# PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP HELD BY MID-CAREER STEM AND SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY

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## ABSTRACT

PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP HELD BY
MID-CAREER STEM AND SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY

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This study explored a question being asked by many current higher education leaders: Who will serve as future leaders in U.S. institutions of higher education? There is an anticipated leadership crisis (Anft, 2018; Appadurai, 2009; McDade et al., 2017; Selingo, Chheng, & Clark, 2017) which suggests an inadequate *number* of people, in particular those with faculty training and experience, who are willing to serve as campus administrative leaders for modern U.S. universities. To inform this concern, this study explored perceptions of academic leadership held by 12 mid-career faculty in STEM and STEM-related Social Science fields at a research-intensive university and explored the degree to which Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional, and Demographic Factors shaped their views. Asking faculty members at mid-career—those who represent individuals who have established themselves as scholars and who represent the cohort of future leaders—what they think of academic leadership and how they articulate their views of it, can help inform questions about what will be needed to recruit, train, and support leaders as they negotiate their careers.

The study found that faculty perceptions of leadership are shaped primarily by Institutional Factors: the policies, procedures, and institutional bureaucratic structures that shape the conditions in which faculty members work. These factors had the strongest influence on their perception of academic leadership and its suitability for their career goals. Other important factors were the degree to which leadership aligned with scholarly interests, the ability to integrate scholarly productivity with formal leadership opportunities, and the timing of


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leadership opportunities and where they were within the tenure and promotion process, which illustrate concerns about leadership derailing one's promotion to full professor.

This study provides a helpful context for discussions about leadership development, faculty development, and how higher education leaders can proactively plan for institutional change by enlisting the support of faculty leaders and aspiring leaders.

*Keywords*: *Faculty leadership, faculty identity, academic leadership, social identity, professional identity, higher education, administration*

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This is dedicated to my family,
without whom my work is not possible…or worth it.



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This was not the journey I expected.

But now that I am finally at the end, I can reflect on the incredible support I have had along the way. The truth is, I have benefitted from learning from and working aside too many incredible colleagues to possibly name them all, and I am grateful for the many fine people who have given me a well-timed boost of confidence, an unexpected nudge in the right direction, or an off-hand comment that led me to a new way of thinking. I promise: I remember every single good person I worked with, and cherish every great thing they brought to my life. Knowing that you saw me as an equal made it all the sweeter to finish my Ph.D. so my credentials could match the value you always made me feel.

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add that he is probably the most patient, too. Thanks for hanging on to see me finish; I hope retirement treats you as well as you treat everyone else.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Universities and colleges in the United States have long benefitted from faculty engagement in leadership (Birnbaum, 1992; Jeanmood, 2016; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Thelin, 2004) and in the earliest American campuses, faculty members performed multiple roles and controlled many core functions of higher education institutions (Bok, 2015; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Thelin, 2011). Presently, however, there is evidence that the role of faculty members has evolved to a point where their influence (Ginsberg, 2011) and engagement (Fitzgerald et al., 2012) in campus leadership and administration has devolved , raising concerns among those (Barden & Curry, 2013; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Kezar, 2007) who believe that faculty members should be, but are not fully, engaged in institutional leadership (Braun et al, 2009; Holcombe & Kezar, 2017; O'Meara, 2016).

### Statement of Problem

In my estimation, the literature reveals that the challenges in academic leadership suggest issues of both *quantity* and *type* of faculty leaders interested or serving in leadership roles. In some cases, there may be declining interest among faculty in assuming leadership positions or an unwillingness to lead (Anft, 2018; Appadurai, 2009; Campbell, 2002; Ekman, 2010; McDade et al, 2017; O'Meara, 2013). This is thought to be creating leadership vacancies that are increasingly difficult to fill, given a declining number of candidates interested and qualified to fill them. In other cases, some scholars and policy-makers decry a shortage of the *kind* of leaders sought for leadership positions (Pasque, 2010) namely women (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009; Glazer-Raymo, 2009; Vongalis-Macrow, 2016) and persons of color (Gaetane, Williams, & Sherman, 2009; Smith, 2015; Tapia, Chubin, & Lanius, 2000) , whose perspective is essential in leading increasingly diverse post-secondary institutions (Greene, 1988; Smith, 2015). These seemingly disparate trends—one of fewer faculty members willing and able to pursue leadership



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and one of too few women and minority candidates willing to pursue leadership--together form a topic worth exploring, to better understand the changing nature of the faculty role in campus leadership.

These concerns emerge from a belief that modern institutions of higher education benefit from a more active campus leadership that includes faculty contributions (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Gumport, 2001) as part of a leadership "revolution" (Keller, 1983) facing 21st century institutions (Bok, 2015; Su & Wood, 2017). Put differently, universities thrive with contributions from an engaged and informed faculty (Cyert, 2006), and if the right *kind* of leaders, in sufficient *numbers*, are to be found to fill leadership roles, institutions and scholars should contribute by actively seeking out understanding and offering solutions.

To make my own contribution to this body of research, I developed this research study, in part to test the veracity of concerns (Appadurai, 2009) potentially contributing to a shortage of faculty leaders (Selingo, Chheng, & Clark, 2017). This study engages with mid-career faculty working in a research-intensive university in the United States to explore their perception of academic leadership. Via qualitative methods, I captured faculty perception of academic leadership by exploring the factors that shape their perception of leadership. In the rest of this chapter, I review the background of the problem and the purpose of the study. First, I discuss why some (Appadurai, 2009; Barden & Curry, 2013) express alarm about the future of academic leadership and the factors that may be contributing to this problem (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). Then, I will describe the purpose and importance of the study, or why I believe that institutions would potentially suffer amidst a decline in faculty engagement in institutional leadership. Finally, I will explain the study itself, to delimit its scope and clarify the terms I use throughout the remainder of the proposed study.



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**Description of the Problem**. The "leadership crisis" in higher education (Appadurai, 2009; Selingo, Chheng, & Clark, 2017) refers to an anticipated shortage of faculty leaders who are interested and ready to assume formal institutional leadership positions such as department chair, dean, provost, or president (Barden, 2009; Bornstein, 2010; Ekman, 2010; Gonzalez, Stewart, & Robinson, 2003; Lederman, 2013; Leubsdorf, 2006; O'Meara, 1997). Throughout the history of higher education, academics and faculty members have often risen through the ranks of academic administration, from the department level up through the executive suite (Bramlett et al., 2015; Thelin, 2014). This trajectory may be changing (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016), however, and faculty members may be taking on a less central role in leadership.

Consider the position of the American university president, which historically was a position held by an established academic leader but is now open to a much wider group of people (Selingo, Chheng, & Clark, 2017; Selzer, 2018). See, for two high profile examples, the position held by Mitch Daniels, former Republican Governor of Indiana who then became President at Purdue University despite limited experience in university leadership (Kiley, 2013), or the selection of Bruce Harreld, a businessman, to be president of University of Iowa, after a contentious search process (Charis-Carlson, 2016) that questioned his credentials. Harreld was a "strategic planning" leader from the business world and was thought to be selected because of his decidedly "pro- business" approach to campus leadership (Charis-Carlson, 2016). At my own institution, Michigan State University, the university found itself embroiled in a university-wide scandal that resulted in the appointment of a former governor with no previous college administration experience to replace an outgoing president who had held the position for over a decade (Wolcott & Hinkley, 2018).



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The American Council on Education found that in 2016, 15 percent of college presidents came to their position from positions "outside of higher education" (ACE, 2017) such as business leaders, politicians, and people with other areas of expertise. As Evans, Homer, and Rayner (2013) put it, "being a professor…is fast depreciating in a workplace that increasingly values professional managers rather than professors as managers" (p. 676).

For some, this trend illustrates the expanded impact of politics (Bok, 2014) into university leadership, while others see a value in academic leadership by non-academics. The National Association of College and University Business Officers has asserted that successful business leaders from the private sector are the best choice for many campus leaders (Kiley, 2012), since budgets and financial concerns are such a big part of presidential workloads and makes sense in a system that increasingly asks universities to run like businesses (Deem & Brehony 2005; Schrecker, 2010). The debate about the effectiveness of non-academics leading academic institutions has yet to be resolved (Vara, 2015), but it is clear that the role of lifelong academics in institutional leadership *has* changed (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016) and that some scholars are finding it to be a problematic trend (Perlmutter, 2018): It is no longer a given that it will be faculty members who will assume the formal reins of power and decision-making authority on university campuses.

What is highly likely, however, is that institutions can expect to spend more time and resources searching for academic leaders (McDade et al., 2017). The tenure of a Chief Academic Officer is only about five to seven years (American Council on Education, 2017; Ekman, 2010), and the role of department chair is often vulnerable to quick turnover, in large part because many new department chairs are unprepared for the challenges of the role (Ross, Huang, & Jones, 2014). A short cycle of hiring and searching (McGlynn, 2018) for academic leaders suggests a



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need for a robust pool of qualified candidates to fill positions as they come available. In some sectors, such as in medicine (Blumenthal et al., 2012) or in community college leadership (i.e., Reille & Kezar, 2010), the gap between those needed and those available is well-studied. There is less concrete data on the leadership shortage within higher education more broadly (Leubsdorf, 2006), but anticipated retirements among the large demographic of Baby Boomers suggest significant vacancies in many sectors in the near future (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Tierney, 2006).

Independent of the demographic questions—are there enough future leaders to fill the anticipated vacancies?—there is the parallel question about the availability and willingness of the right *kind* of faculty members to assume leadership positions (Heller & Abrosio, 2008) in the U.S.'s increasingly diverse institutions (American Council on Education, 2000; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016).

The U.S. workforce is growing more diverse (Bell, 2011). So too is the student body on U.S. campuses (Aud, Fox, & Kewal-Ramani, 2010; Smith, 2015). However, faculty and institutional leaders do not reflect this trend toward greater gender, racial, and cultural diversity (Banda, Flowers, & Robinson, 2017; Blackwell, 1996; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Musu-Gillette et al., 2016; Nettles & Perna, 2000; Renwick Monroe & Chiu, 2010; Smith, Tovar, & Gouveia, 2012). For many scholars and supporters of American higher education, this is a problem (Cooper et al., 2013; DeVeld & Stepnick, 2014; Dominici, Fried & Zeger, 2009) which needs to be addressed, in light of concerns that diverse, complicated institutions need a diversity of perspectives in order to support the challenges and opportunities of modern institutions of higher education. Significant efforts such as that made by the National Science Foundation ADVANCE program (see for example, Stewart et al., 2007) and other efforts on individual



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campuses (e.g., Hogan, 2018; Hornsby, Morrow-Jones, & Ballam, 2012) have sought to address this issue and draw out leaders with more diverse experiences to step forward in leadership roles.

Therein lies the problem driving the present study: U.S. institutions are going to need leaders in large numbers, and not only that, they need the right kind of leaders to serve well academic institutions into the 21st century. But it is not clear that these leaders exist in sufficient numbers, and very possibly, the current corps of willing and available faculty members do not create a sufficient pool from which to draw to satisfy the need. There are a number of factors which likely contributed to the creation of this problem (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016), which I explore next.

Before I delve more deeply into the background of this problem, I wish to draw attention to the ways in which this is a problem that transcends institution-types, but is also primarily informed by research that focuses on doctoral-granting institutions and research-intensive environments. Alarm about this trend is most often sounded in reference to changes in bigger institutions like RSU, which tend to be the most widely studied (and which I study here, incidentally), though important work studying leadership challenges at community colleges (i.e., Reille & Kezar, 2010) and other institution types is also a focus of inquiry. I recognize the bias toward studying "big" institutions of higher education and realize that context powerfully shapes perception and experience, and that conclusions drawn from experiences at one institution type do not necessarily transfer to other types. But there is still value in talking about the "faculty experience" in ways that may resonate across context, while also acknowledging that some experiences are decidedly limited to a specific environment.

**Background of Problem.** As I wrote earlier, there are two separate trends—that of potentially too few leaders, and that of too few diverse candidates for leadership—that contribute to the



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value of this study, but the causes of these trends are somewhat conflated. That is to say, both are rooted in part in changes in faculty hiring and tenure processes, as well as changing roles played by faculty members on campuses throughout the United States (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016), such that many modern faculty members seem less interested in leadership than previous generations of faculty members, who largely dominated the top positions in universities and colleges.

Declining leadership interest may be, in part, due to declining power among faculty members across campuses (Baldridge, 1978; Neumann, 1991; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). Even just in numbers, faculty members appear to be on the decline, especially relative to administrative positions: there has been a well-documented (Desrochers & Kirschenstein, 2014) and ongoing rise in the number of professional academic administrators, a percentage that has doubled in the last 25 years (Marcus, 2014; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016)—despite declining numbers of tenure-track faculty members (Maxey & Kezar, 2013). Some scholars (Bok, 2015) can explain this rise in the numbers of professional academic bureaucrats as a result of the need for highly specialized professionals to lead a modern multi-versity: According to Benjamin (2010), modern

> universities and colleges necessarily incorporate and coordinate the activities of highly trained professionals. Academics rarely work autonomously. They generally need organizational facilities, and often need colleagues, as well as salaried employment. Academic organizations need to coordinate the specialized work of diverse academic professionals. (p. 3)



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Others (Ginsberg, 2011) see a growing corps of academic professional administrators as a deliberate attempt to marginalize faculty, who often interrupt or question the increasingly business-driven approaches some leaders impose on institutions of higher education.

The growing number of academic professionals may also be a necessary by-product of faculty "unbundling" (Austin, 2002), or the pulling apart of traditional faculty work in teaching, research, and service, into a system where individuals focus primarily on one of those areas of responsibility (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). For many tenure-stream faculty members, that effectively means a greater focus on research; for an increasing number of non-tenure-track faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016) that means a focus on teaching. This leaves service work open to some faculty, but also in the hands of professional administrators who are handling more and more "management" tasks that would have been addressed by faculty members in years past (Thelin, 2004).

This interpretation of "unbundling" (Austin, 2002) is admittedly an oversimplification—most faculty across institution type still do some research, some teaching, and some service, though the balance varies widely (Perry et al., 2000). Still, there is evidence that the work of faculty has evolved substantially in the last few decades to emphasize certain areas over others (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006) which has a potentially significant impact on attitudes about the value of leadership and opportunities to pursue it (I will explore this further in Chapter 2). There is little doubt that while there once was robust faculty engagement in most aspects of administrative decision-making (Thelin, 2011), a growing administrative bureaucracy handles more and more of the administrative and management functioning of the university, and this is a place where some potentially significant institutional decisions can be made (Wood, Bandura, & Bailey, 1990).



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Faculty leadership is also impacted by the changing appointment statuses of modern faculty members. An increased reliance on non-tenure-track faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016) who are routinely ineligible for leadership positions (Kezar & Bernstein-Sierra, 2016) means that there are more faculty who are not permitted to engage in leadership or formal decision-making. While in 1969, 80% of faculty were full-time, tenure-track faculty positions (most of whom could be asked to engage in leadership and service of all kinds), a quarter-century later, nearly that many faculty positions are non-tenure-track (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; AFT, 2009; Mazey & Kezar, 2013), most of which are held by individuals who are ineligible for important service and leadership opportunities (Kezar, Lester, & Anderson, 2013). Therefore, it follows that where there once was a robust number of leadership-eligible individuals who could hold key leadership positions such as department chair, college dean, or university provost, the current system has shrunken the available pool of future leaders. It then follows that if even half of those tenure-track faculty are *uninterested* in leadership, it would constitute the kind of crisis some scholars decry (Barden & Curry, 2013).

These faculty hiring trends also have an impact on the gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of leaders (Blackmore, 2014; Trower & Chait, 2002), and are likely, though perhaps inadvertently, contributing to the relative lack of diversity in leadership ranks (Glazer-Raymo, 2008). Women and minority faculty are overrepresented in non-tenure-track faculty ranks and underrepresented in tenure-stream faculty positions (Robbins & Robbins, 2006). This underrepresentation of women and minority faculty is especially problematic within certain fields, notably those in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) (Hopkins, 2015; Perez-Felkner et al., 2015). Similar statistics hold for leadership among diverse faculty members



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across discipline and independent of gender (Stanley, 2006), as too few minority faculty of all races and ethnicities are fully represented in higher education leadership (Gasman, Abiola, & Travers, 2015).

Further contributing to a situation with a lack of diversity, even when women or minority faculty *are* in tenure-eligible positions, they are less likely to be tenured or promoted, professional milestones which signal promise in one's field, stability in one's institution, and are often requirements before even considering the pursuit of formal leadership positions (Jones, 2013; Gardner, 2012; Hackman et al., 2017; Jones, Warnick, & Palmer, 2016). These unfortunate demographic realities illustrate, in part, the conditions within which leaders are selected and help show at least one reason contributing to the underrepresentation of women and minority faculty in the ranks of higher education leadership, despite significant attention paid to the problem (Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Davis, Maldonado, & Daniels, 2015).

Here I have reviewed some of the structural, demographic changes in the composition of faculty to illustrate that there is likely some truth to the belief that faculty members are too few in number to fill the anticipated vacancies in academic leadership. In chapter 2 I explore several other important influences about the cultural and normative effects on faculty identity, which likely influence perception of academic leadership.

**Value of Proposed Study**

There is a core, underlying assumption built into both the characterization of the problem and the purpose for this study: The belief that the engagement of faculty membership in leadership and institutional decision-making is a *good* thing. After all, if it were simply a matter of needing leaders to fill vacancies and believing that any leader of any educational or professional background would suffice, then there would be less consternation about the trend of hiring businesspeople and politicians for important university leadership positions (Bok, 2015;



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Gasman, Abiology, & Travers, 2015; Selzer, 2018; McGlynn, 2018; Veblen, 2015), less concern about the silencing of faculty voices in decision-making at varying levels (DeBoy, 2015; Ginsberg, 2011), and less attention paid to the challenges of leadership in higher education (Trachtenburg, Kauver, & Bogue, 2016).

Therefore, I want to be explicit in my bias, that faculty engagement in administration and leadership is valuable and proven, given the long and established role academic faculty members have played in leadership, governance, and decision-making in U.S. institutions of higher education since its earliest days (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Thelin, 2011). Shared governance is an important part of faculty work, where through formal and well-defined mechanisms, faculty members of diverse training maintain important control over academic and other institutional matters that are core to the function of a college or university (Johnston, 2003). Indeed, faculty leadership is "critical to innovation in teaching, advances in knowledge, and alteration to many campus policies and practices" (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 716).

Faculty leadership on campus is often focused primarily on academic and curricular matters or the tenure and promotion process (Tierney & Lechuga, 2004). And many of these decisions occur through formal mechanisms of faculty governance, such as a faculty senate (Tierney & Minor, 2003) or tenure and promotion committees, over which faculty groups have primary power (Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000; Speier, Palmer, Wren, & Hahn, 1999; Youn & Price, 2009). There appears to be general support for the importance of faculty governance (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Jones, 2011; Tierney & Minor, 2003), though 43% of faculty surveyed in one study did not believe that faculty senates were valued by their institutions (Tierney & Minor, 2003). As Ginsberg (2011) described them, "On the whole, faculty senates and assemblies are not particularly important decision-making bodies. Their input



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is advisory in character, and not binding on the administration" (p. 15). Some faculty believe that participation in institutional organizations like faculty senate was a waste of time (Monaghan, 2018) or that faculty were insufficiently involved in making institutional decisions (Leach, 2008).

Research indicates that faculty members feel generally ambivalent about other traditional locations of faculty leadership and influence, such as in committee work (Ganesh & Tripathy, 2015; Sternberg et al., 2015; Rosser, 2004). Other areas of service may be undervalued (Levin, Jackson-Boothby, Haberler & Walker, 2015) where faculty service work is sometimes viewed as advisory or symbolic (Ginsberg, 2011; Kater, 2017), but not actually thought to be areas where faculty decisions carry binding authority.

This seeming incongruity—support for the idea of faculty engagement in decision-making roles but belief that it is often ineffective and a waste of one's time—may result from the way shared governance has been enacted since the 1966 *Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, which articulated and legitimized faculty involvement in institutional matters (Birnbaum, 2004). This "joint statement" provided details about the governance relationship between faculty and administrators, and articulated two primary ideas: that certain areas of institutional business require equal participation from all areas of campus leadership but that modern universities and colleges are complex institutions that may, at times, need to weigh one group's experience and insights more than others. According to Mortimer and McConnell (1978), the "Joint Statement" was designed to be both "the sharing of authority among constituents on endeavors that require joint decisions and a segmenting of authority on endeavors where one has primary responsibility" (in Jones, 2011, p. 120).



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In reality, however, critics of modern university administration have argued that too many important decisions—especially those around budgets, strategic planning, how money is used at an institutional level, or areas such as athletics—are classified under the second tenet (that some views are weighed more heavily than others, and it is typically the views of administration that are valued as such), and that faculty interests are subordinated to administrative interests (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Jones, 2011). A handful of studies have shown that faculty are not only interested in having more input on such matters (Tierney & Minor, 2003), but are capable of making these "hard decisions" (Eckel, 2010) in areas beyond academic policy (Jones, 2011). This seemingly conflicting information—some studies say faculty do not wish to engage in campus decision-making, while others suggests that they do, and in meaningful ways—deserves more attention. After all, while there is a common view that service work is the least desirable part of faculty work (Buckley, Sanders, Shih, Surinder, & Hampton, 2000; Solem & Foote, 2004)—others feel it is a valuable and important way to make a contribution and help faculty gain an appreciation for the complexity of institutional management (Levine, 2014).

My intention in this research study was to add some depth to our collective understanding of the problem and to provide additional data to inform scholarship on faculty perceptions of leadership. Instead of talking about faculty as a monolithic group who "do" like to do certain things and who "do not" like to do others, I ask faculty members to speak more deeply about the various factors that influence their work, and see what they identify as the most influential on their thinking.

**Introduction to the Conceptual Framework**

There are several factors that likely shape faculty perceptions of administrative leadership, and each has been studied to various degrees by scholars. I will explore each of them



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in more detail throughout chapter 2. The factors include Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional, and Demographic Factors. **Cultural** factors refer to how professional norms unique to faculty work at research universities may influence how a faculty member perceives academic leadership. **Disciplinary** norms refer to the specific faculty cultures found in particular disciplines that similarly shape perception. **Institutional** factors refer to primarily institutional factors and include policies, expectations, rewards, and other factors which compel or deter faculty perception of and behavior around leadership. **Demographic** factors include how one's gender, race, age or other identity factors may shape attitudes and beliefs about one's abilities or openness to leadership. I explore each of these in much greater depth in the following chapter, but I am particularly interested in exploring the degree to which individuals see these factors as impacting their views on leadership.

These four factors comprise the conceptual framework for this study, and are informed by scholarship from a variety of fields. Notably, I draw upon the work of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 2001), a theoretical model from organizational psychology and social psychology which suggests that an individual draws his or her identity not only on personal, self-referential factors (such as age, gender, religion, etc.) but from social and group influences as well; that a person's sense of who she is, is based on the various groups to which she belongs as much as it is how she sees herself. I use this theory to inform my conceptual framework because I believe that faculty perception of academic leadership is informed by a variety of the factors in the framework—but that the relative influence of the factors differs and varies depending on the context (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995), and that there is value in considering the factors as a whole and asking faculty members themselves to articulate the relative merit of the factors.



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SIT permits me to acknowledge that any one faculty member has multiple, often overlapping identities, each of which has unique attributes which would need to be negotiated in the pursuit (or avoidance) of academic leadership, and each of which expresses itself in different ways and to varying degrees depending on context, called “identity salience” (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995). Consider, for example a woman who is also a mother, a chemist, and an associate professor in a Chemistry department which is dominated by men. If she were to consider leadership, any one of these different roles would confer to her certain beliefs about leadership and its availability as a viable career path for her, but which of these identities is most salient for her in her decision-making? Would she have expectations about her abilities or attitudes about leadership in recognition of her role as a woman, as a chemist, as a minority within her department?

To be certain, the complexity of self-concept is such that she would, naturally, consider *all* of her various identities (i.e., gender) and membership in social groups (i.e., Chemist). However, too often in literature around leadership we parse them out as individualistic: about women leadership, about minority leadership, about scientists as leaders. The value of using SIT to inform the conceptual framework for this study is that it assumes that participant faculty members have and honor their multiple personal and social identities, within specific organizational contexts, and use these cues to make decisions about all of their professional activities, including leadership.

**Definition of Terms**

This proposed study will focus on perception of academic leadership held by mid-career faculty members. I am focused on this topic, and this population, for several reasons.

I am specifically interested **campus-based, titled leadership** as an example of academic leadership. By **campus-based**, I mean positions which are primarily rooted in an institutional



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hierarchy, serving primarily local colleagues at a common institution of higher education. I use this for a very deliberate reason: there is evidence that faculty members are more loyal to their disciplines (and I would extrapolate, to their identity as a "chemist" rather than a "faculty member at Roger State University"), and less loyal to the institutions that employ them (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Dill, 1982; Jauch, Glueck, & Osborn, 1978). Leadership in a professional society, which affirms a disciplinary identity (Bush & Genik, 2013), can enhance one's disciplinary reputation (Feingold & Estes, 2016; Ryan, Healy, & Sullivan, 2012).

In contrast, a campus-based position is one that focuses attention on local needs and works in service to local colleagues and institutional priorities. Such roles do not automatically reinforce one's disciplinary identity or affirm prototypical faculty behavior that prioritizes research output and prestige. Instead, campus leadership may even challenge disciplinary identity because such positions draw attention and time to areas other than disciplinary concerns. For example, a chemist who takes on a leadership position within the American Chemical Society affirms her identity as a chemist and gains additional prestige for chemistry-related activities done in service of advancing chemistry and chemists. Contrast this to a chemist taking on a campus-based position such as Chemistry department chair. There she would likely enjoy greater connectivity on campus to colleagues both within and outside the unit, and be expected to not only advance chemistry, but she would also have to focus on advancing non-discipline-specific institutional values and expectations (Bowman, 2002). Thus campus-based leadership positions are less a reaffirmation of one's disciplinary professional identity and potentially a challenge to it.

In this study, I sought to ask specifically about campus-based leadership because it serves as chance to explore the degree to which an individual faculty member perceives academic



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leadership as in line with one's disciplinary identity (and connections), or a challenge to it. More importantly, I seek to see how individuals see and describe their perception of these ideas, if they do at all.

I am also focused on **formal, titled** leadership. This term refers to those positions which carry with them formal weight and authority, and are functional parts of the institutional hierarchy. These are positions which are not merely appointed or casually nominated, but vetted and considered in deliberate ways. They are positions with sufficient weight and expectation, such that their title represents a possible new *identity*, not merely an added *activity*. It is important to acknowledge that faculty leadership takes place in many important locations around a campus, in both formal and informal way (Kezar & Lester, 2011). Titles vary, and are of various degrees of formality (Logan, Gaff, & Jentoft, 2002; Murphy, 1992), but all provide important opportunities for faculty leadership.

I do not mean to suggest that informal leadership opportunities are not important and valuable ways for faculty to contribute to their institutions. I fully recognize that most faculty engage in important service and leadership activities, including many that are expected of all faculty members, such as roles on curriculum committees, faculty search committees, and in appointed positions, elected positions, and others (Baldridge, 1978; O'Meara, 2016). All of these tasks benefit from faculty engagement and confer benefits to faculty members. But while all faculty are expected to engage in service to differing degrees, not all faculty members are expected (or encouraged, frankly) to take on formal titled leadership. Therefore these formal and titled roles, such as department chair, provide a useful example of the kind of leadership which is open only *to* faculty members, but is not *for* all faculty members.



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I am interested in formal campus leadership at multiple levels because of my concern about the source and quality of the next generation of leaders (Appadurai, 2009; Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Dominici, Fried & Zeger, 2009; Eckman, 2010; Glazer-Raymo, 2008) who can serve in vacancies in positions such as dean, provost, and president and invited participants to talk about a variety of leadership roles. However, for the purposes of this study, I specifically asked about department chair roles because this position serves as an important example of local faculty leadership that has unique status for early- and mid-career faculty members.

One reason is that the job of department chair is an important first step toward positions of greater institutional responsibility for many leaders (Berdrow, 2010; Gonaim, 2016; Hahn, 2011; Kezar, 2009). For individuals who aspire to positions higher in an institutional hierarchy, serving as department chair is also a common vetting position (Gmelch & Miskin, 2004; Lepowski, 2014).

The second reason to specifically inquire about one's experience with a department chair is that it is a position which represents multiple identities: people in the role are expected to serve both their faculty colleagues (Cipriano, 2017; Chun & Evans, 2015) and their institution's mandates (Buller, 2006; Leaming, 2003), as well as maintain an active research career that is expected of most faculty members. According to Gmelch and Burns (1994), "department chairs find themselves trapped between the stresses of performing not only as an administrator but faculty member as well" (p. 259).

Unlike many service roles or leadership opportunities, taking on the role of faculty chair is rarely a result of serendipity: It is a deliberate choice to accept leadership in a formal and high-profile way with an accompanying degree of administrative authority (Bliss et al., 1996; Booth, 1982). For some faculty members who see the chair as more administrator than faculty



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(Ginsberg, 2011), the choice to move from "regular" faculty member to "department chair" represents a move to the "dark side" (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Palm, 2006).

Because of the department chair's often ambiguous role between faculty and administrator (Gmelch & Burns, 1993), it serves as an ideal proxy for formal leadership for the purposes of this study: it is a role that most faculty members have seen in their own units since they became faculty members. Chairs are colleagues, as well as administrators, in a way that "higher ups" usually are not. Unlike positions higher in an institutional hierarchy, such as dean or provost, most faculty members likely had encounters with a department chair beginning in graduate school, and throughout the process of socialization toward a faculty career (Austin & McDaniels, 2006) and through their pre-tenure years.

**Scope of the Study**

The population for this study is mid-career faculty members, those who have earned tenure but are still at a point in their careers where they can make important decisions about the future of their career (Hall, 2004). Unlike the early career years, which are focused almost solely on publishing, grant getting, teaching, and other activities for earning tenure (Crawford & Olsen, 1998; Sorcinelli,1992), mid-career offers more flexibility and exploration opportunities (Caferella et al, 1989), including thinking about leadership. Mid-career faculty have likely experienced different service opportunities, have not yet taken on formal campus leadership positions (or are relatively new to such posts), and have started to assume faculty service in more intensive ways (Baldwin & Chang, 2006) than during their pre-tenure years. Newly tenured faculty may have taken advantage of leadership development opportunities to enhance their careers or clarify their career aspirations.

By necessity, I am delimiting the target population to tenure-track faculty members, since on many campuses, non-tenure track faculty members are simply ineligible for formal campus



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leadership positions (Venegas & Kezar, 2014). Since I am interested in helping to answer the question of who will serve as the academic leaders of the future, the study's relevance is enhanced by focusing solely on those who are, in fact, most widely eligible to serve in such roles.

Further, I am focusing on faculty at a research-intensive institution (McCormick & Zhao, 2005) for similarly practical reasons. This institutional context is the most useful for the purposes of the study, I feel, because it is the context where faculty work is embedded in different roles, different titles, and most clearly unbundled (Austin, 2002). These institutions are more likely to have different titles and classifications (i.e., research faculty, traditional tenure-stream faculty positions, non-tenure-track faculty, visiting faculty). Unlike environments such as liberal arts colleges or community colleges, where individual faculty members often assume multiple roles (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006) or take on leadership early in their careers out of need and tradition (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014), larger research-intensive universities are likely to be the environments which prioritize certain aspects of faculty work in favor of others in ways that have direct implications for faculty perception of academic leadership.

**Research Question**

How do mid-career faculty members at Roger State University perceive academic leadership, and which factors—Institutional, Demographic, Cultural, and Disciplinary—most strongly influence their perception of academic leadership?

**Summary**

This conceptual model acknowledges that individual faculty members possess multiple social and professional identities, and that their perception of academic leadership is informed by their experiences as well as these multiple identities. If faculty members are going to be well-positioned to serve in leadership roles in modern institutions of higher education, it is useful to



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consider how they perceive academic leadership: the worth of it, their capacity for it, and the factors that influence how they view campus leadership roles.

In chapter 2, I explore further the extant literature on faculty work as it shapes faculty perception: How faculty work is structured and rewarded, how norms and academic cultures develop and shape attitudes on faculty leadership, and how these various literatures fit together when united by theories from Social Identity Theory (SIT). In chapter 3 I describe the methodology I used to conduct the study, and detail the case context (Roger State University) in which I pursue this study. In Chapter 4, I share my findings. In Chapter 5, I conclude with recommendations that emerge from the findings, and suggest avenues for further study.



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# CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In chapter 1, I explained the motivation for this study: a concern that scholars need to better understand the role that academics and faculty leaders play (or might play) in modern institutions of higher education, and the availability and willingness of faculty members to step forward as leaders. In this study, I review literature from a variety of scholarly traditions that each speak to some dimension of the faculty work experience. Some may focus on how faculty members learn to do their jobs, while others focus on the ways in which faculty work is rewarded, shaped, influenced, etc. Collectively, these studies contribute to a broad understanding of how faculty members might perceive leadership.

## Conceptual Framework

The work on academic leadership is largely embedded in literature on faculty work, and speaks to what scholars have discerned about how faculty members approach their profession. Many facets of these previous studies have focused on specific areas of the faculty experience—how women or persons of color experience their profession, or how different policies and norms shape the faculty experience. All of these individual studies provide useful contextual information for the present study, which seeks to understand faculty perception of academic leadership in an effort to help institutions consider the role academics do, and could, play in leading modern institutions of higher education.

But instead of focusing on one specific area—such as a particular gender or racial group, or a how norms in a particular discipline shape faculty views—I sought to employ a conceptual framework that assumes *all* of these factors are influential. It assumes that faculty members are shaped by how they come to understand their roles as faculty members, by the messages they receive about the role of leadership in an academic life, and by the messages they get about their own suitability for it. Individuals are complex, with multiple identities and experiences that



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shape their perception. But which identities and experiences do individuals themselves say are *most* influential in shaping their perception of leadership? To seek insight for this exploratory study, I needed a conceptual framework that unifies various studies on "faculty work" to see which influences have the most power—according to individual faculty members themselves. With a unified framework built from pieces of individual scholarship, I can test the relative weight of those influences. Assuming all those messages are influential, which do faculty members themselves report as the most influential in shaping their perception? Is it something their graduate mentor told them? Is it the model of their department chair? Is it something else?

In approaching the literature to see how it creates a larger puzzle of faculty work, it became clear that much of the scholarship fits into four distinctive themes, or groups of factors that shape how faculty members come to understand their professional identities and what is expected of them in these roles. These themes are, first, **cultural factors**, which refers to the normative culture of "faculty life," wherein individuals are socialized to adopt identities and behaviors which signal membership in a "faculty" group and are motivated to perform professional work appropriate to "faculty" culture. A second set of factors, **disciplinary factors**, describe how unique norms from specific academic disciplines shape faculty identity and behaviors, and are sometimes in line with and sometimes separate from "faculty" identities more broadly. Thirdly are **institutional** factors, or influences such as the policies, procedures, and practices that powerfully signal to people how a prototypical faculty member acts. These institutional factors compel and deter behavior in powerful ways, and shape how faculty members perceive what is expected of and valued in their work. The fourth set of factors are **demographic factors** such as gender, race, and ethnicity (and others)—which are personal



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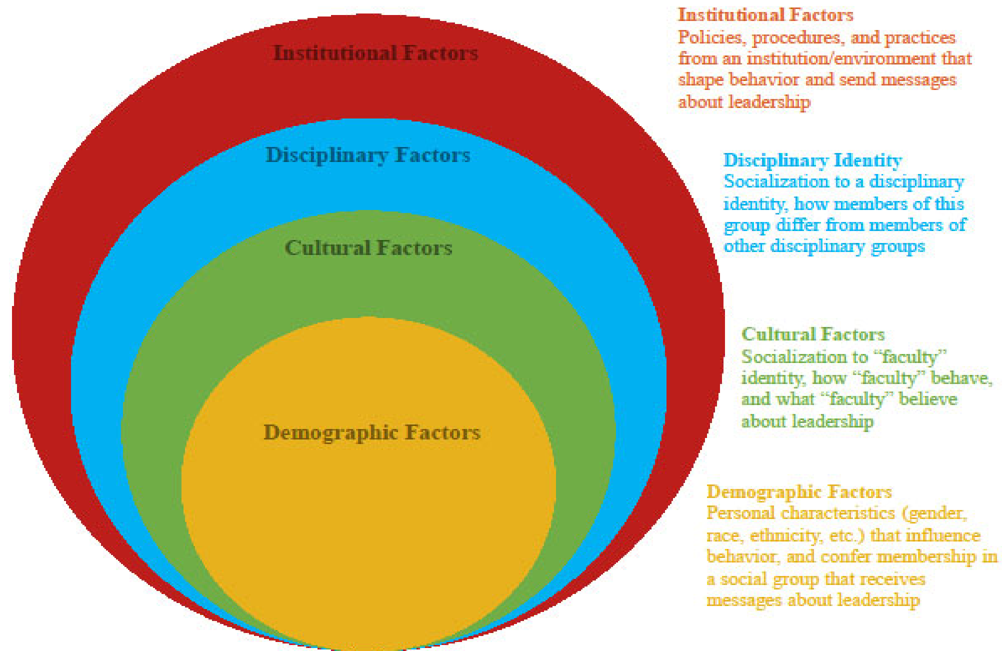
characteristics that can influence the faculty experience and, for this study, influence perception about leadership and one's suitability for it.

**Figure 2.1 Unified Framework of Factors Influencing Faculty Perception of Leadership**




The image above illustrates the conceptual framework I am using for this study: It illustrates the four categories of factors that shape faculty work. Each of these is built up by various studies which inform the theme. When I discuss each of the four factors, I review relevant and representative literature on the topic to show the variety of influences that come together to create each theme. These individual studies and pieces stand alone as useful and informative research on the faculty experience, but when pieced together as I do here, the individual pieces provide a rich and complex understanding of the many factors that shape faculty views in many areas, including faculty leadership. In the absence of explicit studies on faculty and leadership, we can infer from other studies that certain factors compel behavior in a particular direction. I



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use these studies collectively as the framework for the study and in later chapters, I analyze original data to test the framework and see which "ring" stands out to individual faculty members as the most influential in their views on leadership. This diagram is helpful in that it emphasizes that all factors shape their views, but some are more influential at different points.

In chapters 4 and 5, I review the data from this study and make recommendations based on what the data suggest: that institutional factors (policies, practices, etc.) are generally more influential than different personal and professional identities and cultures. The conceptual framework I employed for this study, however, acknowledged that all of these factors influence modern faculty life to varying degrees.

In the rest of this chapter, I explore more fully each of the factors comprising the conceptual framework and delve into scholarly literature to see what has already been learned about the environments, cultures, and disciplines in which different people work and how their personal experiences and identities may shape those views. Throughout this section, I also introduce concepts from Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Hogg & Terry, 2002; Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1985), because such theories from social psychology provide useful insights to pull the individual nested rings together in the model. These concepts explain why the process of socialization to a faculty career or a discipline are so powerful, and why messages about leadership learned during this time are so enduring. These concepts also explain the ways in which individuals are psychologically—if not intentionally—motivated to align their perceptions and behaviors to their preferred social groups and SIT theory may explain an inherent incongruity between faculty members and leaders that is reportedly common in faculty circles (Ginsberg, 2011). These concepts explain how individuals come to own different identities and offer insights on how membership in a group (with a resulting group identity) shape perception



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and behavior,  as well as how these identities are more salient in some contexts, and during some times, than others (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995). SIT offers the psychological glue that explains why the four "rings" of this conceptual framework hang together as a single, unified, model: individual people, like the participants in this study, are shaped by their multiple, overlapping and nested identities, and the contexts in which an individual finds herself will influence which identity is most salient and powerful in shaping how we understand that context.

Before I review the four themes emerging from the literature that inform the conceptual framework, it is useful to review some important concepts from SIT that provide helpful vocabulary and concepts that I will revisit in exploring other literature later in this chapter.

**Self-Identity and Group Identity**.  There are several important concepts from SIT which are essential for the present study: the first is that individuals hold multiple identities. The second is that those identities are not exclusively personal, nor are they exclusively social: they are both. Third is that people will act in ways that align with group norms to affirm their membership in any group that confers psychological value to people in that group. Fourth, is that "identity salience" (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995) is helpful in seeing that various identities do not i with each other, simply that different identities are more "important" to express than others, at different times and in different contexts.

Identity is sometimes thought of as a collection of personal traits: gender, race, ethnicity, professional affiliation, etc. But those personal "traits" signal membership in groups of people with the same trait: say, of women, of Asian-Americans, or of immigrants. Group affiliation is a powerful influence, because an "individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1982a, p.31) can powerfully shape beliefs and behaviors. People seek "the



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perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (Mael & Ashforth, 2001, p. 21) because we want to belong to groups that provide a psychological value to us. For example, membership in groups provides us with "self-esteem" (Ellemers et al., 1999) because individuals possess a powerful need to belong to social groups (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1943) and because affiliation with others within a group confers status and affirms identity for individuals. As social beings, people value aspects of their identities and want be part of a group that affirms those pieces of oneself, and will align their perceptions and behaviors to the group in which they value membership.

But people also belong to different groups—families, professions, social groups, online groups—and the norms and values of different groups shape different identities, which are more and less powerful at different times.

> Identity salience represents one of the ways, and a theoretically most important way, that the identities making up the self can be organized. Identities, that is, are conceived as being organized into a salience hierarchy. This hierarchical organization of identities is defined by the probabilities of each of the various identities within it being brought into play in a given situation. Alternatively, it is defined by the probabilities each of the identities have of being invoked across a variety of situations. The location of an identity in this hierarchy is, by definition, its salience. (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 206).

This is true of faculty members who are, after all, people. Faculty members then, like all people, hold multiple identities that they value and are members of different social groups (of faculty, of people within a discipline, of people at the same institution, of people with a certain expertise, of members of a gender or ethnic group) and each group has different "rules" about



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how a member of that group should behave and what they should believe. These identities are "nested" within each other and emerge at different times, depending on the context.

SIT also suggests that these various identities confer value to individuals. For example, if a "faculty identity" (or "political scientist" or "woman scientist") is valued, then maintaining the salience of that identity is a powerful motivator, which motivates individuals to behave in ways that affirm their faculty identity and resist acting in ways that question their group affiliation. For this study, that means examining the ways in which behaviors (or attitudes about leadership) align with what "faculty" do, while rejecting behaviors that go against what are commonly thought of as appropriate faculty behaviors.

**Faculty Prototypes**. SIT describes the process by which a person gains understanding of what it "means" to be part of a group. This type of socialization in SIT is called "self-categorization," (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Turner et al., 1987) and includes a process of depersonalization, of shifting from highly personalized identity traits to align with established group norms around behavior. Depersonalization is NOT the same thing as dehumanization or deindividualization (see, for example, Nadler, Goldberg, & Jaffe, 1982), but rather refers to "a transformation of self [that] is the process underlying group phenomena, because it brings self-perception and behavior in line with the contextually relevant ingroup prototype" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123).

The notion of "prototype" in SIT refers to "ideal worker" norms, and communicates to group members which behavior is most prized, esteemed, or to be emulated (Turner, 1985). "Self-categorization theory explains how conformity to group norms arises from salient self-inclusive social categorizations" (Hogg, Abrams, Otten & Hinkle, 2004). It is the process by which group members unconsciously absorb group ideals, and come to understand the difference between "in group" and "outgroup" (Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1999) and "rests on intergroup



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social comparisons that seek to confirm or establish ingroup-favoring evaluations and distinctiveness between ingroup and outgroup, motivated by an underlying need for self-esteem" (cited in Hogg and Terry, 2000, p. 122). For the purposes of this study, the process of becoming a faculty member means a process of "depersonalization" where a person becomes a "faculty member" so that her attitudes and behaviors become aligned with prototypical norms.

**Identity Centrality and Salience**. Once a person has adopted the beliefs and behaviors that indicate membership in their group, and has decided that a particular facet of their identity is important to them, they become loathe to risk losing affiliation with that group. The notion of "identity centrality" (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1998) explains this idea. The more central and significant a person's group identity to his or her self-concept, the more strongly a person will take on the characteristics of that group (i.e. self-stereotyping: Turner, 1999) to reaffirm her membership in "her" group…and not a member of another group. This is useful because "SIT is essentially a theory of group differentiation: How group members can make their in group(s) distinctive from, and wherever possible, better than out groups" (Brown, 2000, p. 757). Identity centrality offers nuance to suggest the ways in which an identity is most salient (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995): it indicates that one identity is more central (i.e. more highly prized) by an individual.

The more friction between two identities, the more identity interference (Settles, 2004), a psychologically negative experience which occurs when two identities have competing or conflicting values, and where conflict between one's social roles or identities has negative psychological and performance outcomes (Settles, Jellison, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009). These constructs explain how self-categorizing behavior in line with group prototypes is a self- and group-preserving behavior that is psychologically protective for an individual's sense of self.



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**SIT and Faculty Leadership**. How does these concepts relate to the focus of this study, exploring perception of academic leadership among a small population of mid-career faculty members? As I wrote earlier, SIT assumes, as this model does, that various identities and factors shape faculty work in powerful ways. And SIT explains the psychological foundation of identity and group membership, so that we can understand why faculty members would make both logical and strategic, as well as psychologically-protective, choices that affirm and preserve aspects of their identity. This, in turn, shapes their attitudes about their work, how they perceive their work, and how leadership aligns with—or challenges—the identities they value for themselves. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how faculty perceptions of leadership are shaped by a multitude of factors and include both "logical" influences (e.g., "leadership takes too much time,") and normative influences (e.g., "I'm a faculty member, and 'leadership' is not for 'faculty'"). The conceptual model for this study assumes that a confluence of factors—shaped by environment, but also shaped by group norms—contribute to faculty views on leadership.

In the remainder of this chapter, I delve further into the four categories of factors defining the conceptual framework for this study. Within each cluster, I also expand on the ways in which SIT helps explain why such factors would be important to individual faculty, and how they (potentially) contribute to faculty perception of leadership.

**Cultural Factors**

In this section, I focus on the literature which explores the "cultural factors" shaping faculty identities. As I explained in my review of SIT, a professional identity such as "faculty member" is potentially very powerful. It is a rarified group, and membership in this group is hard fought, suggesting that individuals might consider their faculty identity central to their being. In such a case, this "identity centrality" could motivate them to behave in ways that very much align with prototypical faculty behavior, and resist anything further afield. For faculty members



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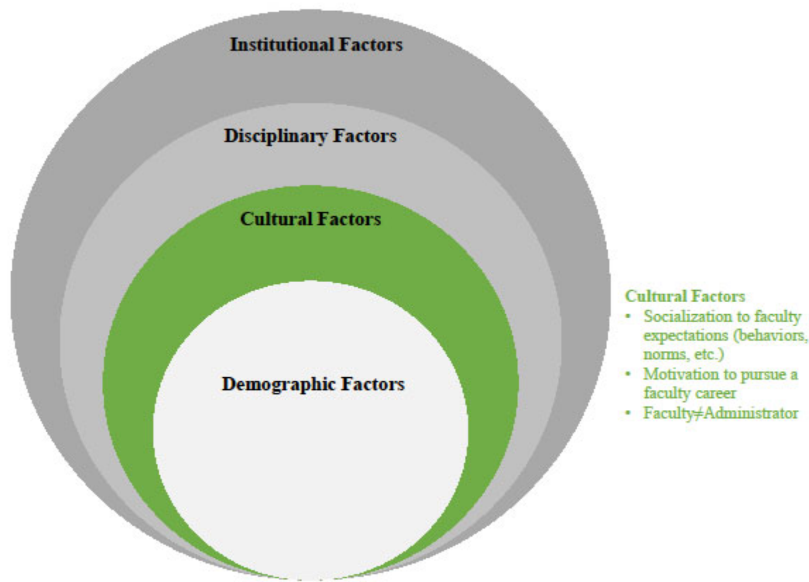
who absorb notions that academic leadership is “the dark side,” (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Ginsberg, 2011), or something that “other” people do, leadership could be unappealing because it is decidedly “out group.”

**Figure 2.2 Cultural Factors**




**Socialization to the Faculty Member Role**. The typical first step to becoming a faculty member is to successfully complete graduate training and experience a period of graduate student socialization (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gardner et al., 2012; Portnoi, Chlopecki, & Peregrina-Kretz, 2015). This is a well-established process of communicating the norms of faculty life. Unlike other fields, where orientation or “organizational socialization” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) often does not begin until a person starts at a new job, for faculty members, “the literature on socialization implies that an individual’s understanding of the faculty career begins with the graduate school experience or even earlier, not with the first faculty position” (Austin, 2002, p. 96). The earliest exposure to academic training or anticipatory socialization (Van Maanen &



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Schein, 1976), may in fact be the point at which individuals start considering taking on a faculty identity. These processes communicate not only disciplinary, technical knowledge, but also knowledge about what it means to be a member of a particular discipline as well as a faculty member (Gardner, 2010). I will talk more specifically about the impact of disciplinary identity later in this chapter.

This conveyance of faculty norms happens in both formal and informal ways. There are some important explicit functions of socialization offered by faculty to graduate students—providing feedback about conference presentations or cover letters, for example. But the reality is that the long period of graduate school socialization means that students pick up informal cues as well. As Bragg (1976) described it, "faculty members transmit their attitudes, values, and behavioral norms both formally—through the structures they establish and through the courses they teach—and informally—through individual advising and supervising of study and through social activities" (p. 19). Other informal, perhaps even unintentional, socializing occurs when students watch faculty behaviors to pick up on norms and preferences to determine what kinds of actions make successful (or prototypical) faculty members and academics (Weidman et al., 2001). Austin (2002) noted,

> aspiring faculty are keen observers and listeners. They listen carefully to formal as well as informal conversations with advisors and supervisors. They pay attention to casual, off-hand remarks by professors and other students. Aspiring faculty members observe departmental policies…and faculty members' behaviors, including how they allocate their time across responsibilities, their degree of willingness or reluctance to take on various tasks, and their interactions with students (p. 104).



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Thus, the behavior of individual faculty members powerfully communicates faculty norms to graduate students, who eventually take these prototypes with them to their own faculty positions after graduating. Advisors and mentors, in particular, have a powerful influence on faculty professional identities (Lindholm et. al., 2002).

Few faculty members indicate that they were drawn to academic careers because they sought to be academic administrators or leaders (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2013). As Lindholm (2004) noted:

> By and large, faculty participants were drawn to faculty careers by the pleasure they derive from engaging in the tasks associated with professorial work; namely, teaching and research. Somewhat surprisingly, no participants specifically mentioned service—the third major component of traditional faculty work—as either a compelling, or deterring, factor in shaping their academic career aspirations (p. 617).

And in communicating their passion for academic labor, mentors are not passing along a passion for leadership, service or administrative work. Austin (2002) wrote that "few graduate student respondents reported receiving any guidance about the array of other tasks that faculty members must fulfill, including advising, committee work, curriculum development, managing ethical issues, and public service and outreach" (p. 105). For the "keenly observant" graduate student (Austin, 2002), silence may be powerful: graduate students are paying attention but are either picking up no information about the value and utility of service or leadership, or they are picking up the perspective that such activities are, by virtue of their invisibility, not part of "faculty work."

The lack of attention paid in early career training (Readman & Rowe, 2016) to "bureaucratic concerns" (Corcoran & Clark, 1984) may be contributing to the fact many faculty



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members find themselves ill-prepared to engage in the kinds of service or leadership activities that are often central to administrative structures, especially at the department-level (Wolverton, Ackerman, & Holt, 2007), which is where many first service and leadership opportunities arise. Golde (1997) found that fewer than 19% of graduate students felt that their graduate training prepared them to participate in governance or service, while 90% felt prepared to conduct research. Again, these data suggest that the process of conveying faculty values is one that emphasizes tasks: research, and likely teaching, but not leadership, while ignoring the identity shifts that individuals undergo in transitioning roles throughout their career, such as transitioning from graduate student to faculty (Billot & King, 2017; Tülübas & Göktürk, 2017), or faculty member to administrator. Exploring the lasting impact of these early socialization messages may emerge as a finding for this study.

**Faculty ≠ Administrator? Risks to Identity**. There is room in the literature for more research-based scholarship on faculty attitudes about leadership. The research in this area is rich with important pieces which describe "what faculty think" about leadership, but the empirical testing of these beliefs warrants further attention. For example, Foster (2006) argued that there is a "traditional view that people who seek administrative positions should never be granted them: that to seek to become a department chair or dean is a reflection of raw ambition or misplaced priorities" (p. 50), but fails to articulate explicitly whose "tradition" is being honored. Rich (2006) said that "even more than before, university administration is seen as removed from the academic life of the university" (p. 40), but this belief is not supported by data. Other scholars have written that the relationship between faculty and administrators results from a well-documented "cultural clash" (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006) with irreconcilable cultural differences (Dill, 1991) and is described as "we-they" in some literature (Borland, 2003). These



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perspectives, echoed in book-length treatises which articulate faculty concerns about academic leaders (e.g., Ginsberg, 2011), hint at a widely-held contentious relationship between faculty members and academic leaders.

Though it is less empirically tested than one might like, these views, true or not, may be widely held and illustrate a perhaps common view that "faculty" and "academic leaders" are, in fact, two *separate* groups: for some, assuming the role of department chair means a new *identity*, not merely new *responsibilities.* SIT describes this psychologically uncomfortable "role incongruence" (Settles et al, 2009) as something people generally avoid, so as to preserve important "identity centrality"—refusing to risk losing one's core faculty identity by engaging in leadership activities that seem to challenge it.

Some scholars have attempted to articulate more specifically what makes academic leadership something "other than" faculty work. Evans (2017) noted some confusion among professors about what constitutes "leadership," and Foster (2006) noted that "the academic and administrative organizations operate on very different principles, and virtually everyone understands there are differences" (p. 52). One difference is that "most faculty are intrinsically motivated, and their individual initiatives contribute to the university" (Swain, 2006, p. 26), but that there is a focus on individual accomplishment and credit that is anathema to the team- and organizationally-oriented work of academic leadership (Swain, 2006) which may go uncredited. As one article argued, "unique ideas are celebrated in faculty worlds [while] in administrative roles, ideas are often 'stolen' by other academic administrators and should be viewed as a compliment" (Kezar, Lester, Carducci, Gallant, & McGavin, 2007) instead of a breach of academic norms. Another argument that seeks to explain fundamental (and perhaps incompatible) differences between faculty and administrators is that "to move from the role of a



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faculty member to administrator is more from a specialist to a generalist…[which] requires some thoughtful forgetting or setting aside of learned perspectives" (Platter, 2006, p. 19).

Platter's (2006) view hints at a finding which could emerge from the study, that there is a cognitive shift, a "forgetting or setting aside" (p. 19) of views that is part of a mental "move" from faculty to administrator—that administrators may feel compelled to sever their faculty identity in some way which the SIT literature suggests might be uncomfortable. Indeed, there are important identity differences that can have a powerful impact on one's interpersonal standing within a faculty group that result from this move. "The most significant is the change in colleague relationships. Faculty peers are no longer peers for an academic administrator" (Strathe & Wilson, 2006, p. 11). Put simply, an academic leader makes (often unknowingly) the psychologically-difficult choice to leave one group in favor of another, and "the transition of a faculty member to administration is usually a one-way trip, and a trip for which most faculty members are unprepared" (Foster, 2006, p. 59).

Further, "academic leadership is viewed as management rather than academic leadership" (Strathe & Wilson, 2006, p. 8), which is another example of the idea that many faculty members may have a negative or ambivalent (Evans, 2017) sense of what academic leadership is or entails, but they do "know" that "faculty" does not equal or include "academic leaders." Many leaders often do not fully grasp the impact of this shift on their careers, professional relationships, or, as SIT would explain it, the "identity incongruence" that results from taking on an academic leadership position on their campus.

These studies suggest an incongruity between "faculty" and "leadership" that has psychological consequences for one's identity and membership in social groups, and which is sometimes a socially isolating experience. Collins (2014) wrote, "institutional leadership is



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usually encouraged and supported only by other administrators, and only after someone makes a transition to a leadership position" (p. 561). This research implies that someone considering making the leap to administrative leadership takes a risk, often without the support of their primary identity group of faculty members, to join a separate group (faculty leaders) who are welcoming only after the proverbial leap has been taken.

This "leap first" idea explains why a significant portion of the literature on academic leadership is drawn from a specific group: those who are already in academic leadership positions (Brown, 2005; Lawrence, 2011). There are relatively fewer research studies which tackle academic leadership directly from the perspective of "the led" (Evans, Home, & Rayner, 2013), despite leadership being a "relational position…not only by those holding leadership roles but also by those on the receiving end" (p. 675). The present study is an effort to build upon other efforts (DeZure, Shaw & Rojewski, 2014) to study this phenomenon further.

The scholarship on faculty socialization and identity proves compelling in helping clarify how a person comes to understand what it "means" to be a faculty member: how one behaves, what activities one engages in, and what one thinks about different facets of the role. These factors likely shape faculty perception on leadership, either by communicating negative views or being silent on the role. But they are by no means the only influence on perception. In fact, while there are many norms that hold true for all "faculty," so too are there factors that are specific to disciplines.

**Disciplinary Factors**

In this section, I narrow the group further, to focus on another set of factors: **Disciplinary factors**. Nested within the larger group of "faculty," this section explores how specific disciplines convey their norms and prototypical ideals for what it "means" to be a specialist in one's field.



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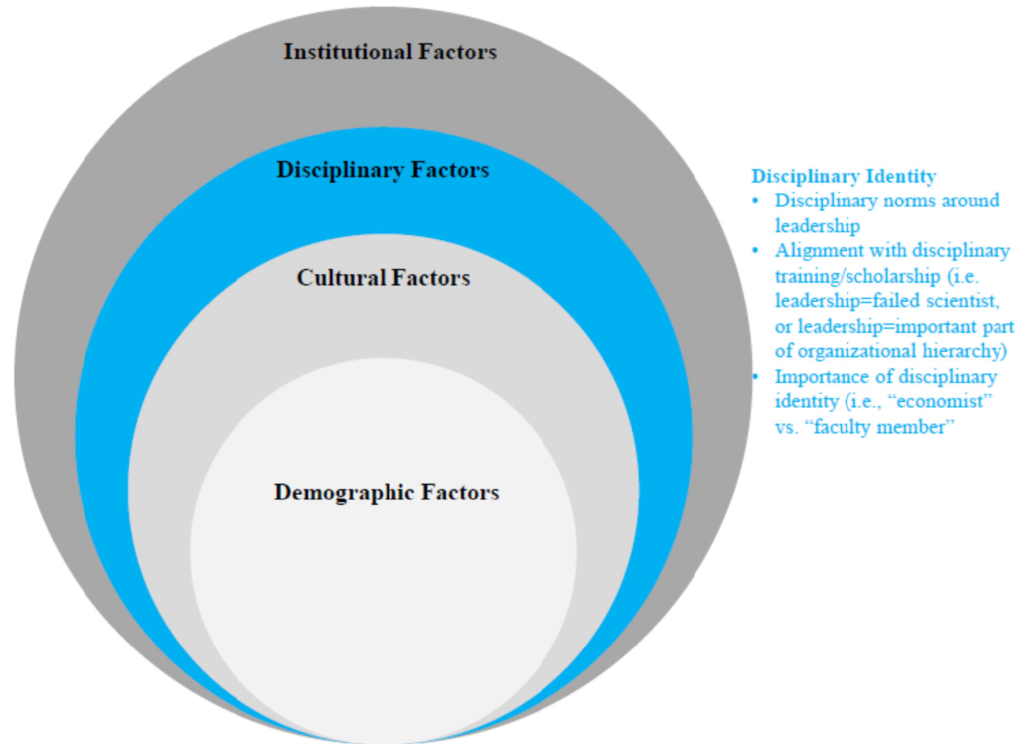
**Figure 2.3 Disciplinary Factors**




Scholarship (i.e., Finkelstein, 1984) suggests that for some people, their specific disciplinary training conveys "profound and extensive" (Braxton & Hargens, 1996, p. 35) differences to define their social group. As I reviewed above, graduate school is a time when specific norms and expectations are conveyed about "faculty work," but specific behaviors and attitudes about discipline are also conveyed (Lindholm, 2004). These attitudes and norms have lasting impacts on faculty perception and effort, since discrete academic disciplines have an effect on overall job satisfaction (Terpstra & Honoree, 2004; Sabharwal & Corley, 2009) and job turnover (Xu, 2008). Faculty within a discipline are more alike in these measures than they are to faculty in other disciplines on their campus. Even more importantly, one's discipline may, in fact, be the most important social group, the most salient or central identity in SIT terminology,



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for many faculty members. As Foster (2006) wrote, “academic disciplines strongly socialize faculty with values that do not easily cross disciplinary boundaries…and disciplinary biases are difficult to set aside” (p. 51) for any reason. For some people, their primary identity may be “faculty member at Roger State University,” while for others, institutional affiliation is a distant second to their role as “an epidemiologist” or other “—ist.”

It is also important to consider departments as an important location for conveying disciplinary norms. Departments are often the institutional, bureaucratic unit that unites people with shared disciplinary training. As noted before, departments are also the primary home for graduate students being socialized into a faculty (or disciplinary identity) (Lindholm, 2004). And the academic leader most likely to influence an early career faculty member is rooted in a department: The department chair (Bowman, 2010; Gonaim, 2016; Taggart, 2015). Departments are also the primary home for early career faculty members (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999; Fleming, Golman, Correll & Taylor, 2016; Ikenberry & Friedman, 1972) who may have little exposure to bureaucratic systems “higher up” in the institution (Miller, Mamiseishvili & Lee, 2016).

Further, it is in the department that many faculty members taste their first academic leadership positions (Wolverton, Ackerman, & Holt, 2007). Though department does not equal discipline for many faculty members, the department does become a bureaucratic proxy for people with shared disciplinary interests (Lattuca & Stark, 1994). In short, be they closely aligned or less so, disciplines and departments are cultures and spaces that convey important group norms and experiences to faculty members. It is a place that has models for faculty leadership (the chair) and where messages about leadership are shared (Andrews, Conaway, Zhao & Dolan, 2016; Gonaim, 2016) among colleagues and conveyed to graduate students.



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The impact of disciplinary identity on an individual faculty member is especially powerful for women and persons of color working in fields where they are underrepresented. For such individuals, one's ability to encounter peers with demographic *and* disciplinary identities honors important senses of self that may have an impact on how narrowly faculty members will enact their group identity and norms. For example, Settles et al. (2009) wrote that women scientists may be drawn closer toward their *disciplines*, often via professional societies, and away from their local departments, because disciplinary societies and other non-campus activities permit engagement with other women who share both a gender identity and a disciplinary identity. Other studies have argued that women and underrepresented minorities benefit from committing primarily to their disciplines, particularly via membership and engagement in professional societies for strategic reasons.

Disciplinary affiliation provides useful connections, offers helpful support, offers nearby models of leadership, and fosters the exchange of ideas about leadership for individual faculty members. Sometimes, the intellectual training of a discipline can also shape faculty views on leadership.

**Disciplinary Views of Leadership**. For some faculty members, disciplinary training lends itself to leadership while for others, leadership provides a departure (Watson, 1979). Some disciplines prioritize, value, and reward leadership (including on campus positions) in ways that are not lauded in other disciplines (Austin, 1990). For example, in a hard science, departmental leadership may be less valued because chair responsibilities take a person away from his lab or research. In contrast, departmental leadership in a department of political science may be more valued because the study of leadership, and recognition of its potential impact, is a feature of some research agendas in that discipline and thus may be better understood as a important



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function of an organization. For some, but not all, faculty members, “because the department chair is the only administrative leadership position for a specific discipline, being offered the position enhances a candidates credibility as a scholarly leader within her field” (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009).

Del Favero (2005) has explored how disciplinary training contributes to leadership style among academic deans, and reported that established social and professional norms have an enduring effect on the ways in which individuals construct knowledge (Austin, 1990), make decisions, and enact policy for their units. Importantly, disciplines also embrace different organizational hierarchies (Ruscio, 1987), a point which has a direct bearing on how leadership within different disciplinary groups might be embraced—or rejected—depending on the cultural values of hierarchy. For example, in some fields, hierarchy represents a decision-making process which aligns with how work is done in those fields (consider, say, a lab environment where a principal investigator is a functional head decision maker and where group consensus is common), while for others which are “flatter” or resistant to hierarchy, assuming a leadership position within the hierarchy may be an uncomfortable rejection of group norms and prove to be a challenging identity shift.

There has been some attention paid to academic disciplines and their influence on faculty norms and identity, but “the aspects or dimensions of disciplinary work at the source of these disciplines is less well understood, especially in leadership or administrative contexts” (Del Favero, 2005, p. 74). This study helps fill that gap, but instead of *solely* focusing on the disciplinary influence on leadership, I seek to explore the *relative* influence of disciplinary norms on faculty attitudes about leadership, since one’s disciplinary identity is an important, but not sole, facet of who they are and how they work.



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**D**isciplinary vs. Institutional Affiliation**. Research has suggested that loyalty and orientation to one's discipline, versus one's institution or immediate colleagues, is a message that may start early in one's faculty career. "New faculty members are being socialized to view involvement in external activities as more important than campus involvement" (Kezar, Lester, Carducci, Gallant, & McGavin, 2007, p. 14). External activities typically refer to activities within one's professional societies or funding agencies, acts of service and leadership that enhance their disciplinary status. At the same time, they are often discouraged from considering service or leadership at the department or campus level.**

Echoing this, Klomparens et al. (2014) argued that leadership in scientific societies: provides professional strategic advantage by building and maintaining professional coalitions with other experts in a shared discipline (Nelson & Morreale, 2002). The impact of this engagement increases status within their field, creates opportunities for highly visible leadership positions within a discipline, and offers reputational advantages not afforded by campus-based positions, making disciplinary visibility especially important for early-career faculty members (Becher & Trower, 2001). These acts would, in SIT terms, emphasize a disciplinary identity as the most central, but have the potentially unintended side effect of eroding institutional loyalty (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008). That such messages are being targeted at early career faculty members may have an enduring effect. Research (Alpert, 1985; Bice, 1992; Reybold, 2005) claims that experiences during the early part of one's faculty career affect psychosocial professional development, so early messages that disciplinary loyalty should be paramount may have an enduring effect on a person's views on campus leadership.

Musselin (2013) wrote more explicitly about a lack of perceived loyalty to institutions, writing that most "academics have come to distance themselves from their departmental and



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institutional homes" (p. 33). The idea that many faculty members are primarily oriented to disciplinary affiliates (Galloway and Jones, 2012), rather than to those who share an institutional affiliation, is not new. Gouldner (1957) wrote over a half-century ago, and divided faculty members into "local" or "cosmopolitan" orientations. This work was empirically tested on faculty in the 1950s, and builds upon previous efforts to clarify why certain individuals were motivated to respond to the interest and needs of those within a close social group (departmental colleagues, for example) while others were more concerned with the needs and opinions of more distant social groups, such as other experts within one's field, but employed at other campuses. Those with a local orientation are "high on loyalty to the employing organization, low on commitment to specialized role skills, and likely to use an inner group orientation" (Gouldner, 1957, p. 291).

In contrast, "cosmopolitan" faculty members are low on loyalty to one's employer or immediate colleagues, and likely to use an outer group orientation (Gouldner, 1957). Despite its scholarly age, Gouldner's (1957) work and its relevance to this study should be clear: It is one that links social identity, group affiliation, and professional behaviors among faculty members.

This is relevant to the present study for a couple of reasons. First, SIT would suggest that those who are primarily "cosmopolitan" might prize their disciplinary identity and seek activities that reaffirm their status as, say, an historian. Meanwhile, it may be that "local" faculty see themselves more, or at least as much, a member of a college or university, and thus this more inclusive view opens them up to opportunities to serve their peers via "a career orientation to the employing organization" (Gouldner, 1957, p. 288)…including people who are outside their primary disciplinary group.



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Concepts from SIT also help clarify how faculty members may come to develop their core identities, how they come to understand who is "in group" versus "out group" (Mullen et. al., 1992), and justify acting in particular ways. In faculty communities, "disciplines sustain professions in that they legitimate the contrast with other groups, justify the monopolization of authority, and protect the autonomy of professional deeds" (Gieryn, 1983, in Hagoel & Kalekin Fishman, 2002, p. 298) that are unique to a particular disciplinary group. These "tribes and territories" (Becher, 2001; Trowler, Saunders, and Bamber, 2012) often use rhetoric to distinguish a scholar in one area as distinct from scholars in other areas, foregrounding one's discipline as the priority identity. As I seek to explore how individuals perceive campus leadership—itself a position that works in service to others, and often "others" who are not immediately part of one's group—it may be possible to tease out the ways in which disciplinary group affiliation shapes attitudes and willingness to lead.



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**Institutional Factors**

I have reviewed what the literature suggests about faculty work and, in particular, the ways in which one might expect faculty cultural and disciplinary factors to influence faculty perception of leadership. In this next section, I explore the **institutional** factors such as policies, bureaucratic influences, reward structures, and other organizational "levers" (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007) which implicitly and explicitly influence how faculty members spend their time, attention, and effort. They contribute to the environment in which faculty work happens and signal what is valued by the institution.

Relevant "Institutional factors" refer to the influences emerging from the context of a faculty member's work, such as policies, organizational expectations or practices, and other characteristics that shape behavior, attitudes, and value norms about leadership in particular ways (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1996). Examples of structural factors which shape faculty behavior include: pressures to focus on publishing (DeRond & Miller, 2005; Leisyte & Dee, 2012; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2008), constraints which shape how faculty spend their working hours (Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1996), reward structures that value research more than service and/or leadership (Fairweather, 1993; O'Meara, Terosky, and Neumann, 2008), teaching (Cox, McIntosh, Reason, & Terenzini, 2011), or non-traditional forms of scholarship (O'Meara & Braskamp, 2005), and other facets of an institutional environment which influence how individuals approach their work. These contextual policies and messages "tell" individuals how they should spend their time and attention.



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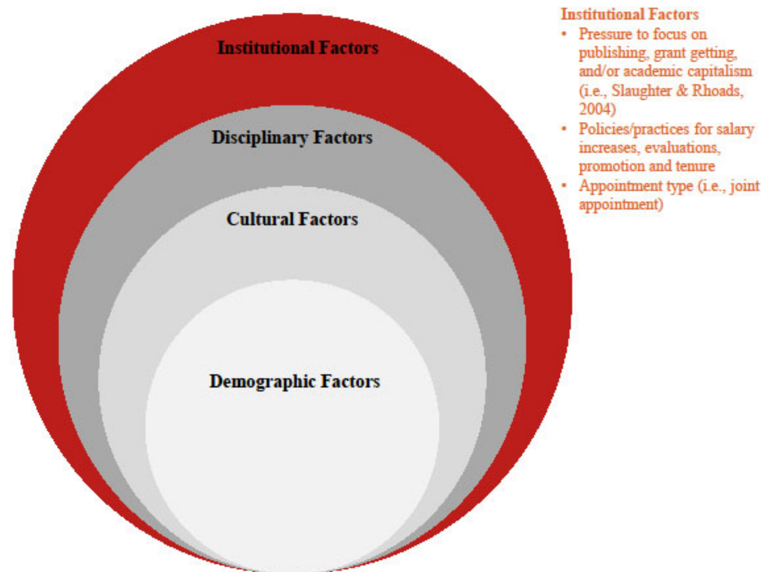
**Figure 2.4 Institutional Factors**




These Institutional factors often convey important information about leadership to group members are sometimes embedded in formal policies and are sometimes enacted by cultural norms in a unit. An example of this would include either written policies or commonly-held practices of restricting untenured faculty members' engagement in leadership opportunities (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Garman, Wingard, & Reznik, 2001), which may signal to early career faculty members that leadership is not valuable enough to do in one's early career, or that it is something a person needs "protection from." Another example are policies that formally prescribe how a person should spend her effort (i.e., 50% on research, 40% on teaching, 10% on service) (Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000), or how senior faculty members communicate these effort distributions less formally. Formal and informal factors of this type may affect faculty members' willingness or ability to take on any role that is not explicitly prescribed to them (Kezar, Lester, Carducci, Gallant, & McGavin, 2007), including academic leadership.



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Institutional factors may also refer to implicit or explicit expectations around what will be rewarded in reappointment, promotion and tenure or what work “counts” toward annual review or competition for raises (O’Meara, 2014). In fact, Fairweather & Rhoads (1995) and Diamond (1993) found rewards, not socialization or attitudes, to be the strongest predictor of faculty behavior. Each of these factors, and rewards in particular, can signal which behaviors are valued, and send important messages about how one behaves or acts when one is part of the “faculty” group. As I wrote earlier, these messages are powerful as SIT suggests that individuals will consider the degree to which behaviors align with group expectations (or not).

These various Institutional factors, as I am calling them, seem independent of one another, and in some ways they are. But each represents an example or a piece of the larger, unified conceptual framework for this study on faculty perception of leadership. Each piece represents something we assume to be true: that faculty members do receive messages about leadership from their peers, that faculty members do see who gets raises for doing specific work and not others, that individuals do notice and care about what is actually evaluated (as opposed to what they are told is evaluated) in their annual review. Assuming all of these things, which is most impactful in shaping perception?

**The Evolution of the Professoriate: Crowding Out Leadership and Service**. As with most social groups, the prototypical faculty identity (and thus, the identity most emulated by faculty as a general group) has evolved in distinctive ways. It has become one where a somewhat narrow set of accomplishments—primarily around productivity in grant-getting and publishing (Tierney, 1999) is lauded as an “ideal” faculty member because success in these areas is lauded and prized (Fairweather, 2005). Though faculty work has long been rooted in a tripartite mission—that of research, teaching, and service (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Clark, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads,



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1993)—the ratio of these three functions has evolved. Research suggests that faculty members at all institutions--including community colleges and liberal arts colleges, which generally prioritize teaching over research-intensive environments (Austin, 1990; Clark, 1997)—have been spending an increasing amount of time on research and publication (Bentley & Blackburn, 1990; Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000; Dey et al., 1997; Harley, Acrod, Earl-Novell, & King, 2010; Nygaard, 2017; Von Bergen and Bressler, 2017), leaving less time for other activities. Increased pressure in the realm of "academic capitalism" (Slaughter & Rhoads, 2004), or "the involvement of colleges and faculty in market-like behaviors," (p. 37) also contributes to this trend. The reasons for this vary: It may be an effort by lower- or middle-ranking institutions to improve their status by emulating more highly-ranked institutions (Volkwein & Schweitzer, 2006), or it may be a result of financial constraints that force individual faculty members to compete in the "grant game" to essentially fund their own livelihoods (Miller, Taylor, & Bedeian, 2010; Smith, Anderson, & Lovrich, 1995). In short, what it takes to be a faculty member, and stay a faculty member, has changed across institution types to prioritize teaching at the expense of other traditional faculty roles, including leadership.

The reasons vary, but the impact is clear: there is an identifiable "unbundling" of faculty responsibility that has been well documented (Austin, 2002), which focuses different faculty around different work assignments and explicitly delimits what is appropriate "faculty" behavior (Bland, Carter, Findstad, Risbey, & Staples, 2006).

SIT would argue that these behaviors and the emphasis on publishing and grant getting signal very clearly that those who consider themselves, or aspire to be, "productive faculty" members will thus focus their efforts in these areas. It is little wonder, then, that some faculty may reveal that they hold beliefs that other activities—including academic leadership—are



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simply not part of what "productive faculty" do or express interest in pursuing. This study will ideally tease out these ideas and explore them in relationship to other influences on faculty beliefs about campus academic leadership.

**Faculty Activities with Value**. The high social status of "highly productive" scholars (code for those who are unusually successful at getting grants and publishing; Tierney, 1999) means they are not only the model prototype, but those who are the most heavily rewarded (Fairweather, 1999; Teodorescu, 2000).

A prototype that emphasizes grant and publishing productivity may shape behaviors in others There is evidence that particularly successful faculty members influence others, especially newcomers, who will "produce more there than they did before they arrived [in that department] and more than they will later if they move to a less productive environment" such as another department or to another campus (Pellino, Boberg, Blackburn, & O'Connell, 1984, p. 26). These findings illustrate how group affiliation can prompt behaviors in identifiable ways. Such norming behavior may be a result of competition (Anderson, Ronning, DeVriews, & Martinson, 2007), but it also could be explained by SIT as a socially-motivated explanation: that new members of such a group will be motivated to align themselves with the norms and expectations of their social group, and become active producers themselves to reflect the "highly productive" expectations of the group.

Early- and mid-career faculty—the very faculty who may be best positioned to serve as faculty leaders in the future, should they be willing to take on the role—may be being conditioned to prioritize research over other activities (O'Connor, Green, Good, & Zhang, 2011). Diamond (1993) wrote that a focus on grant seeking, however, may be detrimental to broader faculty endeavors, since "the focus on research and publication and the mad dash for federal



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funds and external grants has diverted energies away from important faculty work…and service, teaching, and creativity are risky priorities for faculty members seeking tenure at many institutions" (Diamond, 1993, p. 7). The environment in which they are competing is even more complex, and in 2017, the percentage of funding from federal funding agencies hit a historic low (Mervis, 2017). This means that any institutional pressures to secure extramural funding for scholarship becomes harder and harder (Gallup & Svare, 2016), requiring individuals to spend more time on seeking and securing funding, and less time on other areas of the faculty experience, including service or leadership. Increasingly, some institutions are also using outside funding as a metric for faculty productivity (Sheridan et al., 2017), in addition to scholarly output. Still, expectations to earn tenure or be promoted are rising (Jackson, 2017; Rizen, 2012). Given these increased pressures to succeed in this facet of the faculty experience, some faculty members may be reluctant to consider activities—such as leadership development or leadership positions—that do not align with the activities held up as prototypical behaviors needed to be a "successful" academic within one's environment. And doing so may carry other perceived risks.

As noted prior, these prototypes often see concrete rewards that less "productive" scholars do not, and rewards of this kind are powerful in shaping behavior (Fairweather, 1996). In an environment with stagnant or declining salary growth that has recently not even held pace with inflation, (Flaherty, 2017) attention to what behaviors are rewarded, and replicated, makes rational and motivational sense (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007) for many individuals. Put differently, individuals who are concerned with status and compensation will logically look to see who in their sphere is working in ways that enhance their financial compensation and emulate their behaviors: if faculty members with high research productivity and a high risk of being "poached" by another institution are routinely rewarded with salary increases (while less



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productive scholars' incomes are stagnant), (Benderly, 2015; University of Arkansas, 2014), then a peer may be motivated to focus more on research to remain competitive and valued. This is another example of the ways in which policies—this one around compensation—represent an Institutional factor that shapes faculty behavior in ways that have an impact on the views and enactment of leadership on campus. In contrast, an institution that highly valued and rewarded leadership would expect to see others pursue leadership because it was shown by the institution to be valued.

There are many ways that an institutional context shapes faculty perception on what is important work to be done. There are formal policies, as well as informal policies communicated between faculty members. There are rewards given to certain group members, and withheld from others. And all of them create a context that signals to individuals what activities—including leadership—are worth their time and effort.

**Demographic Factors**

It is important to consider the faculty and disciplinary norms that create the cultural and disciplinary factors in the conceptual model for this study. And it is important to consider the Institutional factors that also impact how faculty perceive their professional roles. The final category of factors to explore is "demographic" factors, which include the unique personal characteristics that shape faculty perception on leadership. This cluster of factors is important because part of my aim for this study is that institutions should be concerned that the right "kind" of people—namely a diverse population of people—be available for and consider leadership. It is also important because of the robust literature that conveys important information about academic leadership for different groups of people.



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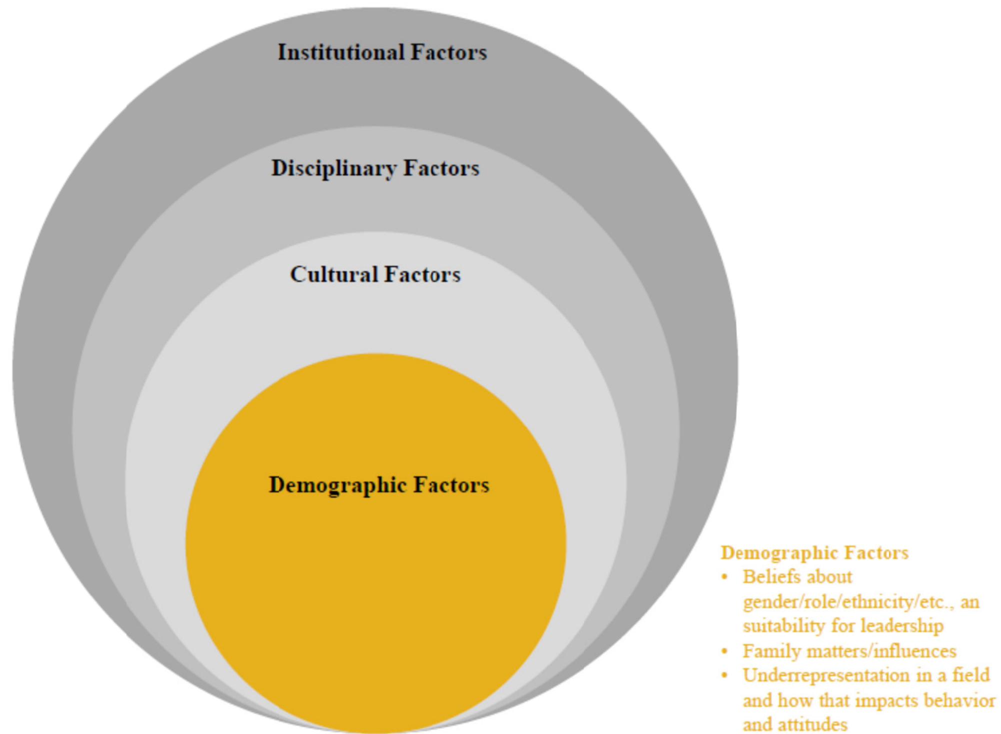
**Figure 2.5 Demographic Factors**




SIT offers some insights on why it might be difficult to attract diverse candidates to leadership positions. Minority members (be that a gender, ethnic, racial, etc. minority) of a group tend to make group membership even more salient (Brewer, 1999) to buttress self-esteem and make central one's group identity. In other words, those who are least like other group members in terms of demographic factors are most likely to adopt the strictest interpretation of the ideal, prototypical identity. For the present study, this permits me to see if the people in my sample who were underrepresented in their department prioritized their disciplinary identity (Settles et al., 2004) in ways scholarship suggested they might, or if there were other factors that proved more influential in their thinking.



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**Gender**. The role of gender in academic leadership has been widely studied (see, for example, Howe & Walsh-Turnbull, 2016; Wheat & Hill, 2016), especially among scholars interested in the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership. "Department chairs and academic deans can be key agents of change in efforts to diversify the academy…however, women are even less well represented among academic deans and department chairs than among full professors (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009, p. 25). This idea suggests a negative cycle of perception: that a lack of women in leadership may be contributing to the ongoing lack of women in leadership (Redmond et al., 2017). For the present study, which is not specifically focused on women in leadership, gender is specifically important because the study *is* concerned about too few leaders. Thus the impact of the leaders in the professional spheres of participants become important models of academic leadership, and it then becomes possible to see the degree to which the availability of local leaders (primarily department chairs) influence faculty perception.

The lack of leadership models for women in academia may also create gender schemas which skew perceptions about who can be effective as a leader, and create conditions where men are overrated and women underrated (Valian, 1998). A lack of women in leadership may also make it difficult, psychologically, for individuals to resist these gendered schema because they have few personal examples from which to draw (Vongalis-Macrow, 2016). Confounding an underrepresentation of women in leadership is a phenomenon by which the fewer women in a group, the more their gender identity becomes an inescapable part of their group identity, called tokenism (Kanter, 1974). To others, a person's gender (or other unique demographic attribute) becomes an undeniable and inescapable facet of identity by virtue of its novelty. Men are marginalized within a group if they are members of a minority racial or ethnic identity as well, but the negative impact is less for them than for women of any race (Cohen, Swim, 1995).



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Basow (1986) found that the group marginalization, which often results from tokenism (Kanter, 1974), is also more detrimental to women than to men in maintaining group membership and status within a group; that women struggle to maintain core group identities in ways that men do not, and that women risk more in exhibiting any behaviors others may find to be beyond group norms.

A gendered schema of leadership norms suggests that male, transactional, and hierarchical models of leadership are the current standard (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009), or in the language of SIT, the prototypical leader. The prevalence of this idea in academic leadership explains why some women may not "see themselves" as leaders, and consider themselves ill-suited for leadership. Leader categorization theory (Nye & Forstyth, 1991) argues "people have preconceptions about how leaders should behave in general and in specific leadership situations" (p. 198). These preconceptions disproportionately, and negatively, impact women because they bias against specific behaviors, such as women acting "like women" *or* women acting with the traditional masculine behaviors that social groups have honored as prototypical leadership behaviors (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Dominici, Fried, & Zeger (2009) also argued that women appear less respected as leaders by their colleagues or by others in their university and are particularly vulnerable when identified for difficult leadership positions, termed by psychologists as the "glass cliff phenomenon," (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). For women who are a gender minority in their field, in particular, this phenomenon can be especially challenging because it puts an additional burden on them to be successful: if she fails, her failure will be blamed on "women leaders," and used by some as evidence of women's inability to lead. Even when successful as leaders and within their academic circles, women are often unfairly evaluated by their peers (Rosser, 2003), since as



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Eagly & Karau (2002) reported, “even when women possess the agentic qualities typically associated with leadership, such as dominance, men are more likely than women to emerge as the acknowledged leader of the group” (Ritter & Yoder, 2004, p. 187). Fincher (1996) found that because of the complexities of outcomes inherent in the enterprise of higher education, effectiveness is largely a function of perception, which makes women’s leadership even fraught: a lack of measurable outcomes means that success and failure is a result of idiosyncratic preferences, not measurable impacts. Faculty members, women in particular, often absorb these biases which well could influence how an individual perceives one’s abilities as a leader (Knipfer et al., 2017).

**Family matters**. Another gendered influence that may impact perceptions and intentions around leadership: the role of family responsibilities. The challenge of academic motherhood (Ahmad, 2017; Sipes & Lynn, 2010; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012) is a well-studied phenomenon, and the impact of child-rearing has been studied for its impact on the career trajectories of academic women (Mason et al., 2013; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Pillay, 2009). As Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) reported, “although men are shouldering an increasing share of responsibility for family life, women still tend to be primary caregivers for young children and aging parents” (p. 237). The impact of this situation makes it very difficult to be both an “ideal” parent and the “ideal” (or prototypical) faculty member (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004).

Other explanatory influences which some scholars (Bilen-Green, Froehlich, & Jacobson, 2008) describe as influential deterrents for women to consider leadership include the second shift (Hochschild & Machung, 1989), or the phenomenon whereby professional women need to do a “second shift” of domestic tasks in addition to their professional obligations, thus potentially stalling professional ambition or growth (Shiebinger & Gilmartin, 2010). Women are also at risk



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of a stalled academic timeline, taking longer to rise through the tenure ranks (Armenti, 2004; Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Perna, 2005), a fact attributed to both gender and family reasons but with clear implications on their availability for leadership positions.

The research on women in academia is increasingly robust and comprehensive; scholars (see, for example, Knipfer et al., 2017) are committed to identifying the factors that may be contributing to the underrepresentation of women in a variety of academic spaces, including academic leadership positions. That is an important step to addressing the problem. What is interesting and relevant to the present study is that such studies inform what women may be absorbing about the various challenges to leadership: that they are not suited for it, that they will not be supported if they pursue it, that family obligations make leadership too difficult, etc. For this study, though, including gender as one factor, but by no means the only factor, it is possible to see the relative value people place on their gender in perceiving leadership. Women faculty are many things, but it is not yet clear which social identity—womanhood, say, or a disciplinary identity—is the most powerful in shaping their beliefs and goals, or the ways in which gender identity relates to leadership in ways alike or unlike their male colleagues. That is why I'm employing a multi-faceted conceptual framework that assume demographic factors to be one influence on faculty perception, but by no means the only influence.

**Underrepresented Minority Groups**. Women are not the only group who have a particular personal characteristic that may emerge as central in absorbing ideas about leadership. Individuals who are members of racial and cultural groups that are underrepresented in academic spheres (Layton et al., 2016) or in academic leadership also absorb ideas about their suitability as leaders (Vasquez-Guinard, 2010). As I mentioned, however, there are certain identity phenomena (i.e., tokenism; Kanter, 1977) which apply more potently to women than to male



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faculty regardless of race or cultures. For example, Nye and Forsyth (1991) found that some faculty hold negative views about women's ability to lead effectively, but no such findings extended to men of color.

Still, faculty of color are decidedly underrepresented (Gin, 2013; Mayo & Chhuon, 2014; Layton et al., 2016; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008) within higher education and the lack of leaders of color is a problem for many of the same reasons that a lack of visible female leadership negatively impacts women (Gallagher & Trower, 2009). Faculty of color are often overburdened by service expectations and mentoring obligations (Baez, 2000), which can have harmful professional impacts, especially if such activities take time away from better rewarded activities around research. In addition to these extra service burdens taking up time and energy and encouraging faculty to engage in undervalued service responsibilities (O'Meara, 2002), it also potentially communicates to such faculty that their value is that of a "person of color" and makes salient their racial or cultural identity. When a Latino Physicist (say) is invited to serve on a committee to offer his perspective as a faculty of color, that subtly makes his "Latino" identity more central than his "Physicist" identity (for more on tokenism of this kind, see Aguirre, 2000; Niemann, 2016). Thus, it potentially reaffirms the salience and centrality of one's cultural identity and may supercede that of one's professional, disciplinary identity. I would anticipate that for some faculty, their demographic identity factors will emerge as powerful factors shaping their perception.

**Conclusion**

Finkelstein (1984) argued that faculty behavior in general could be best understood as a function of both social experiences and psychological characteristics. I agree, and designed the conceptual framework I use for this study because it inherently values a variety of factors that shape the faculty experience. Using concepts from Social Identity Theory to both unify and



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explain how the various factors come together to affirm different facets of faculty identities, this conceptual framework provides a way to understand and appreciate that faculty views are shaped by multiple influences—how they perceive what it means to be a faculty member and how much value they place on that identity. How closely they hold their specific disciplinary identity, and how much they are willing to challenge expected norms for how "a chemist" should go about her work. How much the policies, bureaucratic structures, and reward systems of their institution inform them about what work is valued, and what is not. And how "who they are as a person" tells them what they should think about their suitability for leadership and the role it might play in one's life.

In the coming chapters I explain specifically how I designed the study to accomplish this goal. In Chapter 3, I review my research methodology. In chapter 4, I share my research findings, with a particular eye to highlighting which quadrant of factors (which "puzzle piece") is identified by faculty participants as the most powerful in shaping their views. And in chapter 5, I make recommendations for how this study could be used, extended, or continued to positively impact the availability of faculty members to step forward as campus leaders as well as influence practice in cultivating leaders for postsecondary education.



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# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to explore faculty perception of academic leadership within the context of Roger State University (RSU). This institution was selected for two reasons: 1) it represents a fairly typical doctoral granting, research institution, and 2) RSU conducted a 6-year, institution-wide effort to positively influence various facets of the faculty career, including programming around faculty leadership. For these reasons, RSU represents an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) a methodological approach that calls for deep analysis of the context under study with the expectation that findings can be useful to inform other, similar contexts. In the rest of this chapter, I (a) provide an overview of the case study research design (b), describe RSU and share relevant details about it as a case worthy of study; and (c) describe my data collection and analysis procedures.

For the present study, I employed a case study methodology (Stake, 1995) and relied on qualitative data collection methods. I conducted semi-structured interviews (Glesne, 2011) with 12 faculty participants and reviewed data about and documents from RSU to explore how campus context and faculty experiences on this campus may have shaped individual perception of academic leadership. As I reviewed in chapter 2, there is an abundance of scholarly work that provides theory as to how, where, and under what conditions faculty members do their work and how these conditions create different experiences for faculty members (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2017). These previously published pieces provide a framework to understand the institutional, cultural, disciplinary, and demographic factors that create the environments of faculty work.

This study adds to existing scholarship by focusing on how individuals at RSU perceive academic leadership and consider academic leadership in their own careers, within the specific



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context of who they are and where they work. This study, then, puts individual perception (Tesch, 1984), at the center of analysis. I am primarily interested in seeing how extant literature merges with individual perceptions of leadership to create valuable "meaning-making" (Mezirow, 1991) among the faculty members who participated in this study, and how these individual perceptions might yield themes that help campus and scholarly leaders better understand and nurture academic leadership at different institutions.

**Qualitative Methodology**

As I am interested in particular in how individual faculty members consider facets of their professional work in forming their perception of leadership, it is especially important to honor the voices and language participants themselves use in describing their beliefs. Such a perspective assumes that "reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality" (Merriam, 2007, p. 22), and individuals interpret their experiences in ways that reflect their own lived experiences (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992; Stake, 1995). A constructivist epistemological approach emphasizes participant-generated meanings and places at the center of the conversation *individual understanding* of the unique environments in which they engage (Merriam, 1998; emphasis added). A constructivist approach also emphasizes the ways that participants describe their experiences and views. Qualitative methods are the most appropriate approach because of their utility in studying phenomena in "their natural settings….and attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p., 3).

**Case Study**. This study is rooted in a case study methodology (Stake, 1995). Case study is suitable to this inquiry because it is "the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigators have little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context" (Yin, 2003, p. 1). I am interested in



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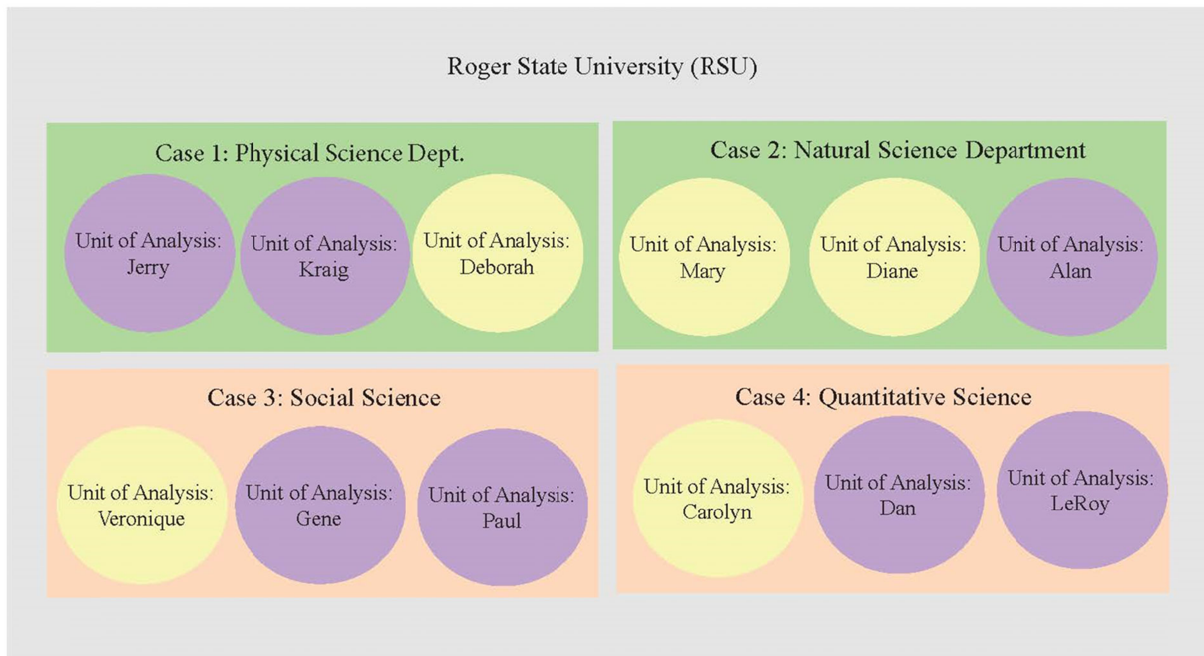
analyzing how a particular group of faculty participants articulate their perceptions, within the "real life" context (in this case, their RSU campus) that is an important aspect of a case study.

Stake (1995) delineates different kinds of case study, each of which emphasizes a different approach to analysis. This project would be considered a "collective case study" because I am studying several units (in this case, departments with faculty members in them) that together comprise a collection of cases (see Figure 3.1, below). Individual faculty perceptions become the unit of analysis that inform each case. A collective case study is comprised of these individual "instrumental" cases, which Stake (1995) wrote, helps to generate insights into a particular phenomenon, with the expectation that such insights could prove useful to other contexts. Such is the goal here. It is a research design not simply to understand RSU more deeply; rather, it is to see how what can be learned at RSU about faculty perception of leadership may prove useful to other institutions of higher education.

**Figure 3.1 Case Context**



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## Site of the Study

This study was situated at Roger State University (RSU), a large, public research university in the land-grant tradition (APLU, n.d.) located in a Midwestern state in the "middle" of the United States. Like other land-grant colleges and universities located throughout the U.S., there is a large agricultural college and institution-wide emphasis on applied science. The RSU structure is somewhat typical of large public universities: Individual departments, roughly constructed around academic disciplines, collectively comprise a college. There are several degree-granting colleges, including medical, veterinary, and law colleges, all of which serve graduate students. Three of the almost twenty colleges are interdisciplinary residential colleges which educate solely undergraduate students. The remaining colleges educate both undergraduate and graduate students and offer doctoral-level training in many fields.

RSU is a member of the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU), and the American Association of Universities (AAU), which implies a reputation as a respected scholarly leader and research-intensive university that conducts research across the country and throughout the globe. RSU annually secures more than $500M in external funding, primarily from federal sources such as the Department of Energy, National Science Foundation, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, and Department of Justice. It dedicates at least $75M to international research and development projects.

In late 2016 and early 2017, the point at which I conducted the interviews for this study, RSU enrolled almost 40,000 undergraduates and 11,000 graduate and professional students (RSU website, n.d.). RSU employs approximately 5,500 faculty and academic staff. It, like many large U.S. universities, attracts students from around the world, though the majority of undergraduate students attending RSU are drawn from with the state in which it RSU located.



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**Institution Type**. As an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) the relative "typical-ness" of RSU as a public, land-grant institution makes it a useful context to study. And the large size of the faculty suggests that there are a variety of experiences among faculty members that make this study of academic leadership interesting to explore. Research suggests that on smaller campuses or different institutional types, individuals easily, and often by necessity, transverse multiple-cultures (Austin, 1997) to serve in multiple roles (Austin & Brocato, 1997). However, in larger institutions like RSU, faculty may focus more narrowly in certain areas where they are particularly strong, be it research, teaching, or leadership.

RSU also has a high percentage of non-tenure track faculty members, many of whom are classified with a title that signifies their status as a person with faculty-like responsibilities, but who is not on the tenure track. For some of the faculty in this job classification, RSU offers a professional designation called "continuing appointment," which is loosely akin to tenure for tenure-stream faculty. "Continuing appointment" status allows such faculty job security and a degree of academic freedom, in such a person "will not be dismissed due to capricious action by the University nor will dismissal be used as a restraint of academic freedom or other civil rights" (Handbook, n.d., section 1.2) .

There are other differences between non-tenure track (NTT) and tenure-stream faculty at RSU however, that illustrate differences in faculty work between the two groups. For example, the former must seek permission to pursue external funding as a principal investigator, even if they occupy a research-focused appointment. There is also wide variability about inclusion of these faculty members in other areas of faculty work. For example, some departments welcome their non-tenure-track faculty members to attend department meetings, vote on department



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matters, serve on committees, and participate in other opportunities for service and leadership work. Others do not. Distinctions of this sort are often made at the department level.

RSU appointment types can vary as well. NTT faculty are generally hired with specific parameters around their work—to manage academic programs, to teach in specific areas, to conduct research—while tenure system faculty members are more likely to teach, conduct research, *and* serve the institution in some way. But at RSU (and many other institutions like it), faculty members can negotiate these expectations in different ways that play to their individual strengths. For example, faculty who are highly successful in research can "buy out" their teaching obligations with grant monies, thus reifying their primary value to the institution as a researcher. Similarly, faculty members serving as a department chair (or associate chair, or assistant chair, or graduate director) at RSU commonly take advantage of a course release, because the leadership demands of such positions are such that the institution realizes individuals need a break from some other facet of their work (in this case, teaching).

Neither of these practices is particularly novel for RSU or other larger research institutions, but show how different facets of faculty work influence how an individual negotiates their workload while also signaling "what successful faculty do" to their faculty peers. These different experiences likely influence how faculty perceive their value to the institution as well as how they perceive teaching, research—and leadership.

**NSF ADVANCE project**

A few years prior to this study, in 2014, RSU emerged from a campus-wide effort targeted at increasing diversity in faculty ranks among social science and STEM faculty. This effort had a component that was specifically focused on academic leadership. From 2008 until 2014, RSU operated the ADAPP (Advancing Diversity through the Alignment of Policies and Practices) grant, a project funded through the National Science Foundation's (NSF) ADVANCE



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program (ADAPP website, n.d.). The effort was aimed at improving the diversity and retention of underrepresented faculty in STEM and STEM-related fields, and particularly targeted three colleges at RSU: the colleges of Natural Science, Engineering, and Social Science. Those three colleges have the highest concentration of faculty members working in STEM or STEM-related Social and Behavioral Science fields.

Though the ADAPP programming and evaluation efforts largely focused on those three colleges, at its core, the ADAPP project was a policy grant, an institution-wide

> effort to align our values of diversity and quality with academic human resource policies and practices at the department- (or unit-) level. We recognize that departments are critical sites in which recruiting, evaluation, and promotion decisions are initiated--and where climate is most directly experienced by RSU faculty members. (ADAPP website, n.d.)

The grant design drew upon principles of strategic human resources (Fornbrun, Tichy, & Devanna, 1984). Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) emphasizes clear processes and structures as essential elements for organizations to have and communicate in order for people to thrive and carry out the "mission and strategy" (Tichy, Fornbrun, & Devanna, 1984) an organization needs to exist and thrive.

According to the ADAPP grant proposal, RSU sought this approach of

> integrating goals, policies and practices so that critical behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes that promote diversity are consistently reinforced and rewarded. Research supports the effectiveness of the SHRM approach, and it is widely viewed as a 'best practice' for promoting desired behavior and attitudes, increasing accountability, and reducing bias in faculty employment decisions. (Wilcox & McGroarty, 2007)



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The ADAPP grant emphasized transparency (where policies were clearly articulated and shared widely among those to whom the policies apply) and alignment (where policies were applied equitably across similar units) of human resource policies that have particular sway over hiring and professional advancement for faculty. The idea was that greater alignment of employment policies and practices with an organization's strategic goals and values will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency in achieving those goals and values.

A SHRM approach emphasizes the need for attention to be paid to important organizational goals (vertical alignment of policies and goals), and for horizontal alignment to create synergies by reinforcing each other rather than disrupting each other. For a campus, that meant creating consistent policies across departments throughout the institution (horizontal alignment) as well as vertical alignment with institutional goals. The opposite of the SHRM would be a system where policies "disrupt" institutional goals, or where different policies "apply" to different units (or individuals), which can cause confusion and bias. RSU, notably, featured a strategic plan which explicitly values "diversity and inclusion" (RSU, n.d.), so greater vertical alignment was appropriate, and because the grant sought better gender and racial equity among faculty in STEM and STEM-related fields, it was essential make sure that ALL faculty had access to the same information and resources they needed to navigate hiring, promotion and tenure, and thrive in their positions at RSU.

Via an emphasis on policies and practices, the ADAPP grant sought to streamline the structures in which faculty members work, particularly around issues like hiring, promotion and tenure, and annual review: the very policies that powerfully shape how faculty members advance and grow in their careers. For example, the project sought to make more transparent university efforts to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce with the belief that increased diversity



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would be a result of making explicit and transparent the processes and expectations around these human resource functions. The guidelines explain

> that traditional faculty searches often fail to adequately focus decision makers on position-relevant criteria, involve low levels of reliability (e.g., candidates treated differently in the process, interviewers assessing the same candidates very differently), and are susceptible to the influence of various biases (e.g., similarity bias, stereotypes). (, Roehling & Granberry Russell, 2013, p. 5)

The new guidelines argued that “adopting a scientific or structured approach is the key to conducting successful faculty searches” ( Roeling & Granberry Russell, 2013, p. 5).

The ADAPP efforts took a similar structural approach in clarifying guidelines around RPT (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure) and Annual Review (AR), to make sure that each college had unbiased and consistent processes by which to evaluate every individual faculty member for reappointment, promotion or tenure.

**ADAPP and leadership**. The ADAPP grant leaders recognized that they would need strong leadership to achieve and sustain its goals: to align policies and practices and ultimately support faculty success and advancement, and they also sought to achieve greater diversity in campus leadership. The grant thus explicitly built a program to provide leadership development to women, in particular, but also to underrepresented minority faculty in an effort to build support for grant efforts, but also to train future campus leaders. The view, in part, was that by demystifying the processes by which one becomes a leader, and destigmatizing leadership ambition for women, RSU could shape policies and procedures to support leadership development as part of its efforts to use policies to improve other areas of faculty development.



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The grant offered workshops and other outreach efforts to identify and nurture leadership potential. It brought to campus well-regarded speakers on academic leadership, networking events for women faculty to learn with and from each other, panel discussions of women leaders in various roles to talk about their leadership experiences, and other events and programming to expose more faculty members to the opportunities and realities of academic leadership, as well as prepare them for it. As part of its new policy on mentoring, ADAPP encouraged mentors and mentees to discuss leadership ambition (Luz, 2011) as part of faculty career development.

Collectively, the policy changes sought by ADAPP, and the programming organized and offered by the grant project, illustrate a 6-year effort on the part of RSU to create an environment in which a diverse faculty can be recruited, retained, and thrive in a variety of professional spheres—including in academic leadership roles.

**Leader diversity at RSU**. On the face of it, RSU was well positioned to lead conversations about diversifying its academic leadership: at the time of the grant project, the university president was a woman, and several deans were women, including the Dean of Social Science—one of the three colleges targeted by the ADAPP project for programming. In the early stages of the 6-year grant project, there was a change of leadership such that a woman became provost, making RSU a campus where both a woman president and provost were the university's top two leaders. Those women were still in those positions during the fall of 2016 and early 2017, when I conducted my data collection interviews for this research project.

Even though RSU had women in important and visible leadership roles, such positions were not enough to fully rectify a lack of gender (and racial and ethnic diversity) among leaders in higher education, and more specifically, at RSU. The ADAPP grant analysis indicated that RSU lagged



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> other institutions in women and persons of color occupying leadership positions; further, the percentages of women in leadership positions, in both STEM and SBS (Social and Behavioral Science) departments/units, did not change measurably during the 5-year ADAPP initiative. In addition to the low representation of STEM women in titled leadership positions, women faculty in the Colleges of Engineering and Social Science reported being less confident in their ability to influence the groups they lead and less skillful at being effective leaders than did men faculty in 2013. (Woodruff, Li, & Morio, 2014, p. 2)

The reasons for this vary. Some answers can be found in evaluation data from the ADAPP project, in particular a campus-wide survey that inquired about various facets of the faculty experience, with a particular focus on gender (as this was grant focused particularly on increasing gender diversity, at least in large part). It found

> no significant differences between female and male faculty responses to [the possibility of] serving as Assistant or Associate Chair or Director, as Department Chair or Director, as Director of Center, Institute or Program, and as Assistant or Associate Dean. Significantly more female faculty reported they were asked to serve as Dean than were male faculty. (Woodruff, Morio, & YI, 2009, p.20)

The survey also revealed other details relevant to the RSU context. In the College of Engineering, male faculty reported an unwillingness to pursue leadership because they prioritized time to "perform research/scholarship/creative works (11%) and [believed that leadership] will not enhance career (9%). For female faculty members, the top reason was [they were] not interested in administrative positions (13%)" (Woodruff, Morio, & Yi, 2009, p. 21). In RSU more broadly, "female faculty, compared to male faculty, reported significantly more



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concerns about not receiving enough support when serving in leadership roles both within the unit and in the broader RSU community" (Woodruff, Morio, & Yi, 2009, p. 22).

The evaluation reports for the ADAPP project provide important details about leadership at RSU. But there is still more to be known: As the evaluators noted, due to the "small sample size the statistical interpretation of the data should be noted with caution" (p. 21). Further, what the project revealed about leadership at RSU was within the context of a campus-wide survey that offered only predetermined items with which a respondent could agree or disagree. Since both the grant efforts and the campus climate study looked at more than just leadership, the evaluation provides valuable insights on the context for this study, but does not discount the need for additional research. This study seeks to extend the knowledge of faculty perception of leadership at RSU.

**Case Boundaries**

The entire RSU campus was affected by ADAPP project, though most of the resources were targeted at three colleges—Natural Science, Social Science, and Engineering—with the highest number of faculty doing work in STEM and STEM-related fields in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. This guided my approach to narrowing the population I would study in this case, to focus on these areas where, it would seem, conversations about faculty leadership were ostensibly already happening.

There were other practical considerations for why I found it useful to study STEM and STEM-related social science fields. First is that the literature I reviewed in chapter 2 indicates that many faculty are pressured toward publishing, but also to grant getting, and that these realities shape how they approach all facets of, and opportunities in, their careers. Grants are less common in the humanities or fine arts areas than they are in social science and STEM fields (Ali et al., 2010), and so it follows that faculty members in fine arts may feel less, or at least



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differently, pressured to secure extramural funding for their research. Since I was interested to see how institutional factors, including pressure to get grants, emerge (or not) as a factor that shapes perception of academic leadership, it was helpful to delimit the study to disciplines with some degree of environmental similarity, such as those for which extramural funding may be an expectation of prototypical faculty members.

**Department Selection**

I selected a total of four departments, two traditional STEM departments, and two Social Science departments with faculty members doing work in STEM-related social sciences. I deliberately sought departments large enough that I could identify 3 individuals who were at mid-career, who had been tenured and were moving along their academic lifespan toward full-professor, which meant identifying people who were approximately 5-7 years post-tenure.

It was essential to find clusters of faculty in a small number of departments (so, three individuals in each of four departments) because part of the analysis explored the role and impact (if any) of department chairs as an example of faculty leadership. The department chair is an example, or symbol, of campus-based academic leadership. I decided that identifying a cluster of faculty from the same department may provide some useful insights about how a single department chair can exemplify campus leadership to a particular pool of faculty and influence their perception of leadership, which is helpful in delimiting the case study context. It was useful to have a shared context for small groups of faculty participants, which permitted a chance to explore, on a small scale, common departmental contexts within RSU.

I also sought out departments which had at least one man, and at least one woman, who were 1) in the relevant STEM or STEM-related disciplines, and 2) were mid-career on the tenure track in those target departments. I was determined to have at least one man and one woman (the third would depend on who responded to my solicitation) in the sample for each department.



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This was for a couple of reasons: 1) the ADAPP grant which figures into this case analysis was particularly targeted at women and faculty of color, and 2) given my curiosity about the degree to which aspects of one's identity (racial, cultural, and/or gender identity) affected their perception of leadership, it was useful to find as many people with different personal experiences as possible.

In the end, I was limited to a small number of departments that fit these criteria: Many departments simply had too few faculty at the mid-career point, or only one man or woman (which meant that if they declined, the department would be discounted). And because I sought three individuals from each department, I needed to get three different people to independently agree to participate.

**Participant Selection**. I methodically went through each potentially relevant department at RSU, and looked at their respective websites to find faculty listings. Most of these departmental web pages provided names, appointment types (including faculty rank), and contact information. These web resources provided sufficient information to discern if a department was large enough to have a pool of mid-career faculty whom I could approach. After methodically reviewing the departmental web pages at RSU for any disciplines or fields that are STEM or STEM-related, I narrowed it down to several that were large enough to have a sufficient number of mid-career faculty whom I could approach to participate in this study.

For each potential department, I identified each person noted to be an "Associate Professor." I then located each person's curriculum vita to confirm that, 1) they were (or had been, as it were) on the tenure track, and 2) that they were approximately five- to seven- years post-tenure. Though there are some non-tenure track faculty members who use the title of associate professor, I was generally able to confirm via the official RSU directory if someone



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was a tenure-track associate professor, or some other appointment type that also granted an associate professor title. By triangulating data sources—the title on the departmental web site, individual curriculum vitae, and the university directory—I identified potential interview participants.

It was important for this study to engage mid-career faculty members for a couple of reasons. First, for those who are post-tenure but not yet promoted to full professor, this "often misunderstood" time in the faculty career (Baldwin & Chang, 2006) is useful for this study for several reasons. Mid-career faculty are the largest group in number of faculty (Baldwin, Lunceford, & Vanderlinden, 2005), which makes them a large pool of potential academic leaders. This time in a career is also often a period of flux, arousing changes and challenges that are unique to the "middle years" of one's career (Baldwin, Lunceford, & Vanderlinden, 2005). This instability suggests that some faculty members within this stage may grapple with decisions about the trajectory of their careers, a trajectory which may include exploring leadership opportunities.

Mid-career faculty are often presented with additional service and leadership opportunities (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Lucas, 2000) from which many are "protected" during their pre-tenure years (Fox & Colatrella, 2006; Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008). Baldwin, Lunceford, & Vanderlinden (2005) found that "the percentage of time devoted to administrative duties is larger for early midlife (15.2%) and late midlife (18.3%) faculty than for early-life faculty (11.2%)" (p. 104), which illustrates that mid-career faculty are, in fact, spending a greater percentage of their time on institutional matters than their junior colleagues. How well these early post-tenure experiences translate to one's thinking about future leadership is less studied, but findings from my study hint at some answers.



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A second reason for the focus on mid-career faculty is that the middle career years are often a "depressing" (Wilson, 2012) time when individuals rethink, recalibrate, or otherwise make decisions about the next steps they want to take to shape their professional lives. This may be especially true for newly-tenured faculty members, many of whom kept their heads down, focusing on teaching and research in their pre-tenure years, only to think, "now what?" after earning tenure from their institution (Mills, 2000; Wilson, 2012). For some, that "now what" may mean paying greater attention to faculty activities beyond research and teaching, and some may begin to test out leadership or consider such paths for their own careers. Thus this study contributes to literature on this point of mid-career as well as data about how we might confront one of the ongoing challenges which catalyzed this study: how to address the shortage of qualified and interested academic leaders in the coming years (Appadurai, 1999; Campbell, 2002; Ekman, 2010; McDade et al, 2017; O'Meara, 2013).

In short, unlike early-career, untenured, faculty members, whose institutional trajectory is less certain (Hart, 2016; Lewis & Altbach, 2007), mid-career faculty members have earned tenure, affording them a level of commitment from the university of their continued employment (Williams & Ceci, 2007), which may provide some safeguards and flexibility to explore new skillsets or opportunities. Post-tenure, these same individuals also find themselves confronting more service and administrative responsibilities (Brewer et al, 2017; Hart, 2016; Lucas, 2000), which often are useful exercises in thinking about institutional matters. This study speaks to how, and when, these expanded experiences influence perceptions of academic leadership and, ultimately, how people figure academic leadership within their own future career plans.

After I compiled lists of relevant departments, and lists of eligible faculty members, I contacted individuals on my list (see Appendix B for a copy of the email text I personalized and



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sent out) via email, at their official university email address. I contacted all eligible associate professors from a unit on the same day, which means I sent out clusters of emails at a time. It is worth noting that I sent individual emails, each addressed to "Professor Lastname" rather than a group email not only to personalize the request, but also minimize the risk of anyone accidentally "replying to all" and inadvertently announcing to his or her colleagues an intent to participate in this study. I deliberately contacted all faculty members from a single unit at the same time because it was important that I got three "yeses" from a unit before I would fully commit that department being one of the four I studied. Emailing all potential participants from a single department on the same day proved a useful strategy: I found that if and when an individual was going to respond, either with a lukewarm (or the rare enthusiastic) yes or a definite "no," they did so within 48 hours. Within a few days of sending emails to any one department, I could see if there would be sufficient response to include them as one of my four final departments. If I got two "yeses" and sought a third, I sent a follow up email within a few days, which sometimes yielded the additional "yes" I needed.

I ended up with the following distribution (Table 3.2, below). I am choosing not to disclose the exact name of each department because it would then be possible to identify individuals based solely on the information provided (at least one department had only one woman who was at mid-career).



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**Table 3.2 Distribution of Faculty Participants by Gender and Departmental Affiliation**

| Department | | Number of Men Participants and Names | Number of Women Participants and Names |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Science (PS) | STEM Department | 2 (Jerry, Kraig) | 1 (Deborah) |
| Natural Science (NS) | STEM Department | 1 (Alan) | 2 (Mary, Diane) |
| Quantitative Science (HS) | STEM-Related Social Science Department | 2 (Gene, Paul) | 1 (Veronique) |
| Social Science (SS) | STEM-Related Social Science Department | 2 (Dan, LeRoy) | 1 (Carolyn) |

In qualitative interviewing it is often helpful to employ a snowball sampling strategy to identify participants for a study, such as asking an individual to recommend people in their network to participate, or asking them to refer friends or colleagues to you. I largely avoided relying on such referrals to maximize privacy and knew that if I found individuals who had been recommended by colleagues, they would be able to identify each other. The risks were admittedly minimal, but it was something of which I was aware, and I was able to find individuals who were intrigued enough by my invitation to agree to be participants.

**Data Collection**

In this section, I describe the process I used to gather data: how I conducted the interviews, what I did after the interviews, and how I analyzed the data. As is required by my degree granting institution and RSU, I submitted an application to the institutional review board, which included an overview of the research project, a copy of the consent document (see Appendix D), the interview protocol (see Appendix C), interview protocol and consent documents to the institutional review board (see Appendix A), and was granted an exempt status to conduct research for this study.



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**Interview protocol**. It was important to me, and to the qualitative/constructivist case approach I used, to give as much space as possible for individual faculty members to speak freely and openly about their experiences. To that end, I employed a semi-structured interview protocol, which permitted me a degree of open-ended questioning "that allow(s) people to respond in their own words and that encourage detailed and in-depth answers" (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011, p. 63). Interviews are a particularly effective method for qualitative research, because it is a data collection strategy that foregrounds "an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29). Given my interest in their perception, these "insights" were the target of my inquiry.

I designed an interview guide to provide a common structure to be used at each interview, so that each interview covers roughly the same topics as the others, but which encouraged open-ended follow up on topics that merited further exploration (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). Such an approach provided a unifying framework to the interviews—they were structured to be more similar than different. I found that this open-ended, but comprehensive, interview guide created a feeling that this interview was, in fact, a conversation that permitted us a chance to explore individual perceptions of academic leadership, and how those experiences were formed by different people, while also making sure that I gathered similar information from each conversation.

In late summer 2016, I piloted the interview protocol twice, each time with a mid-career faculty member in a relevant discipline. Both were faculty members at RSU. The woman was an associate professor with social science disciplinary training working in a humanities unit. The other was a man who also has social science training, and is affiliated with an interdisciplinary



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unit that is outside the target area of my study. Both were mid-career associate professors. The two pilot interviews helped me consolidate the interview protocol, clarify questions, and helped illustrate to me whether the questions were likely to yield the data I sought for the study. Both interviews permitted me to test out different recording technology. After incorporating their feedback and my own observations, I changed the interview protocol to streamline questions, clarify confusing language, and otherwise improve the instrument to be more efficient and clear.

I also designed the interview protocol to require two interviews. The first interview was longer, about an hour or 1.5 hours; the second interview was designed to be shorter, only about 30 minutes. The first interview covered the most important questions and yielded the most significant data; the second was designed to be a chance to clarify any statements that may have been unclear or which merited further discussion. I also wanted the second interview to see if the first, longer, conversation functioned in any way as a sort of intervention that spurred different ways of thinking about academic leadership.

**Conducting interviews**. I conducted the first and second round interviews during Fall 2016 and early winter 2017. Each participant was encouraged to select the meeting of our location, and each person chose to meet in their campus office. This space had the advantage of being private, with the option of a closed door, and quiet, for ease of recording.

After introducing myself, I shared a copy of the consent form and asked each participant to sign and initial it, permitting me to audio record our conversation and later transcribe it. I gave each participant the option of selecting a pseudonym for oneself.

I then began asking questions and recording. I actively took notes during each interview session, and these descriptive and "analytic notes" helped me to capture observations, themes, or non-verbal information that was relevant to the discussion (Glesne, 2011). I also found my note-



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taking to be useful in helping pace (and often slow) the conversation, especially if the interview participant was particularly talkative, talked particularly fast, or if we developed a rapid pace of back and forth. Asking to periodically stop so "my writing hand" could catch up afforded us a chance to catch our breath, take a drink of water, or otherwise pause to slow the pace of our discussion. The notes proved invaluable in helping me review at a glance what was discussed, as well as offer another level of analysis that I could compare with the interview transcriptions. For case study, Stake (1995) emphasizes the use of such notes as an important data source.

After each interview, I thanked participants for their time and asked to schedule a follow-up interview, at least two weeks after the first. In the end, due to scheduling (and rescheduling) challenges, some interviews took place as quickly as one week after the first interview, and some as much as two months or more. I was not overly vexed by this: it was a natural outcome of trying to schedule time with very busy people who were not compelled beyond curiosity and goodwill to meet with me again. I was willing to take whatever time, whenever, I could get it, and worked to be prepared to maximize our time together. I believe that this study benefitted from my ability to be flexible, as it made it more likely that I could get individuals to agree to participate.

The follow up interviews were each approximately 30 minutes, and in between the first and second interview, I was able to review notes, transcribe the interview itself, and also think about the interview within the context of any previous interviews. This method reflects a use of generalized principles of constant case comparison (Glesne, 2011) which allows for developing concepts from the data by coding and analyzing simultaneously (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). This strategy permitted me to review what was said in the first interview and to identify ideas and concepts that were unclear or less-than-fully developed, as well as guide me in the development



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of appropriate follow-up questions. The follow-up interview was designed primarily to allow me to clarify or ask for elaboration on areas that were unclear or confusing.

Another important function of the follow-up interview was to see if our first conversation had functioned, in any way, as a sort of intervention (Rothman & Thomas, 1994), to prompt a participant to think about, observe, or discuss academic leadership differently. Indeed, the majority of respondents indicated that the first interview had "really gotten them thinking," and that they had, in fact, noticed or thought about events and ideas differently after we first met. Three participants mentioned that after I left, each reached out to a colleague to debrief the new ideas he had after our first interview together; one recommended the study to a colleague so that he could participate and share his insights. This kind of change in thinking was not the focus of the research—I was not seeking to measure attitudinal change, with the preliminary interview as a catalyst for change—but it was still a useful exercise to see if individuals were noting a change in their perception, or if they were thinking about their role differently in light of what we discussed. The short follow up interview, then, proved essential as it gave me a chance to explicitly inquire about any new or changed thinking about leadership.

I followed the same recording procedures used in the first interview—record, take notes—and at the end of each interview, I reviewed my notes and transcribed the conversation.

**Protecting the privacy of participants**. Following the mandates of the RSU Institutional Review Board and good practice for this type of research, I promised participants to protect their identity as much as reasonable. In a study such as this, it was essential to protect participant identities wherever possible, in order to permit participants to speak freely and honestly about their careers, work environments, and colleagues. I wanted participants to feel comfortable in sharing as much, or as little, about their experience as they wanted, and when they discussed



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colleagues, I sought to protect their identities so as to not jeopardize their reputations. The use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying details also helped assure confidentiality.

All of the paperwork amassed during data collection (consent forms, analytic notes, other notes) and files (recording files, transcripts) have been stored in a password-protected file, on a password-protected server to which only I have access. Though the risks are relatively small—participants were free to share, or not—I took these precautions because I realize the inherent risk in opening oneself up to a stranger, and discussing one's workplace and colleagues.

**Data Analysis**

It is important to note that some of the data analysis was happening simultaneously with data collection, which can be common in qualitative research since "there is no particular moment when data analysis begins" (Stake, 1995, p. 71). Given that I conducted interviews over a span of four months, I was simultaneously capturing data, writing analytic memos, making preliminary interpretations, transcribing interviews, and keeping detailed notes for next steps. As Creswell (2009) puts it, "while interviews are going on, for example, the researcher may be analyzing an interview collected earlier, writing memos that may ultimately be included as a narrative in the final report, and organizing the structure of the final report" (p. 184).

Once I had confirmed each piece of relevant data—reviewing my analytic notes, confirming that transcripts matched audio recordings, and becoming deeply familiar with the transcripts as the primary source of data—the next step was to code the data. During each step, I have kept detailed analytic notes about why I made the analytic decisions I did, to help clarify and legitimize the decisions I made in this qualitative analysis (Anfara et al., 2002).

The first step was to transcribe, verbatim, the interview discussion. Once that was complete and I had compiled transcripts for each first and second interview, I went over each transcript to confirm accuracy and re-familiarize myself with the interview data. I also compared



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each final transcript with my interview notes, to make note of affect and other details that could influence interpretation in important ways.

**Coding**

***Open coding.*** By this point in reviewing the data, I had been a participant in the conversations and read the transcripts at least twice. It was at this point that I started to make particular note of emerging ideas and trends, a process called "open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I captured these analytic notes as I went through each transcript, making general illustrations and lists of who was discussing different topics.

I went line-by-line through each transcript for this initial coding process, to "generate initial categories…and to suggest relationships to other categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 2005, p. 57). I remain(ed) aware the process of coding introduced opportunities for researcher bias (Charmaz, 2006), and remained focused on a "close reading" of the text and my notes from the interview, to make sure that what was said was being dutifully captured, analyzed, and reported.

***Focused coding.*** Once the process of open coding suggested potential analytic directions (Charmaz, 2006), I revisited each transcript looking for other parts of an interview that were relevant to this emerging theme. I classified and reclassified important images, metaphors, or pieces of text, and referred to my notes as often as necessary to ensure that I was capturing any relevant emotion that may have come through (for example, a participant may have shared a joke as an example of a charged professional situation she experienced, while another participant may have made a similar joke but meant it to illustrate something different). I revisited the source transcripts and my notes several times to be sure to match the language with the context, and "use a[ny] narrative passage to convey findings" (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). The repetition of reading and noting popular ideas helped identify themes that were commonly repeated, echoed,



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or identified by participants as influential.  This process narrowed the themes that were cited most frequently to narrow the analysis.

Once I had identified themes that were shared by several participants, I began to pull apart the transcripts into different computer files, each organized around an emergent theme. Throughout the coding the process, I had kept a list of categories to indicate which theme was discussed by which person, and also created detailed maps and drawings that tracked who said what, and what they said. I then transferred these groupings to the computer, creating individual Word files for each topic, and copying relevant quotes from the transcripts into each file.

As example of this process, consider the emergent theme of joint appointments. As I initially read each transcript, I wrote notes in the margin to capture different ideas that emerged. Then, after rereading each transcript individually and collectively, it became clear that several faculty members had discussed joint appointments, so I started mapping the frequency of mentions of appointment type. Then, once I confirmed this was a theme worthy of more detailed analysis, I created a separate computer file for "appointment type," and searched every transcript for words like "joint," "appointment," "MOU," etc. This located all mentions that related to appointment type, and I copied relevant quotes (with the identity attached to the speaker), into each "themed" document. I also consulted my analytic notes to add relevant details about that particular quote in its context (i.e., noting if there was emotion attached when they spoke of appointment types).  Once I had systematically identified all relevant quotes, it became possible for me to analyze the rhetoric and ideas cited by participants to discover patterns of perception around different topics.

Though there are helpful computer programs such as Dedooce or inVivo that are designed to help with this process (Hardy & Bryman, 2004), I opted not to use them for this



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particular project. As Gibson (2014) wrote, “It is a common misunderstanding to think that all qualitative research should involve the use of software of this type: it is not the case. Nor is it the case that such software actually ‘performs’ analysis; these programs are tools that help researchers organize their work” (p. 4). Rather, I embraced a relatively “low-tech” approach because it kept me closest to the data—the actual transcripts (Gibbs, Friese, & Mangabiea, 2002) and notes from the interviews themselves.

The final step, after identifying the most promising themes and codes was to systematically ensure that all data relevant to these findings was captured accurately and represented and reported fairly, to marry interpretation with data. I did that by running a “find” function on each transcript with relevant terms (e.g., “gender,” “chair,” or “joint”) to ensure that I did not miss or misremember references. I also read and re-read the original transcripts, as well as the various “themed” files to make sure that I reported as much, and as accurately, as possible.

This strategy goes beyond what Creswell (2009) might describe as merely “basic qualitative analysis”: when a “researcher collects qualitative data, analyzes it for themes and perspectives, and reports 4-5 themes” (p. 184). The approach I am taking here aligns with case study recommendations (Stake, 1995) in that it acknowledges that “we are trying to understand behavior, issues, and contexts with regard to our particular case” (p. 78). I do this by teasing out relationships between ideas or concepts, identifying recurring issues, and aggregating categorical data (Stake, 1995) that is an essential focus of case study. These emergent themes were then compared to the conceptual framework used in this study to align what various research indicates might be influential to faculty perception of leadership, and what faculty members independently describe as influencing their perception.



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**Trustworthiness**

I took several steps to increase trustworthiness in this study, which is an essential function of qualitative research.

Triangulation**.** First, to emphasize the rigor of qualitative case study, Stake (1995) argues for triangulation, or protocols that move toward analytic "discipline…[and] protocols which do not depend on mere intuition and good intention" (p. 107). To this end, I used multiple data sources (Merriam, 2009). The two interviews for each person, the information about RSU, the details about the ADAPP project as it relates to delimiting case boundaries, the transcript notes: these collectively represent multiple sources of data that shape the case and provide data that informs analysis. The two interviews permitted me to clarify data and use the second as a "member check interview" (Birt et al., 2016), where "the transcript of the first interview [to] foreground(s) the second interview during which the researcher focuses on confirmation, modification, and verification of the interview transcript" (Birt, 2016, p. 1805). In the present study, the follow-up interview was a chance to clarify, expand upon, or better understand ideas shared in the first round of interviews.

**Positionality**. Another approach to enhance trustworthiness and credibility was to periodically check myself and my role in the research process, to acknowledge my own bias and reflexivity (Merrian, 2009). Creswell (2009) writes that for qualitative research, credibility is established when "the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, (and) qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent" (p. 190). I sought "dependability and consistency" as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), where the issue is not whether the data (and interpretation) would be consistent in a second or third iteration of this study if replicated by another researcher, but "whether the results of a study are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1995, p.56). I kept detailed notes during each of the interviews and



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during analysis to check my own reflexivity or when previous experience may be leading me in a direction that the theory and interview data were not.

I have a variety of directly relevant professional experiences that could influence my bias or shape my assumptions, so I used these research notes to mitigate this as much as possible. In general, I believe that my professional experiences enhance my ability to conduct research in this area. Stake (1995) noted that, “all researchers have great privilege and obligation: The privilege to pay attention to what they consider worthy of attention and the obligation to make conclusions drawn from those choices meaningful” (Stake, 1995, p. 49). In this regard, I feel that my professional experiences complement my ability to research this topic.

I have been working for almost two decades in professional development with faculty members and graduate students. In these roles, I have supported faculty development around teaching and leadership and, most importantly, I recently served as director of the ADAPP project in the final two years of its implementation. In this role, I primarily facilitated the institutionalization of grant efforts with RSU leaders, filed paperwork with the funding agency, and managed the financial side of the grant. Importantly, I was not an active participant in delivering programming to faculty members, designing the grant effort, or conducting any of the grant-related evaluations. I worked primarily with the grant leadership team, not specifically the STEM or STEM-related faculty the grant sought to impact. Put differently, few of the faculty in my study who participated in the ADAPP grant activities or were aware of its efforts knew that I was part of it: my role in the project in its final stages was largely bureaucratic. In interviews where participants described the grant at all, I divulged my work with the project so that my efforts were transparent.



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This study is not an evaluation of the ADAPP project; rather, the ADAPP project provides relevant contextual details of the case. I believe that my familiarity with the project helps discern what is "worthy of attention" (Stake, 1995) and what is not. I find my nuanced understanding of those grant efforts and deep familiarity with the campus context provide me with some overall helpful understanding of leadership on campus, helped pique my interest in studying this population more, and helped guide me to recognize good sources of data, which Stake (1995) argues is particularly pertinent for case study approaches.

**Summary**

Because I am studying faculty perception of academic leadership, a qualitative approach studying RSU as a case provides a rich opportunity to explore participant views in a nuanced, participant-directed way. I valued the opportunity to permit faculty members to articulate their own views and experiences, and use those to explore how well the conceptual framework—and the literature that informed it—aligned with the perceptions of mid-career faculty members themselves.

As I note elsewhere, a qualitative study of this sort does carry certain limitations: the views of 12 faculty members do not represent the views of ALL faculty members, no matter how intentionally diverse a set of perspectives I sought for this study. Similarly, though I designed an interview protocol to allow for a comprehensive exploration of perceptions of academic leadership, these interviews only capture attitudes about a specific period of time, and do not easily evidence change over time (beyond the time that elapsed between the first and second interview, that is), or after any significant changes to the RSU community.

Still, despite these limitations—and other limitations of all qualitative work (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015)—I maintain that to answer a question like the one that drives this study, qualitative methods are the most appropriate and effective: they permit us to deeply



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explore a topic that has been articulated among those who care about post-secondary education, and in so doing, help point to new directions of further research (which I do in Chapter 5).

In the next chapter, I share findings from the data to illustrate the themes and ideas most prevalent in this population of faculty members at RSU.



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# CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I report on findings from interviews with 12 mid-career faculty members at Roger State University and reveal what the data from this exploratory study indicates about faculty perceptions of academic leadership, within the specific context of a research-intensive environment at a doctoral-granting institution. To begin, I more deeply introduce the 12 participants so as to paint a fuller picture of the people involved in this study, and draw particular attention to the leadership roles these individuals occupied at the time of their interviews (late 2016 and early 2017). Where relevant, I also explore what these faculty—with a particular eye on those who have stepped forward to tackle campus academic leadership roles—identified as their motivations to participate, as well as what they have said about their general views toward future leadership roles. Thus, I begin this chapter with a focus on who is "doing" leadership and understanding "why" they are doing it and how they see it, and "how" they might be convinced to maintain leadership as an important part of their career planning.

I am equally interested in the factors that might dissuade them from leadership and so draw upon the theoretical framework for this study and the factors that could compel or deter individuals toward or away from faculty leadership. The four factors that inform the theoretical framework are Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional, and Identity factors. Each of these factors is informed by the literature (see Chapter 2). In this chapter, then, I take what the literature suggests might influence faculty perception of academic leadership and compare it to what faculty themselves identified as influential. The bulk of this chapter does this by reviewing the theoretical framework within the context of these 12 interviews to test the degree of alignment between what scholarship suggests and what these individuals said. At the end of the chapter, I



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focus on findings that either transcend categorization or are novel enough to supersede categorization.

**Introduction to Participants**

In the previous chapter, I explained how each participant was selected for participation in this study based on their departmental affiliation, their status as associate professors in mid-career, etc. Here, I share more information about each participant with a particular focus on their respective experiences with academic leadership. Though this study was informed by concern about the willingness and preparedness of mid-career faculty members to engage in academic leadership at their institutions, it is worth noting here nearly half of the participants in this study were in formal, titled roles at RSU (5 of 12 participants were in such roles) and all participants had engaged in some sort of service to their unit or the university. As before, I defined these formal positions to include those with official formal titles, situated on an institutional hierarchy, and include roles that typically have selection processes and start and end dates. For research intensive environments like RSU, positions such as these are typically longer-term (several year) assignments with duties that occupy a substantial enough amount of time that they come with changes in appointment type to allow for an increased workload: A course release, perhaps, or a reallocation of one's appointment effort to acknowledge the workload. Many such positions come with perks such as a parking spot or additional pay (or summer pay, for those faculty members with 9-month appointments), signing authority or a dedicated budget line. These are positions that extend beyond the kinds of jobs that *all* faculty are "expected" to do (such as the occasional search committee, appointment to a departmental committee, etc.) in a doctoral-granting university; in other contexts like a community college or liberal arts college, leadership roles like this are often more integrated with other faculty responsibilities.



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As I explored in previous chapters, I do not wish to underestimate the role of disciplinary leadership in shaping faculty experiences with leadership. Such positions play an incredibly important role not only in the functioning of disciplinary societies and other groups of their ilk, but in helping individuals develop leadership skills and maintain their status as a leader in one's field. These are also important places for some faculty members to test leadership capacity, learn leadership skills, and prepare for other future opportunities. They are important roles for faculty to consider.

But as I have emphasized, for this study, I am particularly interested in the role of campus-based leadership positions, and I am focusing on these for several reasons. First, they represent the work that is potentially distinctive from one's research and one's identity as a scholar within one's discipline. Taking on the role of conference chair for a professional society annual conference is valuable, high-profile leadership with official responsibilities: But such a role affirms a person's leadership and identity as a chemist, say, as opposed to taking on work that would--or could be perceived to--lead away from chemistry (such as a department chair).

I have reviewed in previous chapters how these perceptions are shaped, but I mention them again here because I find it helpful to describe some discipline-based leadership that emerged as a finding in this study. For at least a few of the participants, their disciplinary leadership roles are prominent enough that I would be remiss in not acknowledging them as important leadership experiences that no doubt helps shape a participant's view of himself or herself as a leader. These roles are not the focus of the present study for intentional reasons, but they are worth noting because individuals in these roles revealed nuanced views on leadership.

I also wish to emphasize that all faculty in this study reported having engaged in service responsibilities, some of which are more high-profile than others (such as university-wide



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committees). I do not explore those deeply here (or in Table 4.1), primarily because such service roles are the kinds I have described elsewhere as typical of the roles doled out among faculty in a unit and are not necessarily vetted in the same ways as more formal positions. What this chart is intended to show is this: participants at mid-career *are* engaging in leadership in different ways (including important campus-based roles) that can potentially position them for future leadership roles. And, perhaps more importantly, service or "informal" leadership roles that are typical experiences for faculty of all types may lead eventually to more formal leadership positions and provide useful skills and experiences from which to draw. So while typical service responsibilities are *not* the focus of this study, I do want to note that such opportunities for leadership are common, can be valuable, and likely do influence a person's perception of leadership and his or her suitability for formal academic leadership roles.

In Table 4.1, I outline important leadership posts held at the time of our interview. In some cases, I changed the actual title in an effort to preserve privacy and promote some continuity across units: for example, at least two participants occupy roles that serve graduate students in their units. In most units at RSU, that person is called "Graduate Program Director," while for other people, they might be "Associate Chair and Graduate Program Director" or "Associate Director for Graduate Studies." Since this study is not about nuances in title of different leadership positions, and since I wanted to minimize the degree to which identities could be revealed in such situations, I categorize them the same way: their duties are more similar than different, even when their titles diverge slightly.



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**Table 4.1 Faculty Leadership Experiences**

| Name and Discipline (All are "Associate Professors") | Formal Campus Leadership Role Held At Time of Interview | Disciplinary Leadership Role of Note | Notes/Other Significant or Demanding Leadership Roles |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jerry ( Physical Science) | Associate Chair/Associate Director/Grad Program Director (Unit-Level Position) | | |
| Kraig (Physical Science) | | Prestigious Position in Field: Provides leadership and direction on the research priorities of his discipline and influences the allocation of research resources | |
| Deborah (Physical Science) | Associate Chair/Associate Director/Grad Program Director (Unit-Level Position) | | |
| Alan (Natural Science) | | | Working on a business plan with IP/Technology emerging from research |
| Mary (Natural Science) | Chair/Director (University-wide Position) | | |
| Diane (Natural Science) | | | Working on a business plan with IP/Technology emerging from research |
| Gene (Social Science) | Associate Chair/Associate Director/Grad Program Director (Unit-Level Position) | | |
| Paul (Social Science) | | | |
| Veronique (Social Science) | Chair/Director (University-Wide Position) | | |
| Dan (Quant. Science) | | | |
| LeRoy (Quant. Science) | | | |
| Carolyn (Quant. Science) | | Prestigious Position in Field: Provides leadership and direction on the research priorities of his discipline and influences the allocation of research resources | |



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As Table 4.1 illustrates, 2 participants were in (or had very recently completed) two highly-prestigious leadership roles in their disciplines, roles which they were invited, elected, or tapped to fill because of their research expertise and influence. And in a different kind of disciplinary leadership, two faculty members were taking on challenging roles as entrepreneurs or founders of startups, translating aspects of their research to market opportunities and learning to navigate the business world. Five of 12 were in formal, campus-based, titled leadership roles that are the focus of my study. The remaining (3) had all served in various roles typical of many faculty members, including on search committees, graduate admissions or curriculum committees, faculty advisory councils, etc.

In sum, the data revealed that all 12 faculty members were doing "something" related to service, that 4 were serving in leadership roles in their discipline or in businesses they were founding, and at least 5 were serving in the formal, titled, leadership roles that are at the center of this study. To better understand how faculty members perceive these roles, and their engagement in them, I explore the data through the lens of the conceptual framework (detailed in Chapter 3). In each section, I review what I mean by Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional, and Demographic factors, and test the degree to which responses from participants in this study align with what the scholarship suggests might influence faculty.

**Cultural Factors**

As I described in Chapter 2, the scholarship that comprises "Cultural Factors" refers to the norms, messages, and experiences unique to the faculty role that likely influence faculty members' perception of academic leadership. The relevant literatures suggested that faculty members—like those in the present study—may have picked up views via a lengthy socialization process that prepared them for faculty work, a process communicated throughout graduate school and the early years of faculty life. The scholarship also suggests that academic leadership



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is, for some, a role that is antithetical to the roles that motivated them to complete a doctorate and pursue a faculty career: thus the resistance to formal leadership is that it takes them from the very work they fought to be able to dedicate their professional lives to doing. Similarly, the research I explored earlier indicates that some individuals may absorb a tension between faculty and administration that suggest academic leadership is something *other* than faculty work, a significant enough shift in identity that may discourage some people from considering this role switch. This shift is also sometimes described as a permanent move toward administration and away from faculty, such that when someone becomes an academic leader or administrator, she ceases being a faculty member.

These cultural factors have all been identified and described (here, in Chapter 2), and all could be interpreted as cultural messages which may influence faculty perception of leadership. These cultural factors—socialization to faculty expectations, incongruity with the "reason" for pursuing a scholarly career, and identity misalignment between faculty and administration—represent one of the four factors the literature suggests influence faculty perception of leadership.

In the remainder of this section, I explore the degree to which these factors influenced the thinking of those faculty participants in my study, and in the final part of this section, I share what emerged as other "cultural factors" that were identified by participants as having a powerful influence on their perceptions of leadership.

**Socialization: Messages from Mentors and Colleagues about Leadership.** Even when prompted explicitly, the faculty in this study generally struggled to identify specific messages about leadership that they may have received from mentors or colleagues during the process of socialization. That is not to say that participants in general lacked strong beliefs about leadership,



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but within this sample, individuals struggled to identify specific conversations that would discourage—or explicitly encourage—them from thinking about or pursuing leadership.

For those serving in formal leadership roles, all recalled discussions with colleagues and mentors about leadership that were generally positive. Some of these discussions were explicit: direct encouragement when a participant was considering taking on a leadership position. Others were less explicit: general discussions about leadership, talking about a mutual colleague who was moving up the institutional hierarchy and what that might mean, etc. In short, all participants had thoughts about the role leadership might play in their careers, but none were able to point to a specific conversation or "aha moment" that shaped their views.

***Graduate school mentoring messages.*** I asked each participant pointed questions about their experiences during graduate school, and while responses varied, the theme that emerged aligned with what the research suggested: that graduate training *rarely* addresses the role of service or leadership in faculty work, and that most graduate training focuses on research.

As the scholarship suggested, cues about service or leadership are picked up in the ways many aspects of faculty work were: by watching. As Dan, a Quantiative Scientist, described it, he was given explicit guidance for his research but that when it came to other responsibilities like teaching he was left to sort it out. Leadership was not discussed explicitly in his training.

> Research, a lot is learned in graduate school. I do have my advisers who were fantastic and they helped me a lot. After you get out of graduate school, you learn, well, there's a lot more that you don't know than you do know…. I'm always learning from others but at the time, I got here kind of like, "Pretty much establish myself and have a much better feel for how do the research."…For teaching, it's made in the same way although I'd say I probably I didn't really have much in the way in terms of mentorship. …I didn't really



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care that much. I want to improve but I didn't care enough to go the extra mile to actually seek out things like teaching and attending courses or things like that. Really again, it was just basically by doing it over and over again. I started doing, teaching classes when I was in graduate school, I was horrible at it. I like to think I got better.

In Veronique's case, her mentor was a particularly skilled researcher and leader in her own right, who both modeled, instructed, and inspired Veronique to approach her work in particular ways. Though her mentor was successful in multiple faculty domains and modeled that success for her students, the bulk of her explicit mentorship focused on Veronique's academic work, such as offering pointed advice about new directions her research could take. Leadership advice was less pointed, and when Veronique was considering the role she now occupies—that of a chair/director with university-wide influence—her dissertation advisor cautioned against it, saying,

> "Are you sure you want to do this?" She was apprehensive, probably still is because it's an administrative role and I am not full [professor] yet. And I think that's good advice, I think it's good for me. The woman I actually talk with on the phone [another, newer mentor], who did this [kind of administrative leadership], she was much more encouraging because she had done this, she was really comfortable as an administrator, but she said these are the things you have to look out for. [Dissertation advisor] is getting now an administrative role that she just absolutely loathes, she hates it.

Largely, the participants affirm what the scholarship suggested as a cultural factor shaping graduate student socialization: that graduate mentors are largely silent about the roles service and leadership play in faculty life, and mentoring advice focuses primarily on research and, to a lesser degree, on teaching. Using Dan and Veronique as examples, participants'



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mentors were explicit in their guidance around research, less explicit about teaching, and nearly silent about leadership, even as they were modeling and subtly communicating values around the utility of service and leadership via their own careers and how they discussed their work with advisees.

***Messages from mentors and colleagues***. As for the socializing messages around leadership that were shared between colleagues, the messages were similarly ambiguous, but not altogether absent. What I mean by that is that even for participants who did not recall specific conversations, they do recall experiencing events like a search for a new department chair, griping about leadership "higher ups" who made decisions with which a participant did not agree, or some such conversations about "leadership" as being "something" good or bad. For the faculty members in this study who have taken on significant leadership roles in some domain, the conversations were more explicit and pointed for one important reason: most of them sought out specific feedback and advice from formal mentors or respected colleagues when they were considering a new leadership opportunity.

Consider the two faculty members who took on large disciplinary leadership roles, Kraig and Carolyn. When Kraig was considering accepting a nomination for his prestigious research leadership position off campus, he discussed it with his chair. Carolyn discussed with her respected colleagues throughout the university her leadership opportunities and plans, and gathered their insights on what would be most useful steps for her career and ultimate career goals. Kraig sought his chair's permission—this role "takes 60, 70% of my time," he said, and would require a course release and leave time—but also to consider his chair's advice on the wisdom of accepting the position. Carolyn sought counsel less from her direct supervisor/chair, but from university-level colleagues she saw as mentors. While she may have "run it by" her



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department chair, for mentoring advice, she described being more likely to turn to leaders in university-level roles, or even mentors from her past, such as a prominent leader in her field who had been a faculty member in her graduate department.

For the five faculty members who were serving in *campus* leadership positions at RSU, the discussions with mentors were generally more pointed. Deborah described her relationship with her primary mentor as being one largely focused around her research (read proposals, brainstorm new research ideas, that kind of thing), but when she was approached to take on the role of Associate Chair/Associate Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Program Director, she discussed the advantages and disadvantages with her primary mentor and with other senior colleagues in her unit. They had universally warned her against taking the role when she was initially approached—before she had been tenured—but their tune changed slightly when she was approached again “right after” she earned tenure. They enumerated their warnings—that it would take a lot of time and would take her away from her research, but were generally supportive. “We had the discussions where, ‘Okay, who else could do it?’ I'm not saying I'm the best person for the job but since I was asked, I felt that it was a good fate for me,” she explained.

Veronique was even more explicit in recounting how she had sought out mentorship and advice in thinking through her leadership roles: she participated in a formal mentoring program offered by her disciplinary society and accepted counsel from a senior colleague at another institution who helped her navigate the decision, successfully negotiate the position, and helped her realize what to prepare for in taking the role as Chair/Director. With her assigned mentor, “We talked on the phone a couple of times. That was probably a year before I applied. A lot of that conversation happened a year before, at that point I was seriously thinking about it.”



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For Jerry, who has assumed the role of associate chair/associate director in his unit, leadership was a chance to build a new initiative. For his decision-making process, he looked at both “good models and bad models” of formal leaders to provide sort of empirical data on someone who I could tell was good at running things and noting the kinds of things that she did, and then separately seeing other people at the university were like, "Oh, you're terrible at being in charge of a thing.”

When he approached one leader he respected for advice on improving his leadership capacity, she mentioned having attended some leadership classes and suggested some leadership books, including *Getting to Yes* (Fisher & Ury, 1991). In describing her influence, he said he learned by watching and listening to her decision-making process, but that she did not give pointed advice as he moved into a leadership role.

For this group of faculty members, it is largely true that leadership was not a common topic between faculty colleagues, unless a person deliberately sought out advice and mentoring about a specific leadership opportunity. I interpret this to suggest that within this group of mid-career faculty members, people are either not discussing it at all (to articulate pros or cons), or if they are, it is more generalized, joking, or casual conversation. Or, quite simply, the participants had not really thought much about how they absorbed the ways in which their colleagues discussed leadership, and how and why that might shape their thinking.

**Leadership as a permanent step away from faculty**. Another cultural message that the literature suggested might influence perception is the notion that faculty members are different from administrative leaders, that there is an inherent, accepted, and permanent tension between “faculty” and “administration” or “leadership.” A related idea is that accepting a formal



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leadership role is a unidirectional step: once a person moves to administration there is little hope for return. Dan (Quantiative Science) explained it this way:

> I forget the phrase for it but it's a standard thing to complain about university administration. Everyone does that, everyone has these issues that come up… and some things that you see them doing, you're like, "What in the world are they thinking?" It is interesting because it is a bit of an us-versus-them vibe to there. Even though, most of them used to be us. It's an interesting hierarchical structure. I don't know, maybe much like the Army between-- I don't know much about the army, but maybe it's like between the officers and enlisted [members]. There is this, I wouldn't call it a wall, but a decorative fence of separation between the faculty and administration.

Paul, a Social Scientist with a leadership background, said:

> That's really the rub for looking for leadership at the department level as well. It doesn't have to happen. In other institutions--or at least we keep saying at other institutions--it seems that people become Department Chairs without sacrificing their research careers. But really what you want is somebody who sees this as, at least at RSU, it seems very clear to me that you don't spend very much time at all doing research; once you become a Department Chair, you spend all your time dealing with frankly those issues that have very little consequences in broader world -- but have deep consequence within the department, in the department as your community.

For him, that "rub" simply is not worth it. Gene, also a Social Scientist in the same department, echoed a similar belief but came to a different conclusion. He said, the

> RSU model is if you make the move to chair, associate dean or dean that is a career transition. A relatively permanent career transition that now you are one of the



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administrators. In five or six years we really don't want you just to return to the normal faculty life. We want you to keep moving up or keeping that position and that is your new identity. Not only do I see this from my own eyes. It's something that people are constantly talking about… I hear a lot of, not stories, input from [a colleague who is currently a department chair/director] and a few other people who had been administrators and didn't want to follow up on it. They just wanted to go back and do the research and teach [but found the transition difficult.]

Nevertheless, despite this level of self-awareness and understanding of the roles academic leaders play at RSU, Gene explained in his second interview that while he had initially expressed an unwillingness to take such a perceived unidirectional step (and in particular, give up his teaching), when we met up for the second interview, he said

> I guess I have opened myself up more to thinking about continuing on in some leadership position. I never thought I'd say those words out loud, but I'm not closing the door on potentially becoming the next chair. I'm 100% certain that if I told people next year, 'Hey, I'm willing to do it,' They would just say, 'Okay, do it.'

Gene speaks as one of the 5 faculty members in this study who had accepted formal, titled, campus leadership roles who have, according to his own perspective, begun the possibly "unidirectional" move toward leadership and administration. Of those 5, 1 (Mary) occupies a position now that is almost entirely administrative, 3 (including Gene, Veronique, and Jerry) consider these first positions as the beginning of an ambitious academic leadership career, and 1 (Deborah) has already decided to return to a more traditional faculty role, where she could focus primarily on research.



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**Stepping back to faculty.** Of the twelve faculty in this study, one had stepped forward into a leadership position only to realize that she sought a return to a more traditional faculty position. Deborah was serving a term as Associate Chair/Associate Director in her unit, but had already decided that at the culmination of her three-year commitment, she intended to step down from the role. She describes the experience as generally positive, that she felt she was qualified and it was a "good fate" for her, but ultimately, that the demands on her time and attention were simply more than she was willing to continue.

> I've done it for three years. It's a service to the [unit]. It's not my career goal to do this kind of position or at least not right now. Maybe five to 10 years, I want to go back to a management position but not right now. I've done it as a service.

Though she was awarded a course release, Deborah emphasized a frustration about the time the job required, and the attention it took from her research and family obligations. And though she spoke highly of the goals of the work, in particular her close relationship with the students she served and how much she valued the chance to really make a positive difference in her unit, the leadership opportunity was simply not her primary focus at this point in her career, and she felt strongly about returning to her research.

Deborah discussed several shifts that had taken place in her professional life, from post doc to faculty, and then faculty to administrator, and the challenges that she navigated as a result. As she described it:

> The work keeps getting done, so my research was still being done, but it wasn't me doing the research, it was one of my post-docs or my graduate student. That was a big change for me because the research part, and the analysis, and all that, is the part that I like to do. Now, I had to force myself, or I was forced to step back, because I had to do all of the



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other stuff and let now the juniors, to let the graduate students and the post-docs, do the work. My research was happening and it was going well but it wasn't me doing it. It was a transition. I had to figure it out.

Later she added, “I always keep a little piece of the data for myself, and maybe it takes a little longer, but this is mine. [laughs] Then, I'll do what I like. Then my students or the post-docs, they'll have their own analysis to do.” What Deborah is describing here is how she managed the shifting of expectations during the first decade of her career, and how she negotiated these transitions from being primarily hands-on with the experiments and data, to being more hands off with her research. This shift became more obvious to her once she started her administrative leadership role: with the course release that came with her appointment, she moved even further from doing her science toward managing science and actually *doing* more administrative tasks. The demands of her leadership in the unit required more time, leaving less time for her research. She explained that she did not seek or want to continue down the “management” path, and would return to a full-time faculty appointment at the end of her appointment.

**Stepping away from faculty.** Of the five faculty who at the time of the study were serving in formal leadership on the RSU campus, three planned to continue balancing faculty and leadership demands, one (Deborah) had tasted academic leadership and planned to quit it, and one, Mary (Natural Science), described having abandoned her research to do academic leadership full time. Unlike Deborah, who took on an academic leadership position for a few years and was inspired to return to a more traditional faculty position, Mary’s transition to leadership was unidirectional…and also less intentional. Deborah described having discussed the administrative role with her mentors and rationally weighed the pros and cons of accepting the



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role, even declining it before she was fully tenured because she feared how the position would impact her movement toward tenure. Mary's career trajectory was such that she started in academic leadership early—pre-tenure—and stuck with it, until she realized that the work she did in these roles had altered her professional track: That administrative leadership had become her primary, not a temporary, path.

Like Deborah, Mary found herself being asked, pre-tenure, to participate in a department/college-wide leadership role because of the unique skillset she offered, but also because her colleagues and peers believed she possessed the necessary skills to succeed in the role. In Mary's case, her distinctive research expertise made her the only person with the skillset needed for a curricular redesign, so early in her faculty career she was nudged into a leadership role. Unlike Deborah, Mary was not able to resign and move back to a "regular faculty" position that was more concentrated on research and indeed, did not really want to: she enjoyed the administrative leadership work, found she was skilled at doing it, and embraced the opportunity to use her expertise and talents in service of teaching and curriculum design. Though it seemed unclear to her in her early years, later she came to realize that meant sacrificing her research agenda.

In her first few years as an assistant professor, Mary was serving in this teaching leadership role, while also fulfilling the expectations of a 100% research faculty member: competing for and earning grants, teaching, and training students. Eventually, however, after delaying her tenure case twice because her chair agreed that she was not fully ready to submit her portfolio, she accepted that her faculty appointment had effectively changed so much that she sought a reevaluation of her appointment and a reallocation of efforts: she said



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I had an opportunity to try administration and my husband had joked for years that I would be an administrator someday. When an opportunity came up to do that, 50% of the time I could keep my lab, keep my students, keep doing things here but kind of shift my responsibilities….I decided to take that chance…I gave it a shot and it turned out to be pretty good. Within six months—I mean I had a one-year contract [in this leadership role], but within six months my assistant dean, we just really clicked and worked really well together [so Mary continued with her administrative leadership work].

Within a few years—still, pre-tenure and as she approached her tenure evaluation—she slowed the pace at which she accepted students and eventually decided to give up her lab, shifting her attention full-time to administrative leadership, primarily around teaching and curriculum. Though she does not regret the path, she described it as something of an unintentional choice more than a professional strategy. She explained it this way:

Part of this has been things that came up that people needed done--maybe other people didn't want to do--and I was qualified to do, and even though I felt like it wasn't really my first choice of what to do, I still care about making sure that the students got what they needed to get, and I felt like if I was the best person to do it and they did not have anybody else that would do it or could do it, then I need to be a team player.

She later added,

I was naive about that when I first started. I thought you did your research and you get funded but…It's a lot harder and I found that very frustrating. But this was my first choice of the jobs that I had applied for at that time. I was very happy to be here and I didn't want to leave. I've had some other opportunities [at RSU] and I feel like I'm



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appreciated for them. Everybody's got to do their part and this is one thing that I can do well and I like doing it.

Mary admitted, though, that she still sometimes misses her research: even though she is happy with the contributions she gets to make as a full-time administrator, even though she feels valued and appreciated for these contributions, she revealed in her interview that this had not been entirely an active choice, and that by the time she realized she had effectively made what Gene described as “relatively permanent career transition that now you are one of the administrators,” she had to accept that she was likely too far removed from her research to be current and competitive in her rapidly-evolving field.

**Faculty and administration: Straddling the line.** Whereas Deborah had decided to return to faculty and Mary had joined the ranks of full-time administrative leadership, Gene, Veronique, and Jerry described experiences where they are straddling the line between administrators and faculty. Gene, as I noted above, had recently begun his formal role as Associate Chair/Associate Director and was considering what he might need to do to move toward a Chair role when it opens up. He did this despite his love of teaching, an admitted reluctance to give it up, and despite an active research agenda that made him one of the most productive publishers and grant-getters in his unit. The same can be said for Jerry, who also described himself as one of the more prolific publishers, a successful grant getter…and also seeing a chair (or college- or university-level role) position for himself in the near future (“after I get to full,” he said). Veronique described the ways in which she strategically prioritized her research so that it would not get sidelined by her accepting her administrative leadership role. She wanted to continue her research at high levels because she valued her scholarly contribution, and also because she saw the importance of being research-active for her credibility as a leader.



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For these three, there seemed to be a recognition that at this point in their mid-career, they had research, teaching, AND leadership skills that they could explore, and all three articulated an awareness that it was possible—but not particularly easy—to maintain a balance between these three roles so as to not close off doors too early. That meant seeking counsel from mentors, identifying research projects that could be maintained while also serving as an administrative leader, and being keenly aware of the tradeoffs that come from adding leadership as a component to their work at this mid-point in their faculty careers.

In exploring the Cultural Factors that the literature suggests would shape faculty perception of academic leadership, the stories of these five RSU leaders collectively illustrative something important—there may, in fact, exist a cultural tension between "faculty" and "administrative leaders," at RSU (and other doctoral granting campuses), as Gene suggested there is. But this study illustrates that many faculty members also see academic leadership as important in addressing needs (as Mary said, in seeing herself making a contribution that helps students and being a team player), and that by and large people want the "right" people in those roles…even if it means themselves. Each of these examples describes people who accepted formal leadership appointments with the belief that they were a strong choice for the positions they accepted—because of their temperament (Deborah said "you don't want someone grumpy in this role") or because their research expertise is unusual and sought for particular roles (Veronique, Mary, and Jerry suggested this was a factor for them). And all described their accepting these roles because of a belief that they could do the work, that it would make a positive impact on their unit and benefit their colleagues.

Other faculty members in this sample talked about the tensions between faculty and academic leadership as well, and most echoed the belief that there was a distinction between



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faculty and administration, but because they were not at that point serving in formal leadership positions, they were speaking from one side of the divide. Meanwhile the five formal leaders I just discussed, shared their view as people who have sampled both the faculty and the leadership side of the perceived chasm and could speak more specifically to how leadership *experience* had shaped their views.

**Other Factors: Encouragement and Entrepreneurship**. Two other related findings emerged: Six of the 12 participants articulated that they would consider taking on a chair or other formal leadership role if their colleagues told them they thought they would be a great candidate. Of those 6, only 3 were actively serving in leadership roles (i.e., associate chair): that means at least 3 people of 12 expressed a general disinclination to consider leadership roles, but still said they would consider it *if* approached by their colleagues to consider a leadership position. It is worth reiterating that *all* of the participants in this study have participated in important service roles, and some of the faculty have served in prominent leadership positions off campus. As I explained at the beginning of this section, Natural Science's Alan and Diane both have started exploring entrepreneurship with intellectual property emerging from their research, and Carolyn (Quantitative Science) and Kraig (Physical Science) have both participated in highly-visible, demanding, international leadership positions that were open to them because of their skills and reputation in their respective fields. These are valuable and important leadership experiences. The others—LeRoy and Paul, primarily—have each explored leadership in different ways, but generally described themselves in terms that see such work as "general" faculty service instead of the kinds of roles that lead toward an official administrative role.

**Understanding of Leadership v. Management**. There is one cultural factor that emerged as particularly influential in shaping faculty perception of leadership: how they currently view



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leadership. That may sound like confusing circular logic: faculty perception of leadership is influenced by faculty perception of leadership. But in parsing out how faculty members in this study viewed leadership, there were important distinctions in their minds that shaped their perceptions in noteworthy ways.

Paul, the Social Scientist whose scholarly research has a line of inquiry focusing on leadership, eloquently described academic leadership in a nuanced way. To him, there was

> formal and informal academic leadership. The formal academic leaders are in singular positions that range from associates; provost to associate provost, deans, associate dean, kinds of positions. They tend to be people who have had some academic success and have chosen to climb on to the administration ladder.
>
> Informal academic leadership are academics who have chosen to try to build something, institution or at least a movement either towards establishing programs or towards advancing areas of scholarships and research. This could include faculty who bring other faculty together to develop either a center or a scholarly community that does particular things; anything from the programs and centers on campus to the -- what is it called -- there's social sciences and environment reading group on campus. Or people who pull together, for instance, panels at conferences. Leadership can be exercised through developing a panel that again pulls together an area of scholarship; gets people together to present to each other in a way that's organized around having a conversation. Again, that can happen on campus or can happen widely in the academic field.

Other faculty members made similar distinctions, but characterized them as a difference between "management" and "leadership." The most stark examples came from Deborah, who sometimes used the words management and leadership interchangeably, but saw her formal



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leadership position as requiring more "managerial" skills than leadership skills, and indeed made a distinction between what happens on campus—that is management in her mind—and what happens in her discipline—which is where leadership takes place. When I asked her to define "academic leadership," she said it was:

> more on the management side, going up the scales…associate professors or associate chairs on the way to -- chair of the department and even higher. There also comes to mind…the scientific leadership. It's always in the fields like you have specific people that are more successful or they have this great new idea. You would look up to them and you go to conferences, if you want to listen to their talks. There are two different things.

Her departmental colleague, Kraig, described his disciplinary role as a leadership position, and that his responsibilities as a leader included working with others who were in the "management structure," referring to colleagues both in his disciplinary circles and his unit at RSU.

Dan, a Quantitative Scientist added, "I don't look to administration for leadership per se." That, he explained, emerges from his disciplinary colleagues and often centers around scholarly work, while administration serves a function to "make a decision and explain why you made that decision."

The majority of the faculty—9 out of the 12 participants (75%)—described leadership to include topics like budgets and personnel, "managing people," creating and completing forms, and other bureaucratic minutiae. As LeRoy (Quantitative Science) explained it, "Lots of personnel stuff, a lot of resource allocation, deciding what resources, I think general policies, and standards." Paul (Social Science) echoed this, and used the need for organization to handle all of



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these bureaucratic concerns as a reason he would not put himself forward for a leadership role. He said

> it comes back to the organization thing. You've got to be organized and capable of delivering. I'm pretty down on my capability of delivering right now, and there's too much on the line; it's boring administrative stuff that you end up doing most of the time, but in terms of individual careers it's [the "boring administrative stuff"] essential.

He recognized the need for that level of attention to detail because mishandling bureaucratic matters can be harmful to people's livelihoods, while he also felt a weakness in organizational matters would make a leadership role challenging to him.

Looking further into the rhetoric used by participants, it became clear that the more experience a person had in formal leadership, the more comprehensive and inclusive their views of leadership became. This was amplified further by those who had articulated a willingness to continue leadership. In analyzing how faculty members described the work of academic leadership, the following pattern emerged (see Figure A below): The less leadership experience *and* less leadership interest a faculty member disclosed, the more likely she was to see academic leadership is nothing but management tasks and bureaucratic minutiae. On the other end of the spectrum, people with both noted academic leadership experience and an interest in continuing this work saw academic leadership as requiring some bureaucratic tasks but also a chance to really lead, to "make a difference" in one's department or discipline. For the middle group, those with some exposure to leadership via traditional service responsibilities, and who had not necessarily ruled out academic leadership for their future (or those with interest in leadership but few formal experiences at this point), the description was largely seen like the first: academic leadership is just boring management tasks. Though this sample is small, this suggests to me that



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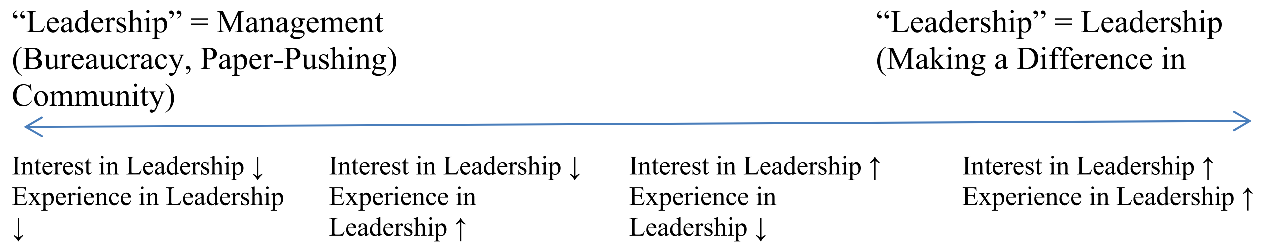
it is *possible* for faculty to have a more favorable view on leadership, to see it as something other than simple "paper-pushing," but to do so, faculty members need to have a *meaningful* and *positive* leadership experience that was valued enough to consider continuing to serve in such roles.

**Figure 4.2: Continuum of Management vs. Leadership**




**Disciplinary Factors**

In this next section, I explore the degree to which the Disciplinary Factors identified by the literature—including the ways in which certain disciplines may lend themselves to leadership more readily than others, the degree to which one's disciplinary identity is of paramount importance to a person, or unique disciplinary norms around leadership—influence how faculty perceive academic leadership. As with my exploration of Cultural factors, I first reexamine what the literature suggests are likely to be influential factors, and consider the degree to which these factors shape how the faculty members in this study perceive academic leadership. At the end of this section, I will identify any factors that emerged as potentially new Disciplinary factors that shape faculty perception of academic leadership.

**Identity=Discipline**. As I explored more fully in Chapter 2, the literature suggests that many faculty members identify themselves first as an "—ist," or a member of their particular discipline (i.e., biologist, chemist, economist, anthropologist, and so on). For these people, their primary loyalty relates to their disciplinary identity and shapes how they approach their work. All of the



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participants, save one, answered similarly when I asked them to describe themselves and their work, and most were discipline-specific in their response, saying "I'm an ethnographer studying…" or "I'm a botanist with an expertise in…" There were a few variations: Alan (Natural Science) said, "my primary function is as a researcher," but he also spoke of his teaching and how he valued that as an important part of his work. Carolyn (Quantitative Science) said of herself, "I understand myself to be a scholar first and a person who is interested in making the world a better place in which to live, secondly." She later clarified her work describing her particular area of research. A few, such as Diane (Natural Science), added personality traits in introducing themselves, such as when she said she was "independent." But the majority emphasized their disciplinary affiliations.

I do not believe this is a meaningless, rhetorical pattern: I believe that in asking an intentionally vague question (some paused before answering because they could see how it could be answered many ways; several asked for clarification on what specifically I was hoping they would say), it revealed that most of the faculty with whom I spoke see themselves through the lens of their disciplinary training and to a subsequent degree, as a faculty member, person in the RSU community, etc. On the face of it, it may be an artifact of the socialization process in graduate school—learning to be an "—ist" also includes seeing oneself as an "—ist." But it suggests a discipline-first orientation that has implications for one's views on leadership, and for some, makes them more willing to serve in roles that extend their disciplinary presence but less interested in serving in other ways.

Quantitative Scientist LeRoy is the most salient example of this. In describing himself, he did so to emphasize his sub-discipline (i.e., not a Chemist, but a Polymer Chemist), and when he shared his service and leadership experiences, they were primarily designed to build



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interdisciplinary collaborations in service of his subfield on campus, and within his discipline more broadly. As he explained it,

> I think I've come to realize the importance of being part of a couple networks that I'm part of. So I prioritize. Each of them will have one or two conferences every year. Prioritizing those. This isn't necessarily answering how I do it, sort of like what I've come to. That other good conferences always mean good connections could come out of it, or good feedback on my research. A lot less of these are run of the mill conferences… [The value in these connections are] Chances for collaboration, knowing what people are up to. I can call someone up and say, 'Hey, we're trying to do this. Do you know where the data's at?' It's just relationships I think are important …Someone knows you, they'll think of it differently, not typical. That's the reality of it."

For LeRoy, that meant taking the chance to develop an on-campus speaker series to collaborate with scholars in other departments around big issues, identify strategic collaborative opportunities for research, and other relationships that largely target those with a shared interest in his area of study.

In some ways, LeRoy represented one end of a spectrum: the end where his commitment to his research dominates his time and attention, and most of his decisions directly connect back to his scholarship. Our conversation revealed his dedication in different ways, as he repeatedly talked about wanting to avoid any activity that interferes with his research activities. With regard to leadership as he understood it, he said

> Why I became a professor is *not* to do stuff like that…It's to have those days where I have nothing on my agenda but work through … some question or data set. The research has its down sides for sure but the freedom and always learning new things in my field,



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interacting with people in my field with a shared interest in methodologies and whatever…that's what I'm in the profession for.

It became clear in our conversation that his avoidance of certain service and leadership activities was not selfish or sinister—he did not represent the worst kind of stereotypes about faculty members who only care about research and nothing else—but that he felt driven (he used the word "calling" at one point in describing his commitment to his research) to focus his energy and time on his research that made other activities seem like a confusing distraction.

On the other end of this spectrum would be Mary (Natural Science), the woman who has permanently shifted to an administrative career. Her self-introduction "has kind of evolved since I came here as a faculty member," she said, because it had: thought she still considered herself primarily to be a scientist, her identity reflected a shift that meant she was no longer primarily *doing* science.

In reviewing the specific rhetorical choices made by participants as they introduced themselves at the beginning of our first meeting, I have come to believe that it is important to consider how faculty members see them*selves* in order to understand how they see their work. Their social identities matter, a fact that is emphasized by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Perhaps it is just common convention that they are "—ists" to illustrate a loyalty to their discipline. Perhaps this is just how people introduce themselves at a large university like RSU with heavy research expectations, to draw attention to a disciplinary expertise and find people with similar interests, to make a large campus smaller. By emphasizing a disciplinary sub-group in which they are a member, they affirmed their identity as an "—ist" and also emphasized that their research is part of "who they are," which may be even more important in research-intensive environments like RSU. I suspect that the deliberate care some of the



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participants used when they thoughtfully weighed their responses can also be interpreted another way (one that would be supported by the Social Identity Theory and related scholarship): that the work we do shapes how we see ourselves. For LeRoy, the work he does as a researcher—work that he loves and that he protects with his time—is in his subfield of Quantitative Sciences: that's why he said he was a particularly kind of Quantitative Scientist. For Carolyn, in the same department but who sees her work in international terms—likely a partial result of her recent high-profile international leadership position, representing her field—her response reveals the values with which she was raised. She sees herself as "a scholar…interested in making the world a better place," which aligns with her describing having been influenced by a broad and deep community of leaders that shaped her commitment to making a difference in society. For Deborah, a somewhat ambivalent leader, she said she as a "Physical Scientist" first, and then added her leadership work, not as a component of who she "is," but as an add-on description of the work she does. It was not a title she owned as part of how she introduced herself, but was a role she was occupying because it represented work she was in the midst of performing.

Contrast that with Gene or Jerry, both of whom are serving as Associate Chairs/Associate Directors, who said they *were* both "—ists" and "Associate Chairs." For both of these men, the role they occupied was equal to their disciplines and "who they were" in a way it was not for Veronique or Deborah, despite being in similar formal leadership roles. And for both of these men, higher leadership—including potentially Department Chair or a college-level position—was something they saw in their future. This raises a question that is open to interpretation, but also extends a theme of this study: does the work create the identity, or does our identity shape our willingness to accept (or reject) work? Were the men in this example more willing to consider further leadership because they already saw, and described, themselves as leaders?



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Veronique—like Jerry and Gene--sees herself (and has shown herself to be) a proud and effective leader with ambition to continue in leadership roles, but did not foreground a leadership title in the same outright way that Jerry and Gene did in their self-introductions.

I suspect this is not simply semantics of language. To a person, each faculty member in this study saw leadership as a set of duties—leadership is what someone in a leadership role *does*, not who a person *is*. And this interpretation helps explain why someone like Dan (Quantitative Science), who is not actively serving in a leadership role, still considers himself a candidate for a future leadership position: he is, perhaps, a latent leader, someone who thinks of himself as having the necessary skills to serve in a an academic leadership role, he just happens not to be currently in such a position. This may have important implications for thinking about and identifying the possible next generation of leaders, as well as recognizing that many people do not see leadership as inherent *in* a person, but as something that is enacted *by* a person.

**Disciplinary Norms for Leadership**. As I reviewed in chapter 2, there is relevant literature that suggests that disciplines have unique cultures, and these different cultures may have different views on leadership. By and large, I believe this present study affirms this notion in ways that are both predictable and surprising. It is, I believe, not surprising that the three faculty members in Social Science had more experience studying and thinking about leadership in both theoretical and practical ways. In fact, Paul, a Social Scientist in this study and someone who was not in a formal leadership position when I interviewed him, has extensive scholarly work in leadership and had worked at another institution in a role where his scholarly expertise in leadership was an important part of his work. He explained that leadership, as a topic, is inherent in his scholarship and that his work extends into the public realm in ways that propel him into leadership roles within the communities and organizations he studies. He explained it this way:



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I'm doing a little work on the [public] sector on what could be defined as leadership, but is much more broadly-speaking about organizational design and really thinking about how [a public group] interacts with communities. I suppose that is leadership in some ways.

For all of the faculty members in this particular department, the formal (in the case of Veronique and Gene), and less formal (for Paul) there was a fuzzy line—if at all—in how they understood leadership as something they studied, something they enacted, something they wrote about, or something they embodied. Unlike their STEM colleagues, for whom leadership was a topic that they could discuss as distinct from their research efforts, for the Social Scientists, leadership enmeshed in multiple domains of their faculty experience.

That was somewhat less true for the other social science discipline, Quantitative Science. Here too, the faculty members—Carolyn, LeRoy, and Dan—all spoke with a relatively sophisticated understanding of how leadership exists within the social structures they study. For these three faculty members, in describing how they viewed academic leadership or leadership more broadly, they were able to tie it back to their research focus and use their own careers as examples of leadership in different ways. For Carolyn, whose scholarly expertise aligned with issues of power/prestige/leadership and whose work examines large social structures/organizations (in an effort to preserve some anonymity, I choose not to be too detailed in describing any participant's work, so please forgive some vagueness) in a "meta" way, her leadership experiences align: She works practically as a leader, and theoretically as a scholar to conduct research that has strong practical and policy influences on large communities. In these roles she does take on an advisory leadership role.



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**Leadership and STEM vs. STEM-Related Social Sciences**. It would not be accurate to say that the social scientists were more sophisticated in how they conceived of, or enacted, leadership, even if their disciplinary training and area of scholarship included studying leadership theory. What the present study does illustrate, however, is that there are certain tensions about leadership that exist for traditional STEM scientists that were less prevalent for their social science colleagues. For example, both Veronique and Gene discussed their formal leadership experiences in ways that showed how leadership influenced, morphed with, and shed light on certain aspects of their research in particular ways. They also described experiences they had had as leaders that helped them add complexity and nuance to the "worlds they studied" in their social science work. Leadership challenges Gene described in his unit translated to challenges he had in research team, for example, and Veronique described experiencing collegial relationships in her leadership role as mimicking some of the work that she studied in different contexts.

That was less true for Jerry or Deborah, both Physical Scientists who described fewer connections between their leadership and their research. Deborah described her leadership role as a service to the people in her discipline, but illustrated that that "managerial" work was a distraction that pulled her away from the experiments and data of her field. For Jerry, it was a similar outcome: though he thrived as a campus and unit leader and intended to continue down the path of academic leadership, this work was a parallel—not a complement—to his work as a physical scientist. He described some synergy between his teaching and his academic leadership, but his research and his leadership were largely separate tracks that rarely "spoke to each other" in ways that seemed more common for the social scientists.

**Disciplinary Loyalty**. Extant research suggesting that some people are more loyal to their disciplines and less loyal to their institutions is both supported and challenged by responses from



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faculty members in this study. Consider Kraig, the Physical Scientist who was serving in a disciplinary leadership role, a role that came with a degree of scientific prestige. He explained that being nominated and selected for this role was "an honor," that enhances his research prestige, even if the actual work of the role is less appealing to him, because it is all about "deleting emails" and scheduling meetings.

> It was a surprise to me how much work it actually is. How many conversations there have been. There's many things all going on at the same time. It was surprising to me how many of these things I have to actually keep track of, right? Because we organize ourselves, I don't have a secretary taking care of all the scheduling for me for example. I do all of that myself.

For him, the leadership opportunity in his discipline reaffirmed his disciplinary prominence. The same can be said for Carolyn, a  Quantitative Scientists whose leadership within her discipline was affirmed by her prominent off-campus leadership experience, even as it taught her important leadership skills that she can transfer to other areas.

For Kraig and Carolyn, their leadership positions align with and affirm their status as disciplinary leaders. For the five people in this study who were serving in campus leadership roles at the point of our interview, the complements between leadership and disciplinary status was less clear. As I discussed in the previous section, Veronique, Jerry, and Gene all consider themselves to be productive and effective as both leaders AND scholars, and their skills in balancing both may explain a willingness to stick with leadership. All described themselves as unwilling to give up their scholarship, either because they continue to love and be inspired by it or for practical reasons: because they were determined to "make it to full" professor, and knew that a productive research record would be required for promotion. Each of these leaders



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described their disciplinary affiliation in important ways that were, at least a little, surprising: that their leadership gave them, in their mind, a chance to improve their research reputations.

Gene described it this way: He said that as a highly productive scholar—good at getting grants, very research-active and successful at publishing—he felt that he could help his colleagues also be more "productive" by sharing his strategies. By doing this, it would draw attention to the good work coming out of his unit and draw more positive attention to the work of all the scholars in the department, a boost in reputation that would help his disciplinary standing. In his calculation, academic leadership in a campus role was about helping his colleagues and people he cared about, but also helped his own research status on campus and within the field. For him—and this idea was echoed by Veronique and Jerry—their success as leaders would simultaneously draw positive attention to their scholarly work…not prove to be a distraction from it. They can be supportive of their colleagues and share their leadership skills with their institution, while also being focused on their discipline as well.

Their conception of leadership suggests that academic leaders can have dual, complementary identities, as faculty AND administration, and honor the way these two social identities are nested and enmeshed, while also distinct in different contexts. In this view, academic leaders have the power to align oneself with disciplinary colleagues while also serving academic leaders outside one's disciplinary unit, and that leadership can be used to accrue resources in service of one's discipline as well as serve a larger institution. This view resists seeing an "either/or" tension between faculty/administration, or even between a cosmopolitan orientation that prioritizes a disciplinary identity versus a local orientation (Baker, 1984) that makes one's status as an RSU leader most salient. Rather, these three leaders have conceived of a way for academic leadership roles to serve both their international disciplinary groups and their



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local groups at RSU, being both loyal to their immediate colleagues and aware of the possibilities beyond the RSU campus. An added dimension of this is that leadership was a strategic choice for Veronique, who pointed out the job opportunities for Associate or Full Professors in her field were not common, but it would be much easier to move to a different campus to serve as chair or other titled leader at another campus. While she emphasized that she was not looking to leave RSU at this point, this serves as another example of how leadership can serve multiple parties at the same time: while leading at RSU, leaders may also be preparing themselves for other opportunities as well.

**Disciplinary training and expertise**. There was one disciplinary factor that emerged outside the predicted conceptual framework: a repeated theme that "I'm not trained for leadership." Six of the 12 participants echoed some variant of this: Deborah said, "we are trained to do something but then the management role requires something completely different." Dan explained, "It's not like it's really much formal training for this. You learn from those who've done before." And Mary said, in looking for people to fill other leadership roles, "we need a leader, we need somebody to do this and what does that mean and what kind of person do we look for where do we go to look for that? There's no training ground for anything like that."

Collectively, these quotes suggest that for many faculty members—half of those in this study—leadership is mysterious enough, and far enough afield, that they do not feel they adequately understand the job to consider their own preparation for the work. It also suggests something that I suspect is specific to faculty work, and the deep disciplinary credibility one must have to work at a research university like RSU: how people come to understand expertise. To become a faculty member at a research-intensive institution like RSU, individuals have invested significant time in mastering one specific area of their discipline in preparation to



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occupy a position where they are learned enough to be an expert in their field. This training may lead them to believe that a similar commitment to "learning" or being "trained" as a leader is necessary for academic leadership, and because they haven't been "trained" in that way, leadership is not "for" them.

This idea merits further attention, but may also be an extension of an earlier theme—that because some faculty members trained in social science disciplines may have studied leadership as a theoretical concept related to their research expertise, such faculty may feel they have sufficient enough understanding of "leadership" as an idea that they could envision themselves enacting the work of leadership. Even if they have not studied specifically "how" to be a leader, the notion of leadership may be less unfamiliar than it is to the STEM faculty who said, many times over, "It's not like I was trained to be a leader."

It is clear that disciplinary identities and norms powerfully shape how individuals come to understand their academic roles, which in turn shapes their perception of leadership. That may mean seeing themselves in terms that prioritize their disciplinary orientation and belief that expertise in their fields confers some respect and authority that would not necessarily extend to leadership positions, because they are not trained for leadership. And even though participants in this study who came from social science orientations spoke of experiences where they studied and researched leadership as a topic, that did not necessarily predispose them toward being more open to, or understanding of, academic leadership more so than their STEM colleagues.

**Institutional Factors**

In this section, I review the degree to which institutional factors described in the literature—such as formal and informal practices and policies that shape how faculty members spend their time—align with what faculty perception of academic leadership. It is in this section that the findings from this study reveal the most surprises, I would say. It is here that the faculty



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participants from RSU identified factors that the literature informing the conceptual framework for this study did not necessarily predict, while simultaneously challenging what the literature suggested *would* have an impact.

The Institutional Factors I described in chapter 2 include policies and practices that signal, implicitly and explicitly, what is important for faculty work including, reward structures, expectations for promotion and tenure, and other rules that signal what is important to faculty in making decisions about spending their time.

**Pressure to Publish and Get Grants**. Scholarship on faculty productivity (see Chapter 2) shows increased pressures on early- and mid-career faculty to be active in publishing and securing extramural funding, pressure that is put upon most faculty at RSU but is particularly important to faculty in STEM fields. As an institutional factor, these pressures likely shape perception of academic leadership. The thinking is that these pressures to be "productive" scholars may make leadership less appealing because it takes away time and energy from grant and publishing productivity, which is required for career advancement, competition for raises, and other rewards. This message is communicated to faculty at RSU (and many other doctoral granting institutions like it), that grant-getting is an important part of what is expected of faculty. As Jerry (Physical Science) said, "The department has made it very clear that I need to mentor students and get grants and teach. Service does come up, but among all of those other things, it's never that big of a deal." He added that he writes the grants and his post-docs and graduate students do the actual research.



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**Table 4.3 Summary of Findings**

| Factor | Theme | Sample Quotation | Speaker |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cultural** | Graduate School Influence | "Research, a lot is learned in graduate school. I do have my advisers who were fantastic and they helped me a lot. After you get out of graduate school, you learn, well, there's a lot more that you don't know than you do know." | Dan (Quantitative Science) |
| **Cultural** | Messages from Mentors and Colleagues | "We had the discussions where, 'Okay, who else could do it?' I'm not saying I'm the best person for the job but since I was asked, I felt that it was a good fate for me." | Deborah (Physical Science) |
| **Cultural** | Leadership a permanent move from faculty | "RSU model is if you make the move to chair, associate dean or dean that is a career transition. A relatively permanent career transition that now you are one of the administrators. In five or six years we really don't want you just to return to the normal faculty life." | Gene (Social Science) |
| **Cultural** | Leadership = Management | Academic leadership is "Lots of personnel stuff, a lot of resource allocation, deciding what resources, I think general policies, and standards." | LeRoy (Quantitative Science) |
| **Disciplinary** | Identity=Discipline | "My primary function is as a researcher." | Alan (Natural Science) |
| **Disciplinary** | Disciplinary Norms for Leadership Vary | "I'm doing a little work on the [public] sector on what could be defined as leadership, but is much more broadly-speaking about organizational design and really thinking about how [a public group] interacts with communities. I suppose that is leadership in some ways." | Paul (Social Science) |
| **Disciplinary** | Training and Expertise | "We need a leader, we need somebody to do this and what does that mean and what kind of person do we look for where do we go to look for that? There's no training ground for anything like that." | Mary (Natural Science) |
| **Institutional** | Pressure to Publish is not pressure: It's an expectation | "The department has made it very clear that I need to mentor students and get grants and teach. Service does come up, but among all of those other things, it's never that big of a deal, so that's always tough, you know. | Jerry (Physical Science) |
| **Institutional** | Funding as Service | "As a chair I think I could. Of course, just as a regular faculty member I think I could, but as a chair I could find more support, resources, and build an infrastructure in our department where junior faculty can be more free to approach senior faculty and other people on campus to get the resources they need and get them incentives to do that." | Gene (Social Science) |
| **Institutional** | Joint Appointments | Somebody in HR should not sign the ultimate piece of paper, whatever it is to bring that person on board until there is an MOU for a joint appointment. I mean, everything should shut down until then. | Carolyn (Quantitative Science) |
| **Demographic** | Gender | "I'm willing to do something I don't want to do, to keep the department from what I would see as plummeting, and that is something I struggle with as a woman. I think this is a gender thing, that I'm not going to let the place fall apart." | Veronique (Social Science) |
| **Demographic** | Family | "You tend to see those other people that have more time, and those are the people that are going to tend to volunteer for those positions. They see that also as a platform to move to the higher ranks of the college of university level." | Diane (Natural Science) |
| **Demographic** | Stage in Career | "Five years or so, to be 100% as chair." | Gene (Social Science) |



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That said, the RSU faculty in this study did not speak of grant-getting expectations as a factor that dissuades them from other activities, such as leadership. It is just a part of the job they have simply come to expect, and perhaps "one more thing" that is communicated to be a faculty role. No one said that they would *not* consider leadership opportunities because they were so bogged down with the demands of writing grants or publishing. For LeRoy and Deborah, a love of and dedication to research drew them toward scholarship and away from leadership, but that was not related to pressures at RSU to publish and get grants—it was simply that their passion was for research, not that they felt pressured or compelled to focus their energies there.

In fact, the faculty members who spoke of productivity described it simply as "part of the game," and not something by which they felt challenged or thwarted. As Alan (Natural Science) put it, making it through the pre-tenure process and finding success as a faculty member in his field was not something that was spelled out for him by mentors or by formal promotion and tenure processes. It was just, well, obvious to him. He said,

> I knew what needed to be done and just had to do it. I don't think it's a mystery…you've got to get grants, you've got to publish papers. I've seen enough good labs that I knew what a successful lab was. And I had my own vision for what my lab should be. There's not a lot of mystery to it. Yes, I didn't think it was mysterious at all. There's a lot of discussion, "What do you need to do to get tenure?" In my opinion, it's obvious, you just have to do it. Now how do you get there? That's where a mentor could maybe give me some advice.

How *did* he get there? He said, "Trial and error. You've just got to work hard. In my case it was write 70 grants in my first seven years. I did kind of a dart board. [If I was] throwing enough darts, eventually it'll hit the bull's eye. The more darts you throw…"



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For Diane, also a Natural Science faculty member, the experience was similar, and to her, any pressure to get grants and publish was expected by her when she pursued a faculty position. She described her role this way:

> I was working until 1:00 in the morning yesterday, the day before until 1:30 in the morning. It is never ending. It's not a job. It's a lifestyle, and I think that's a very good way to define it because you just cannot leave at 5:00, and expect success with experiments…or grants. There is always so much going on.

This statement was not a complaint or lament; it was, in her view, simply what one does to do the work that a successful faculty member must do in order to succeed in a field they love. Participants did not see these policies enumerated in a formal policy at RSU; they were modeled and conveyed via training as just a regular part of the job. Diane said:

> we know the drill. Once you become independent [after a scientific post-doctoral position], you know what directions you want to take, what are the first experiments you want to get. You hire people, you mentor them and you know exactly the grants, and the learning goes with it, but I was really prepared. I was very, very ready for that and I was able to be very successful getting grants from the very beginning because of that.

Despite some resignation about the workload, and despite a track record of success in publishing and grant-getting, Diane did articulate aspects of the scholarly pressures that were a source of frustration and stress.

> I can manage grantsmanship very easily. I always get very good scores; the problem is getting funding. Sometimes you submit grants to get into the high priority funding and so many times in the past years, so you have to work so much harder. You can reach the quality but then it becomes quantity, so to at least hit the jackpot in one program or



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> another. Then the funding has decreased significantly, hasn't really gone up. The overhead goes up, the salaries have to go up, the supplies go up, but the budget is very reduced, and I spend a lot of sleepless nights because I have people that depend on me; students, staff, some have visas, and they're very vulnerable.

In the course of the interviews, scholarly productivity came up repeatedly as part of our discussion on how individual faculty members made sense of their work, what was expected of them, and how they discovered what they would need to be successful (so as to see how leadership does, or could, fit into their perception of a successful faculty career). But I think it is worth noting that while the extant scholarship (i.e., Finkelstein, Conley & Schuster, 2016) is generally right—there is an increased focus on grant-getting and publishing in modern faculty work that puts pressure on their time and focus--these demands were not thought by the faculty members interviewed as something "new." It would not be accurate to suggest that faculty members in this sample would be more interested in service or leadership if only they were not so bogged down by grants and publishing. That is NOT how the faculty in this study described it; rather, they described the pressure to produce as simply part of the game of being a 21$^{st}$-Century faculty member at a place like RSU. It is not an excuse given for why people do (or do not do) certain activities, so much as one dimension of the research enterprise they have come to expect.

There was a relationship between leadership and scholarly productivity that did emerge as an Institutional factor of note. Consider Social Scientist Gene, who agreed to step into a leadership role in his unit partially *because* he is a successful grant getter with a higher-than-average publishing record. These skills and his status as a high producer would, he believes, make him a more effective leader: He said he could use these skills to support his colleagues and help them be more productive faculty members, which he believes is an important part of



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departmental leadership. He also believes that his status as a high-producer means he could maintain a certain level of productivity while also taking on additional leadership. That is to say, he is not struggling to cultivate the skills needed to get grants and write: he has figured it out and believes he can help others to do the same. His willingness to step forward to lead as chair is because he wishes to serve his colleagues and help their unit's reputation. Gene said,

> I'm one of the most productive members of the department…so I think I can lead us by example. But also help people who aren't experienced with getting grants, help them find the resources and collaborators they need to become more successful. And help people with publishing strategies, not that I have all the advice, but help people who are struggling to be successful in publishing find advice from other people in the department and other people in college.
>
> Right now, there's about six or seven other faculty that are, seem like, in a vacuum, like, "I don't know why I'm being rejected all the time? I don't understand, is it my writing? Do I have the right powerful data?" and they feel alone. They feel isolated and that's not a recipe for success. They need to have mentors, they need to have collaborators to help them out, to show them, "This is a good way to frame an introduction to get the editor's attention to know that this thing belongs in this journal." I'm fairly good at that. …I would like to help out more faculty that way and as a chair I think I could. Of course, just as a regular faculty member I think I could, but as a chair I could find more support, resources, and build an infrastructure in our department where junior faculty can be more free to approach senior faculty and other people on campus to get the resources they need and get them incentives to do that.



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I think I'm slowly talking myself into administration, I don't know how I feel about that. It's a challenge and I like challenges, I like doing something new every so often. I like a challenge of "I've never done this before, I think I can do it. Let's try it." It's exhilarating….I'm not ambitious in the Roman sense…I don't have that sort of ambition and if I would ever become a chair, I would not want to go further up the ladder. I would like to be an administrator at a local level where I can help the people I know well and a discipline well but to be someone in the college of social science like an associate dean I don't have that sort of interest. I would really like after being chair to go back [to a faculty role].

As he described it, Gene is strongly considering staying with academic leadership after his term as Associate Chair/Associate Director concludes, primarily because he sees it as a chance to help his department and his colleagues, not as an escape from the demands of a "regular" faculty appointment, and not because he seeks to rise through the ranks toward higher administration. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that Gene recognizes his ability to better mentor and serve his colleagues as a "regular" faculty member, but sees it becoming more powerful if he pursues this work as a formal, titular leader: complete with resources and the ability to change structures and resource allocation in service of faculty success.

Jerry, a Physical Scientist in a similar role as Gene's, also saw overlaps between leadership and his research success. In his case, he saw his success in managing a growing research enterprise while also doing leadership as evidence that he had capacity for continued leadership. Leadership roles also exposed him to different faculty inside his department, college, and more broadly at RSU which largely affirmed to him that there were many people who sought



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to undermine the efforts his unit had built, motivating him to continue to fight for stability and resources for his unit.

> My research has not changed a ton. In fact, despite all of the administrative stuff, my research group is pretty much the biggest it's ever been…My research program is going well. I personally am not writing many papers or any papers this last year…I write the grants, but my students in postdocs are doing plenty of research. So, I'm not super worried about that part.

As he spoke, Jerry routinely went back and forth between his leadership roles and his scholarship and teaching, which suggested to me that he does not see these roles as incongruous.

> I've been thinking about it. I really like the direction that the department is going right now. I think I'm in the right place to do the right things at the moment. In the sense that what [the department] really needed was someone who knew a lot about education and curriculum, and really cared about it. That's my skillset. I want to do that. I've peripherally involved, heavily involved with recruiting faculty and searches, and things like that. I've been peripherally involved with working with donors and things like that, and doing associate chair-type stuff just because there's so much work to do. I don't know. I don't like that as much as I like curriculum stuff.
>
> It was one of those things where it's like, I keep having these moments where I feel like I can't believe they're letting me do this, like someone who's an adult should really be watching what's going on here because…I'm the best qualified person in this department to be doing that, but it's still like a dog driving a car.

Gene (the Social Scientist) was more explicit about tying together his research success and his goals as a leader in serving his colleagues, but Jerry echoed similar insights: That his



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leadership was important and should continue for a couple of reasons. First, because he was able to lead at a high level while also maintain a high level of research productivity and knew that would be important for his credibility as a leader. Second, because he knew that he had a unique skillset to continue the forward momentum his unit was experiencing, and he was one of few with the capacity, skill, and willingness to continue that momentum.

**Funding as Service to Unit**. Dan, a Quantitative Scientist, also spoke about how the need for grants and publishing shaped his perception on leadership, but he came to a different conclusion than Gene or Jerry. Like Gene, Jerry, Alan, and Diane, Dan considers himself to be a highly-productive scholar who has somewhat "figured out" what it takes to be successful. But unlike Alan and Diane, whose success in research and passion for it are keeping them focused in this direction, and unlike Gene and Jerry whose research success has encouraged them to pursue formal leadership to expand their influence in support of their colleagues, Dan articulated a desire to stay focused on research *to better serve* his department and colleagues, at least in part. He described an interest in leadership "someday," and thought he had skills to lead his unit, but determined that his higher value to his colleagues at this point was to focus on research. Why? Because he could get grants more easily than many in his unit.

Dan was clear that his particular area of expertise does not require continuous funding (unlike many lab-based STEM fields), but he dedicates a lot of time to grant getting nevertheless. He said,

> Most of the time what do I do with grants? I do it to get some student support, get paid for the summer and hire research assistants which is very different from the hard sciences. There is a lot of push by university and then that goes to the college, in particular to push to get more extra funding.



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> My view is look; if you need the extra funding, yes it's nice that I can get some extra money in my pocket. Remember I am happy to apply for a couple of grants to try to do that and if university gets their cut, great. But really, if I don't think I need to do the money to do the research, I don't want to spend the time trying to get the money to do the research.
>
> I think it does take away from my time doing the research when there is much more focus on grant application and it's a trend that I think it's going to be more and more. Unfortunately, the problem is at the amounts of grants available are going to be less and less, almost certainly with the new administration. I see far less ability to get, particularly the government grants that the university really likes, because they give the high overhead… It's one of the other things which is I feel a bit of a responsibility to actually apply for these, because, we're evaluated as a unit in terms of our grant funding. Because I work in such an applied field where there are more [potential funding sources], I do feel more of a responsibility to apply for these things, and try to get myself to take some of the pressure off my colleagues who really don't have that many options to do that. I'm willing to do it for my colleagues.

I think this bears repeating because this study revealed something the literature did not quite predict in this particular way. Increased pressure from RSU to secure funding, and increased demands for publications in order to earn tenure and promotion are factors that shape faculty work lives, collectively *do* influence how faculty members make decisions about allocating their professional time and energy. By and large, however, the participants in this study simply came to accept these demands as part of "doing business" as a faculty member in the 21st Century.



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Specifically, with regards to how it shaped their perception of academic leadership, faculty in this study suggested that effective academic leaders are expected, at least in part, to nurture faculty members and create structures for scholarly productivity to be valued, and that faculty members were willing to see their contributions as part of the overall strength of their unit. For some, that may mean finding ways to become formal unit leaders, so as to share their skills and advice and mentor other faculty members or create more space for colleagues to dedicate to research, as Gene and Jerry have indicated their willingness to do. That may mean rededicating one's self to research because that is where success and strengths lie, as it is for Alan and Diane, whose leadership will be in developing potential startups as a source of potential prestige and revenue. Or it may mean that pursuing grants becomes a priority, like it did for Dan, because he is uniquely qualified to earn outside funding and was willing to do that to benefit his colleagues and his unit. For him, the conclusion is that formal leadership ambitions would have to wait, since he has decided his research and grantsmanship is his best way to serve his colleagues since RSU has decreed that a unit is evaluated, in part, on its ability to find outside funding support. This represents an example of an Institutional Factor shaping faculty views on leadership.

Though it was in a different thematic vein than the other faculty members, Veronique also described seeking funding for projects and research as something she increasingly found helped her contribute to her program and unit in specific ways. For her, the Presidential Election of 2016 inspired her to think differently about the impact of her work and she rededicated herself to doing more outreach with her research and using the changes in presidential administration to go after funding in new and creative ways. Recognizing that many alumni and RSU supporters who have a general interest in her work and were displeased by the outcome of the 2016



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presidential election, she saw a chance to build new opportunities as a way of pushing back. She said

> I feel a little bad saying-- Everyone around me is super depressed, right? And despondent and panicked and talking about, “I can’t get out of bed, the situation is so dire, what if this happens? What if that happens?” And everyone around me is-- I actually feel energized by the circumstances because when things are really shitty is when you can effect change… I can do anything I want and you have to stop me. You can’t-- I don’t have to ask permission, I can go and forge ahead and do it and then someone can complain about it afterwards but you can’t stop me from doing it, so this is great time, I think! I feel emboldened to work with new partners, to encourage people who are feeling timid and frustrated to say, "actually we could help you and I know some people who could help you grow."
>
> If you have $10,000 we would like to have it, if you have $10 we would love to have it and this is what we're going to do with the money you gave us and this is how we're going to turn it into a positive change that you can say, "This student got to go on a study abroad." And eventually I want to get--the Dean of Social Science told me that this was a hard sell and I said, "I appreciate your comments, I'm going to prove you wrong, just want you to know." She goes, "Good for you."

For Veronique, an opportunity to find funds to support her efforts actually motivated her, becoming a lever that could extend the work and impact of her scholarship and leadership efforts. The political climate in the United States created a need for more scholarship in her field, an opportunity to find support for her research, and she decided to us her position to pursue ambitious plans related to her unit and primary area of research expertise. She felt “emboldened”



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and described seeing her role as a scholar *and* leader as a chance to find more money for valuable projects. For Veronique, the act of seeking funding was an opportunity to build new things *as* a leader…not a challenge that prevented her from *being* a leader.

Collectively, these narratives suggest that many of the faculty members in this study saw a connection between academic leadership and research productivity as being more synergistic than scholarly literature on faculty work might have suggested. Leadership is not necessarily a distraction from the "real" work of getting grants and writing papers; academic leaders can play an important role in fostering environments that create success in getting grants and writing papers. Nor is leadership necessarily a refuge from the demands of getting grants and writing papers; successful leaders (in their view) see formal positions of leadership as a chance to share success with others in a unit, to improve the unit's standing, or to corral resources and prestige in service of one's colleagues while also contributing to the publishing metrics of a unit. And for many of the faculty in this study, leadership is a chance to build upon and extend one's scholarship in new ways, by amplifying research productivity in a way that benefits one's unit, not simply oneself.

**Joint appointments**. There is another institutional factor that remerged in findings from this study, and strongly influenced faculty perception of leadership in profound ways: the prevalence of joint appointments. Seven of the 12 faculty members (58.34%) in this study were working in joint appointments, which meant that a formal percentage of their effort was allocated across at least two units. Here is the overall breakdown by department (again, here I am intentionally opaque so as to mask identifying characteristics). Each department in my study had 3 faculty participants. In each department, no faculty had precisely the same configuration with the same units.



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**Table 4.4 Sample Appointment Types**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Physical Science | 2 of 3 have joint appointments | Appointment Allocation 25/75; 25/75 |
| Natural Science | 1 of 3 has a joint appointment | 50/50 |
| Social Science | 2 of 3 have a joint appointment | 25/75; 51/49 |
| Quantitative Science | 2 of 3 have a joint appointment | 25/75; 51/49 |

Notably, I did not specifically seek out individuals with joint appointments. But it became clear in these interviews that for the seven faculty with appointments of this type, the fact of them being "part" of two distinct units shaped their views on faculty life and influenced their perceptions of academic leadership.

In analyzing how jointly-appointed faculty members described their experiences, with a particular eye on how a joint appointment would shape perception of academic leadership, one fact emerged as salient and powerful: jointly-appointed faculty members had exposure to multiple leaders, at least two chairs or directors. This is striking because many early career faculty members are "protected" in their service such that they may gain less exposure to leaders outside of their immediate domains, making one's department chair the leader most visible to early career scholars. Typically, the department chair played an important role in a person's recruitment and hiring process and helping them settle into their roles as faculty members at RSU. That means many faculty may really only get to deeply appreciate leadership as embodied by one person: their department chair. But for jointly-appointed faculty member in this study, that meant exposure to multiple leaders early in one's career, and most in this study spoke about "seeing" different models of leadership from their respective chairs. Several also noted interactions with academic leaders higher up in the administration hierarchy, who helped them negotiate their shared appointments. Of the seven faculty members with joint appointments, all



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spoke highly of at least one of their chairs; in some cases, it was the chair in their "primary" department, while for others, it was the chair in their "minority" department.

I feel like this point is particularly important because four different faculty (or 25%; all jointly appointed, and not in the same units) spoke at length about having experienced a particularly horrible chairperson. Looking closely at one of the units represented in this study, from which I interviewed three different faculty members, the chairperson's leadership inspired two of these faculty to consider more carefully their leadership prospects, while for the third the tumult in the department discouraged any thoughts of leadership. For the two with an interest in leadership, they credit other campus leaders—their "other" chair, or another campus leader outside the unit, who helped them cope with the challenges in the unit—as models of excellent leadership that they wanted to import back to their beleaguered department.

There was another theme that emerged around joint appointments, that has direct relevance to leadership—how it is enacted, how it is understood, and how it is modeled. For two of the 7 jointly-appointed participants, there were "issues" in their appointments, largely in relation to poorly-constructed (or absent) memoranda of understanding that clarified how these faculty members should engage in the work of two units (i.e., were they required to attend faculty meetings in both units? Do both department chairs weigh in on raises?). As Carolyn argued, "Somebody in HR should not sign the ultimate piece of paper, whatever it is to bring that person on board until there is an MOU for a joint appointment. I mean, everything should shut down until then." Both of these participants articulated that having to navigate this frustrating experience yielded some positives: the confusion brought them closer to "higher up" administration in their colleges or at the university-level (i.e., Academic Human Resources). This gave them additional opportunities to engage with campus academic leaders with different



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skillsets and different responsibilities. The experience also helped both of these faculty members understand the importance of bureaucratic tasks in leadership that if handled poorly, negatively influence people's professional lives.

My point is this: for early- to mid-career faculty members, a joint appointment and the inherent exposure to multiple campus leaders can help faculty members appreciate different approaches to leadership. For someone in a unit with a particularly ineffective leader, being able to easily compare and contrast leadership styles is also potentially useful. By being close to multiple leaders (be they good or bad), faculty members in joint appointments could potentially be inspired toward a fuller understanding of what a department chair does, how much influence the role has on faculty members, and help them see different models of what can be done. It may be that seeing more than one leader "at work" from the earliest days of one's career helps these faculty see a broader landscape of leadership that permits them more easily to see themselves in similar positions.

Of the four groups of factors—Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional, and Demographic—Institutional Factors were cited most frequently and in most depth by the RSU participants in this study. Increased pressure and expectations around getting grants and publishing? Yes, those influence how faculty members spend their time, but for those who are successful, the chance to share this research success may make formal leadership more compelling, not less. For at least one faculty member, research success is the reason they delay leadership—because the metrics used to evaluate their unit depends on research productivity, and that is where some faculty feel they can make their strongest contribution. For some faculty members in this study, the quest for funding is just "part of the game" to keep their research going, while for others, the quest for funding inspired them to pursue new and innovative ways to enact their scholarly work. For



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some of the jointly-appointed faculty in this study, a quirk in their appointment type means early and continued exposure to different leaders, inspiring them to see for themselves a possible way to contribute in a titled position.

Importantly, I do not think that these institutional factors are particularly unique to RSU. I do think, however, they merit further attention, to further probe the ways in which structural and bureaucratic factors shape faculty work and attitudes about their work, and do push and pull people toward leadership in potentially powerful ways.

**Demographic Factors**

In this section I explain how participants described the demographic factors that shape their views on academic leadership. While the literature has done a robust job of exploring the relationships between leadership and women, persons of color, people within specific disciplines, and family status in studying (or imagining) how these identity factors influence one's ideas about leadership, here I was interested in seeing the degree to which individual faculty members at RSU independently identified these demographic factors as shaping their views.

Before I delve too deeply into exploring the ways in which participants articulated certain demographic characteristics as an influence on their perception of leadership, it is helpful to review more details about the participants themselves. There is an important limitation: I did not specifically ask for participants to identify their own gender, ethnicity, race, or other personal information unless one of their responses specifically called for it. I was interested to see if participants themselves independently identified personal characteristics as relevant to the questions I asked and if so, the degree to which those demographic characteristics shaped their views on leadership.

That left me to interpret the information that was shared by participants. That is to say that if a participant referred to herself as a woman, I classified her as a woman, but I did not



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explicitly ask if that participant identified as a woman. If a participant discussed his children, then I classified that person as a parent even though I did not explicitly ask if that person considered himself to be a parent. I do not intend to be pedantic in writing this, but rather to acknowledge that I realize the need for nuance, sensitivity, and inclusion that is lacking in this study, which I realize is a limitation, especially for scholars who do work in these areas.

I am not deliberately linking these demographic characteristics across categories, which is to say that I am choosing not to indicate if the African American/Black faculty member is a man or a woman. Doing so could easily identify a participant. Instead, I offer these admittedly superficial descriptive statistics, which are nevertheless relevant when considering the participants in the present study.

**Table 4.5 Summary of Demographic Characteristics**

| Gender (n=12) | 5 women | 7 men |
|---|---|---|
| Race (n=12) | 1 African American/Black;<br>1 More than one race | 10 White/Caucasian/Other |
| Ethnicity (n=12_ | 1 Hispanic/Latino/a | 11 Non-Hispanic/Latino/a |
| (Inter)national Status (n=12) | 8 U.S.-Born and Raised | 4 International Faculty (1 was raised abroad by U.S. Parents) |
| Family Status (n=12) | 8 referred to their children and/or partners | 4 No partners/children/unknown |

The primary finding was that of the factors comprising this conceptual framework, Demographic Factors were the least likely to be cited by participants as factors shaping their perception of leadership. That is not to say that participants did not cite aspects of their identity that influence how they understand and execute their work—that did come through explicitly—but I could not say with any confidence that demographic factors were cited without prompting as primary factors that shape perception of leadership.



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**Gender**. Of the demographic characteristics that emerged in the interviews, the most striking influence shaping how faculty do their work—but not necessarily how they think about leadership—is gender. The most obvious way that gender emerged as an artifact of leadership is that when I asked participants to imagine specific leaders and what they thought about their approach to leadership, 10 of the 12 participants in this study named at least one woman leader as someone whom they admired, sought to emulate, thought to be particularly effective at academic leadership, etc.

In some cases, those women were research mentors—dissertation directors or postdoctoral advisors—while in other cases, they were senior women colleagues in the department, college, elsewhere at RSU, women mentors in one's discipline, or other respected colleagues who modeled effective leadership. It seems noteworthy that for the majority of participants in this study, women leaders came to mind as particularly influential at helping participants envision effective leadership.

The literature I explored in chapter 2 spoke less about other women as leading exemplars of leadership, and more what studies signal to women about their own potential effectiveness as leaders who are also women. For the purposes of this study, however, gender emerged among women participants as merely one aspect influencing how they approached their work. Deborah (Physical Science) talked about a moment in graduate school when she realized that people expected less of her abilities because she was one of few women in her field of study, and that she used these low expectations to her advantage in flouting her skills and promise. Diane (Natural Science) spoke specifically about how her status in a "male dominated" field made her more aware of how her work as a woman could be an asset (as Deborah described), but also a liability. As an asset, it inspired her to take on roles within her department, mentoring newly-



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hired women and serving on committees to draw attention to the work that women were doing that had historically been overlooked. She explained that:

> I've been lucky to attract a lot of women to my lab and we've all together as a team have gone through a lot of situations in which I'm pretty sure the gender made a difference. But it's all right, we can't give up. This is a situation where we can make a difference and every step of the way will become easier. [That she tells them] I'm passing this [advice] to you and through my experiences and the way I can shield you [from experiences you are] inevitably going to have, the situations you learn and then I'll give you speed course because I am quite experienced in many other situations. But then you will have your own students and then you pass that and then you know what not to ever become, how to make it easy and then it's true that we become role models and without even trying, a woman will always attract other women.

Diane added that there was one aspect of being a woman in her field that consumed time and energy she would not have needed to expend were she a man: defending her work. During the time of our interviews, she was chairing a committee for her department and was in the thick of building a startup around her research (there had recently been some press that was attracting attention from investors), but she struggled to manage it all because so much of her time was spent making sure she got credit for her research. She said:

> Mine is extremely male dominated to the point that so many times I'm the only woman speaker. Many times I am not even invited when you see a lineup of people there. Sometimes people are talking about research that [I am] the leader of! I've been there, or the last moment I have been asked to talk…[but] I'm [not] talking about [my experiments], this person is talking about it, and it's my field, it's *my* paper [the male



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> invited speaker is discussing]. So…the way I look at it is that, you have to pick up every single crumb that you are given. Because any opportunity, even if it's not perceived as an opportunity, every instance where I say no, you open the door to your competitors and I take it as, and I say yes to almost everything when I travel, that's why I'm so busy...I always say that I am like Britney Spears on tour. But it's very important. I think they associate their work with your face, with the way you talk, with the way you behave, and I want them to see how I defend my work.

I would extend Diane's defense of her work to suggest that although she did not articulate as such, there is a relationship between her efforts and leadership challenges faced by many women: a relentless challenge to one's authority and abilities. This emerged in Veronique's experience as well. She explained that she believes her gender affects how she enacts the work of being a leader, sometimes to her own detriment: she said,

> I'm willing to do something I don't want to do, to keep the department from what I would see as plummeting, and that is something I struggle with as a woman. I think this is a gender thing, that I'm not going to let the place fall apart.

A willingness to take on jobs or tasks that need to be done for the good of the community but not necessarily for selfish motivation was echoed by Deborah in why she agreed to take on the Associate Director/Associate Chair role, by Mary in describing how she stuck with leadership even as it derailed her research career because she wanted to make sure the students got a sound education, and by Carolyn, who explained that she sees women take on work all the time for which they do not get credit.

As Carolyn said:



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> When I was advising this center, I was waiting to be named Assistant Director or something like that and that wasn't happening. A lot of my advice wasn't even being taken. I thought I could do a lot more. I was functioning in that role but I wasn't being given the title. I got really frustrated with that and I stopped doing it. In that sense, it was important for one thing but one out of, let's say 10 things. My experience has been that women are expected to do a lot of things without the title, without being in a bureaucratic position and then they get the opportunity to do it so they will put in the time. They will have shown that they're capable already. Yes, I admit doing a lot without any titles. I think that sometimes they help, but sometimes they don't.

Carolyn described her work in a way that echoed what Diane said, and notably, they were the only two women working without formal titles: Deborah, Veronique, and Mary all had formal administrative titles. But Carolyn and Diane were contributing in ways that were very similar to the other women, but were without the formal recognition, title, and rewards that the others had received via their titular leadership positions.

Veronique (Social Science) spoke in deeply nuanced ways about the ways in which gender—both her own gender, and gender as a social construct—shaped her faculty experience. From citing the strong influence her advisor had on her as an academic, but also as a mother and a woman, to identifying the important role other women mentors played in how she approached her work, there was evidence that gender (as an example of what I would call a Demographic factor) shaped her understanding of her various roles in profound ways. But, as is particularly relevant to this study—they were not the only, or even the primary, factors influencing her perceptions of leadership.



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She described some of the efforts that had come out during the ADVANCE grant efforts at RSU (see Chapter 3 for more details), and in particular, workshops that were targeted at women to help prepare them for success in their academic works. Veronique said those workshops—which she generally attended—were a waste of time, and seemed to miss the point entirely:

> I don't want another workshop. [What I want is] why don't you change the structure of my life? You cannot get blood from a rock. I am busy—I don't need more mentoring, I need you to provide child care or make more space in my workday for me to do the things that will get me tenure. I don't want to go to another workshop, I don't want to go to another committee meeting, I don't want to go to another goddamned luncheon. I didn't swear I don't think in my feedback but that was the tone. I used the phrase "you can't get blood from a rock." I was angry that they were asking me what additional thing can I attend that somehow will help me get tenure. I'm like, "No. why don't you have a workshop where I go and just write, shut up and write… make it mandatory and make it during some other thing I *have* to go to so that I can't go to the other thing and I could just [write].

For Veronique, the need for more support for women was not rooted in solutions that were unique for women: they were institutional factors that shape faculty expectations and put limitations on how people achieve the challenges they confront. These supports were not demographic factors specific to women, or parents, or scholars of color. She advocated for better institutional structures—child care, or spaces where she and others could get their work done without interruptions—not specific factors that spoke to the fact of her gender. Thus, in coding



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the findings for this study, most of the demographic influences were actually functions of other factors shaping her experience.

I wish to reiterate the way that gender emerged among the women participants in this study: Women in this study talked explicitly about how their status as women forced them to defend their work in ways that their male colleagues did not (women are significantly underrepresented in all but one of the disciplines in this study) or take on uncredited leadership roles to serve students/their field/their colleagues in ways that were offered, with titles, to men in their units. But only Veronique—and to a degree Carolyn, both women are in social science disciplines—talked specifically about the intersections of gender and leadership. The other women spoke with awareness of how their gender influenced *all* areas of their professional lives, though not specifically, or necessarily, their leadership ambitions or skills.

Still, I would argue, that there are connections: the constant need to defend or speak up for one's scholarship, I would surmise, is not only exhausting—itself a deterrent--but may make some women reluctant to step forward into leadership where they might expect even more critique and questions about their abilities and decisions.

Further, a history of taking on work without credit—without titles or formal administrative resources—suggests to me that even women like Carolyn and Diane who are not "interested in" academic leadership are, in fact, doing academic leadership…possibly without the perks that come with titular authority. Women in this study describe their leadership efforts (with or without titles) with pride—citing evidence of their success—while also downplaying their value or interest in leadership. This is more than just rhetorical semantics; it reflects a certain murkiness to one's perception of leadership as something women are already doing, despite what they call (or refuse to call) it.



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**Family Matters**. Aside from one's gender, only one other demographic factor described in the conceptual model emerged as a demographic factor shaping faculty perception of leadership: Family status. And again, it did not emerge from participants in quite the way the scholarship might have predicted it would. While I reviewed literature that suggested parents, and particularly mothers, were challenged in managing all of their faculty responsibilities in ways that might shape their views on leadership, the responses from faculty members in this study disclosed different views on how family obligations shaped their work.

For Natural Scientist Alan, his involvement with his children's school inspired him to take a leadership role in expanding the outreach his lab (and unit) did in the community. For Mary, as I noted earlier, her desire to not move away from the community where her family had settled shaped her willingness to evolve her professional goals with her changing professional roles. Veronique also identified an unwillingness to move her children from their schools as an inspiration for finding new challenges at RSU, in lieu of moving to another campus for opportunities. LeRoy articulated that he structured his work efforts in a way that afforded him as much time as possible with his family and suggested that he carefully steered away from roles (including ones with more leadership components) that would draw him away from home more frequently.

Deborah drew an explicit connection between her status as a mother and her leadership: and that was because as a woman in formal leadership, she factored in a desire to have more time with her family as one of the reasons she was stepping down from her leadership position. Diane did not say this of herself, specifically, but did suggest that many leaders have no families, because they have more time. As she said, "You tend to those other people that have more time,



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and those are the people that are going to tend to volunteer for those positions. They see that also as a platform to move to the higher ranks of the college of university level."

I review these findings because they somewhat align with what the scholarship (i.e., Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2014) in this area suggests—that being a faculty member with children, particularly young children, influences one's thoughts and actions around leadership, particularly about one's ability to manage the time and energy needed to be an effective leader and the kind of parent they wish to be. In spite of these findings, no clear pattern emerged regarding how family responsibilities shaped faculty behaviors.

**Stage in Career**. There was one demographic factor that emerged as a common theme: that of being "5-10 years" away from really considering leadership, or being "5 years" away from a project completion that would open up new opportunities for them. Carolyn, for example, expects to be "a changed leader" in five years, because she has an ambitious research program she is running for five years. Deborah suggested she may be willing to return to leadership, "maybe five to 10 years, I want to go back to a management position but not right now," and Gene described a plan to take on a leadership role in "five years or so, to be 100% as chair" (and take leave from his other, jointly-appointed, faculty role). The recurring theme of things, people, places, being different "in 5-10 years" at first seemed like a rhetorical colloquialism to represent "someday maybe, but definitely not now, and perhaps not ever." But in analyzing the repetition with which I heard it, and the context in which participants described this timeframe, it suggests to me that people are using this phrase as a shorthand to represent a time when they will have been promoted to full professor, have finished one or more ambitious projects that they had undertaken, or when they are further into a role as a senior colleague and ready to take on new challenges, including, perhaps, academic leadership.



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As I have noted, a few (three) faculty members have already committed to continuing leadership in their careers. Even for Jerry and Gene—the two participants most overtly committed to pursuing leadership—being promoted was the first order of business: they would not consider taking on a departmental chair position until their promotion to full professor was complete.

**Surprising Findings from Demographic Factors**. I have already suggested a limitation to this study that colors the findings from this section: That I did not specifically ask about, clarify, or otherwise affirm demographic characteristics that faculty members claimed for themselves. And there is significant and compelling research that suggests a complex relationship between leadership and women and/or persons of color in particular. And yet, in the present study, I did not find individual faculty members reporting that their specific identify factors were particularly powerful in shaping their perception of leadership. This was surprising to me as a researcher: That is not to say that the women did not speak in broad strokes about how their gender shaped their work as faculty members and scientists, and many faculty members spoke of the challenges they confronted in managing their faculty workloads with their obligations in their home life, but they did not specifically cite those factors as influential in how they thought of themselves as leaders, or how they understood leadership more broadly; simply that their gender was not more (or less) likely to shape their views on leadership.

I suspect this was, in part, because studying the influence of demographic factors on leadership was, to be blunt, not the point of this study. That is to say, I explored various factors that could shape faculty perception and sought to see which of those factors rose to the top as most influential. It is the difference between asking "Which factors shape your perception of academic leadership?", "Which aspects of your identity shape your perception of academic



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leadership?", and "How does your gender (or race or family status, etc.) shape your perception of academic leadership?" I have no doubt—especially in the cases of Carolyn, Veronique, and Diane, who spoke fluently about the challenges their gender (or race or ethnicity) created for the ways they approached their faculty roles--that had I asked the last question, they would have had insightful comments to share that illustrated the relationship of their demographic characteristics. But that was not how I framed the question, so while demographic or identity factors may shape their perception, for them, there were simply other factors that shaped perception *more*.

**The Salience of Identity and Situation**. The idea of identity salience from Social Identity theory helps explain this interpretation and may help to explain how demographic characteristics influenced—or, as I found, mostly did not influence—the ways in which participants thought about academic leadership. The notion of identity salience (Abrams, Thomas, & Hogg, 1990; Wang & Davidio, 2017) speaks to the idea that at certain times and in certain contexts, one's various identities are more at the forefront than others, and are hugely dependent on the situation. For the purposes of this study, that means that a faculty member's status as a faculty member may be stronger for themselves in certain times than their status as a woman, a person of color, etc. I spoke to this idea in Chapter 2 more fully, but I suspect the relative subordination of Demographic Factors in faculty perception to Cultural, Disciplinary, or Institutional Factors is at play here: For the faculty in this study, identity characteristics were important, but not *quite* as important as their faculty identity, their disciplinary identity, or others more closely tied to their scholarly training and faculty status.

A related interpretation I offer here is this: I think that because the faculty members in this study are at the point of mid-career, and because most of them have engaged primarily in service leadership in their *departments* (or in prominent *disciplinary* leadership roles), their



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scholarly/disciplinary identity is most powerful in shaping how they think of themselves as leaders. That means that Deborah, because she has a unit-level leadership position, is serving colleagues who see her as "one of them," a person with a shared social identity as a Physical Scientist, who has proven her skills as a scientist and is now also a woman in a leadership role. Therefore, the salience of her gender is lessened because her scholarly, disciplinary role is more salient.

Why is this important? I suspect this is important because Demographic Factors, as perceived by others, may evolve as a person moves through his or her career. In the earliest days, colleagues may see a person primarily through their identity characteristics—as a new Latinx colleague, say, or the new woman in Biostatistics. But as that person establishes herself within a discipline, personal identity characteristics become less salient, and scholarly identity characteristics become more salient within one's disciplinary home: their department.

But identity characteristics may again become more salient, more identified by faculty members as important in shaping their perception, when they move into spheres where their disciplinary expertise (and respect for it) is less a given. It may be at the college level, or other positions that may be higher up in the institutional hierarchy, may reorder a person's identity such that a leader's racial, gender, ethnic, religious, etc. identity becomes more salient as they move into circles where their discipline is no longer the primary fact of their professional being. Again, using Deborah as an example, in her departmental service, her status as a Physical Scientist leading other Physical Scientists takes precedent over the facts of her gender or ethnic background. In other domains, where she is leading people who do not *first* see her as a brilliant scientist, they may see her gender or motherhood status as more salient. In these expanded and different contexts, I suspect that revisiting the questions for this study may elicit a different



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response and prioritize Demographic factors as more salient in both how Deborah sees herself and in how others likely see her. And I would guess that in roles where a person is "new"—the first woman in a leadership position, the first scholar of color, etc., that particular demographic factor would be even more salient.

Thus, it would be worth repeating or revisiting this approach with people whose leadership is beyond their disciplinary groups, or further up a hierarchy which may reorder the identity salience (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995) in a particular group. Another idea would be to revisit the faculty in this study to see if their identity salience changes over time as they take on newer or broader roles. In all, it is worth considering exploring this idea among leaders who are serving in domains that extend outside the institutional structures of their discipline, be they departments or disciplinary societies, to attempt to decipher where demographic characteristics become most salient and influential in one's thinking. This idea merits revisiting in the future.

**Review of Findings**

In closing this chapter, it is useful to review the factors that faculty in this study identified most often, and with most regularity, in shaping their perception of leadership. As I have argued throughout this study, all of the factors I used for this theoretical study have an influence on faculty perception of leadership. These various factors—Institutional, Demographic, Cultural, and Disciplinary—are all nested within each other and are expressed at different times in different ways. That is the very idea of identity salience (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995) within Social Identity Theory, that different identities and membership in different and valued social groups (i.e., "faculty member," "economist," "member of the RSU community") are all held within a person at the same time…they are just expressed differently in different contexts. So within the context of this study—and how these identities and factors influence faculty



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perception of academic leadership—I illustrate which factors are most commonly expressed by the faculty members in this study.

First, institutional factors—the policies and practices that formally shape the conditions of faculty work—had a strong influence on perceptions of leadership for faculty in this study. Study participants cited such factors the most often. As a group, they spoke most deeply about how institutional factors influence different dimensions of leadership: their beliefs about what it entails, their experiences with it, and their perception of leadership. In particular, the prevalence of joint appointments at RSU had a strong influence on faculty views of leadership, either because when done well, joint appointments permit early exposure to multiple leaders or, when done poorly, jointly-appointed faculty members are motivated to see the need for effective academic leaders at the chair position. Also, research demands and rewards for productive research were shown to both motivate and deter faculty toward leadership: some faculty were motivated to pursue leadership in part because of their research success. Other faculty members saw the institutional emphasis on grant getting and research (and implied silence on other facets of the faculty role, such as leadership) as one they welcomed: they could be rewarded for focusing on the research that they wanted to be their priority.



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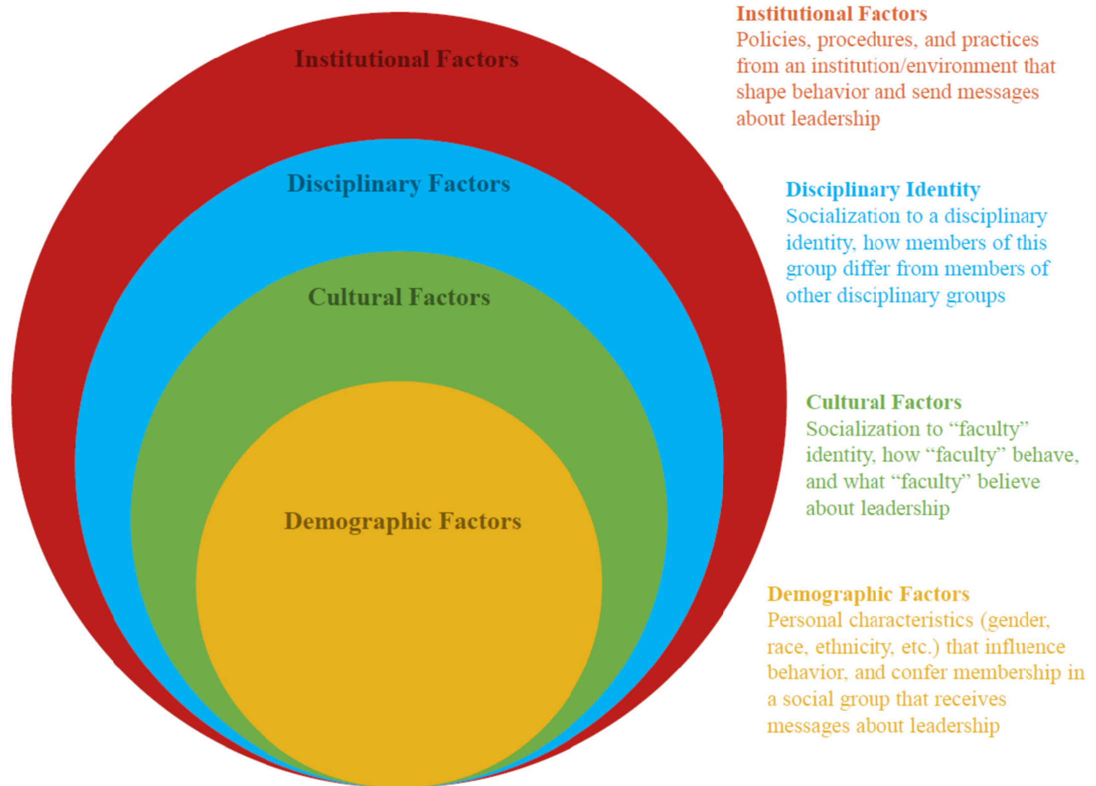
**Figure 4.6 How Faculty Describe the Relative Influence of Factors**




The second set of factors that faculty members most discussed were disciplinary factors. This came through in their relative emphasis on their disciplinary identity and a general willingness to consider leadership within their disciplines or units, while expressing a general disinterest in anything "higher up" in the hierarchy. Additionally, faculty leaders in the social sciences described an ability to more easily integrate their scholarship and their leadership in ways that may make it easier to keep up with the demands of both; STEM faculty members were more likely to articulate a tension between managing their dedication to research and the challenges of leadership roles. It is not accurate to say that social scientists have better leadership skills or more nuanced approaches to leadership, or that they are more likely to take on academic leadership positions. But the social and quantitative scientists in this study were able to cite



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connections between leadership and their scholarly work that made envisioning and enacting leadership as an academic leader more accessible: while leadership is a parallel activity for the STEM faculty in this study, it was described as more easily integrated by the social scientists.

Also affecting perception of faculty leadership were cultural factors, or the norms and beliefs about leadership communicated by faculty members to graduate students and faculty colleagues about the utility and value of academic leadership. This largely affirms what the literature suggested—graduate training rarely addresses the value leadership for an academic career, and faculty colleagues have conflicted views on "academic leadership" in general. This study suggested that when faculty members discuss actual leadership opportunities with respected colleagues and mentors (both formal and informal mentors) and share their cultural views on leadership, the discussions and advice given are nuanced, and generally supportive of faculty serving in academic leadership roles.

The least clearly influential factors in this study appear to be demographic factors, or how one perceives their gender, race, ethnicity, family status, etc. in relation to their ability to be effective leaders. Gender, career stage, and family status were cited by participants, in depth by a couple of women in this study, but as a whole, demographic factors were least likely to be cited as influential in shaping views on leadership.

In the next chapter I discuss the implications of this study, and make recommendations for next steps. In addition, I relate findings to the literature on academic leadership and the conceptual framework.



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# CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter, I tie together the information in the previous four chapters to review why I pursued this study and what the findings revealed about the topic. I will also explore how well the findings align with, or challenge, extant scholarship on the topic of faculty perception of leadership.

The purpose of the study was driven by a need to understand faculty perception of academic leadership, within the context of a research intensive, doctoral granting institution of higher learning. Using the scholarship on faculty work, professional development, and identity theories from social psychology, I developed a conceptual framework to describe how certain factors—Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional, and Demographic factors—can powerfully influence how individual faculty members understand and enact their professions. Using this framework, I interviewed 12 mid-career faculty members at Roger State University to explore which factors most influence their perception of academic leadership. In the rest of this chapter, I revisit the purpose of the study in light of the findings, and then discuss the factors that faculty members identify as the most powerful in shaping their perception. At the end, I identify implications for scholarship and practice.

## Revisiting the Purpose of the Study

This study was spurred by a concern that faculty members may not be ready, willing, or available to take on formal academic leadership positions at U.S. institutions of higher education (Appadurai, 2009; McDade et al., 2017). The study was designed to test the veracity of this claim, but also to assess more broadly the perception of academic leadership held by a small group (n=12) of mid-career faculty members in STEM and STEM-related social science at one particular institution, Roger State University (RSU), an R1: Doctoral Granting institution (Carnegie, 2018) in the United States. This population was selected because I sought to capture



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the perception of those who were far enough along in their faculty careers that they had established themselves in their disciplines and departments, but not so far along that they had already made permanent decisions about how they sought to spend the second phase of their careers. These faculty members at mid-career were at a point where they had proven their skills as faculty scholars by earning tenure, and could explore opportunities in other dimensions of the faculty experience and test different possibilities for their careers, including trying and preparing for leadership opportunities (Baldwin et al., 2005; Gruppen et al., 2003).

This study revealed that, at least within this small sample, most faculty members are not entirely *uninterested* in leadership. Over a third of participants (5 of 12) were, at the point of our interview, serving in academic leadership positions and actively considering additional responsibilities; of those five, only one planned to step down from a leadership track. The majority—58.3% or 7 of 12 participants—were not in leadership positions at the point of the interviews for this study, but had not completely ruled out leadership from their future plans. These seven expressed a general willingness to step forward as an academic leader, under the "right" circumstances. Those circumstances might include being approached or asked by respected colleagues (6 of 12 suggested this as a possibility). Another circumstance identified by faculty members relates to timing: several colleagues mentioned a desire to take on leadership roles, but only after being promoted to full professor, completing a big project, or some other preoccupation that had them thinking "5-10 years" from now as the ideal time to take on a position such as chair, associate dean, etc.

Only two (13.7%) were emphatic about not considering academic leadership positions in the future, though even they qualified their statement by saying that they would do it if their colleagues asked them to. This is a small sample that does not necessarily extrapolate to national



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trends, but it does suggest that there may be more willingness among mid-career faculty members to lead than some of the literature suggests (White, 2017).

**The Four Factors Framework: Which Really Mattered?**

The conceptual framework I employed in this study suggested that faculty work is shaped by factors that fall into four large groups: **Cultural, Disciplinary, Institutional,** and **Demographic Factors**. Each of these categories describes different influences shaping how faculty members come to understand, enact, and pursue their professional paths. **Cultural** factors refer to the norms and attitudes in overall faculty culture that are a result of the socialization process (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Johnson, Ward, & Gardner, 2016) people undergo during the process of training for and working as faculty members, and which roles faculty members see as their responsibility or something foreign to the norms of "faculty work" (e.g., Borland, 2003). **Disciplinary** factors refer to the norms and culture in specific disciplines (Lindholm, 1994) that convey membership in a discipline, and these factors recognize that different scholarly traditions have different attitudes and expectations about faculty work, including academic leadership (Austin, 1990; Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009). Disciplines are also housed in departments, units that in this study represent a bureaucratic place where people affirm their disciplinary credibility (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999; Fleming, Golman, Correll & Taylor, 2016). **Institutional** factors refer to the policies, reward structures, and other often-bureaucratic practices (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007) that signal what faculty effort is valued and rewarded (DeRond & Miller, 2005; Leisyte & Dee, 2012; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016), and how faculty work is structured (e.g., in a joint appointment). **Demographic** factors refer to different aspects of one's personal identity, and how extant scholarship has studied the ways that gender (Wheat & Hill, 2016), race (i.e., Layton et al., 2016), ethnicity (Vasquez-Guinard, 2010), family status (Ahmad, 2017; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004) and other



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“demographic” factors influence a person’s views on leadership and his or her willingness to engage in academic leadership opportunities.

Each of these factors *could* influence faculty perception of leadership and in fact, all of them do: various factors prove to be influential at different times and in different ways. Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that individuals are members of multiple social groups, and the identities drawn from each of these groups is valuable. Depending on the context in which a person finds herself, those nested group identities will be more or less emphasized, an idea called identity salience (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). For this study, then, the primary objective was to explore which of these identities was most salient in shaping faculty perception of academic leadership. At what point do factors related to one’s institutional identity prove most influential? Or when do factors associated with a disciplinary, cultural, or demographic identities matter the most? This study sought to explore such questions, and thus I employed a conceptual model and interview questions designed to elicit responses so that all participants could identify and articulate for themselves which factors most shape their view. Though analysis of the interview data, I was able explore which factors were most often cited by participants as influential, and what that suggests about the factors that shape perception of academic leadership.

**Institutional Factors Powerfully Shape Perception**. For the majority of the participants in this study, institutional factors were cited frequently, showing that such factors specific to their role as faculty members at Roger State University were highly influential in shaping faculty perception of academic leadership. That means that policies, appointment types, procedures, and reward systems communicated and shaped views on leadership more powerfully than other



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factors. In other words, being a faculty member at RSU, specifically, powerfully influenced perception of academic leadership.

**Importance of Research**. There is research to suggest that increased demands for publishing and grant getting among faculty members (Harley, Acrod, & Earl-Novell, 2010; Nygaard, 2017; Von Bergen & Bressler, 2017) is forcing faculty members to prioritize research over other traditional faculty activities (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Bressler, 2017; Clark, 1997; Schuster, Conley, & Finkelstein, 2016; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993), including leadership. These expectations become an institutional factor, because such expectations are sometimes explicitly codified in reward structures or communicated via expectations for tenure and promotion. Like many other institutions, RSU has increasingly communicated an expectation to get extramural funding that participants all articulated: it was something the university expected of them, and they understood those expectations. In explicit and implicit ways, RSU had communicated an emphasis on research.

This study affirms that research remains a priority for many faculty members, but none articulated institutional pressures to "publish or perish" as influencing their views on leadership, specifically. Rather, faculty report viewing heightened expectations around publishing and grant getting as simply "part of the work" they expected to do as faculty members, and not a pressure that interferes with their ability to serve in other ways. This study suggests that faculty do not necessarily see a distinction or a tension between "research" and "leadership," and in fact report finding satisfaction in overlapping the two parts of their work: two participants said that it was their success in grant getting and publishing that actually inspired them to pursue leadership. Because they had evidenced success, they felt comfortable meeting these standards and saw their skill in this area as an opportunity to corral resources for their unit, take on a leadership role in



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supporting colleagues and help graduate students hone these skills, or otherwise find a way to leverage scholarly success into leadership initiatives. Rather than research demands being a challenge to leadership activities, this study suggests that there may be overlaps and opportunities for synergy. This aligns with scholarship that suggests many people accept the role of a department chair as a service to colleagues (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004).

It is worth noting that two faculty members in this study identified other ways for leadership and research to overlap, just not in campus leadership positions: They founded new biotech startups based on research from their labs, and both reported finding unexpected appreciation for the challenges of adding new skills in leadership and business management.

Collectively, the faculty members in this study challenge conventional interpretations (Finkelstein, Conley & Schuster, 2016; Nygaard, 2017) that heightened research demands, which I classify as institutional factors, were forcing otherwise emerging leaders into traditional research roles. Instead, this study revealed that research demands influence how faculty members spend their time, but these demands may also shape willingness to pursue academic leadership positions by inspiring people to creatively integrate leadership in ways that complement, enhance, or build upon their research skills, reputations, or goals.



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**Table 5.1 Summary of Notable Findings**

| Factor Category | Finding | Implication for Scholarship | Implication for Practice |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Institutional** | Research demands are high, but do not necessarily interfere with other faculty roles/leadership | Examine ways that heightened demands for grant-getting and research may be inspiring new synergy among faculty domains rather than competing for time and attention | Innovate ways to support faculty who wish to explore leadership while also maintaining research productivity |
| **Institutional** | Joint Appointments | Little scholarship has been done to examine "joint appointments:" how they are managed, negotiated, etc. | Institutional leaders can maximize the effect of joint appointments—exposure to multiple leaders/mentors, exposure to different departmental cultures—and minimize negative impacts (e.g., poorly negotiated details around evaluations, say) |
| **Disciplinary** | Primary, salient identity is rooted in discipline. Of the "identity" factors, disciplinary cultures are most influential on views on leadership | Nuanced studies of how faculty members negotiate disciplinary identities among their other personal/professional identities | Recognize that departmental leadership may make different demands related to identity than other domains of leadership; find ways to support departmental leaders as they maintain their disciplinary/faculty identity |
| **Cultural** | Leadership = Management | Better study the roles of academic leaders, what they entail to catalog the accuracy of the view that bureaucratic concerns dominate academic leadership. | Restructure leadership positions to better support (i.e., administrative support) the "bureaucratic" tasks of leadership and allow for more "leadership" and vision. Demystify and train earlier for management tasks, so new leaders can spend less time in learning these tasks. |
| **Demographic** | Personal characteristics (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, family status, sexual orientation, etc.) were least influential in shaping faculty perception | More "holistic" studies that assume demographic characteristics are one of many identities, and test when and under what conditions particular identities are most salient. | Do not always assume that demographic characteristics are the primary identity individuals bring to their professional activities; program accordingly |



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This was a small sample and specific to the context of an R1 Institution (Carnegie, 2018), so these individual cases may not extrapolate to larger populations or different institutional contexts. Still, I find these perspectives worth noting because they challenge conventional notions (i.e., Nygaard, 2017) about tensions that suggest faculty members are compelled by institutional pressures to prioritize research above all else. Instead, what participants in this study revealed was a more nuanced relationship between research and other faculty activities that suggest more overlapping, complementary relationships.

**Joint appointment**. The most surprising finding was that another institutional factor, joint appointments, had a strong influence on faculty views of academic leadership. I did not specifically seek out participants who held joint appointments, nor did I find a great deal of scholarship about joint appointments for faculty members being a particularly salient feature of modern faculty life (see Glass, Doberneck, & Schweitzer, 2011 for one recent piece that references the influence of joint appointments on faculty work; in this case, outreach efforts).

Nevertheless, seven of the 12 (or 58%) faculty members in this study were serving in joint appointments. The findings made it clear that the fact of these appointments influenced how faculty members interpret leadership and I suspect these appointments are influential for a couple of different reasons. First, because jointly-appointed faculty members are inherently "in" two different units, they are from their earliest days on campus exposed to faculty in at least two disciplines, and are led by at least two department chairs, an academic leadership role that plays an important role in modeling academic leadership to new faculty members (Andrews, Conaway, Zhao & Dolan, 2016; Bowman, 2010; Mamiseishvili & Lee, 2016). Second, in cases where a joint appointment policy was handled poorly, leaving a faculty member to navigate two different departments on his or her own, the challenges of managing two different departmental homes



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sometimes put these faculty members in touch with academic leaders higher up in the institution (in one case, in the Provost's Office) to help sort it out. For one faculty member who shared her history of struggling to navigate a joint appointment, these institutional leaders became trusted mentors and colleagues who have shaped how she thinks about, enacts, and envisions leadership for herself.

The faculty members in this study spent the most time and detail discussing the ways in which institutional factors shaped how they approached their work. Such factors include the surprising influence of joint appointments, as well as the way that research expectations and rewards, compel, and/or deter faculty from adding leadership to their professional responsibilities. There is no question that institutional factors like policies and appointment types shape the environments in which faculty members do work, understand their roles, and come to understand "academic leadership."

**Cultural and Disciplinary Factors**

In this study, Cultural and Disciplinary factors also emerged as important influences on faculty perception. Cultural factors refer to messages, norms, and identities related to "faculty" cultures, while disciplinary factors refer to specific disciplinary norms and practices within faculty ranks. The latter recognizes that faculty members experience their work primarily within the framework of their discipline—in this study, that means within the cultures of Social Science, Quantitative Science, Physical Science, and Natural Science—and that these particular cultures powerfully influence how individuals understand themselves as professionals, with expectations about their professional roles and how they make decisions about what work to prioritize.

**Discipline = Identity**. This study affirmed that most faculty members "see" themselves through a disciplinary lens (Becher, 2001; Galloway & Jones, 2012; Musselin, 2013). Faculty members rhetorically emphasize their disciplinary identities by introducing themselves as an "—ist" (i.e.,



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chemist, botanist, psychologist), and offer as evidence details about their particular area of research. I suspect this is more than mere habit, and that this way of introducing oneself signals high degrees of identity salience (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995) from seeing a disciplinary identity as their primary vision of their professional selves.

It is also noteworthy that even for faculty members who are in formal academic leadership roles, the disciplinary identity is the primary identity. Of the five (out of 12) participants serving in campus leadership positions, only two introduced themselves jointly as "—ists" *and* as "Associate chairs" (or other titles). Both of these faculty members had already indicated a desire to one day serve as department chair. Meanwhile, the three women in leadership roles described themselves as "—ists" and also referred to their important academic leadership positions, but their precise rhetoric did not suggest that they saw their leadership identities as fully equal to their disciplinary identities. Rather, leadership was a set of duties that they fulfilled (and often enjoyed and thrived in doing) while they saw their disciplinary efforts as who they were as professionals. This functional view may explain why faculty members in this study did not seem to be wrestling with identity issues as they considered leadership: it was largely not the case that participants saw leadership positions as conferring a new identity. Their scholarly identity *is* their professional identity, and for most, leadership is simply an additional set of responsibilities.

**Faculty Views of Leadership as Management.** The idea that leadership is a set of duties reflects another finding of note from this study, that many faculty members seem to see leadership as akin to management (Collins, 2014; **Söderhjelm**, Björklund, Sandahl & Bolander-Laksov, 2018; Strathe & Wilson, 2006). This idea represents a cultural factor because it transcends discipline: it is an idea that was shared by faculty participants across both social



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science and traditional STEM fields. This view of academic leadership supports scholarship (Evans, 2017) showing many faculty are ambivalent or unclear about what constitutes academic leadership. This idea was communicated explicitly by several participants who used the word "management" to describe campus leadership roles and the word "leadership" to describe visible leadership roles within one's disciplinary organization. Other participants described leadership as focusing primarily on bureaucratic matters such as human resources or personnel matters, budgets, paperwork, or running meetings. Interestingly, the people in this study who most strongly articulated a view of leadership as something *more* than bureaucracy are also the same four faculty members who had articulated a commitment to pursuing additional leadership roles, suggesting that the more committed a person is to leadership, and perhaps the more experience he or she has with leadership positions, the more likely those people are to see leadership as something more than mere management.

**Faculty ≠Leadership?** A common refrain in faculty circles is the stereotype that faculty members see academic leadership or admiration as "the dark side" (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2012; Foster, 2006; Ginsberg, 2011), and that once you become an academic leader, you can never return to faculty. This study both affirms and challenges become these ideas. One faculty leader (Gene, a Social Scientist) explicitly acknowledged this idea exists, but also refuted it by pointing to a colleague of his who was in the midst of a successful transition back to the faculty. Not one person in this study held a uniformly negative view of campus academic leadership, or saw it as antithetical to "faculty" status. Even among the few who emphatically saw only the slimmest chance of leadership in their future, those who said that if their colleagues needed them to take on the role of department chair, they would; they just would not seek such a role for themselves. And there was little hostility to academic leadership that appears in some other



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works (i.e., Ginsberg, 2011) which sees an inherent and insurmountable conflict between leadership roles and faculty positions.

So this study's findings resist the idea that faculty members see leaders as an entirely different "group," a new identity, of which they want no part. Though I would have expected to see more tension between a person's faculty identity (or their disciplinary identity) and a burgeoning "leadership identity," that did not come through for these participants. Scholarship has suggested that to be an effective leader, one must develop a leadership identity (Moorosi, 2014; Wheat & Hill, 2016), but the participants in this study often expressed a reluctance to call themselves "leaders," even when they were in formal leadership roles.

I suspect this comes from an overall functional view of leadership that I described above. This echoes the way that several faculty members described them*selves* with a disciplinary identity—and their leadership work as something they *do* in addition to their disciplinary research: their scholarship is "who they are," while leadership is "something they do." Academic leadership, in this functional view, is a set of tasks—management tasks, as perceived by faculty members in this study as well as reflected in the literature (Collins, 2014).

There is one piece of relevant scholarship that does help to inform why participants in this study did not necessarily see the assumption of a leadership role as the assumption of a leadership identity as well: White (2012) studied faculty transition to the role of associate dean. He found that in the first two years of leadership, the primary focus was on mastering the tasks required of this role while still retaining a strong faculty identity, whereas those who had been in the role longer articulated more tension around identity issues and navigating a leadership identity with their faculty and disciplinary identities. In the present study, all of the leaders I included were relatively new in their leadership role (or looking at leadership from the outside):



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This may explain a primary occupation with the functions and *tasks* of leadership, and it may be that as people settle into leadership they begin to explore leadership *identities* in new ways. It may be that there is a longer period of metamorphosis between a non-leader and a leader—and that a period of time and transition is needed to move from a point where a faculty member "does" leadership to a point where a faculty member thinks of herself as a leader, with a corresponding leadership identity.

I think this interpretation may also explain the relatively strong emphasis on institutional factors in shaping perception, which I described in the previous section: since so many faculty across disciplines see the *act* of leadership as the completion of a set of managerial tasks, it follows that the *artifacts* of those tasks—the policies and administrative effects (like appointment types, what kind of work is formally recognized and rewarded) that represent institutional factors—would dominate the factors that shape their work environments and how they understand leadership. In short, a functional view may lead a person to believe that leadership is a set of mundane tasks, and that the impact of leadership is the creation and enforcement of policies and procedures that govern faculty efforts.

**Demographic Factors**

The most surprising finding from this study is that the faculty participants in this sample were least likely to identify demographic factors—race, gender, ethnicity, family status, etc.—as factors shaping their views on leadership. I explore this idea more fully in Chapter 4, but given the strong work done by scholars to explore how leaders in different groups—leaders of color (Gin, 2013; Tuitt et al, 2009; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008), women (Howe & Walsh-Turnbull, 2016; Wheat & Hill, 2016), faculty leaders with family concerns (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004)—experience leadership and are often underrepresented in the ranks of leaders, I



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would have expected demographic factors to emerge as a more powerful force in shaping mid-career faculty members' perception of leadership.

Instead, I found that many faculty members, especially the five women in this study and the two faculty members of color, spoke about their experiences in nuanced ways that showed a sophisticated understanding of how their gender, race, ethnicity, etc. shaped their careers and how the facts of their experiences are always present and nested within different social identities, but those demographic factors did not specifically or exclusively shape their leadership views and experiences.

This illustrates some incongruity with the scholarly literature (e.g., Acker, 2010; Blackmore, 2014; Rosser, 2003), which suggests that views and experiences about *leadership* among women, persons of color, and cultural or ethnic minority faculty members are unique and striking enough that they stand apart; that leadership for women is different than it is for men, and that women perceive leadership differently as a result. Findings from this study did not align with this view.

The RSU participants in my study did not articulate significant differences—based on their gender, at least—in their views of leadership. This aligns with what analysis from the RSU ADAPP project (discussed more in Chapter 3) discovered: no significant differences between female and male faculty responses to [the possibility of] serving as Assistant or Associate Chair or Director, as Department Chair or Director, as Director of Center, Institute or Program, and as Assistant or Associate Dean (Woodruff, Morio, & Yi, 2009, p. 20). So it may be that in this particular context, demographic factors like gender are less influential than one's disciplinary identity or environmental and institutional factors, in shaping perception of leadership. I think



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there is more to this analysis, however, that aligns with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

I have already discussed how many faculty members in this study perceived leadership in functional terms: it is seen by most faculty in this study as a set of tasks, added to the other tasks done by faculty members. This seems to be especially true for those furthest from leadership—those who have not served in leadership roles nor expressed interest in leadership. It may be that for faculty members who see roles like "Assistant or Associate Chair or Director, as Department Chair or Director, as Director of Center, Institute or Program, and as Assistant or Associate Dean" and have little personal curiosity about the role may see only the most bureaucratic elements of it and focus on such details in ways that make the role unappealing to both men and women alike. Therefore, identity factors like gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. may not have been identified as particularly salient because they did not see who they were *as a person* as altogether relevant to a job whose primary responsibility is to accomplish certain tasks.

There is another way to consider the question as to why demographic factors did not emerge as more influential in shaping perception of leadership, and this analysis is informed by facets of Social Identity Theory, and in particular, identity salience (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995). "Identity salience" refers to the notion that different facets of our identities are more salient, striking, or relevant than others at certain times and in certain contexts.

> Identity salience represents one of the ways, and a theoretically most important way, that the identities making up the self can be organized. Identities, that is, are conceived as being organized into a salience hierarchy. This hierarchical organization of identities is defined by the probabilities of each of the various identities within it being brought into play in a given situation. Alternatively, it is defined by the probabilities each of the



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identities have of being invoked across a variety of situations. The location of an identity in this hierarchy is, by definition, its salience. (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 206).

That women and faculty of color did not primarily emphasize their gender, ethnicity, or race in describing their views on leadership or their ambitions for it may be partially explained by the concept of identity salience: it may be that at this point in their career and within the particular communities where they are imagining themselves as leaders, a disciplinary identity may simply be more salient than other facts of one's personal identity. In describing one's views on the department chair, say, or one's willingness to serve in such a role, it is possible that participants consider themselves via a disciplinary lens more so than as a woman, a person of color, etc. The fact of their gender may be less salient to them *at this point* and *in this context* because they are leading in domains where other facets of their identity—primarily their disciplinary identity—are perhaps, quite simply, *more* salient.

If this interpretation holds, then, it may be that as leadership takes people into new and different communities, where people do not already "know" them (or their disciplinary abilities, their backgrounds, accomplishments, contributions to the community, etc.), other identity factors emerge as more powerful: the identity benefits conferred by expertise in one's discipline may become less powerful and less salient, the further one gets away from one's department. It may be that as a person moves into domains where disciplinary authority is less a given, other aspects of identity become *more* salient and more clearly aligned with studies and literature that convincingly emphasize the importance of demographic identity factors (e.g., Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Wheat & Hill, 2016) in shaping people's views on and experiences with leadership. It may be that a botanist considering serving her colleagues as a department chair is seen by her colleagues (and considers herself) primarily as a highly-successful botanist…but if



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she were to move into leadership roles where her scholarly accomplishments in botany are less immediately valued, then gender (race, ethnicity, etc.) may become more salient in how she thinks of herself as a leader and how she experiences leadership. She is never not a woman and a botanist—those identities are always nested within each other—simply that different identities are more visible (more salient) at different times.

This interpretation merits further attention from scholarship. There could be a great deal to learn by intentionally studying how leadership views evolve over time, from a point before a person enters into a leadership role and as they move through leadership positions. In particular, there would be value in intentionally studying faculty views on leadership specifically through the lens of identity and how the salience of various identities morphs (or not) in different contexts and throughout a career (White, 2012). The present study, just to reiterate, was not a study about identity and its influence on leadership: It was a study about *perception* of leadership and what factors most powerfully shape perception, of which different identities (including faculty, disciplinary, and personal identities) were possible influences.

**Summary of Findings**

In summary, the findings from this study suggest that while all identities are important, faculty members identify institutional factors as particularly important in shaping how mid-career faculty members at RSU see academic leadership. I suspect that bureaucratic and environmental issues seem more powerful because participants are at a point in their academic careers where they have either relatively little exposure to formal leadership positions and because they largely report thinking of leadership as a set of bureaucratic tasks. People in this mid-career stage with limited experience with leadership largely report seeing leadership as a position dominated by managerial tasks or the enactment of policies and procedures; they also, then, seem to see bureaucracy, policies, and procedures as having the most influence on how



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they understand leadership  and imagine the future roles they may take on. This was less true of a small number (4 of 12) of faculty who had not only stepped into leadership positions with a higher degree of responsibility, which implies that a positive experience as an academic leader, coupled with a desire to continue to grow and serve in such roles, leads to a perception of leadership as being more than mere management.

This is not to suggest that *only* contextual factors influence perception of leadership. This study suggests that aspects of a person's professional and personal identities are also influential to their thinking about leadership. But what emerged in the findings for this study was that when mid-career faculty members consider leadership, the identity factors that most shape how they think of leadership are rooted in their disciplines, and in their disciplinary identity. Training in their disciplines that shaped and modeled academic leadership; authority and prestige within a discipline that may inspire the pursuit of new challenges; the desire to serve disciplinary colleagues with an eye to advancing the scholarship and standing of the department within disciplinary societies and other higher ups at RSU: Those factors shaped perception of academic leadership and inspired participants to consider leadership opportunities. Absent from these findings were inherent tensions or incongruities between "faculty" work and "academic leadership." Of little direct influence among this group were how a person's personal identity factors shaped how they saw or considered leadership positions.

**Implications for Scholarship**

I have noted throughout this analysis that the relatively small sample size in this exploratory study suggests some limitations, but I also think that the small size makes it easy to identify areas ripe for future study, as well: by expanding the population studied, there are particular threads of this study that could yield important findings.



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**Holistic Views**. I feel strongly that there is merit in taking a holistic view, as I endeavored to do here in the overall design for this study: to assume that there are multiple factors influencing how faculty members perceive academic leadership and allow them to decide which ones are the most powerful in shaping their thinking. Though there is value and merit in studying the specifics of a faculty experience—inquiring *how* a person's prior training or gender identity shape what they perceive—I find it equally helpful to inquire *if* and *when* different identities and experiences prove powerful in shaping one's views. It represents, I believe, a more realistic effort to acknowledge everyone has multiple, overlapping, and nested identities that are expressed in different contexts, and is why I employed Social Identity Theory in informing the theoretical model for this study.

I focused here on the topic of leadership, but there are other areas that could benefit from a unified framework like I used in this study. For example, future studies could explore how faculty members perceive what is most impactful on their teaching: is it the environmental factors that dictate when they teach and what courses they teach? Is it how well (or poorly) their graduate programs prepared them for teaching, with norms and beliefs that persist into their faculty careers? Is it who they are a person and how students perceive them as women or teachers of color? It is likely all of them: but asking teachers themselves to identify what they perceive as most powerful may yield important insights from scholars, as well as identify opportunities for institutions to support improvements in teaching and design effective professional development around pedagogy that addresses the issues identified by faculty members themselves as challenges and assumes all are relevant challenges at different times and in different ways.



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There are other opportunities for future research that relate to this idea of looking holistically at how faculty members see and negotiate the different domains of their work.

For example, scholars may benefit from studying how faculty make choices regarding the traditional tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service. Faculty participants in this study suggest that they see fewer hard boundaries between leadership and other areas of faculty work: That leadership can overlap with research (and teaching), complement it, or be used in service of raising one's research profile and reputation. This idea deserves more attention, as participants suggest they find ways to creatively tie together different domains of their work which are sometimes treated separately by scholars.

**Joint Appointments**. I indicated my surprise in finding that joint appointments emerged as an institutional finding that had a powerful influence in shaping perception of leadership. But there is relatively little scholarship done that explores these appointments or measures their prevalence, there is surprisingly little work done on this topic. Part of it may be a result of the challenge in identifying and tracking jointly-appointed faculty members (institutions differ in their practice), but I suspect this is a gap in the literature worth exploring. Given a growing interest in interdisciplinary work (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013), are joint appointments becoming more common as a way to recruit and support people whose work spans more than one discipline? In what ways do these appointments affect how faculty in them navigate their careers, including leadership? Though I did not seek out faculty in joint appointments, I ended up with seven of 12 being participants in such positions. Targeting this population more intentionally for study could yield other important insights useful to scholars and practitioners alike.

Evolving views of leadership. I explained that one of the reasons I saw value in studying mid-career faculty members—some of whom had not served as leaders—was the relative paucity of



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scholarship from the perspective of the led (Evans, Home, & Rayner, 2013). I am intrigued by the idea from these findings that may suggest an evolution of ideas that takes place as a person moves from a position before they have served as a leader to one of novice leadership to an experienced leader: and to capture the evolution of these views, it is necessary to intentionally target people who are not yet leaders themselves. This is an area worthy of extra attention from scholars.

Similarly, scholars could further explore the idea that emerged in this study, and which also were found in White's (2012) work: That the early days of leadership in one's career are marked by a preoccupation with the management of tasks required in a job, but that the more experience a person has with leadership (and the more committed they are to continuing a path of academic leadership), there is a shift that encourages more self-reflection about how leadership impact's one's identity, the development of a leadership identity, leadership as an intellectual and scholarly challenge, or other facets of leadership beyond the mere checking off of tasks. Longitudinal studies that track the evolution of ideas would not only be interesting, but potentially have implications for practice that could target, more intentionally, leadership development programs. I describe this idea further, below.

**Implications for Practice**

Throughout this analysis, I identified areas for future research from scholars that could extend the findings of this study and offer new ways of interpreting those findings. It is equally, if not more, important for me to identify the ways this study may point to potential implications for practice, to help institutions interested in cultivating leaders among their faculty.

**Reimaging Leadership Positions**. Institutions can use findings from studies like this to think critically about the ways in which leadership is structured and what faculty members believe academic leadership entails. The largely functional view of leadership held by mid-career faculty



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who participated in this study illustrates that they largely think of academic leadership as a series of bureaucratic tasks. Perhaps this is simply a call for institutions to do more effective public relations to improve the image of leadership, to better assure those who "see" academic leadership but have not participated in it that leadership entails more than budgets, personnel matters, and paperwork.

But it may also be that academic positions, such as department chair, are accurately viewed and that a disproportionate amount of time is spent on potentially unappealing bureaucratic matters. If that is the case—that the very positions of academic leadership that faculty members experience from their earliest days as a scholar, and the positions which shape their views of leadership are, in fact, overrun with bureaucracy—the institutions may want to rethink the roles or provide more strategic support so that such positions appeal to a more diverse pool of faculty members. As I found, all 12 participants in this study were open to serving in leadership roles such as department chair (even the two who suggested they would not be very good at the job said they would consider it if their colleagues encouraged them). This suggests that there is potentially a much broader pool of potential leaders than one might expect…so long as the job itself is more than bureaucratic drudgery.

Participants in this study who articulated a desire to pursue additional leadership roles did so because they saw academic leadership as a way to make a difference: serve their colleagues, serve students, advance and support scholarship in their units, etc. None cited bureaucracy as the reason *to* pursue leadership, though several cited bureaucracy as a reason *not to* pursue leadership. If institutions share my values guiding this study—that higher education institutions are well-served by engaging diverse faculty members in leadership and decision-making at all



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levels—then figuring out how to make leadership roles more appealing to different kinds of people will positively impact the institution.

That may mean offering support staff with high levels of training in budgets and personnel matters to alleviate some of the pressures put on department leaders to allow them more time and energy to enact other leadership ambitions better suited to their goals and experiences. It may mean creating support structures that allow faculty members interested in leadership to continue their research at high levels, and not feel that they need to step back from their scholarship—as I mentioned, several participants indicated a willingness to pursue leadership after "finishing" some significant line of research—to alleviate any concerns that leadership will derail their research or other valued aspects of their faculty careers.

**Reimagine the Leadership Training Timeline**. And importantly, this study may suggest that the professional development needs may change over one's faculty career, to speak to the ways that different concerns relate to leadership perception. That means different kinds of training, at different points in a career, aimed at different people. For someone who has never been a leader, but is considering a role as an associate chair, associate dean, graduate director: the present study would suggest that a functional view of leadership predominates their thinking, so training in time management, how to work well with an assistant, budgeting, how to manage paperwork etc., may be the most beneficial (if not necessarily the most exciting). As White (2012) pointed out, for new leaders, the first two years are dominated by struggles to master the tasks expected of them in their roles: Helping to prepare people with training in these tasks could empower them to consider pursuing these positions more often.

Institutions should also value leadership training that evolves as leader needs evolve. Once people have sampled academic leadership, and mastered the needed skills required for the



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roles, leadership development could focus on other challenges of leadership in support of leaders who want to pursue "big" goals. Maybe that could include strategic planning, coalition building in the complex systems that dominate higher education (Birnbaum, 1991), or other leadership skills that move past merely keeping on top of paperwork.

And eventually, academic leaders want and benefit from discussions of how their identities may shift over time (White, 2012). That could mean they come to adopt a personal "leadership identity" as they adapt to the challenges of leadership and find ways to reflect on the impact of their leadership. It may mean that as leaders move into positions of power further away from their disciplinary/department homes (i.e., moving from department chair to a college-level position), leaders may need to grapple with how their personal/demographic identities influence how they enact leadership. Institutions could, at that point, consider training focusing on these areas. I could see value in adopting a "lifespan" view in training and supporting leadership as useful (see Table 5.1, below). It takes into account that leader needs—and leadership identities and goals—evolve depending on where a person is in her career and her leadership trajectory in ways that align with how faculty members in this study perceive leadership and articulate their goals and objectives.



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**Table 5.2 Sample Leadership Development Curriculum Across the "Lifespan"**

| Stage of "Leadership Life" | Preparing for Leadership | Novice Leaders | Seasoned Leaders |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | The Work of Leadership | Setting Your Leadership Priorities | Developing Leadership Identity |
| **Who Served** | For those not in leadership, or new to the role | Leaders who have developed skills to manage the job; now want to set goals and "lead" | Leaders who are interested in moving into higher positions of authority |
| **Description** | "Functions" of leadership (the bureaucratic stuff) | Strategies for goal setting and achieving collaborative or "big" goals that require more than just management skills | Developing who "you are" as a leader, and how "others" see you. Leading people you do not personally know |

In short, if a person is discouraged from leadership because he does not believe he is organized enough to manage it, despite potentially effective ideas and skills, the solution is not necessarily to provide him with leadership training to help him hone his leadership identity: it may be that he needs a good administrative assistant. Similarly, if a new woman college dean is struggling because her role on campus is one where many in her college are not aware, or appreciative, of her powerful status as a researcher, it may be useful to offer support and mentorship in navigating how her gender (or race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) is shaping how she approaches her work and how her colleagues see her. Expanding research in this area, then, could have significant scholarly and institutional impacts.

Rather than assuming the same leadership training to be useful and applicable to people across their professional lifespan, institutions could design a leadership curriculum, that moves along with faculty members as they build new skills and confidence, and prepare them for the next round of leadership challenges they might confront.



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**Structures Shape Leadership**. As I noted, institutional factors emerged as very powerful in shaping faculty perception, and one surprising note was the influence of joint appointments. Though it was not the focus of this study—it was not even a factor I considered when I sought participants for this study—the fact is that 7 of 12 participants were themselves in jointly appointed faculty positions, and the data revealed that the fact of these appointments had a strong influence on perception of leadership.

This is, in part, because jointly appointed faculty members began their careers at RSU with exposure to at least two different department chairs: That meant the ability to experience at least two different units, see different leaders in action, and see how different departments function in different ways. In several cases, one department offered a model of a highly successful leader, while the other department chair was problematic.

I would argue that the role of joint appointments is worth more attention, from both scholars and institutional leaders. It may be true that RSU has more jointly appointed faculty than other campuses, though I suspect it does not. But as I noted in calling for more scholarship around joint appointments, so too should practitioners pay attention to the impact of their appointments. That means focusing on designing effective Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) so that faculty new to institutions are not left trying to figure out how to manage competing expectations in two departments. Rather than creating a situation where a junior faculty member is uncertain about who will have greater influence in annual reviews and evaluations, an institution can proactively implement policies whereby both chairs offer feedback and mentoring—evidencing different models of leadership—in support of faculty and their success. Such an approach could serve well in modeling and inspiring leadership among faculty members in addition to alleviating stress.



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**Conclusion**

The core of this study is rooted in the belief that faculty members make important contributions to institutions of higher education, and that having them engaged and involved as teachers, researchers, and leaders that shape institutions is valuable. We need faculty voices in the functioning of higher education institutions, and to serve this effort, it is necessary for both scholars and institutions to think critically about the work of academic leadership, and confront the realities of it: What does the work require right now, and what would the work ideally require so that the skills of engaged and accomplished scholars can be best used to support our institutions? What institutional, cultural, and disciplinary messages (and norms and practices) shape the way faculty members come to understand the value of academic leadership and their place in it, and are those messages accurate? Are they the messages we want to hear? Do they say the "right" thing to the people we most want to hear it?

In order to begin to answer these questions, I designed this study. And through it, I found that faculty members are paying attention to the work of universities beyond their research and teaching obligations, and they generally see a positive value in faculty contributions to the functioning of their departments and universities. They see value in opportunities to honor their own skills and making contributions that use their skills, especially of those leadership opportunities support their research, their colleagues, and their students: If I were to try to tie up neatly one single takeaway, it is that the mid-career faculty members in this study have a lot of passion for many dimensions of their work, and when opportunities arise to use their skills to positively impact those dimensions, they are willing, even eager, to serve in leadership roles.

I hope this study continues the efforts of scholars to better understand the specific challenges faculty members confront in academic leadership positions, and that institutions use research like this to structure positions and support individuals willing to serve in such roles. As



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scholars (Schuster, Conley, & Finkelstein, 2016) continue to track the evolution of faculty careers and how scholars negotiate the new demands of an academic job, institutions would be well served by paying attention to these studies and proactively identifying strategies to identify and nurture the leadership ambitions in the population of diverse, engaged, and committed scholars who want to see colleges and universities thrive.



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# APPENDICES



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## Appendix A: IRB Letter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**Initial IRB Application Determination *Exempt***

July 7, 2016

To: Roger Baldwin
417 Erickson Hall

Re: **IRB# x16-871e** Category: Exempt 2
**Approval Date:** July 7, 2016

Title: Mid-Career Faculty Perceptions of Academic Leadership and Self

The Institutional Review Board has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your project has been deemed as exempt** in accordance with federal regulations.

The IRB has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for the protection of human subjects in exempt research. **Under our exempt policy the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects** in this project as outlined in the assurance letter and exempt educational material. The IRB office has received your signed assurance for exempt research. A copy of this signed agreement is appended for your information and records.

**Renewals**: Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. If the project is completed, please submit an ***Application for Permanent Closure***.

**Revisions**: Exempt protocols do not require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a new initial application will be required.

**Problems**: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify the IRB office promptly. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the IRB.

**Follow-up**: If your exempt project is not completed and closed after three years, the IRB office will contact you regarding the status of the project and to verify that no changes have occurred that may affect exempt status.

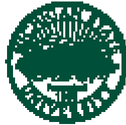
Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at IRB@msu.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harry McGee, MPH
SIRB Chair

c: Julie Rojewski




Office of Regulatory Affairs
Human Research Protection Programs

Biomedical & Health Institutional Review Board (BIRB)

Community Research Institutional Review Board (CRIRB)

Social Science Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB)

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**Appendix B: Participant Solicitation Email**

**From:** Julie Rojewski [mailto:rojewsj@msu.edu]
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 11, 2016 2:54 PM
**To:** Participant [participant@rsu.edu]
**Subject:** Dissertation Project on Academic Leadership

Dear Professor:

I am writing you in hopes that you will be willing to permit me to interview you for my dissertation project.

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Administration at MSU, and where I research faculty careers as part of the HALE program under the guidance of Dr. Roger Baldwin, Professor of Educational Administration. My dissertation project looks specifically at mid-career, social science faculty members and their perceptions of leadership in academia, which is why I am contacting you in hopes that you would be willing to spend time being interviewed.

I am asking for a total of about two hours of your time:

1) An interview of no more 1.5 hours (average so far is one hour)

2) A follow-up interview of about 30 minutes, to be scheduled a few weeks after our initial conversation

I will, of course, come to you at a time and place that works into your schedule.

There is no need to prepare anything for this discussion: I'm seeking to capture how you see your career, and academic careers and leadership more broadly. At this point, I have interviewed half a dozen faculty members and several of them have told me after the fact that they appreciated the experience, because it gave them a chance to think about and discuss their work in a way they don't usually do. I would love to include you in my sample.

Please let me know if you are willing to help with this project, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.
Thank you for considering this!

Sincerely,
Julie Rojewski
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Educational Administration
Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education (HALE) Program
College of Education
Michigan State University



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**Appendix C: Interview Questions**

**To be read to each participant:**
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research study, which I am conducting in partial fulfillment of the requirements to earn a doctorate in the HALE program in the College of Education.

The purpose of this study is to better understand what you, as a mid-career faculty member, think about faculty work and leadership. In particular, I am interested in exploring your attitudes about academic leadership, experiences with leaders and leadership as a faculty member, and what role leadership plays or might play in your own career.

I have a series of questions that I will ask, and I encourage you to answer in any way you feel comfortable. If it is okay with you, I will record our conversation so that I can transcribe it; I will also be taking notes. I can assure you anonymity: I will use a pseudonym for you in my dissertation, and all identifying details will be masked or removed.

Loosely-Structured Interview Questions (Cover each, but flexible depending on conversation)

**Perception of Self and Work**
Please tell me a little bit about yourself and your work as a faculty member.
(How do you describe your job as a faculty member? What do you do?)

How did you learn to be a faculty member?

What do you think it means to be successful as a faculty member?
How did you come to believe this?

How do you make decisions about your career, such as deciding which opportunities to pursue, and such?
Whose counsel do you consider?

**Perceptions of Academic Leadership**

If I say the words "academic leadership," what do you think of?

How would you describe the "kind" of person who is interested in taking on leadership role such as a department chair or college dean?

How do your colleagues and peers talk about academic leadership?

Has the message changed over the course of your career? In what ways?

**Perceptions of Academic Leaders**



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Can you think of any academic leaders who really stand out in your career? What makes them stand out to you?

What can you tell me about your department chair as a leader?

What about your chair in your previous departments, such as during graduate school or post-doctoral training? Does anything stand out with leaders you have worked with in the past?

What kind of academic leadership, if any, have you done in your career?

What was that/were those experiences like?

Why do you think you were asked to take on that role?

If someone asked you to put your name in to be a department chair, what would you say? (How would you answer if you were already promoted to full professor?—to ask if needed).

What would you see as the pros and cons of taking on a formal leadership role now? At some point in your career? (If they express no interest in leadership) Can you think of any circumstances that would be compelling to you to take on that role?

What kinds of changes would you need to make to yourself or your work (if any) to position yourself to be a successful campus leader with a formal leadership title?

**What kind of legacy would you like to leave, professionally? What would you like people to remember about your faculty career?**

**For the second interview**, I would prefer to tailor the questions to go deeper in the topic areas that are particularly rich: which should become clear after the first round of interviews. It's difficult for me to say right now for sure where I would focus on my questions, but I do have some ideas:

Is there anything about our previous conversation that stuck with you, that you thought more about after we spoke?

Have you thought any more about academic leadership? Do you feel more or less inclined to consider academic leadership opportunities that come across your radar?

What if I said that someone suggested you for a campus leadership role? What would you say to that?



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**Appendix D: Participant Consent Form**

**PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY**

**Mid-Career Faculty Perceptions of Academic Leadership and Self**

Dear Participant:

This is an invitation to participate in an interview that is part of a doctoral dissertation research project examining perceptions about academic leadership and professional identities held by mid-career, tenure-system faculty members. This study, entitled *Mid-Career Faculty Perceptions of Leadership and Self,* is conducted by Julie Rojewski under the supervision of Dr. Roger Baldwin, Professor of Educational Administration in the MSU College of Education.

This study asks you to participate in two separate interviews. The first will be approximately one-hour, depending on the length of your responses. A follow up interview will take place approximately one month after the first, and should last approximately one half-hour. Interviews and data analysis will follow standard qualitative procedures suitable to loosely-structured interview protocols. Participants will be asked to select their own pseudonym prior to analysis, and all identifying information will be removed from transcripts prior to analysis.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, with no penalty for doing so. You may also choose not to answer individual questions but to answer others. With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded with a digital audio recorder. If you agree to this, you may request that the recorder be turned off at any point during the interview. All digital recordings, this consent form, and the information form, on which you indicate your name, contact information, and chosen pseudonym, will each be kept in a separate, secure location at Michigan State University until three years after the completion of this study, at which time each will be destroyed.

Your identity will remain confidential in all transcribing, analyzing, and reporting of data. Because this study involves face-to-face interviews, I cannot provide anonymity to participants. But your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of attitudes and experiences related to academic leadership among tenure-track faculty, and inform scholarly understanding of how faculty members perceive their work. Higher Education scholars and institutional leaders anticipate a shortage of qualified and experienced academic leaders willing and able to provide leadership and guidance to US colleges and institutions, and this study is an effort to inform this phenomenon.

Potential risks are expected to be minimal because the researchers are committed to protecting your confidentiality and that I will make every reasonable accommodation to mask your identity. We remind you that you may, at any time and without penalty, elect not to answer a question or terminate the interview. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.



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If you have concerns or questions about this study or to report an injury (i.e. physical, psychological, social, financial, or otherwise), please contact either the researcher: Julie Rojewski (rojewsj@msu.edu or 884-0065) or her doctoral advisor Dr. Roger Baldwin (rbaldwin@msu.edu or 355-6452).

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

**Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.**

________________________________________ ______________
Signature of Participant Date

____________________________________ ________________
Name of Participant (please print) Initial Here for Consent to Record Interview

_________________________________________
Chosen Pseudonym



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