities and events. However, O'Reilly also cautions that too much information about the participant will leave nothing for the interviewer to learn from the interview. So she recommends that the interviewer have enough knowledge about the participants with regard to background information, but remain naïve with regard to the precise topic discussed with the participant.

The next step in the interview process is to begin the interview. Prior to the start of the interview, the participant received a brief review of the nature and purpose of the research, taking a moment to reconfirm their agreement of the terms. As the interview progresses, the interviewer can use follow-up questions to gain additional information about the participant and subject matter. The interviewer can demonstrate he or she is listening by repeating what the participant has said and asking pertinent follow-up questions. However, it is important to note that the interviewer must be careful not to influence the response too much, and remain neutral to allow the participant to demonstrate his or her expertise.

In their book, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest the participant answer the main questions and probes during the course of the interview, which enables the interviewer to explore brief answers given and ask follow-up questions to collect more in-depth answers. This leads to the final step in the interview process, which is the closing. As O'Reilly (2004) suggested, the interview should be an enjoyable experience for all and should end on a high note. At the end of each interview, the researcher should redirect the conversation into an informal chat, just as it began, thank the participant, and offer the participant the interviewer's contact information in case he or she has additional information to provide. This researcher sent formal thank you notes to each participant along with a Pepperdine key chain in the week following the interview as a token of her appreciation.

**Conducting the interviews.** Participants' legislative assistants were contacted by telephone to coordinate and confirm the interview time and date. Each participant was

scheduled for a 30-minute interview in her local legislative district office, and lights and camera were set up 30 minutes before each interview.

Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher obtained verbal permission to videotape the interview, and each participant received a copy of the questions. During the interview, the researcher followed the prepared questions and used open-ended questions to follow up on answers given. The researcher refrained from showing excessive emotion or asking leading questions. Once the interview concluded, the researcher thanked the participant and reviewed the remaining processes involved in the study. The researcher sent each participant a copy of her videotaped interview and a transcript to review so she might offer any suggested changes or corrections to the interviewer.

**Recording and transcription of interviews.** As previously outlined in the interview protocol and interviewing procedures, this study includes a video component; each participant gave permission for her interview to be captured on camera. As Lomax and Casey (1998) note, the value of videotaped material has been well documented across various research methods and disciplines. Videotaped recordings of human social activity provide records that are more accurate, detailed, and complete than unaided human observation. For the videotaped component of this research, the researcher utilized a professional camera operator, a digital camera, and a professional light system. The choice to use a professional recording team was based on the high visibility of the participants and their familiarity with quality videotaped interviews, as well as to reassure each participant of the study's credibility. The video recording also serves as the transcription system for the study.

All lights, microphones, and camera equipment were in place and tested prior to each participant entering the room for her interview. As O'Reilly (2004) noted, recording and videotaping allows the researcher to concentrate fully on the interview, listen more intently, and follow the interview questions more carefully. However, the researcher also took notes using a pen and paper to record her thoughts during the interview. For transcription, this researcher and a second rater used the digital video and audio recording, which allowed the researchers to have a verbatim transcription of the interview. The reliability of videotaped data is self-evident because the recorded image may be replayed, enabling analysis to be delayed until the researcher has left the field and allowing other researchers to conduct their own analysis as well (Lomax & Casey, 1998).

Once the interviews were completed, the videotape and its case were labeled with a unique code. Each interview was numbered sequentially, followed by the interviewee's first initial and last name, and ending with the date of the interview. The video tape, transcripts, and notes will be kept in a locked file at the researcher's home and destroyed after a period of 5 years.

**Data analysis.** According to Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000) "Qualitative research uses analytical categories to describe and explain social phenomena" (p. 114). Qualitative research can produce a large amount of data, and analysis often takes place simultaneously to allow questions to be refined and possible new avenues to be explored. To ensure the established categories are appropriate for the data, Pope et al. recommend the constant comparison of information to the rest of the data collected. They further explain that categories might be derived gradually from the data or deductively. To analyze data, Pope et al. recommend drawing from the qualitative data analysis

methodology utilized by Ritchie and Spencer (1993). This study's data analysis process follows this methodology, which outlines five stages of data analysis: (a) familiarization, (b) identifying a thematic framework, (c) indexing, (d) charting, and (e) mapping and interpretation.

As Ritchie and Spencer (1993) described, the first step in the data analysis process calls for the researcher to become familiar with the data by watching the videotaped interviews, reviewing his or her notes, and reading transcripts. This process allows the researcher to begin notating recurring themes that will be used later to code the information. After completing each interview session, the researcher watched the taped interviews and reviewed her notes in order to ensure that the notes were legible, noted significant observations, and confirmed that the videotape was operational. This initial review also allowed the researcher to gain an overview of the data gathered. During subsequent reviews of the videotapes and notes, the researcher recorded recurring themes for analysis and future review.

To establish inter rater reliability, a second evaluator skilled in scholarly research, content analysis, and data classification was used. Once complete, both sets of coded data were compared. Where a disagreement in coding existed, the two raters discussed and came to an agreement. If an agreement was not reached, the dissertation chair served as the tie breaker (Salas, 2005).

During the next step in the data analysis process, the researcher returned to the notes to begin identifying a thematic framework by highlighting key issues, concepts, and themes. The Ritchie and Spencer (1993) methodology suggests the researcher identifies priority issues and questions derived from the purpose of the study, issues raised by the

participants, and experiences and or behaviors that recur in the data. This process results in the researcher creating a detailed index and manageable labels for the data, which allow for easier retrieval and examination.

The next step in the analytical process involves applying the thematic framework systematically to the transcripts and notes, also known as indexing. Indexing, according to Ritchie and Spencer (1993), is the process of annotating the transcript with numerical codes and short text to support the descriptions. Coding can be recorded in the margins of the researcher's notes. For this research, the first initial and last name were used to identify the participants. Since the participants are public figures, confidentiality is not an issue. Each informed consent and interview protocol was coded in the same manner.

Interview questions were developed to correspond to the three research questions. The interview questions correspond to each of the three research questions and are designed to be asked sequentially. Each interview question was also assigned a letter of the alphabet for quick reference: (a) factors contributing to participant's success; (b) What skills do you believe contributed to your success as a political leader? (c) What skills to you believe contributed to your success as a woman political leader? (d) What do you believe are the characteristics that are important for you as a political leader? (e) What type of obstacles did you have to overcome to reach your political office? and (f) How did you choose to overcome the obstacles you described? To capture the visual behaviors of each participant, the following codes correspond to the responses captured on the video: (ec) eye contact with camera, (hm) hand movements for emphasis, (sm) smiling, (sp) speech fluency, (cas) casual dress, (for) formal dress. If a reader would like to compare the similarities between the leadership characteristics and traits the

participants have self-reported as important to women political leaders, the related codes would be first initial/last name participant 1 4j ec and first initial/last name participant 2 4j ec. Table 2 provides an overview of the codes, interview questions, and visuals for the videotaped component.

Charting the data is the next step in the process outlined by Ritchie and Spencer (1993). In this step, the data are rearranged according to the relating thematic framework. The researcher charts the data by the key subject area or theme, with entries from several participants. The charts contain summaries of views and experiences, which involved a considerable amount of abstraction and synthesis. Following this methodology, a chart was established for each theme in this study. Summarized responses from each participant was included in the chart. This researcher and the second reviewer each completed a chart.

During the final stage of this process, the researcher mapped and interpreted the key characteristics and then interpreted the data set. Ritchie and Spencer (1993) outline the use of charts to define the concepts, map the range and nature of the phenomena, and create typologies and find associations between themes in order to provide an explanation for the findings. This stage is influenced greatly by the researcher's objectives and the themes that emerge from the collected data.

For this study, the researcher and second reviewer each used the researcher's notes, charts, transcripts, and videotaped recordings to identify key dimensions, themes, attitudes, experiences, and images. The researcher and the second reviewer compared findings for consistency. As discussed previously, if a discrepancy arose, the dissertation chair made the determination on how the material should be presented. Through this

process, the participants' attitudes and leadership characteristics and traits were identified.

### **Reporting the Data**

The final priority for data analysis is to adopt a well-organized strategy that makes sense of the data and presents the information clearly and comprehensively (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). For this study, Pareto charts are used to report the number of participants who presented similar characteristics and traits. A Pareto chart is used to summarize graphically and display the relative importance of the differences between groups of data (Simon, 2008). By utilizing Pareto charts, the researcher was able to display clearly the similar coded information. Polkinghorne suggests the researcher should produce a report that provides a clear description of the experience. The goal is that the reader of the report will have a better understanding of the phenomena. Moustakas suggests that writing a brief closing report will express the essence of the study by: (a) summarizing the findings, (b) relating the findings to and differentiating them from information gathered in the review of literature, (c) relating the study to possible future research and developing an outline for future study, and (d) relating the study to social meaning and relevance (Pinckley, 2007).

### **Limitations**

At the time of this dissertation, elected California women politicians representing the local, state, and federal levels of government constitute only a limited segment of the seated population of elected officials. The researcher attempted to contact the eligible members of this identified group.

Another area of limitation for this study concerns the validity of data gathered using videotaping. Lomax and Casey's (1998) research on observing and recording subjects determined that the video camera has little or no influence on the data collected. They cite a Vihman and Greenlee study in which interactions between a mother and child were videotaped at their home. Vihman and Greenlee concluded that the conversations were indeed spontaneous, implying that the method has no impact on the data collected.

Finally, participants may give answers they believe the interviewer would like to hear or simply provide false answers. Fortunately, the researcher can determine the validity of the information participants give by using triangulation (eliciting the same data from the participant by using different questions), comparing reports from other sources, and making personal observations of the participants in the interviews (O'reilly, 2004).

### **Statement of Researcher Bias**

The researcher is currently a municipal employee under the direction of an elected mayor and city council body that has an elected woman as a member. The researcher is affiliated with a statewide political party and actively participates in statewide campaigns for federal-level elections. In addition, the researcher is a current member of the White House Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that aims to advance women's leadership in all communities and sectors—up to the U.S. presidency—by filling the leadership pipeline with a richly diverse critical mass of women.

Miles and Huberman (as cited in Salas, 2005) suggest that people do not keep track of frequencies of comments, make precise estimates, sample representatively, or make accurate deductions. To diminish researcher bias and ensure accuracy of the

information, this researcher utilized a second rater, offered participants the opportunity to review the videotape and transcript of their interviews for accuracy, and reviewed the data, noting the irregularities throughout.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study is to determine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the success of six elected California women leaders. This chapter discussed the qualitative ethnographic research method used to conduct this study. A description of the research design, model, and purpose of the qualitative data for the study were discussed. The researcher identified data collection procedures and instrumentation, including content validity and interview protocols for this study. The study participants, elected California political women leaders, at the state, federal and local levels, were selected by using a purposive or judgment sampling method by which the researcher selects the participants based on the purpose of the study and her experiences and knowledge. The interview process was outlined in detail. The final sections of the chapter discuss the how the researcher reported the data, present limitations of the research, and offer a statement of researcher bias.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Chapter Structure**

The purpose of this study is to examine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the career progress of six elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The chapter consists of a brief overview, profiles on the elected woman participants, a review of the data collection, and data analysis. Data from this study were gathered from in-person videotaped, semi structured interviews. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Overview**

Examining the traits and characteristics of women who are currently seated in political offices could: (a) contribute to the scholarly studies of women political leaders, by developing a composite of successful leadership characteristics and traits for this group; (b) provide information for women who aspire to serve in a political office and; (c) offer an oral history and a rare personal perspective of current-day women political leaders in addition to general theories of leadership. The research questions for this dissertation attempts to answer: (a) What are some of the key traits, characteristics, and skills the participants believe contributed to their success? (b) What are some of the barriers that they had to overcome? and (c) Are there certain common visual mannerisms in their leadership styles? This researcher's hypothesis was that successful political women share similar and complimentary leadership traits, characteristics, and skills.

## Participant Profiles

Six women participated in this study. The participants are women elected and seated at the time of the interview in local, state, and federal offices of the legislative branch of government. Two of the women serve at the local level, one as a city councilmember and the other is a mayor. Two women, serve at the state level as representatives in the state assembly. The remaining two women are representatives and serve as congresswomen at the federal level. Participants were selected from the roster of elected California women who are currently seated in political office.

The following are profiles of the participants. Additional demographic information is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

*Participant Demographics by Party Affiliation, Title, Age, and Years of Elected Service*

Category	Number of Participants
<b>Participant Political Party</b>	
Democrat	5
Republican	1
<b>Title</b>	
City Councilmember	1
Mayor	1
Assembly member/State House of Representatives	2
Congress member/Federal House of Representatives	2
<b>Age</b>	
35–45	2
45–55	2
55 plus	2
<b>Years of Elected Service</b>	
2–10	3
11–15	1
16–20	1
20 plus	1

**Councilmember Nancy Hart (P1).** Hart serves as the councilmember for Ward 6 in Riverside, CA. She has served on the city council since 2001. As a councilmember,

she serves as the chairperson for the Community Service and Youth Committee, vice president of the Safety Committee, and a member of the Transportation Committee.

Hart's commitment to community and public service began well before her current position on the city council with an elected seat on the Alvord School Board, where she served for 9 years. Her service continued for the next 20 years for the county and state units of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). Hart's civic-minded career also includes serving as president of Neighborhood Advisory Committee, board member for Riverside Housing Development, a member of Riverside Partners in Home Ownership, and an active participant with Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful. Councilmember Hart moved to Riverside with her family during her high school years and still resides in the home where her and her husband raised their three children.

**Mayor Melissa Melendez (P2).** Melendez serves as city councilmember and mayor of the City of Lake Elsinore. Upon graduating from high school in Youngstown Ohio, she entered the United States Navy and attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. She spent a year and a half in a Russian-language immersion course, becoming a fluent Russian language speaker.

Melendez became one of the first women approved by the U.S. Navy to fly aboard EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft overseas, conducting intelligence gathering operations. During her 10 years of service in the Navy, Melendez received numerous awards for her strategic acumen, operational insight, professionalism, and leadership skills. After the Navy, Melendez held an academic advisory position at Chaminade University, and later formed her own transcription company.

A self-proclaimed lifelong learner, Melendez holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in History and Political Science from Chaminade University in Honolulu, HI and a MBA from the University of Phoenix.

Melendez is a former PTA president, Home Owners Association president, and volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. She has five children with her husband of 11 years, Nico Melendez, who continues to serve in an active Naval Reserve unit in Iraq.

**Assemblywoman Fiona Ma (P3).** Ma was elected to the California State Assembly in November 2006 and represents the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, which includes the Westside of San Francisco and San Mateo counties. In December 2006, Ma was appointed as majority whip making her the highest-ranking Asian American woman in the California Legislature. As majority whip, Ma works with the leadership teams to identify and implement the legislative agenda.

Prior to her election to the state assembly, Ma served as an elected member of San Francisco's 11-member Board of Supervisors from 2002–2006. During her tenure, Ma sponsored legislation to fight human trafficking. Ma was also a leading advocate of pedestrian safety, graffiti removal, disaster preparedness, increased funding for public schools, and preventing children from exposure to harmful toxins.

As a member of the assembly, Ma is an advocate for advancing women's issues, serving as the chair of the Select Committee on Domestic Violence and is the legislative chair of the Assembly of Woman's Caucus. In 1995, Ma was a delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business under President Bill Clinton.

Ma received her Bachelor's of Science degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York, her Master's of Science degree in Taxation from Golden Gate

University in San Francisco, CA, and a MBA from Pepperdine University. She is a certified public accountant licensed in California.

**Assemblywoman Lori Saldana (P4).** Saldana represents the 76<sup>th</sup> District of the California State Assembly, which consists of the central and northern portion of San Diego, including the communities of Clairemont, Pacific Beach, Ocean Beach, Point Loma, Old Town, and Downtown San Diego. Since elected to the California State Legislature in November of 2004, Saldana was appointed chair of the Housing and Community Development Committee and tasked with dispensing voter-approved bonds for the state of California in excess of \$2.85 billion. Saldana's additional assignments include Elections and Redistricting, Local Government, Natural Resources and Veterans' Affairs Committees.

Saldana has devoted much of her 20-year career as an educator in San Diego to workforce development and programs providing educational, vocational, and public service opportunities for at-risk youth. She spent a majority of her career in education as a professor of Business Information Technology throughout the San Diego Community College District.

Often referred to as a national expert in water quality, Saldana was a presidential appointee to the Border Environment Cooperation Commission. Saldana has an undergraduate degree in physical education and a master's degree in education from San Diego State University.

**Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (P5).** Sanchez represents California's 47<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, which includes the cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove, Santa Ana,

and Fullerton in Orange County. She began her congressional career in November 1996 and is currently serving her 7th term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Sanchez currently serves as the vice chair of the House Homeland Security Committee and is a member of the subcommittees on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism and Emerging Threats, Cyber security, and Science and Technology. She has also been an advocate for Southwest border security and frequently appears on CNN, C-SPAN, FOX News, and MSNBC to discuss the importance of economic development and trade along the U.S. Mexico border and ports of entry.

Congresswoman Sanchez is the ranking female member on the House Armed Services Committee and is the chair of the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities Subcommittee, which oversees the military's overall information technology and cyber security.

Prior to serving in Congress, Sanchez was a financial manager at the Orange County Transportation Authority, an assistant vice president at Fieldman, Rollap, and Associates and an associate at Booz, Allen, and Hamilton. A product of public schools and Head Start, Sanchez is a graduate of Chapman University and American University's MBA program.

**Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (P6).** Napolitano was first elected to Congress in November 1998. She is currently serving her 7th term representing California's 38<sup>th</sup> District, which includes Norwalk, Pomona, Santa Fe Springs, La Puente, City of Industry, Montebello, Pico Rivera, East Los Angeles, and Rowland Heights.

Napolitano has been a member of the House Committee on Natural resources since the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress and is currently the chair of the Subcommittee on Water and

Power. As a congress member, Napolitano also serves on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. She is a former chairwoman for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and revitalized the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, which she cochairs with Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA).

Committed to constituent service and improving the economy of her district, Napolitano has consistently secured federal funding for local transportation, water treatment, job training, social services, educational facilities, and other projects. Napolitano hosts various events throughout the year, including job fairs, workshops on housing loans, foreclosure prevention, military academy appointments, and information sessions on federal legislation and policy.

Napolitano began her political service as a member of the Norwalk City Council. After retiring from the Ford Motor Company, Napolitano was elected to the California Assembly where she served until 1998. She and her husband still reside in Norwalk.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process utilized semi structured interviews from each of the six participants as the primary source of data for this study. To ensure the study meets generally accepted scholarly standards, the researcher: (a) used a panel of experts (detailed in Chapter 3) that reviewed interview protocol and validated the questions (see Appendix D) that support the research questions for this study; (b) received approval from Pepperdine's IRB committee; (c) identified list of eligible participants to approach for interviews; (d) contacted eligible participants, obtained signed consent forms for those who agreed to an interview, and scheduled the interviews with their staff scheduler; (f) utilized clarifying questions when needed during the interview; (g) received authorization

from each participant to videotape for accuracy; and (h) forwarded transcripts and copies of video to participants for their review and approval.

After the Pepperdine IRB granted approval, the researcher began contacting the staff person responsible for scheduling appointments for the potential participants. Initial contact was made via telephone and followed by an e-mail message with a formal letter explaining the purpose of the study, the questions that would be covered during the interview, and assurance that the interview would be no longer than 30 minutes. Many of the eligible participants contacted did not respond. All of those contacted who did respond, expressed interest in the study. Scheduling conflicts were the predominant reason potential participants were unable to participate. The researcher continued contacting eligible participants until the approved sample for each legislative level was obtained. Participants were interviewed in their district office. All of the participants responded favorably to their interviews and voluntarily spent more time than originally allotted for the interviews.

### **Data Analysis**

The videotaped interviews of each participant were transcribed. Videotaped interviews and transcripts were reviewed and nonrelevant discussions were eliminated from the data analysis process. Discussions regarding the weather and entertainment are examples of topics that were considered nonrelevant for this interview. This researcher and second rater used data analysis methodology as described by Ritchie and Spencer (1993).

The researcher and second rater conducted independent reviews of the transcripts. Relevant key words and statements were identified and meaning units were identified.

These meaning units were reviewed and discussed to ensure consistency. These units became the standards utilized for the entire data analysis process. When a disagreement over interpretation occurred, the researcher and second rater reviewed the transcripts and reached an agreement on the meaning unit to assign. Once all transcripts were analyzed, the meaning units were clustered into common themes. The researcher reviewed the transcripts to confirm the themes and determine a count (Pinckley, 2007).

An Excel spreadsheet was developed to record meaning units gathered from the participants' responses to interview questions. This display allowed this researcher to evaluate the responses by interview question and participant. This assisted with identifying similarities of traits, characteristics, and skills among the women elected leaders.

### **Data Display**

The data are organized according to the interview question. A Pareto chart is used for each question to add clarity. All of the quotes are personal communications obtained from participants from March 2010 through February 2011.

### **Interview Question 1**

“What factors have contributed to your success as a political leader?” was the first question for participants. From the six woman participants, 11 themes were revealed through the analysis of data. Figure 4 contains a summary of the themes and frequency of the responses from the participants.

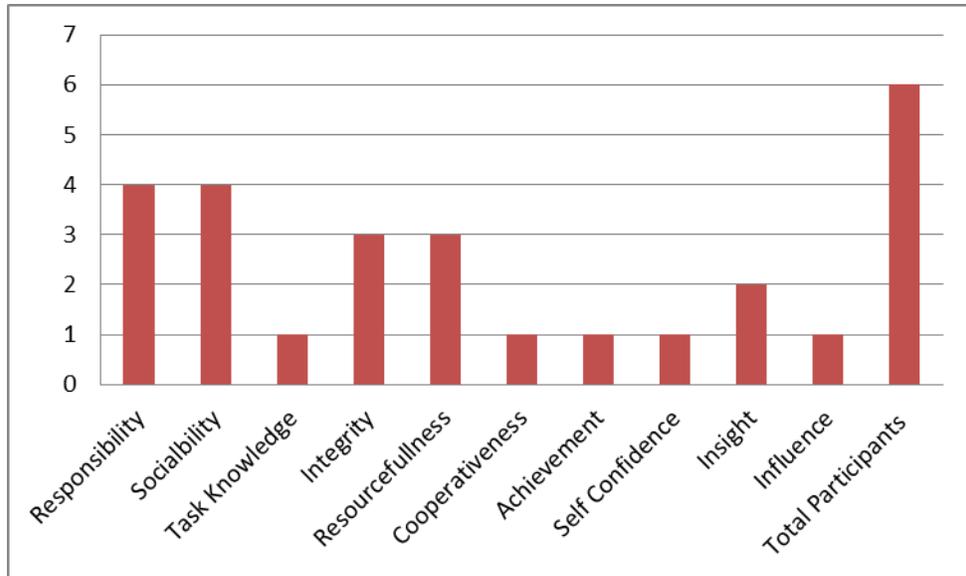


Figure 4. Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 1.

As indicated in Figure 4, four of the six participants expressed that responsibility and sociability were the factors that contributed to their success as political leaders. References to completing tasks, accepting power and leadership roles, and telling the truth were terms associated with the theme of responsibility. Working and communicating with people were terms associated with sociability. The following transcript excerpts are examples of these themes.

Hart said:

As you mix with other women in the school that are doing leadership things, they ask you to join or they ask you to help or they ask you to put on the carnival and you think to yourself can I do that? As a young person, you are taught that is for someone else to do...you are just a normal everyday person. People give you power. They see something in you that they like, or they see something that resonates in them and they want to follow you. Then if they want to follow you, it is easy to lead.

Melendez discussed how successful political leaders understand that leadership depends on others wanting you to lead and to be treated as though they provide value to the relationship.

You can't lead unless you are able to be led and folks want to know you can lead, you can work with others, that you can take a step back and say I really don't know everything about this particular issue, but I'm going to find out. I'm going to turn to the experts; I'm going to pull in experts, instead of trying to be queen of the hill.

Ma, cited working with people, and having their loyalty as successful factors. I believe loyalty is an important trait in politics and being able to work with people. If they feel your word is good and they can trust you, I think that is important.

Others participants responded with the following:

Sanchez stated:

Being able to communicate the truth, that is a difficult thing sometimes for politicians to do, but for me it's worked.

Integrity and resourcefulness were the next two most common themes cited by participants as contributing to their success as political leaders with three of the six expressing each of these factors. Melendez stated:

You really have to be sincere. People pick up on that. They can tell if you are really speaking from the heart. So that's terribly important when you are trying to get someone to believe in what you can do from most people who don't even know you. It's really blind faith.

Saldana stated:

Being curious about problem solving is an important factor. I think being a problem solver, bringing forth solutions, alternatives, working around obstacles as they come up. Being able to look for solutions is a key to succeeding in this line of work.

Ma stated, Showing up and honoring your commitments. Unless I'm really sick, I'm going to be there.

Participants also expressed another important component of resourcefulness was the ability to raise funds for campaigns. Sanchez commented:

Money is an important factor... Usually women aren't as good as fundraisers or they believe that they aren't good. But luckily I came out of the financial world so I know that women are good with money and they can raise money.

Two participants noted insight as an important factor. Grace Napolitano stated, "Essentially, a woman may have ideas in her mind about what changes need to be made. She may espouse them sometimes maybe just to friends. But her heart is in it."

Sanchez said, "The types of experiences I've had... being able to translate that forward to voters."

Other factors mentioned once by participants for Question 1 were, achievement, cooperativeness, influence, and self confidence. "Being able to stand up" Napolitano stated, You learn to interact with other people and convince them that you are who you are. You do it by actions, not by words. If you can't sell yourself with conviction...they won't elect you they won't vote for you.

## **Interview Question 2**

The second interview question was, “What skills do you believe contributed to your success as a woman political leader?” After review of the data, the researcher determined there were seven themes that emerged from this question (see Figure 5). The dominant skills revealed in interview question 2 were relationship and listening, with half of the participants expressing these were the two top skills that contributed to their success.

Both Hart and Melendez expressed the belief that listening is a skill that prominently contributed to their success as political leaders. Hart stated:

When you take leadership classes, you learn to listen better and understand other people’s point of view. You realize that people are just subjects to the experiences that they have had in life...you find that they have things in common with you. I’m really interested in all kinds of people. I really like to listen to where they’ve been and what they’ve done.

Melendez stated:

For me, I listen more than I talk. If you just sit back and listen, you find out a lot of things that people wouldn’t have necessarily communicated to you...the most important stuff comes after the um when people are talking. If you just wait, if you don’t interject and listen and let them continue, you learn a lot.

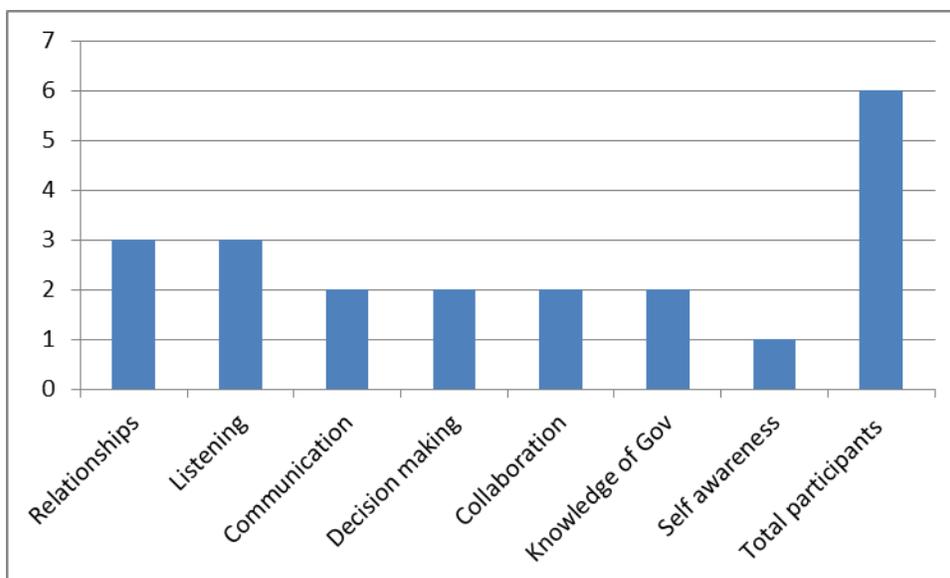


Figure 5. Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 2.

Sanchez expressed:

We tend to be much more circular when we listen. Everybody is on an equal basis and we hear the flow. Women have better listening skills.

People hear, but they may not really hear what people are saying...I think we're much better at that...at hearing what people actually say.

The second most frequently mentioned theme that emerged from the data was relationship-building skills. Both Ma and Saldana expressed the importance with examples from their experiences in the state assembly:

- Its relationships...being a team player...I've played team sports all my life and it helps in the assembly. If you like soccer, basketball, volleyball, then this is for you...it's like being the captain of a sports team. Being able to work with people, liking people, and wanting to help people is very important.

- It's relationships and being able to work with other people even if you may not agree with them 100% of the time. Finding areas where you can agree and working from there.

Hart simply stated relationships are important and that she “has the ability to mingle with all types of people”

The participants emphasized the importance of communication, collaboration, and knowledge of how government works as being key skills to their success. The following transcript excerpts illustrate this point:

- You need to find ways to communicate...on a level that is comfortable for both of you so you can exchange ideas.
- We have so many layers of administration...so understanding what agencies, not only the head of the agency, but the people working on their staff...who holds the keys to opening those doors where solutions maybe hiding. [It's] recognizing that I don't have all the answers. Looking for people who will help me answer the questions, come up with the alternatives, so working collaboratively.

### **Interview Question 3**

The participants had a variety of responses to the third interview question: “What skills do you believe contributed to your success as a *woman* political leader?” Although the participant responses were varied (see Table 4), six themes emerged from the data (see Figure 6).

Many of the participants responded immediately to the question, with a few having to take a moment to think about the skills that they believed were specific to them

as women political leaders. While the responses on their skills varied, each of the participants acknowledged that women think and behave differently than men and as women are definitely different politically than their male colleagues:

Table 4

*Question 3 Participants Responses: What Skills Do You Believe Contributed to Your Success as a Woman Political Leader?*

Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Self-Confidence	X	X			X	X
Cooperativeness	X		X	X		
Persistence				X	X	X
Sociability			X	X		
Achievement	X					X

- We think differently, we act differently, we have different ideas and beliefs.
- I think women are unique in a lot of ways. We as a rule don't seek power and we don't always seek leadership.

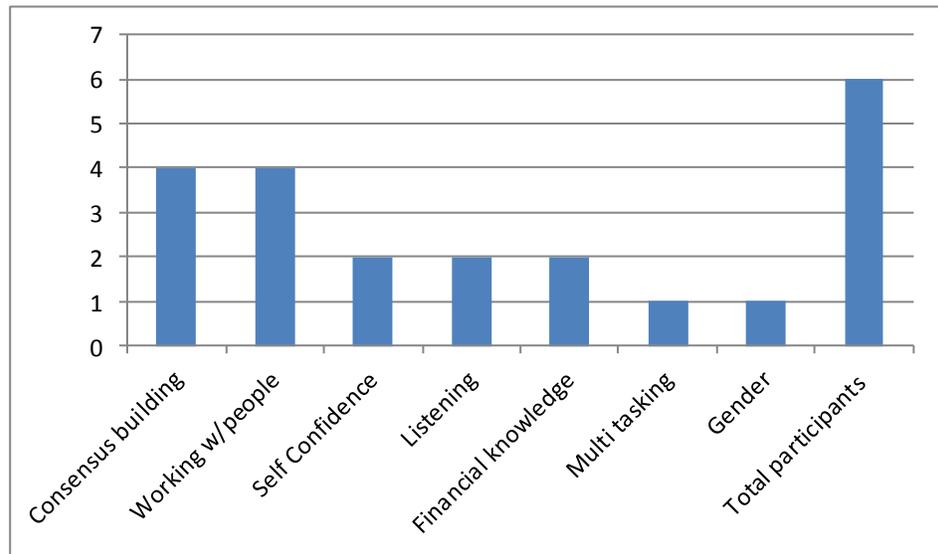


Figure 6. Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 3.

The first common theme that emerged from Question 3 from four of the six women was consensus building. The participants believe that this is the most apparent

skill that differentiates them from male political leaders. The following selected quotations are from the participants on this discussion.

- I think women tend to be consensus builders as oppose to autocratic power brokers. You don't always get 100% buy in, but maybe you get consensus...in fact, it is the best we can do for the circumstances we are given at that moment in time.
- Women tend to want to work together to come to a common solution, versus men who are fine just going to battle and not compromising. We're more like compromisers. I think we try to help each other.
- It's relationships...finding areas where you can agree and working from there.
- Letting everybody come [to the table] and really having an open-door policy...people appreciate that.

Working with people was mentioned by four participants.

- Its relationships and being able to work with other people even if you many not agree with them 100% of the time.
- An overall desire to work with people and wanting to help people...creates a real passion for me.

Two responses from Question 3 fit into each of the themes of self confidence, listening, and financial knowledge. The transcription excerpts from the participant responses are listed below.

- I believe being able to stand up and being able to speak the truth.

- Do I believe in myself? You bet. Do I think I can do the job? You bet. Unless you believe in yourself and you are willing to put your name on the line...people will doubt you as a woman.

Hart stated:

- Like I said earlier...I love to listen to where people are and what they've done. If somebody comes to you they want you to be able to understand why they are coming to you and what they need from you.

Napolitano commented:

- When I first ran for city council, I took out a loan...to ensure I was going to be a viable candidate. Then when I ran for congress I sold stock...put more money on the table. [Now] you can concentrate on knocking on doors and hiring the best people.

Multitasking was a key skill Melendez passionately believed was important for her as a woman political candidate:

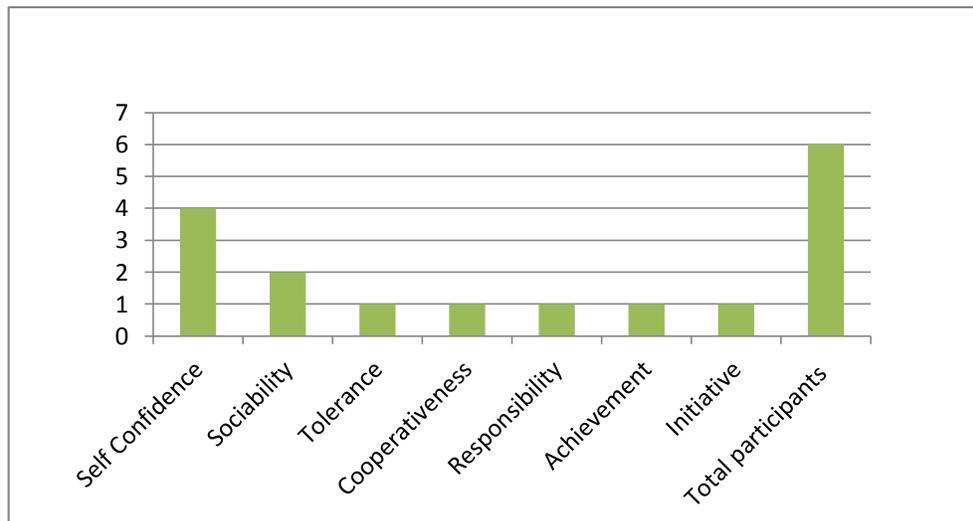
I'm a mother of five. If you can run a household with five children, get out the door, have your hair done, and your kids don't look like they are orphans...people are grateful for that. This has helped me tremendously. The fact that I've been in the military...they understand clearly that you have to be organized. Chaos is not something people are looking for in a leader. They want to know that you can pull it off and that you can do it with grace and style...and you're not going to fall apart the moment things become stressful.

Melendez discussed how she considered her gender as a key skill that contributed to her success as a woman political leader:

I think one of the other things is being a woman....I've met women who will only vote for women. They have openly admitted that...that I'm voting for you because you are a women [candidate]. Sometimes that's not so helpful, because if you haven't done your homework, gender doesn't necessarily mean you are going to be good at the job. But the truth of the matter is...that is how some people vote.

#### **Interview Question 4**

Responses to interview question four fell into the predominant theme of self confidence: “What do you believe are the characteristics that are important for you as a political leader.” This was the first characteristic mentioned by four of the six participants who discussed how important it was for them in their political leadership roles (see Figure 7).



*Figure 7.* Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 4.

- A sense of outspokenness...being able to make a tough decision even when it's not where you want to go. You need to be able to speak up for your community.

- I encourage women who run for office to use your own voice...to be out there to spread a message, to stand for something, versus being behind the scenes. Women aren't scared to make those tough decisions...women stay true.
- Having a very firm grasp of what is the basic belief I stand for...really know yourself and what you have a tolerance for. I believe voters get very tired of people who seem to not know their own values and core beliefs...and maybe shift and adjust their beliefs.
- Do you believe in yourself and what you are doing? If so...then you know. That's your first tool...you have that strength.

Sociability was the next theme associated with the responses from the participants. Saldana mentioned, "I think always being open to learning and looking for examples to work with other levels of government, whether it's federal or state". Ma mentioned,

"Women are more willing to talk about their personal experiences and be out front with them. Whether its mental illness, domestic violence...it think women bring that humanity to the forefront."

Other characteristics reported varied among the participants who identified cooperativeness, responsibility, achievement, and showing initiative as important for them as political leaders. Transcriptions excerpts are listed below.

- Whether you're a man or woman...everyone gets one vote. So if we have more people understanding the importance of voting together on one issue and it's a women's issue...then it means more.

- I believe we [women politicians] often do look at the responsibilities of state government even when we have limited funds differently than our male colleagues do.

Napolitano believed achievement and showing initiative were the characteristics that contributed to her success.

When I go to meetings, people know who I am because I've proven myself...whether it's through some committee work, bringing some money home, and making things happen.

She continued by discussing how she and her staff show initiative when working with the community:

I've been around for 20 some odd years in this area so I'm not an unknown factor...to the business community, elected community, and education community because I've worked with them. People can turn to me for any advice, help, and direction, whatever it is. And that's not only what I do, by my staff does too. They've been trained [by me] for years to provide that kind of service. They can call a community leader, or city council, city manager...and be able to open that door for individuals.

### **Interview Question 5**

Interview question 5 "Name the characteristics that you possess that you also see in other women political leaders?" had the greatest agreement in responses among the participants (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Question 5 Participants Responses: Name the Characteristics That You Posses That You Also See in Other Women Political Leaders?*

Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Self-Confidence	X	X			X	X
Cooperativeness	X		X	X		
Persistence				X	X	X
Sociability			X	X		
Achievement	X					X

Five themes were identified from the participant responses to this question. Self-confidence was identified by four of the six participants as the characteristic other women political leaders possess (see Figure 8). The excerpts that follow illustrate this theme as presented by the participants.

- Outspokenness...a sense of being able to quit beating around the bush and get to the point of the matter. I think getting to the point and being able to say no.

Melendez stated:

- When you are talking to people and they see you are really someone who doesn't have a clue about how to go about accomplishing a task, gender becomes an issue. So [women] have to be confident, and have a message.
- Fortitude...politics is not for the faint of heart. So being thick skinned being able to take criticism, being able to hear the things that are not the truth...and being able to just continue to move forward...being strong.

Napolitano discussed how self-confidence is a tool to manage expectations of others. "They [women] cannot expect to live up to anybody's expectations...especially other women. Sometimes they can be the most critical"

Cooperativeness was the next top theme identified from the data. Excerpts representing this theme follow.

- The majority of women do care about helping people share the limelight, the stage...to help each other. Women provide moral support for each other...emotional support...if you're willing to work with other women. If not, you are pretty much on your own. You can see in the legislature who works with people and who doesn't work with people.

Saldana stated:

- We need parity in women...in the numbers of women who are elected officials. It seems the tipping point is around 40% of women in elected office...then we start to see changes in how funds are allocated and programs are set up...domestic violence shelters, breast cancer screening for low income women. Women legislative members have brought forward initiatives to fund programs.
- Whoever the woman is [she must] understand they are role models and they need to help other [women]...bring them along. You mentor along the way.

A few of the participants discussed the ability to keep moving forward or persistence as the characteristics shared by other women political leaders. Below are examples from the transcripts.

- For women...it's like I was saying in an earlier question, you really have to know yourself, what you value, and have a life history that will show people clearly that's where I come from and this is where I want to keep going.
- The women I've seen in Congress in particular are very strong women. And they are determined and they have a lot of persistence. They don't give up the first or second or third time. They continue forward...very focused on what they want to get done.

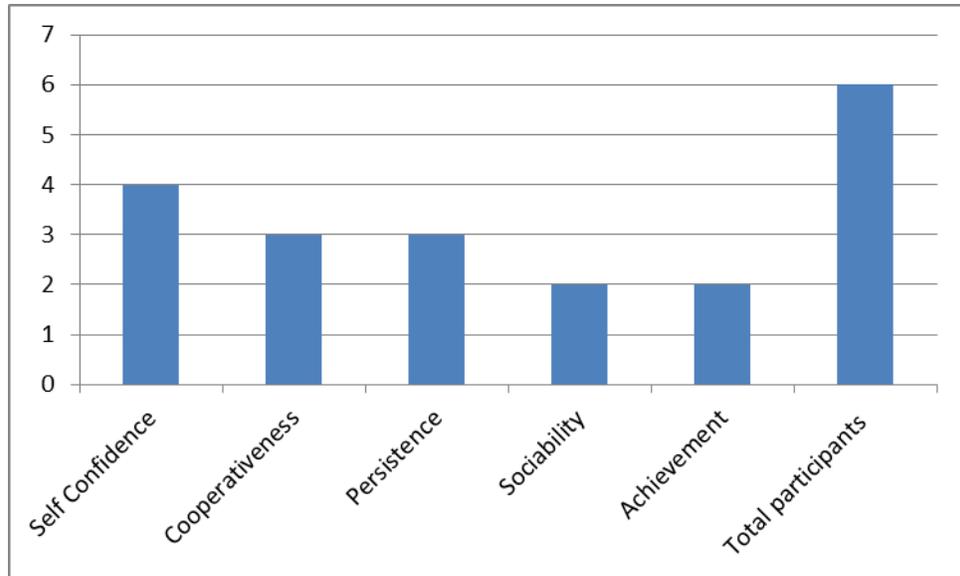


Figure 8. Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 5.

Two participant identified sociability as a characteristic they believed other women politicians possess.

Ma expressed:

Some women want to get their way and they don't like to compromise. Those that don't like to compromise find themselves on their own...other women aren't going to want to come to her defense or help her. The men certainly don't want to...so [those] women will have a tough time in politics...they don't have a built-in ally or group.

Saldana discussed how women political leaders' sociability characteristic was demonstrated in how they represented their area. "Reflecting your district...obviously you have to get elected and you're meeting with constituents"

Achievement was a theme identified by the responses from two participants. Hart responded, "I love solving problems and networking with people...getting that person together with that person and accomplish great things. Napolitano named other women

she believed have demonstrated the characteristic of achievement. “Judy Cho, she’s come up the ranks. Karen Bass, she’s worked through the ranks. She was in the assembly...she was the speaker and now she’s established herself in the senate”

**Interview Question 6**

When asked interview question 6, “What type of obstacles did you have to overcome to reach your political office?” each of the participants indicated that fundraising played a role in getting elected into office and is the predominant theme of the four that emerged from the data (see Table 6). The frequency of primary responses is shown in Figure 9.

Table 6  
*Question 6 Participants Responses: What Type of Obstacles Did You Have to Overcome to Reach Your Political Office?*

Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Fundraising	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gender issues		X	X		X	X
Perceptions				X	X	X
Self Confidence	X		X			

The following excerpts illustrate this theme:

- I’ve been asked by the superintendent to put my hat in the ring. So I spent \$250, made some signs, and put my name in [for school board] and thought the worst I could do is lose. I won!”

Melendez commented:

In my particular case in a local election where it costs far less money to win than if you were running for a state election or at a federal level, I looked at it and said, it shouldn’t take that much money to win, because really all you have to do is go

talk to people. I raised money. Far less than the other two candidates who also won. But in the end, it didn't hurt me, because I still won.

Ma stated:

Raising money is usually more difficult for women. If you look at contribution reports the same company will donate \$3,900 max outs to all the men and then they give the women \$1,000, \$1,000, \$1,000. Women are not good at asking for money. Our sense of worth is different.

Saldana commented:

I was in an open primary I had initially won and then some one else came in, so there were two major opponents and they probably out spent me by a million dollars. But I overcame the financial disparity by just devoting my time to walking precincts...instead of using the time to raise a lot of money.



Figure 9. Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 6

Sanchez mentioned:

I had quite a few obstacles...the perception that women can't raise money.

Napolitano stated:

What happens a lot of the times is women may not have the financial ability.

That's why I took care of it first. In a sense everyone said it was my

retirement...it was my Ford stock I had cashed in. I loaned it to myself. The bank would not loan me the money...they wouldn't loan to a women for politics.

Gender issues were the next theme identified as an obstacle by the participants.

Transcription excerpts from the participants follow.

- It is a little more important to talk to the folks affected by your decisions. The gender issues [being a mother a woman] again come back when talking to people.

Ma expressed:

This is a man's world. Men tend to support each other. They go smoke cigars, and go on fishing trips, and golfing trips. Women are usually busy raising families, doing the social things that we do. I think trying to be accepted in a man's world is not easy.

Ma continued by discussing other another gender-related obstacle:

Also just being a woman. Traditionally were supposed to get married; we're supposed to have kids. That is the first question people ask me when they meet me. Are you married? Do you have kids? Then if you don't, you feel like you're a pariah, or there is something wrong with you. The younger you are, the harder it is to overcome.

Napolitano commented:

I lead in efforts of military terrorism and homeland security. [The men] somehow [think], because she hasn't been in the military or because she hasn't been a

police officer or CIA agent, she may not understand what the implications, the policy, and the whole analytics behind the very male-oriented field.

Male macho...“I can do a better job than you.” The ego of a lot of folks who can’t see past what they see. They judge the book by its cover rather than understanding what’s inside. It is trying to make way for a female that knows what she can do.

Three participants discussed obstacles that were within the theme of negative perceptions. Transcript excerpts follow.

Saldana stated:

I had never served in an elected office. I had been a community volunteer and activist, and helped a lot of other people get elected to various offices. The hurdle was making the change in people’s perceptions from someone who is very dedicated to getting other women elected to office, to being someone who wanted to be elected myself.

First of all, I had no experience in political office. This is the first office I’ve held. Also, the perception that women don’t know what they are doing, or can’t be good with numbers or budgets.

Napolitano commented:

Certain times they look at you like...okay who is she? What is she doing here? Under Willie Brown, I served on a committee for international trade. Once I walked into a meeting in Monterey, California...a conference on exporters and some of the companies that deal with international trade. I walked in and was looking at some of the handouts on the table...someone came to welcome me, etc.

and then asked...“Whose secretary are you?” So you [need to] understand the prejudices against women are there and very evident.

Two participants identified self-confidence as an obstacle they had to overcome.

Related excerpts follow:

- Well my main obstacle was probably me. I was very hesitant to run for school board. I was hesitant to run for PTA president. I think it’s just your background. Ma discussed how not having the self-confidence to take credit for your work is

an obstacle. She stated:

Being able to tell your story, try to take credit for it, and pat yourself on the back. I think women, we believe we are going to work hard and our counterparts will recognize how hard we work. But in politics, if you’re not going to pat yourself on the back...nobody will. It’s about taking credit...you know the men will take credit much easier for things whether they do the work or not. Whereas women, if we’ve really not done the work, we fight to take credit for it even after we’ve done the work.

### **Interview Question 7**

For interview question 7, “How did you choose to overcome the obstacles you described?” there was a consistent response from all six of the participants who cited relationships as one of the methods used to overcome the obstacles they faced (See Table 7). Other responses varied and the frequency of primary responses is shown in Figure 10.

Table 7

*Question 7 Participants Responses: How Did You Choose to Overcome the Obstacles You Described?*

Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X
Commitment			X	X		X
Self-Confidence		X			X	
Enthusiasm	X					
Responsibility			X			
Achievement						X

The data in question 7 found the participants responded with similar obstacles they needed to overcome to reach their political office. As might be expected, the participants responded with similar methods used to overcome those obstacles, talking to people, working with other leaders, working with their female counterparts, were the responses that were included in the relationship theme. The following excerpts illustrate this theme.

Hart stated:

When I had the opportunity as a school board member, to start developing relationships with the chamber, the downtown clubs...I was asked to be a speaker...it develops you and you begin to see your shortcomings as less of roadblocks. Your competency levels rise as you get more self-esteem and you realize you can in fact do things.

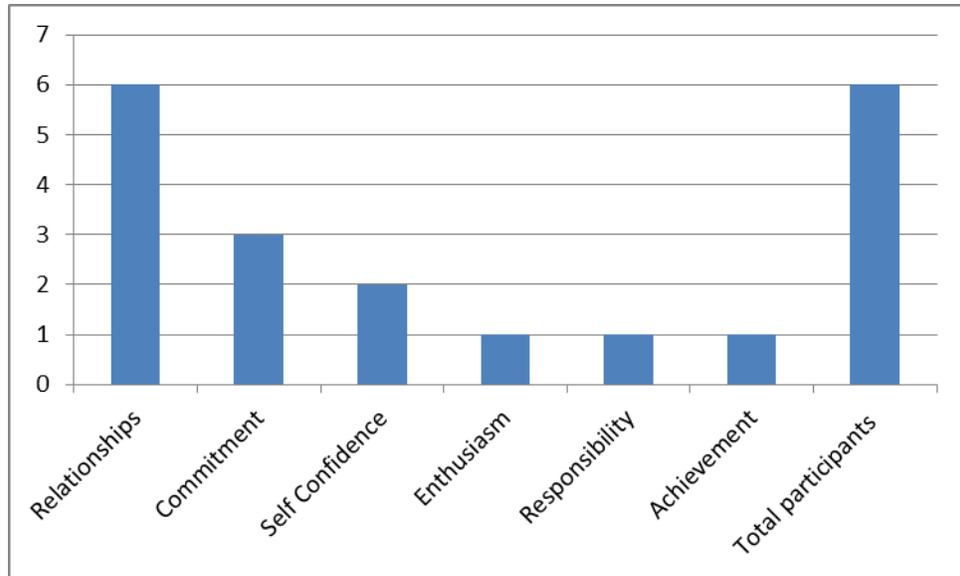


Figure 10. Response frequency for common themes identified in interview question 7.

Melendez commented:

It's very simple...I went and I knocked on doors and I made phone calls and I talked to as many people as I could. You really need to get the endorsement of the people you want to represent. That's most important.

Ma stated:

Women work it out behind the scenes. It's amazing how men have an easier time getting here [political office], but they have a harder time finding their way or their voice or their place once they are here.

Saldana mentioned:

I really just devoted my life to the campaign. It was how many people I can have a conversation with? Because how many times do you have the opportunity to knock on a complete stranger's door and have a conversation with them about something that really matters in their life? I devoted almost a year to that process of walking and knocking on doors

Sanchez stated:

We look for those people and those institutions that will bond with us that will allow us to move forward rather than to concentrate on those that will tear us down.

Napolitano commented:

Personal contact...most definitely...it's immediate. Because you can't always explain what's going on in a letter. There's always something that's left out. Or the nuance isn't there. Besides, it just takes too long.

Commitment was the next major theme. Terms from the participants' responses such as showing up and public service were terms used in this theme. Excerpts from the transcripts follow.

Ma commented:

It's about showing up. I'm probably one of the top money makers. Except for the speaker. That's because I show up. I travel out to Fresno, I was in Euba City, I go down to Salinas, San Diego. I mean all over the state.

Saldana stated:

I think being available and showing up and talking to people is a huge part of being a successful elected official. Making a connection with people because government service is really about how do we adjust to the lives that people are living right now.

Napolitano commented:

My children were grown when I started getting into politics. I was 45 when I first started on city council. I'm 74. So I've dedicated a lot of my life to public service.

You make believers out of people because you know your subject.)

Two of the participants discussed that self-confidence helped them overcome obstacles:

- If you can show them there is so much more to you than being a woman, the rest of that all sort of falls away. So you have to be confident, and you have to have a message. If you have that, then suddenly being a woman, isn't quite so important.

Sanchez stated:

Sometimes you just take it straight on, and sometimes you just ignore it, and sometimes you know when to pick your fights. I think what most women do is we study really hard and we know twice as much and we just keep moving forward.

Enthusiasm, responsibility, and achievement, were the other responses participants cited as ways they overcame obstacles. Selected excerpts follow:

- I think that enthusiasm is one of my qualities. I'm blessed with a high level of energy. It's a drawing quality to other people and they enjoy being around you.
- Women have to work harder to raise money, versus men. I have to travel to prove myself and that I understand and willing to stand up for the same things. It's really a double standard in politics.

Napolitano discussed how showing results helped her overcome obstacles throughout her career:

- It's not what I went out and said...[it's] what I did. It was the results of what my staff and I had carried out...and that was public service delivery.

**Nonverbal Communication (Video Analysis)**

From the review of videotaped interviews, the nonverbal communication themes identified from each of the six participants were categorized as body language and posture and gestures. Mannerisms such as eye contact, smiles, fluent speech, and attire were designated as body language. Hand gestures and body positions were associated with the posture and gesture theme. A nonverbal characteristic that all participants recognized was the use of eye contact extensively. Three participants smiled consistently throughout their interview responses, while one participant used hand motions while speaking. For attire, three participants who wore jeans were determined to be in the casual attire theme, and the three participants who wore suits or dresses were identified as formal. Only one participant used hand gestures when responding to questions and many of the participants nodded and clasped their hands (see Table 8).

Table 8  
*Nonverbal Communication Themes From VideoTaped Interviews*

Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Body language:						
Eye Contact	X	X	X	X	X	X
Smiles	X		X	X	X	
Fluent Speech	X	X	X	X	X	X
Attire: Casual	X	X				X
Attire: Formal			X	X	X	
Posture and gestures:						
Hand movements			X			
Head nodding	X		X		X	

### **Analysis by Local, State, and Federal Jurisdiction**

Because only two participants from each government jurisdiction were included in this study, it was difficult to draw significant conclusions based on the levels of political office. The participant responses from Question 1—What factors contributed to your success as a political leader?—were similar at each level of government. The participants in each of the jurisdictions identified similar factors that affected their success; responsibility, and sociability emerged as the top two.

When asked, “What skills do you believe contributed to your success as a political leader?” the women at each level responded with at least two skills that were their most significant. The participants at each level discussed building relationships within the community and listening to others, which surfaced as the top two themes. Only one participant cited any differences exist at the state and federal level when she responded to this question. Ma stated:

It’s relationships, being a team player...if you like to swim, bike, run, local level is better for you. If you like soccer, basketball, volleyball, then the state is better for you because that’s the different traits that make you a success up there. It’s like being the captain of a sport team. Over there [local] being a captain is hard because everyone wants to be a captain.

Only one woman of the six participants specifically identified her role as a mother as a significant relationship-building skill that contributed to her political success.

Question 3 related directly to their roles as women political leaders. The themes identified by the participant responses, collaboration and working with people, transcended the jurisdictions of their political office and emerged as the top themes.

Participants at each level noted that women act and think differently than their male colleagues.

The characteristics the participants identified in Question 4, self-confidence and sociability again were similar at each level. While the examples they used to illustrate their responses varied, the circumstances that demonstrated their characteristic as a political leader were comparable within each jurisdiction.

When asked question 5—Name the characteristics that you possess that you also see in other women political leaders?—the participant responses were related at each level, with self-confidence noted as the top theme from the data.

The data showed the participant responses to questions 6 and 7 regarding the obstacles and how they chose to overcome them were related throughout the jurisdictions. Fundraising was a significant obstacle and consistent theme for each level of government. Melendez did discuss that the amount of money needed for a local election was not as much as it would have been in a state or federal race, and Hart eluded to the lesser amounts needed at the local level when she discussed her earlier election experience. Relationship building again surfaced as a top response among participants and the predominant theme of how they chose to overcome the obstacles within local, state, and federal political arenas.

When viewing the participants' videotaped interviews, the participants' mannerisms and nonverbal themes were comparable at each level of government. The significant differences among the local, state, and federal level participants were the intensity and length of their responses. The local level participants used lengthy responses to each question. The participants that held state-level offices were concise and

focused in their responses. The federal-level participants responded succinctly and in sound bites for many of the questions.

### **Summary**

Data for this study were gathered from in-person videotaped, semistructured interviews. The researcher and second rater used data analysis methodology as described by Ritchie and Spencer (Ritchie & Spencer, 1993). The participants were videotaped and asked seven interview questions, which related to the three research questions. The participant responses provided the themes relating to the research questions. The themes were identified, illustrated with transcript excerpts, and Pareto charts and tables were used to provide clarity. Participant responses identified how the predominant themes of relationships, self-confidence, and raising money contributed to their success as women political leaders. The data analysis was informative and provided valuable insights for future studies on women political leadership.

## **Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions**

The purpose of this study is to examine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the career progress of six elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. An examination of the literature in Chapter 2 discussed leadership theory and styles including the trait or great man theory of leadership, gender, women's leadership within the political arena, and nonverbal communications and symbolic behaviors.

### **Summary of the Study**

For this study, the researcher used a qualitative focused ethnographic research method as O'Reilly (2004) recommended. This study utilized focused ethnography to evaluate or elicit information on a special topic or shared experience among groups of participants that share some feature or features (Morse & Richards, 2002). Using the notion that people are experts on their own experiences and are, therefore, best able to report how they experienced a particular phenomenon in their life Maykut and Morehouse (1994), data were gathered using in-person, videotaped, semi structured interviews. The purposive sampling technique, as Patton (1990) described, was used to select the participants who are currently elected to serve in California government at the local, state, or federal levels.

Each participant was videotaped and notes were taken. Transcripts of the videotape, along with the notes were the data source for the study. The information was analyzed and grouped by themes, according to the methodology Ritchie and Spencer (1993) recommended. The data and themes were presented in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter Structure**

This chapter presents a summary of the study findings, discussion as it relates to the research question, and implications for women political leadership. This is followed by recommendations for future research and a final study summary.

### **Summary of Findings and Discussion**

This dissertation focused on answering three primary research questions:

1. What are the key traits, characteristics, and skills that women believe enabled them to attain their current position?
2. What are some of the barriers that these women feel impeded their progress?
3. Does there appear to be nonverbal communication traits that relate to their leadership style?

This study has identified the traits, characteristics, and skills that the participants self-reported as significant to their success and the success of other political women colleagues. This study also identified some of the barriers and how these participants and other female leaders addressed them in their political roles. Videotaped interviews of the participants revealed their personal nonverbal mannerisms that also contribute to their leadership roles in the political arena.

All six of participants acknowledged there were traits, characteristics, and skills that helped them succeed as women in their political offices (see Table 9). The themes derived from the participant interview responses included it's about relationships, communicating to others, ability to mingle with all types of people, listening to others, women tend to be consensus builders, don't give up, and keep moving forward. The

success traits, skills, and characteristic themes identified were Responsibility, Sociability, Relationships, Consensus Building, Self-Confidence, Cooperativeness, and Persistence.

Table 9  
*Matrix of Top Themes, Participants Choosing the Theme, Descriptive Terms, and Who Said It*

Themes	Number of women leaders choosing theme	Descriptive terms	Legislative Jurisdictions
<b>Success Traits</b>			
Responsibility	4	Leadership roles, transfer of power, completing tasks, telling the truth	Local, State, Federal
Sociability	4	Working with people, communicating to others, volunteering	Local, State, Federal
<b>Skills</b>			
Relationships/working with people	6	It's about relationships, listening, ability to mingle with people, an overall desire to work with people, communicating with others	Local, State, Federal
Consensus building	4	Women tend to be consensus builders, work together for common solutions, finding areas where you can agree, letting everybody come to the table	Local, State, Federal
<b>Characteristics</b>			
Self-Confidence	5	A sense of outspokenness, use your own voice, women stay true, firm grasp on basic belief and what I stand for, you believe in yourself	Local, State, Federal
Cooperativeness	4	Working with other levels of government, willing to talk about personal experiences, be out there, voting together	Local, State, Federal
Persistence	3	This is where I want to keep going, They don't give up...they keep going, keep moving forward	State, Federal

These key themes are consistent with the landmark research study Stogdill (1948) conducted and information published in multiple publications on women's leadership.

For the first question, the participants articulated how they reached their political offices

and were able to relate those steps to specific factors that led to their success as political leaders. The researcher noted the participants expressed a strong sense of responsibility to serve their communities and were compelled to work with others. These terms were related to the top themes responsibility and sociability.

As the interview continued to question 2, the researcher realized many of the participants were naturally identifying what skills they believed contributed to their success. All six participants used terms that referred to relationship skills. The next top theme identified from participants was consensus building. These top two seemed to correspond to the leadership information the researcher noted.

The analysis of the participant responses and the top seven themes that emerged are illustrated in Table 9. The themes correspond to the research questions, which addressed traits for success, skills, and characteristics.

As the researcher completed interviews with the participants, it became evident that the top two traits the participants identified are among the top five major leadership traits identified in Bass and Stogdill's (1990) landmark studies on traits between 1948 and 1970. Further, legislative jurisdictions did not play a significant role in the traits, or skills, for success the women reported in this study. This study revealed the characteristics the state- and federal-level participants held as important among their peers for success was persistence. Working with people and bringing others together to create solutions were the most consistent responses and cited in some form by most of the participants in their interviews. Table 10 illustrates the distribution of participant responses.

Table 10  
*Distribution of Participant Responses to the Major Study Themes*

Themes by Topic	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
<b>Success Traits</b>						
Responsibility	X	X	X			X
Sociability	X	X	X	X		
<b>Skills</b>						
Relationships/Working With People	X	X	X	X	X	X
Consensus Building	X		X		X	X
<b>Characteristics</b>						
Self-Confidence	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cooperativeness	X		X	X		
Persistence				X	X	X

### **Responsibility**

Leadership roles, accepting power, and telling the truth are among the key comments the participants believed are important responsibility traits for success. Hart described her experience with this stating:

I think people see qualities in you that you don't always see in yourself and they put them on you...they give you power. They see something in you that resonate in them and they want to follow you. Then if they want to follow you, it's easy to lead.

Melendez further underscored the importance of leadership responsibility with constituents when she commented:

When you are in a leadership position, people don't put you there because they think you know everything...they are putting you there because they want you to lead the pack and discover all the things that need to be done along the way.

She also stated, It's not a dictatorship. No one wants to be treated like they are underlings and they don't have a value.

Ma believed that showing constituents that you can be trusted is an important factor:

People feel your word is good and they can trust you. I commit. I show up...honor commitments.

Napolitano illustrated the value and importance of the responsibility theme by relating it to her family duties:

I've always been focused on my family and making things better for them. Once you do that, everyone around you wants you to be part of making a difference.

According to Bass and Stogdill (1990), responsibility must be commensurate with authority and authority is recognized by those in leadership positions and acknowledged by those in positions below before it is converted to power. These women political leaders have come to understand that power and responsibility create an environment that is important for successful leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2002) support this concept:

Synergistic and circular process is created as power and responsibility are extended to others and as people respond successfully. As constituents increase their competencies, even further amounts of power can be extended. As more responsibility is assumed, leaders can expend more energy in other areas. (p. 298)

They continue their discussion on responsibility stating:

Unless people take personal responsibility and unless they are held accountable for their own actions, we're not very inclined to want to work with them nor much inclined to cooperate in general. We know our peers are expecting us to be prepared and to do our jobs, and peer expectations are a powerful force in motivating us to do well. The feeling of not wanting to let the rest of the group down strengthens people's resolve to do their best. (p. 299)

According to Drucker (2001):

There is no such word as “responsibility” in the political dictionary. The appropriate term is “responsibility *and* authority.” Whoever claims authority thereby assumes responsibility. But whoever assumes responsibility claims authority. To assume social responsibility therefore always means to claim authority. (p. 61)

He continues, “A requirement is that a leader sees leadership as responsibility rather than as rank and privilege” (p. 170).

### **Sociability**

The second greatest theme that emerged from the participant interviews was sociability. Terms such as working with people, volunteering, communicating with others, and meeting with constituents were associated with sociability. This researcher expected this theme to be among the top-rated themes for political leaders. It is one of the five major leadership traits Stodgill (1948) identified in his landmark study on trait leadership.

Each of the women in their responses consistently expressed passion about sociability. Saldana stated:

I think being available and showing up and talking to people is a huge part of being a successful elected official. Making a connection with [constituents] because government service is really about how do we adjust to the lives that people are living right now.

Ma, current speaker pro-tem, and popular among many of the state representatives, spoke of the importance of sociability when she commented, “Being able to work with people, like people and wanting to help people is very important.”

She continued, “The majority of women do care about helping people and are willing to share the limelight, and the stage, [in order] to help each other.”

Hart, who is known for little red heart stickers she gives to constituents after they meet with her, believed being involved with groups as a volunteer is important social training for working with people and political success:

I think one of the trainings that I’ve had over the years is basically being a volunteer. I joined PTA. It started out as just a room mother kind of position, and then as you mix with other women in the school that are doing leadership things they ask you to join or they ask you to help put on the carnival or one of those types of chores...and you think can I do that? You are really just a normal everyday person.

Sociability was associated with leadership in 14 studies and is one of the five major traits Bass and Stogdill (1990) identified as necessary for would-be leaders to possess or cultivate if they want to be perceived as a leader. The positive findings on sociability in the 1948 and 1970 studies suggest leaders with sociability are participants in various activities. Stogdill’s studies further define leaders who show sociability as friendly, outgoing, courteous, tactful, and diplomatic. They are sensitive to others’ needs and show concern for their well-being. They have good interpersonal skills and create cooperative relationships with their followers (Northouse, 2004d).

## **Relationships**

The top theme related to skills was identified as relationships. Each of the six participants discussed the importance of relationships for women leaders. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. “Success in leading is wholly dependent upon the capacity to build and sustain those human relationships that enable people to get extraordinary things done on regular bases” (p. 21). Gilligan (1982) stated, “Women not only define themselves in a context of human relations but also judge themselves in terms of their ability to care” (p. 17).

Repeatedly, the participants in this study spoke of the ability to communicate and work with all types of people, building networks, and an overall desire to work with people. The following are excerpts of their responses:

Hart stated:

- I have the ability to mingle with all types of people. I’m interested in all kinds of people, I really like to listen to where they’ve been and what they are doing. I love to converse with people. I think I tend to get along with people and be a happy positive person. I’ve learned over the years that that is in fact one of the qualities that people want to be around.

Melendez commented:

- You really have to be sincere. People pick up on that. They can tell if you are being fake and phony and you are saying what you think they want to hear. For me, I listen more than I talk. If you just sit back and listen, you find out a lot of things that people wouldn’t have necessarily communicated to you...the most

important stuff comes after the “um.” If you just wait, if you don’t interject, listen, and let them continue, you learn a lot. You can’t lead unless you are able to be led and folks want to know you can be led...you work with others.

Ma mentioned:

- It’s relationships, being a team player. I think that women relate differently to other women. I have very good relationships with many of my women colleagues.

Saldana stated:

- A very broad relationship network...understanding what agencies, not only the head of the agency, but the people working on their staff, understanding who holds the keys to opening the doors where the solutions maybe hiding. That’s a big part of politics, the relationship and being able to work with other people even if you may not agree with them 100% of the time.

She added:

“I think being available and showing up and talking to people is a huge part of being a successful elected official. “

Sanchez discussed an overall desire of wanting to help people. She also discussed listening to others:

Listening skills, I believe women have better listening skills. People hear, but they may not really listen to what people are saying. We tend to be much more circular when we listen. Everybody is on an equal basis and we hear the flow come in.

Early in her career, Napolitano served as a volunteer on the Sister City

Commission for the City of Norwalk for 15 years. She stated, “This helped me learn how

city council operates and how local politics work.” Napolitano also discussed teaching others.

This is a learning thing about teaching not only those around you, but your own family. By example. Getting involved and understanding that you are part of a world that sometimes does not tolerate some of the things that some of our youngsters get away with.

She continued by saying “You learn to interact with other people and convince them that you are who you are. You do it by actions not by words.”

### **Consensus Building**

When discussing skills, consensus building was the next most often mentioned theme. Hart said:

Most community people want to be heard. They want consensus. If somebody wants to accomplish something in their community and they come to you, they want you to be able to understand where and why they are coming to you. You can't always agree with them...you have to be able to incorporate your decision and maybe tweak a project a little bit to accommodate as many people in the community as you can. You don't always get 100% buy in, but maybe you get consensus, which is the best we can do for the circumstances were given at that time.

Ma discussed consensus when working with other legislatures:

Women tend to want to work together to come to a common solution. Women work it out behind the scenes. We're more like compromisers. I think we try to

help each other. Rarely will you see women say anything negative or be combative.

She continued:

Some women want to get their way and they don't like to compromise. Those that don't like to compromise find themselves on their own. Because...number one...the women aren't going to want to come to her defense or try to help her. So those women are going to have a tough time in politics.

Sanchez mentioned:

I think women are use to being the negotiator, the bond person in the family who tries to get everybody on the same page and be cohesive. I think we're much better at this.

Napolitano commented:

It takes somebody establishing themselves and having to prove that they're there for the right reason. That people can turn to them for any advice, direction, whatever [they need].

For consensus building, the definition of transformation leaders, which highlights the importance of communication and team building, is compatible with this theme narrative. Wilson (2004) refers to this as “the female advantage” (p. 110)—woman’s ability to communicate across lines of authority, sharing information in a team-spirit work ethic that assumes one person’s effectiveness as both dependent on the rest and a contribution to overall excellence.

Bass suggests transformational leadership motivates followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team, organization, or community (Northouse,

2004e). Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996), in their study on transactional leadership roles, found that those who exhibited a transformational leadership style are associated with effective outcomes. Logically, it might be expected that these women politicians, in general, are more effective because they are using this aspect of the transformation leadership style.

### **Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence is one of the three characteristics identified by the all six participants as an important characteristic for success. Based on Northouse (2004e), it's one of the traits that is central to leadership and helps an individual to be a leader. It is the ability to be certain about one's competencies and skills. It includes a sense of self-esteem and self-assurance and the belief that one can make a difference. Self-confidence allows the leader to feel assured that attempts to influence are appropriate and right. Some of the participant responses follow.

Sanchez said, "Being successful means being able to stand up and communicate the truth. That's a difficult thing sometimes for politicians to do...but for me it's worked."

She continued, "Being able to communicate and being able to stand up. Women make tough decisions everyday for their families. So I think for the nation they can too."

Napolitano believes self-confidence is what has helped demonstrate her dedication to what she is doing:

Understanding first, who you are. Having faith in your ability to speak up...not necessarily to effect change but begin the process of change for the better.

Understanding that if you don't speak up, then things will remain status quo.

She added, “If you believe in what you’re doing...then you know. That’s your first tool is that strength you have.

She also discussed how self-confidence is important in elections, “If you can’t sell yourself with a conviction you know you have, then [constituents] won’t buy. They won’t elect you...they won’t vote for you.”

Hart believed having the confidence to speak up is important:

A sense of outspokenness...a sense of being able to quit beating around the bush and get to the heart of the matter [is important]. I think getting to the point being able to say no sometimes...being able to make tough decisions even when it’s not where you want to go.

Melendez relates self-confidence as bringing forth her own ideas:

For me, I really have to be cautious and come forward as Melissa who has these particular ideas, and it’s not endemic to being a woman...it’s what makes me...me and what I’ve learned along the way with my experiences and wisdom.

Saldana said:

In addition to being open to new ideas, also having a firm grasp of what are the basic beliefs I stand for? Really know yourself and what you have a tolerance for. I believe voters get very tired of people who seem not to know their own values and core beliefs.

For Ma, self-confidence is evident in women leaders especially when it’s time to vote on difficult issues:

I run the floor and I see how people vote and the women stay true. They're not scared...they get out there. You don't find the women hiding in their office...we don't wait for women on the floor saying "Where is she? Where is her vote?"

In discussing self-confidence, Cox (1926) noted great leaders were characterized by traits such as self-confidence. Buttgerit (1932), Moore (1932), and Zeleny (1939) also reported leaders rated self-confidence high. Self-confidence and a personal sense of security are likely to have a strong effect on a leader's tendencies to direct and participate with others (Bass, 1981). Throughout the past 30 years, the concept of transformational leadership has evolved. Judge and Piccolo (2004) extended the concept to include individuals who provide others with consideration.

### **Cooperativeness**

The second characteristic participants reported as important for success was cooperativeness. The following excerpts from the participants illustrate their views. Ma said:

The women [in legislature] provide moral support for each other...emotional support...if you are willing to work with other women. If not, you are pretty much on your own. You can see in the legislature who works with people and who doesn't work with people.

Hart stated:

I can mix between the different segments of the community...doesn't really matter, I'm just at home with all of them. I see that with a lot of women in positions of leadership. They are able to communicate with a hug, with a handshake, with a look, with a smile. We communicate different than men do.

Saldana commented:

I think always being open to learning and looking for examples to work with other levels of government...whether it is federal or the states, internationally.

Cooperativeness was rated a top leadership ability in 11 early studies, defined as the ability to enlist cooperation and control others in a group, and noted that leaders tend to be people who are able to work for the group's well being (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Chin's (2007) recent studies on women's leadership found more women were engaged in the collaborative process of leadership.

### **Persistence**

The third theme identified for characteristics was persistence. What was significant about this theme is that the state and federal participants emphasized it and it is the only theme that did not include a local-level response. Sanchez best illustrated the importance of persistence when she said,

Fortitude and being strong. The women I've seen in Congress are very very strong. They are determined and they have a lot of persistence. They don't give up the first or second or third time. They continue forward with a focus on what they want to get done.

She added, "Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House always says... "Politics is not for the faint of heart." So being thick skinned and being able to take criticism...and being able to continue to move forward.

For Napolitano, persistence is demonstrated through her continuous work for her constituents:

Right now people know, even outside my district when I go to meetings, they know who I am because I've proven myself. Whether it's through some committee work, bringing home some money, making things happen, picking up the phone, and getting some action on something that is necessary.

Saldana continued this thought:

Women have fought hard and primarily the women legislator members. They have brought forward initiatives to fund programs because we recognize that often a woman who is dying of a preventable illness or disease, that impacts a network of her family, and if we can prevent that it would really go a long way to having a stronger society.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) state that proactive people tend to work harder at what they do. They persist in achieving their goals; others tend to give up, especially when faced with strong objection or great adversity. According to Bass and Stogdill (1990), personal characteristics such as energy, intelligence, assertiveness, task orientation, need for power, and other personal traits will promote the persistence of the same persons to emerge as leaders in a variety of times and places. Studies by Kenny and Zaccaro (1983) found the persistence of an individual's attempts, success, and effectiveness as a leader may be enhanced by a consistent ability to perceive the needs and goals of a constituency and to adjust their personal approach to a groups action. Cox (1926) found that great face-to-face leaders were noted for their persistence in the face of obstacles, capacity to work with distant objects in view, degree of strength of will or perseverance, and tendency not to abandon tasks from mere changeability.

## **Obstacles**

When discussing obstacles they faced as women political leaders, fundraising and gender bias were the two themes they identified. Each of the six participants discussed the difficulty of raising money for their political endeavors. Melendez commented on fundraising by stating:

Raising money as a woman who wants to get into political office is difficult. If you have a male and female candidate who are both equally qualified, I think that nine times out of 10 the man is going to get the money.

Ma stated, "Raising money is usually more difficult for women. Because we're not good at asking for money. Our sense of worth is different. We have to work harder to raise money."

Sanchez furthered the thought, "Money is an important factor in elections. Usually, women aren't as good as fundraisers or they believe that they aren't good."

Saldana related her financial obstacle in relation to her campaign opponents, "I was in an open primary I had initially won. Then someone else came in and now there are two major opponents and they outspent me by a million dollars."

Napolitano said, "When I first ran for city council, I took a loan on my house. I wanted to ensure that I was not just running but going to be a viable candidate. So now, I could get out, knock on doors, and convince others of my viability."

When discussing gender issues, the participants such as Melendez stated:

Once people found out I was a mother and that I have five children...the questions rose... "how are you going to take care of your family and children and do this as well?"

Ma, continued this thought, “This is a man’s world. Women are usually busy raising families, doing the social things. So trying to be accepted into a man’s world is not easy.

Sanchez related gender bias to her current role in congress:

The perception that somehow a women, because she hasn’t been in the military or because she hasn’t been a police officer or CIA agent, she may not understand the implications or policies and the whole analytics behind the very male-oriented fields.

Napolitano added to this thought: “The male macho ‘I can do better than you.’

The ego of a lot of folks who can’t see past what they see. They judge a book by its cover rather than understand what’s inside.”

When discussing how they overcame the obstacles the responses varied. Hart relied on her self-confidence and enthusiastic personality: “I think that enthusiasm is one of my best qualities. I’m blessed with a high level of energy...I would bottle it. “

Melendez relied on talking with people as her way of handling the obstacles. She stated:

In my case, local elections cost far less money to win than a state election or at a federal level. So I said, well first of all it shouldn’t take that much money to win because all you really have to do is go talk to people.

She continued:

For the gender issues, again that came back to talking to people. Once we began talking about the issues and my ideas, my background, the gender issues sort of fell away.

To overcome fundraising obstacles, Ma relies on her ability to travel to fundraising events:

Because I have time, I travel to Fresno, Euba City, Salinas, San Diego...all over the state. Except for the speaker, I'm probably one of the top money makers.

Saldana also devoted time as a means of handling obstacles:

I overcame the financial disparities by devoting my time to walking precincts, knocking on doors, and attending community meetings. Instead of using the time to raise a lot of money, I used the time to make a lot of direct personal contact with voters.

Sanchez relies on self-confidence:

Sometimes, you just take it straight on, and sometimes, you ignore it. You know when to pick your fights. I think what most women do is we study really hard and we know twice as much and we just keep moving forward.

Napolitano identified her record of achievements as the answer to her obstacles: "Your actions actually convince [people] you are legitimate...you can do what you say you can do."

There is little empirical support for the notion that a lack of funding exists for women political leaders. Fulton, Maestas, Maisel and Stone have found no real gender gap in fundraising between male and female candidates. Biersak and Hernson (1994) and Darcy, Welch, and Clark (1994) offer some confirmation of the idea that women candidates are underfunded. Their data indicate that women do receive slightly less money than men do. Burrell (1985) and Uhlaner and Scholzman (1986) found that women receive more money than men, mostly because of the number of Political Action

Committees that exclusively support women candidates. Selzter, Newman, and Leighton (1997) claim there are slight variations in funding from Political Action Committees as a result of the level of office—local, state, or federal—or the time period of elections. Procopio (2005) argues that any bias caused by inequitable funding either has been corrected by the development of women candidate Political Action Committees or at most remains an issue of minor concern.

With regard to the gender issues cited as obstacles, there are two narratives to discuss. One addresses the voter bias toward women politicians and the other is gender bias toward women from their elected male counterparts.

The public has become more comfortable with the idea of women in political office. The reasons people give for thinking that the gender of the politician matters are mainly stereotypical. People who think that more women politicians would lead to better government believe women are more reliable and conscientious, less corrupt, and less easily manipulated than men. They also indicated women are more likely to think about social justice, poor people, and fiscal responsibility. Those who saw women as a negative believed a woman's place was in the home and that women would be too soft, flighty, inconsistent, and not business-minded enough to be successful legislators (Simmons, 2001).

Regarding gender bias toward women from their male counterparts, research on gender and occupational stereotypes suggests that political office is perceived as a masculine occupation. Following this reasoning, the legislature, as an institution created by men and historically dominated by men, might reward and advance those who have male qualities such as competitiveness and individualism (Jeydel, 2003).

## **Nonverbal Communications**

After the review of the videotaped interviews, the themes of body language and posture and gesture were identified from the participant responses. Nonverbal communication refers to various types of communication with which the body, the mannerisms, and the behaviors communicate messages. There are many ways the human body expresses itself with others. A skillful communicator can use various parts of the body intentionally to convey a message. Facial expressions, eye movements, gestures, posture, and the intensity of the human voice all communicate a message from the individual (Singla, 2004).

## **Participant Body Language and Posture Analysis**

Each of the participants interviewed had her own distinctive personality that was evident on videotape. The significant observation this researcher noted was that the level of intensity, focus, and tone increased with the levels of legislative representation. The local-level participants, while focused, had a controlled, low intensity, and slower, casual responses to questions throughout the interview. The state and federal level participants had a controlled, intense, focused, rapid, and pointed responses to questions throughout the interview.

**Nancy Hart, city councilmember, Riverside, CA (P1).** When recalling her political experiences, such as the factors that contributed to success, skills, and characteristics, Hart's oral delivery was in a controlled and rapid tone, her eyes were noticeably bright, and she smiled consistently. As she discussed the obstacles she faced, Hart's gaze became more focused, and the tone of her voice was softer and more controlled. Her answers overall were delivered with very causally with low intensity.

Hart did not have any meetings with constituents scheduled for the day and was dressed casually. Throughout the interview, Hart had a relaxed body posture, nodded her head up and down in agreement occasionally, and used few gestures.

The body language and posture Hart exhibited appeared to be consistent with the themes of responsibility, sociability, consensus building, self-confidence, and cooperativeness attributed to her responses in this study (see Table 10).

**Melissa Melendez, mayor, City of Lake Elsinore, CA (P2).** When recalling her political experiences such as factors that contributed to success, skills, and characteristics, Melendez's oral delivery had a controlled and soft tone. She used eye contact to emphasize certain responses she believed were important, such as sincerity when talking to constituents. She smiled when discussing her family. As she discussed the obstacles, her gaze became more focused; her voice became softer and had more intensity. Overall, her answers were delivered casually, with low intensity. Melendez had several meetings scheduled with staff and her attire was considered business casual. Throughout the interview, Melendez had a relaxed body posture, and used few gestures.

The body language and posture Melendez exhibited appeared to be consistent with the themes of responsibility, sociability, relationships, and self-confidence attributed to her responses in this study (see Table 10).

**Fiona Ma, assemblywoman, California 12th district assembly whip/speaker pro tempore (P3).** Ma, discussed her political experiences with an oral delivery that had an intense tone, and was punctuated with hand movements and smiles. She used eye contact consistently to emphasize certain responses such as self-confidence and persistence. Overall, Ma's answers were delivered with focus and high intensity.

Throughout the interview, Ma had a relaxed body posture, used hand movements when she talked, crossed her arms, nodded, and used her body to motion toward certain directions. Ma, had several public appearances that day and her attire was formal.

Ma's body language and posture appeared to be consistent with the themes of responsibility, sociability, relationships, consensus building, self-confidence, and cooperativeness that were attributed to her responses in this study (see Table 10)

**Lori Saldana, assemblywoman, California 76th district (P4).** Saldana, discussed her political experiences with an oral delivery that had a soft, intense tone, and included smiles and consistent eye contact. Her answers were delivered with focused eye contact throughout the interview. Her speech paused occasionally when delivering responses she believed were significant, such as how she handled the obstacles during her political career. Saldana, overall, responded softly, yet with focus and high intensity. Saldana had a relaxed body posture, and clasped her hands occasionally. She had just returned from a speech at a local university and her attire was formal.

Saldana's body language and posture appeared to be consistent with the themes of sociability, relationships, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and persistence that were attributed to her responses in this study (see Table 10)

**Loretta Sanchez, congresswoman, California 47th congressional district (P5).** Sanchez delivered her interview responses with a high intense tone, some smiles, and consistently focused eye contact. While her speech was mainly controlled and rapid overall; the tone fluctuated between soft and harsh depending on the questions. When discussing her skills and characteristics, her oral tone was soft and intense. However when she discussed the gender-related obstacles and self-confidence, her oral tone

became harsh and intense. Sanchez had a more rigid body posture, crossed her legs, and gestured with her head. Sanchez had several public appearances scheduled and her attire was formal.

Sanchez's, body language and posture appeared to be consistent with the themes of relationships, consensus building, self-confidence, and persistence that were attributed to her responses in this interview. Sanchez identified self-confidence and her ability to influence change as the traits she believes help her be a successful political leader (see Table 10)

**Grace Napolitano, congresswoman, California 38th congressional district (P6).** From the beginning of the interview, Napolitano had a soft, intense oral tone, and focused gaze. Her responses to all questions were controlled, focused, and rapid. She would briefly pause her speech and use direct eye contact when discussing issues she believed were significant such as fundraising, self-confidence, and persistence. She had a casual body posture and occasionally nodded and gestured with her head. Napolitano was scheduled to fly to Washington, DC. Her business attire was business casual.

Napolitano's body language and posture appeared to be consistent with the themes of responsibility, consensus building, self-confidence, and persistence that were attributed to her responses in this interview (see Table 10).

Bass and Stogdill (1990) believed success in leading incorporates the interpersonal competency of quality communication with others. More than 90% of communication happens at a nonverbal level. Mehrabian's (1981) frequently cited UCLA study on nonverbal communication shows that 55% of what is recalled from an

conversation or presentation is based on body language and posture; 38% is on oral tone; and only 7% is based on the spoken word.

Fluency of speech was positively associated with leadership in early studies Baldwin (1932) and Zeleny (1939) conducted. Considerable evidence from these studies demonstrates the connections between competence in communicating and performance as a successful leader. Kanter, (1983) found that leaders had a number of communication skills in common. Baird (1977) examined categories of nonverbal behaviors that included eye contact, facial movements, posture, and gestures, and found significant relation between emergence as a leader and the tendency to gesture with the hands Gitter, Black, and Fishman (1975) concluded that nonverbal communications could be more important than verbal ones.

### **Stogdill Top Major Leadership Themes Versus Political Women Leaders Study Themes**

Since Stogdill's (1948) first landmark study of the great man theory of trait leadership , multiple studies have been conducted by Mann 1959; Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986), and Kirpatrick and Locke (1991). According to these researchers, individuals can be born with these traits; they can learn them; or both. A century of research on trait leadership has produced an extended list of traits that potential and current leaders should possess.

The top five major central traits from Stogdill's study are responsibility, sociability, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and persistence (Northouse, 2004d).

Stogdill's top major leadership traits are similar to those identified by the participants in this study (Table 11). Intelligence is directly related to leadership. Having

strong verbal ability, perceptual ability, and reasoning contribute to a strong leader. Responsibility was one of the top themes this study's participants identified, with responses such as completing tasks, telling the truth, and transfer of power. Hart illustrated this concept when she stated, "People see qualities in you that you don't always see in yourself...they give you power." Responsibility is one of the themes that differ between the two studies' lists of top major leadership traits.

Table 11  
*Comparison of Five Major Study Themes to Stogdill's Major Leadership Themes*

Study Themes	Bass and Stogdill Major Leadership Themes (Northouse, 2004)
Responsibility	Intelligence
Sociability	Self-Confidence
Self-Confidence	Determination
Cooperativeness	Integrity
Persistence	Sociability

The second major leadership trait Bass & Stogdill (1990) listed is self-confidence. This trait emerged as the third most identified theme by participants in this study. The other trait theme that the two lists have in common is sociability. Examples of participants exhibiting this theme are noted in the participant responses and nonverbal communication analysis. Determination is listed as the third on Stogdill list and persistence is the fifth theme in this study. Both themes essentially refer to the same leadership terminology and can be considered the same trait.

Integrity is the other significant trait that differs from those the participants in this study identified. Integrity is the quality of honesty and trustworthiness. Leaders exhibiting this trait inspire confidence in others because they are loyal and are trusted to do what they say they are going to do (Northouse, 2004d). It would be expected that this

is a key trait identified by women politicians. Half of the participants in the study identified this theme as it related to their roles as leaders.

The cooperativeness theme is the significant difference in the two lists. The researcher proposes the reason, as the participants in the study stated: working with other people is the key component to being a successful political leader. The participants repeatedly referred to how important it is, especially for women leaders, to cooperate with each other. Ma, illustrated the importance of cooperativeness when she said:

Some women want to go their own way. Those that don't like to compromise find themselves on their own...those women are going to have a tough time in politics. The women provide moral support for each other...if you're willing to work with other women...if not you are pretty much on your own. You can see in the legislature who works with people and who doesn't work with people.

It is the researchers opinion that the findings in this study correlate with the theories proposed in both Stogdill studies, which indicate that there are certain traits that are relevant to leaders in certain situations. Further, the findings of this study correspond to those Stogdill found, which showed that leadership is not a passive state but a result of a working relationship between the leader and other group members.

As discussed previously, in his initial 1948 study, Stogdill examined more than 124 studies and the follow up in 1970 he reviewed 163 studies, on trait leadership. The participants of the studies were men who were serving in leadership roles at Universities, businesses, and social organizations. While this review of studies was significant and produced identified leadership traits, the focus of the studies were predominantly on the ways men lead in various groups. (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

## **Alice Eagly and Stevens Karau Gender and Emergent Leadership Theory versus Women Leaders Study Themes**

To attempt to understand the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, Alice Eagly and Stevens Karau (1991) reviewed previous studies on gender role differences and emergent leadership theory by Eagley. In the earlier studies by Eagly (1987) gender role theory of sex differences predicts that men tend to emerge as leaders initially in leaderless groups and accounts for this factor in terms of societies application of shared expectation of gender roles. These roles are defined in terms of task and social activity. Task activity relates to behaviors that attempt to address or solve problems among the group. Social activity is defined as the contribution to morale and interpersonal relations within the group (Eagly & Karau, 1991).

Eagly and Karau's (1991) earlier findings suggest that men's ability to specialize in task oriented behaviors relative to women's social activity is one key to men's emergence as group leaders. Women, more attentive to the interpersonal relations and group harmony, achieve some recognition as social facilitators but less recognition as the overall group leader. Although other theories could be cited on gender study, the gender role perspective produced a number of predictions, which were confirmed by the research literature on emergent leadership.

The findings of the 1991 Eagly and Karau review confirmed the theory that men emerged more frequently as leaders than women in group settings. However, this review also determined that sex differences in emergent leadership depended on the type of leadership measured. They found that men emerged as leaders more frequently on the task related behaviors and women as leaders more frequently on social activities in

groups. The Eagly and Karau (1991) review also suggests that women not only are treated differently in group settings, but also behave differently. The findings further suggest that men are selected to lead when leadership is determined in terms of task related contributions. Whereas helping the group resolve its interpersonal problems and maintain moral, may be less likely to result for women selected as the group's leader.

The 1991 Eagly and Karau review examined the trends on the amount of interaction and social complexity of the individuals within the groups. In incidents when the groups interacted for longer period of time before a leader was selected, the social elements of the group became an dominant task related factor (e.g. morale, personality conflicts). In these incidents, women were more likely than men to emerge as the group leader.

In the researchers' opinion, the findings of Eagly and Karau (1991) correspond to the theory that women are selected to lead groups where the predominant tasks are related to interpersonal and social issues. The top five themes that emerged from this women's leadership study – responsibility, sociability, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and persistence – are related to social behaviors that require maintaining relationships within the group. As the findings from Eagly and Karau and this researcher suggest, the strategy for increasing women leadership would involve a broader cultural change in which the norms that regulate leadership focus more importance on the social aspects rather than task behaviors.

### **Berdahl Gender Leadership Models versus Women Leaders Study**

Earlier studies of leadership emergence have assumed that there are no sex differences, ignored the sex composition of groups or have only included same-sex

groups. Jennifer Berdahl (1996) reviewed the social psychological contributions to gender differences in leadership emergence by analyzing studies conducted on six alternative models. The research examines leadership emergence on leaderless mixed-sex and same sex groups, comparing existing evidence with the earlier model predictions.

In the recent decades, much attention has been given to emergent leadership – when one or more members of a group composed of equal status and no appointed leaders initially, exhibits high levels of leadership behavior and is then recognized as the leader by the fellow group members (Berdahl, 1996). Berdahl contends that while some groups show emergence of a single member who becomes recognized as the group’s leader, other groups may show less centralized patterns of participation and influence and less hierarchical patterns of status. Her discussion focuses on the interaction by which the group members influence each other as they carry out their collective tasks and the group structure that result from this interaction. Further, because the influence patterns of groups play out over time, the study reviews the affects of newly formed group members who begin as strangers and develop relationships within the newly structured group.

The review of models conducted by Berdahl (1996) contends psychological theories of gender typically emphasize the role of the individual traits in explaining behavior. Recently, researchers have considered the role of context to classify the various trait theories into three different approaches: (a) trait approach, (b) expectations approach, and (c) a multicultural approach. As previously discussed in this study, the traits approach assumes internal traits determine and guide leadership behavior. The expectations approach assumes that demographic cues shape leaders behavior expectations and thereby the intragroup behavior. The multicultural approach combines

the elements the trait and expectations approaches and assumes the cultural background and/or social status of the individuals determine the leadership traits. Each of these approaches reference two types of models: stereotypical sex differences and gender schema theory is classified as the trait approach. Status roles and social roles are expectations approach, and gender as culture theory is classified as multicultural approach. The classification of no sex difference in emergent leadership is reviewed but is not associated with any of the approaches.

The no sex differences model suggests there are no underlying differences between the sexes. Scholars such as Bem, (1981) have derived distinct terms to refer to the social-psychological categories of masculinity and femininity. These stereotypical sex differences then suppose trait differences are biological and developed during childhood. Men are defined by terms such as assertive, controlling, ambitious, and self-confident. Women are defined as caring, concerned for welfare of others, nurturing, emotional, supportive, and selfless.

Gender schema model suggests underlying trait differences are based on cultural stereotypes of masculinity or femininity and leaders will behavior according to these terms instead of their biological sex role. The status roles model states there are no underlying trait differences between genders but men are dominant and women are subordinate with inequalities increasing over time. The social roles model defines behaviors based on cultural stereotypes however, differences disappear over time. The Gender-as-culture theory suggest there are some underlying trait differences between the genders due to their differing experiences within their cultures/society.

The results from the examination of the six alternative models of leadership by Berdahl was mixed, however the gender-as-culture model yielded the most support. The social roles model received the least support. The study also found that despite popular conceptions of leadership, social leadership was often shared in the groups (Berdahl, 1996).

In this researcher's opinion, the mixed results with the gender as culture theory garnering most support from the Berdahl review are closely aligned with those of this study on women political leaders. The social constructs of the political arenas in which these women preside are similar to the conditions supported by the gender-as-culture-theory. The traits, skills, and characteristics the participants identified as keys to their success – responsibility, sociability, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and persistence – are aligned with those identified as the feminine cultural traits of the gender-as-culture model. Further, as this model suggests the women political leaders in this study state, the more influential women possess many of these same traits, skills, and characteristics, but the manifestation of these roles often shift depending on the issues.

### **Bem Sex Role Inventory versus Women Leaders Study**

Androgyny, or the notion that men and women possessed similar characteristics, emerged in the 1970's as a framework of interpreting similarities and differences according to the degree to which they associated themselves with masculine or feminine traits. Sandra Bem (1974) developed the Bem Sex-Role Inventory or BSRI to facilitate empirical research on psychological androgyny. Bem challenged the assumption that constructs of masculinity and femininity are conceptual and distinct. The BSRI included a separate masculine and feminine scale, which Bem defined in terms of culturally

desirable traits for males and females. She argued that individuals could possess a number of traits from each scale and that one could demonstrate varying degrees of such traits when responding to different situations.

The BSRI was the first test specifically designed to provide measures of an individual's masculine and/or feminine traits and defined them in terms of sex-linked social desirability (Hoffman & Borders, 2001). The test consists of 60 items, 20 are considered masculine (e.g. independent, assertive, ambitious and acts like a leader), 20 feminine (e.g. gentle, loyal, loves children and affectionate), and 20 neutral (happy, adaptable, and jealous). Subjects are asked to rate themselves on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (never to almost never true) to 7 (always or almost always true). The items were derived from a pool of 200 items that were judged independently by both male and female Stanford undergraduates to be the most desirable in American society.

Scoring the BSRI were based assessed such that if an individual's Femininity raw score exceeded his/her Masculinity raw score significantly the participant would be classified as feminine and vice versa for masculine. If there was a small difference that participant would be classified as androgynous. Bem (1987) revised the scoring and recognized that if a participant scored high on feminine traits and low on masculine traits were considered feminine; those who rated themselves high on masculine traits and low on feminine traits are considered masculine; those who rate themselves high on both are considered androgynous; and those who rate themselves low on both are undifferentiated. She proposed that the androgynous personality is the most healthy since it is the most flexible to respond across a variety of circumstances (Berdahl, 1996).

The BSRI provided the foundation for the gender schema theory which claims an individual is highly gender schematic if his or her self descriptions adhere closely to the societal norms regarding behavior for his or her sex (Bem, 1987). Critics of the BSRI argue that confusion results from Bem's inconsistent use of the terms masculinity and femininity. While Bem (as cited in Hoffman, 2001) allows individuals to have personal definitions of masculinity and femininity, she holds these definitions as irrelevant to gender-schema processing and sex-typing. Even with this criticism, the BSRI and subsequent gender schema theory is useful for discussions relating to gender role identity and other gender related constructs (Hoffman, 2001).

The Bem studies versus the women political leaders study do have similarities in that the traits the woman participants self reported are considered feminine. Further, the women political leaders who participated in this study validate the suggestion by Bem that the androgynous personality is more useful. The key traits they identified – responsibility, sociability, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and persistence – are a combination of masculine and feminine traits as defined by the BSRI. This researcher also agrees the gender schema theory can apply to the behavior of the participants of this study. As the woman participants discussed, their male counterparts mainly identify with the behaviors that society has deemed masculine and thereby assert they are and should to be the leaders.

The findings of a study conducted by Schmieder (2010) further supports the Bem and woman's political theory studies that suggest androgyny is the ideal and the most healthy approach to leadership since it is the most flexible to respond across a variety of circumstances. In the study on Organizational Leadership Degree program paradigms,

Schmieder finds that the Ed.D programs of the future should stress the personal skills, adaptability, ability to form alliances, utilize complexity, and ability to understand social, political, and economic environments.

### **Implications for Women**

When women run, women win Michelin (2010) has become the rallying cry among organizations across the country that are advocating for more women to join the ranks of those in political leadership. Scholars and women politicians agree that women's presence in local, state, and federal legislative offices is associated with better policy for women, families, and other social justice issues. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, from the beginning of women's entry into government, namely the suffrage movement, the political system has not embraced women's involvement as it did men's involvement. Women continue to struggle with balancing conflicting demands as a result of their various roles as politicians, wives, and mothers, and often suffer harsh treatment from their male counterparts. Running for political office also presents women with the challenge of how their constituents perceived them; in other words, how masculine or feminine they should be in order to be perceived effective.

During the last national election cycle, women were featured prominently on the political stage. From this showing, it is clear that public opinion has changed and indicates that women and men are equally effective leaders. According to Gallop organization polls (as cited in Simmons, 2001), the percentage of the population that believes the country would be governed better if women held political office has increased during the past decade. This is an indication that voter attitudes are no longer

considered a significant barrier to women holding office and the public is more comfortable with women in political office and can see a benefit.

In California, women represent 51% of the population, yet women have not achieved parity in the political arena. The number of women holding political office in the state has declined (Michelin, 2010). In this challenging climate for state politicians, effective leaders are needed who will adopt policies that will help constituents statewide. Several organizations within the state are formally recruiting women who possess the traits, skills, and characteristics considered necessary for successful leadership to run for office.

While studies on gender, elections, campaigns, and resources available to candidates are valuable, this study looks at the skills, traits, and characteristics of women who are seated currently in an elected office. This researcher has found limited studies that examine what women holding office have to report about the leadership abilities used successfully on a daily basis. With the addition of this study, the body of scholarly research devoted to women leadership in the political arena has been expanded and provides valuable insights to other women who are seeking to run for a political office and those who encourage women to run. It is the hope of the researcher that women, support organizations, and other researchers will use this data discussed in this study to recruit and support more women in political office. If more women run, more will win.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study provided relevant information on the skills, traits, and characteristics elected women leaders self-reported as important for success in the political arena. The study was limited to six women who were elected in the legislative branch of government

at the local, state, and federal levels in California. Therefore, the study's data provide a foundation for future research. As a result of the literature review in Chapter 2, the research methodology described in Chapter 3, and this study's findings described in Chapter 4, the following studies on women political leaders are recommended:

1. The study was conducted using a qualitative design with an ethnographic methodology. The current research could be reproduced using a quantitative instrument for gathering data. A quantitative study may produce significant results.
2. The study sample was limited to elected women who are serving in the legislative branch at the local, state, and federal level. The study could be expanded to include data from women elected to other branches of government office (e.g., judicial, administrative).
3. The study was limited to women in California. The study could be expanded to include elected women from different states.
4. The study sample of elected women was nonpartisan. Elected women from each political party could be studied and compared. For example, women in the Democratic, Republican, Independent Parties, etc. could be studied.
5. The study sample could be expanded to include data from elected men and compared. This broader gender sample may yield significant results.
6. This study's sample was ethnically diverse. A targeted ethnic specific sample could offer different results.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to examine how specific leadership traits and characteristics have contributed to the career progress of six elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state, and federal levels of the U.S. legislative system. The researcher used a qualitative design with an ethnographic methodology. An examination of the literature in Chapter 2 discussed leadership theory and styles, including the trait or great man theory of leadership, gender, women's leadership within the political arena, and nonverbal communications and symbolic behaviors.

The researcher gathered data using semistructured interviews. The themes were derived directly from the data the participants provided. After analysis of the data, themes emerged that were related to the research questions. The data yielded seven themes relating to the traits, skills, and characteristics of elected California women political leaders: (a) responsibility, (b) sociability, (c) relationships, (d) consensus building, (e) self-confidence, (f) cooperativeness, and (g) persistence. The video analysis produced results that showed participants' nonverbal mannerisms were consistent with the themes they identified as important in their success.

The key traits, skills, and characteristics were identified and illustrated through excerpts from the participant interviews, and data were displayed in tables and figures. The data, summary, and conclusions are intended to inform the field and further the dialog regarding women's leadership in the political arena.

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APPENDIX A

Human Participant Protection Education Certificate of Completion

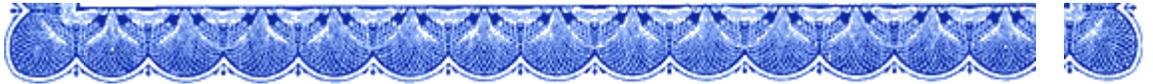


### **Certificate of Completion**

The NIH Office of Human Subjects Research certifies that **Ennette Morton** completed the computer-based training course for NIH IRB members.

Date: 12/14/2007

Certification Number: 1197647488



APPENDIX B

Participant Interview Request Letter and Informed Consent for Participation in  
Research Activities Form

Ms. Ennette Morton

January, 2010

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As part of my doctoral work at Pepperdine University, I am researching and writing my dissertation on the leadership traits and characteristics of California women currently serving in elected political office. The purpose of this study is to identify the key traits and characteristics this group of women achievers believes are important and have helped establish their success as leaders in the political arena.

From this group of elite and distinguished political women who meet these criteria, you have been selected to participate in this study. I am writing to formally request your participation in this study by consenting to be interviewed on this subject. The interview will be scheduled at your office on a date and time that is convenient for you. In an effort to provide full disclosure and comply with Pepperdine University's policies, I want to make you aware of the following:

- Your participation in this research is voluntary.
- The questions will address your leadership style and opinions on elected women politicians. You are free to choose not to participate or withdraw at any time. Also, you are not obligated to answer every question.
- This interview will be videotaped and notes taken. The videotape, transcripts and notes will be kept in a locked file at the researcher's home and destroyed after a period of five years.
- The interview will take 30 to 45 minutes. Set up will take 15 minutes in your office at a time and date that is convenient for you.
- You have the right to selectively answer the questions, and request the video tape be turned off during any portion of the interview.
- To ensure clarity, accuracy and corroborate the information, the video tape and interview responses will be transcribed sent to you for review.
- As part of your participation, your identity and your elected position will be disclosed.
- The information will be published in the researcher's dissertation and may appear in full or part in other subsequent publications.
- You will receive a copy of the significant findings of the study.
- There are no known risks associated with this study.
- There is no monetary compensation for participation

Pepperdine University requires that you are appraised of, understand, and agree to the terms stated in this letter. Should you choose to participate in this study, signing and returning this letter in the enclosed stamped envelope will indicate your agreement with these specifications.

It is my sincere hope you will agree to participate in this study. Your participation is intended to encourage other women to become active contributors in the political process, thereby adding to the pipeline of future women leaders, your public service achievements, and the work of other inspirational women who came before you.

Sincerely,

Ennette Y. Morton

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Ennette Morton (Nusbaum)

Title of Project: The Leadership Traits and Characteristics of Elected California Women Political Leaders

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study under the direction of Drs. June Schmieder Ramirez, Ph.D. I understand that while the study will be under the supervision of Dr. Schmieder other personnel who work with them may be designated to assist or act in their behalf.
2. The overall purpose of this research is:

The purpose of this study is to determine the specific leadership traits and characteristics that have contributed to the career progress of several elected women who represent California constituents within the local, state and national levels of the U.S. legislative system.
3. My participation will involve the following:
  - 1). Answer questions that will address my leadership style, traits, and characteristics I believe are important for me as a political leader.
  - 2). The interview will be videotaped in order to capture my answers and analyze my verbal and non verbal leadership style.
  - 3). Review the information for accuracy and clarity.
4. My participation in the study will be conducted from January 2010 through March 2010. The study shall be conducted in the official representative offices on a date and time specified and confirmed by the selected participants.
5. I understand that the possible benefits to myself or society from this research are:

This study will contribute and further the research of women political leaders by developing a composite of successful leadership characteristics and traits for this group. The study will further the research on the process of becoming a woman political leader, contribute to the research literature, and hopefully inspire women to participate in government and politics, thereby increasing women's participation in the political arena.
6. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include: The imposition of time for me and my staff.
7. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.

8. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
9. I understand that the investigator(s) will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others. I understand there is a possibility that my medical record, including identifying information, may be inspected and/or photocopied by officials of the Food and Drug Administration or other federal or state government agencies during the ordinary course of carrying out their functions. If I participate in a sponsored research project, a representative of the sponsor may inspect my research records.
10. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez, Ph.D at (310) 568-5600 if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Doug Leigh, Ph.D, IRB Chairperson of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, Pepperdine University, at (310) 568-5600.
11. I will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of my participation in this research which may have a bearing on my willingness to continue in the study.
12. I understand that in the event of physical injury resulting from the research procedures in which I am to participate, no form of compensation is available. Medical treatment may be provided at my own expense or at the expense of my health care insurer which may or may not provide coverage. If I have questions, I should contact my insurer.
13. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or legal guardian's  
signature on participant's behalf if  
participant is less than 18 years of age  
or not legally competent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ennette Morton (Nusbaum)  
Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX C

Panel of Experts Letter and Review Form

October 20, 2007

Dr. Paul Pinckley, Sr.  
Exec Director of Student Recruitment  
Pepperdine University

Dear Dr. Pinckley:

As you may know, I am currently in the dissertation phase of the Ed.D – Organizational Leadership program. The purpose of my study is to interview and compile a list of the common traits and characteristics of elected women political leaders in California. I am writing to request your help with regards to the content validity for the data collection portion of my study.

My goal is to interview and video tape six elected women who represent California at the local, state, and federal level of government. Participants will be asked a series of sequential open ended questions which have been designed to parallel the research questions.

I am requesting you to serve as a member of my “Panel of Experts” due to your academic expertise in various areas and your professional experience as leader in academics. Your participation and feedback will greatly enhance the value of my study.

As a panel member, you are requested to read through the research questions and then examine the interview questions. In your evaluation, you will determine whether or not the interview questions accomplish the goal of soliciting the information required by the research question.

I've attached a copy of the research questions for my study, a copy of the interview questions and a worksheet for you to report your assessment. The worksheet includes information on how to complete the form. After completing the worksheet, please return it to me via my email address: [REDACTED] by October 28, 2007.

Your time and effort in helping me fulfill the necessary requirements for my dissertation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding my request, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Ennette Nusbaum-Morton  
Doctoral Student  
Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	EXPERT OPINON
<p><b>Instructions:</b> The research and participant interview questions are listed below. Please read each interview question and carefully compare it to the research questions posed for the study. If the interview question as written effectively supports one of the research questions, place an “X” in the “Expert Opinon” column to the right that corresponds with “supports a research question as written.” If the research question does not support a research question, place an “X” in the column that corresponds with “does not support a research question...” If the interview question would effectively answer a research question, but needs modification, place an “X” next to that statement and add an example of your suggested modification in the space noted.</p> <p>If you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact me via email, [REDACTED] or by phone at (760) 486-3596. Your time, support and input with this process are greatly appreciated. Thank you. Ennette</p>	
<p><b>Research Questions:</b></p>	
<p>1. What are the key traits, characteristics, and skills that women believe enabled them to achieve their current position?</p>	
<p>2. What are some of the barriers that these women feel impeded their progress?</p>	
<p>3. What role did their education level play in their success?</p>	
<p>4. What do the participants feel is their primary leadership style?</p>	
<p>5. Does there appear to be visual cues related to their leadership style?</p>	
<p><b>Interview Questions for Participants</b></p>	
<p>Pre interview Statement to participants: This interview will be videotaped for use with the study to capture any visual cues that may relate to your leadership style.</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Supports a research question as written</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Does not support a research question – should delete</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Modify, as suggested below</p>	
<p>Modification:</p>	
<p>A). What are the factors contributing to your success?</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Supports a research question as written</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Does not support a research question – should delete</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Modify, as suggested below</p>	
<p>Modification:</p>	
<p>B). What type of obstacles did you have to overcome to reach your political office?</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Supports a research question as written</p>	

Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
C). How did you choose to overcome the obstacles you described?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification	
D) What leadership approach do you use with your staff?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
E) What leadership approach do you use with your constituents?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
F) What leadership approach do you use with your colleagues?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
G) What do you believe are the leadership characteristics that are important for you as a political leader?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
H) What do you believe are the leadership traits important as a political leader?	
Supports a research question as written	

Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
I) What do you believe are the leadership characteristics and traits that are important for women political leaders?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
J) What is the highest level of education you have achieved?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	
K) What leadership skills are important in your role as a political leader?	
Supports a research question as written	
Does not support a research question – should delete	
Modify, as suggested below	
Modification:	

## APPENDIX D

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