Disrupting Schools for Boys: Interrogating Program, Policy, and Culture

Michael Paluch
mpaluch3@uwo.ca

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WESTERN UNIVERSITY

DISRUPTING SCHOOLS FOR BOYS:
INTERROGATING PROGRAM, POLICY, AND CULTURE

by

Michael Paluch

AN ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

LONDON, ONTARIO

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Abstract

This inquiry draws upon a variety of philosophical and theoretical perspectives, including post-structuralism, feminist theory and Marxist philosophy for the purposes of identifying an appropriate leadership framework for educators at schools for boys. It is proposed that a disruptive approach to leadership might serve to stimulate the conscientization of stakeholders within boys’ schools with respect to how essentialist notions of masculinity may be limiting student achievement and personal growth. This conscientization may engender a deep interrogation of those programs, policies, and cultural aspects that might be serving to promote unhealthy and/or toxic performances of masculinity. The application of a constructivist and pragmatic lens to the daily work within schools for boys may serve to counter prevailing limiting stereotypes of masculinity and provide boys a myriad of paths to pursue their humanity. The work within this Organizational Improvement Plan may serve to inform educators of boys in any educational context. More research is required regarding practical strategies that might be adopted by educators of boys in light of emerging understandings pertaining to masculinities and gender identity and expression.

Keywords: masculinities, gender expression, gender regime, conscientization, disruptive leadership, schools for boys

N.B. This document has been anonymized to protect the institution of focus.
Executive Summary

In this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP), I seek to provide educators in schools specifically for boys the context for embracing a disruptive leadership style to stimulate an interrogation of program, policies, and culture for the purposes of forestalling limiting notions and performances of masculinity, often referred to in the media as “toxic masculinity”. The explicit premise of this inquiry is that schools for boys have long embraced essentialist notions of gender; it is argued that a constructivist position, which holds gender as social performance rather than something immutable, can serve to reframe the context at schools for boys and provide a backdrop for a more safe, equitable, and inclusive environment.

In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of my own school context, including commentary on current leadership approaches that might be serving to reinforce an essentialist position with respect to gender expression. I provide some working definitions of gender informed by the post-structuralist thinkers Butler (1990/2007) and Connell (2005, 2011, 2012); this understanding of gender is embraced by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (n.d.). I have attempted to offer context with respect to the broader societal brushstrokes that appear to be shaping our understandings of boys and contest the notion of a globalized “boy crisis”. Such a position seems to resonate as a form of recuperative masculinity (Lingard, Mills & Weaver-Hightower, 2012) in which the proclamation that we are headed toward societal crisis because our boys are not achieving in school serves to engender fear and an accompanying common desire to re-frame the status quo. A simple refutation of this position can be made in reference to the income disparity between men in women within the working world (Gender Wage Gap, n.d.); it would seem that boys tend to overcome apparent academic deficits once they leave school.
Instead, I argue that schools for boys may be serving to reinforce limiting understandings of what it means to be a boy or man in our world; as a result, our boys may be at risk in perceiving that they must live up to a vision of masculinity that is essentially one-dimensional. To transcend limiting notions of masculinity, schools for boys must embrace a much broader definition of masculinity—that is, they must see value in promoting a variety of masculinities (van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004). Additionally, I argue that schools for boys must then come to shape both the form and function of their operation around this broad, inclusive definition of masculinity.

To achieve this vision, I argue that we must employ a unique leadership style which I have named “disruptive” leadership, a hybrid of both team and transformational or transformative leadership as espoused by such thinkers as Shields (2004, 2008, 2010). This leadership approach may serve to destabilize the status quo and stimulate a Freirean “conscientization” of faculty and staff (Freire, 1970/2000). A disruptive approach may serve to elicit a variety of voices and ideas that have previously gone unheard or unmentioned. In this way, disruptive leadership has roots in Marxist thought.

Finally, at the conclusion of Chapter 1, I provide a brief reflection on the ethical challenges inherent in the proposed vision and approach. Fundamentally, the problem at hand is the possibility for a significant destabilization of school culture by virtue of the adoption of the premise that gender is primarily performed and not immutable. I argue that the benefits of the adoption outweigh the hazards so long as the leader is not coercive in his or her approach but rather establishes the opportunities for a dialogic approach to educational practice.

In Chapter 2, I offer a series of frameworks for change drawn from management experts and organizational culture specialists such as Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols (2016), Bolman and
Deal (2017), Gentile (2010), and Schein (2017). These change management thinkers provide insight to the way in which the disruptive leader in a school for boys might tackle both the macro and micro components of the organization. At the macro level, the disruptive leader must call together school constituents to challenge the institution’s use of language and its organizational culture. At the micro level, the institution must interrogate academic, athletic, technological, and health and wellness practices.

Further, I offer a series of practical opportunities for reconsidering program, policy, and culture that might have a concrete impact on helping to ensure a safe, equitable, and inclusive school community and may further serve to broaden boys’ understandings of themselves as young men. This list is not meant to be prescriptive in nature because that would be antithetical to the notion of a heuristic, constructivist approach to change as is entailed in a disruptive leadership model. Instead, the solutions offered provide insight into the way in which we might destabilize and reform existing program, policy, and culture.

Finally, in Chapter 3, I attempt to provide a concrete plan for change predicated on the organizational change research. This plan is specific to my own school context and is predicated on the formation of a series of committees that have as their mandate the reconsideration of both macro and micro aspects of school culture (Kang, 2015). Consideration is given to the dissemination of the work of these groups such that they have an impact on school life. The primary communication model offered is that of the interactive blog, and the benefits and limitations of this approach are provided. I offer two models for measuring the efficacy of this committee work. One involves surveying students to glean an understanding of how the hegemonic masculine norm is evolving through the intervention of more considered policies. It is suggested that a healthy gender regime is one in which a variety of behaviours and personal
attributes are accepted by the student population, and not just those that might be deemed as stereotypical. The second survey borrows from Hofstede (2011) and requires staff and faculty to provide their perceptions on the power-distance relationship between administration and staff. I contend that a reduction in the perceived distance between administration and staff will set the tone for a more inclusive community where all voices can be heard. This, in turn, provides a model to our own boys as to how they might structure their own future organizations should they come to do so in their work lives.

This inquiry has helped me to understand two key ideas about education that will serve to inform my practice in the long term. The first is that schools are local constructs and leaders in schools must understand that their practices must be tempered by local phenomena. Connell’s (2012) suggestion that unique gender regimes exist in various local contexts has helped me to see that every educational institution is a unique culture, and the educational leader must come to terms with this culture if he or she is to effect change.

The second idea that emerges from this inquiry that will have an impact on my practice is the notion that the protection of the individual’s right to selfhood is at the root of citizenship, and those who seek to promote the rights of the individual must never lose sight of the value this provides to the overall collective. This has significant policy implications. Governments and ministries of education who seek to produce policies predicated on the protection of individual rights must simultaneously seek to promote policies that transcend the individual and inspire collective responsibility.
Acknowledgements

I am thankful for the support of my family, instructors, and colleagues for their unwavering support of this project. In particular, I am grateful for the loving support of my wife Sarah, who tolerated many hours of one-sided conversations and elected to take on too much of the daily responsibilities of our lives so that I could complete this work. I wish to acknowledge my son Henry for assisting with the graphic design of various figures throughout my coursework, and for providing a role model for what possibilities there might be for fine young men in the world. I offer thanks to my colleagues at work for their generosity of spirit and advice, and, in particular, to Matt, who served as copy editor and critical friend, and Kevin, who has supported this endeavour from its inception. I am indebted to my course instructors for honouring my ideas and nudging me when it was necessary. I am appreciative of the students within my school who have repeatedly demonstrated that the future is forever bright. Finally, I hold a deep reverence for the researchers and thinkers who can be found cited within this work, whose ideas have helped me to see the world in a different light and through a myriad of new lenses.
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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

CAIS

Canadian Accredited Independent Schools. This national organization serves to provide a vision for independent school education in Canada through its robust accreditation process, professional development opportunities, and athletic tournaments. For further information, please see https://www.cais.ca/

CIS

Conference of Independent Schools of Ontario. Similar to CAIS, this provincial organization links like-minded independent schools across the province through professional development and student activities. For further information, please see https://www.cisontario.ca/index.cfm

Concientization

A term derived from Paulo Freire (1970/2000), translated here from the Portuguese “conscientização”. Freire believed that individuals could be liberated from oppression through a deliberate process whereby they became “conscious” of the nature of their material surroundings, their oppressors, and their tacit endorsement of their own oppression.

Disruptive Leadership

Inspired by feminist and Marxist understandings of both team and transformational leadership, disruptive leadership seeks to bring individuals within organizations together to destabilize, dislocate, and disrupt culture for the purposes of promoting social justice and greater inclusivity. Disruptive leaders engage in a type Foucauldian “problematization” of a given organization’s practices, policies, and culture (for a collection of Foucault’s works, see Rainbow & Rose, 2003).
EDIC

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee. This is the proposed vehicle for initiating the changes stemming from this inquiry.

Essentialism

As DeLaMater and Shibley-Hyde (1998) note: “[a]ccording to classical essentialism, there are underlying true forms or essences…and these true forms are constant over time. Modern essentialism consists of a belief that certain phenomena are natural, inevitable, and biologically determined” (p. 10).

Gender Expression

Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

Gender Identity

Gender identity is each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as, or different from, their birth-assigned sex (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

Gender Performance

Post-structuralist thinkers such as Butler (1990/2007) have helped us to view gender not as expressive but performative. As Connell (2012) notes, “gender is constituted, brought into being, by the actions through which we conduct ourselves as gendered subjects and through which we are understood as masculine or feminine” (p. 1676).
Gender Regime

As Connell (2012) notes, “[t]he structure of gender relations in a given society at a given time may be called its gender order; and the structure of gender relations in a given institution may be called it gender regime” (p. 1677).

GVV

Giving Voice to Values. Gentile’s 2010 text *Giving Voice to Values* outlines an approach to leadership that has as its focus ethical matters.

Hegemonic Masculinity

A term coined by Connell (2005) which suggests that at any given time, a particular performance of masculinity may be dominant in a local culture. It is frequently misunderstood as a synonym for toxic masculinity. The theory proposed by Connell suggests that one’s social status is a derivative of their performative relation to what is considered the hegemonic masculine norm.

Heteronormative (and heteronormativity)

Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation (heteronormative, n.d.).

IBSC

International Boys Schools’ Coalition. A national organization dedicated to determining best practices for educators in schools for boys. For more information, please see https://www.theibsc.org/

Intersectionality
The idea that gender, race, ethnicity, class and other cultural backdrops intersect with one another; as such, gender cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive from other identity markers (Harnois, 2016; Parent, DeBlaere & Moradi, 2013; Shields, 2008; Roy, 2000).

**Masculinity**

In the context of this paper, masculinity (in the limiting sense of the singular) is a word that is representative of a form of power that has, over time, been mobilized to reinforce the patriarchy.

**Masculinities**

Masculinities, in its plural form, shall be used to denote an unbounded array of identity performances that may be purposely enacted by men particularly, including, but not limited to, those limiting attributes of masculinity as defined above. To speak of masculinities in the plural (Connell, 2005; Giese, 2018a; van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004) is to recognize the potential for men to transcend toxic or limiting constructions of maleness without having to feel shame about being male (Bly, 2004).

**Mythopoetic Men’s Movement**

Through the 1970s and beyond, poet Robert Bly and Jungian psychologist Robert Moore came to be seen as leading a men’s movement that sought to help men transcend their shame through poetry, music, myth, and attention to Jungian archetypes. The movement has been criticized as a form of “recuperative masculinity” through which men are able to find new ways to reinforce patriarchy and the status-quo (Connell, 2005; van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004).

**NAIS**

An American organization dedicated to serving independent schools through the exploration of issues pertinent to K-12 independent schools in North America and beyond. Their
annual conference brings like-minded independent school educators together to discuss both operational and curricular issues. For more information, please see https://www.nais.org/about/

OIP

Organizational Improvement Plan.

PoP

Problem of Practice.

Recuperative Masculinities

Developed in 1999 by Lingard and Douglas, recuperative masculinities refers to a particular men’s rights politics which seeks, through the tacit or explicit rejection of feminism, to recoup the patriarchy and defend traditional gender regimes (Lingard, Mills & Weaver-Hightower, 2012). I am grateful for the work of Bazinet (2015) for drawing my attention to this concept.

Social Constructionism (and constructivism)

In contrast to essentialism, social constructionism “rests on the belief that reality is socially constructed and emphasizes language as an important means by which we interpret experience” (DeLaMater & Shibley-Hyde, 1998, p. 10).

SLT

In the context of this paper, the SLT refers to the senior leadership team of Macdonald Hall (see Figure 1).
Chapter 1 – Introduction and Problem

Introduction

History will record the current decade as one focused intensely on matters of gender, equity, diversity and inclusivity. Transnational migration and the emergence of electronic media (Appadurai, 1996) have contributed to the polarization of the social imaginary whereby diversity and equity, seemingly two sides of the same coin, are simultaneously championed and attacked (Bell & Stephenson, 2012). Those resistant to change form the conservative and populist alt-right movement, seeking ways to reinforce the status quo, and its accompanying tacit or explicit support of homogenous, heteronormative, and patriarchal thought, as is evidenced in North American politics at both the national and local levels. On the other hand, those who embrace notions of diversity and equity have sought to understand, honour, and promote inclusivity, simultaneously deconstructing limiting perceptions of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

Gender, specifically, has become a focal point within this new social order, and, as new awareness regarding gender possibilities emerge, conventional thinking is being challenged by those who would seek more nuanced and complex positions of not only gender but all manner of social performances and norms. Further, the emergence of the #MeToo movement seems to have stimulated a recognition of the need for reform, not only in the arena of gender relations, but also in the way we treat each other overall. As the norms of the past are called to question, individuals and organizations alike are being required to seek to understand how culture is shaping their operations (Schein, 2017). This cultural disruption appears to have had the effect of promising a
more just society while provoking a defensive and conservative backlash within the political arena specifically.

While it may seem counterintuitive to believe that educators in schools for boys specifically might play a significant role in the promotion of inclusivity, equity and social justice, nothing could be further from the truth. Schools for boys offer a window into what Butler (1990/2007) terms as “gender trouble”. While poorly administered schools for boys can serve to exacerbate limiting stereotypes, well-considered schools for boys can help boys transcend these limitations. Educators in schools for boys might easily choose to bury their heads in the sand, ignoring the emerging cultural sea change, and, wittingly or unwittingly, continue to reinforce essentialist thought, heteronormativity, and the patriarchy. Alternatively, they might choose to embrace the unique opportunity to come to a more nuanced understanding of the various constructions of masculinities, and seek to tackle, head-on, conventional and toxic performances of gender. The effect of such an exploration and interrogation might serve to provide insight to all educators of boys and girls about the ways in which understanding gender and its impact on education can help us to create a better future for our children.

To that end, in this Organizational Improvement Plan Proposal (OIP), I seek to find ways to empower educators in schools for boys to respond to the need to promote healthy, safe and inclusive performances of gender.

**Organizational Context**

Macdonald Hall is situated in the forested hills of a mid-sized Ontario town, its iconic red brick buildings and sprawling acreage barely visible from the roadway. For over a hundred years, the school has served both local and international students, its plentiful traditions stemming from the religious and military commitments of its founding governors and headmasters. Having
weathered many storms in its first century of operation—including two World Wars, which claimed the lives of hundreds of its students, a myriad of financial crises, and, more recently, major demographic shifts that served to challenge its commitment to single-sex education—Macdonald Hall now finds itself in an enviable financial and programmatic position relative to independent and private educational institutions locally, provincially, and nationally. The mission of the school, to foster in boys both social responsibility and versatility, has been immovable since its establishment by the founders who borrowed from both the progressivist and pragmatic educational philosophies of John Dewey and the more antiquated Arnoldian notion of promoting amongst the boys a kind of “muscular Christianity” that was typical in schools for boys during the Victorian and Edwardian eras (Mangan, 2010). Regardless of its origins, this mission has withstood the test of time, likely because it can be interpreted in so many different contexts. Macdonald Hall’s success can be attributed to financially-committed alumni and parents; prudent leadership on the part of present administrators and board members; its unique status as an all-boys school in the context of a region where few exist; and its proximity to an expansive, cosmopolitan urban centre, and the region’s accompanying immigration and wealth creation.

**Programs and Affiliations**

The school serves over 600 boys from grades 5 to 12 and is inspected biennially by Ontario’s Ministry of Education. The school adheres to the policies and procedures as outlined in *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016* (Ministry of Education – Ontario, n.d.). In addition to its adherence to Ontario curriculum, the school is committed to meeting the accreditation standards of the organization titled Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS), which extend far beyond academic matters. Membership in this
national independent school organization informs the school’s approaches within the areas of advancement, enrolment, finance, and co-curricular programming, among others. CAIS, alongside the Conference of Independent Schools of Ontario (CIS), offers Macdonald Hall a family of like-minded, similar-sized schools with which to engage in professional development, athletic opportunities, and strategic thinking regarding important emerging legal or political matters that have a bearing on all within their provincial or national communities. The school also participates in the work of the International Boys Schools’ Coalition (IBSC), a global organization of approximately 400 schools committed to supporting best practices for teaching boys. Additionally, Macdonald Hall offers components of the Canadian Cadet program as offered by the Government of Canada’s Department of National Defence. The school elects to offer the College Board’s Advanced Placement courses to students in senior high school.

**School Leadership**

The school’s leadership is traditional in nature. The Board of Governors, consisting primarily of alumni and past parents, sets, upon recommendation from the Headmaster, the strategic direction of the school, and assumes fiduciary responsibility. The board’s singular employee, the Headmaster, is responsible for the implementation of the strategy and the day-to-day operation of the school. The Board’s responsibilities and directives are identified in the *CAIS Governance Guide* (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, n.d.); in short, this document outlines the rules of engagement for an arm’s length but fruitful relationship between governance and school employees.

Given the size and complexity of the operation, a Senior Leadership Team (SLT), under the direction of the Headmaster, is charged with responsibility for the various areas of school operations extending beyond academics, including residential life, information technology, and
the elementary grades (5-8). Two Assistant Headmasters assume responsibility primarily for the academic and social-emotional aspects of the high school program, though the roles overlap in some areas. The gender distribution on the SLT is similar to that of the faculty as a whole; 30% of the school’s 75 teachers are women, while approximately 70% are men. A large support staff of approximately 130 individuals complements the school leadership and faculty, as does a robust voluntary parents’ association. The latter is formed predominantly by the mothers of current students. An organizational chart identifying the senior leadership of Macdonald Hall and the direct reports of these leaders can be found in Figure 1.

![Macdonald Hall Senior Leadership](image)

**Figure 1.** Macdonald Hall Organizational Chart. An organizational chart reflecting the senior members of the Macdonald Hall leadership. The SLT consists of the individuals listed in the first and second row.

**Strategic Planning at Macdonald Hall**

The SLT at Macdonald Hall meets weekly, sharing concerns pertaining to daily operations and developing strategic initiatives to share with the Board of Governors. Its primary concern of late has been the implementation of the school’s five-year plan, developed following
collaborative sessions with parents, faculty, and alumni. This plan sets out an aggressive reinterpretation of the actions required to enact the mission of the school in the context of changing times (Anonymous, 2018). Within this new strategic plan, four key aspects of the school are reconsidered: academics, health and wellness, community relations, and finances (Anonymous, 2018).

A More Holistic Approach

In the school’s most recent strategic plan, the backdrop of the Macdonald Hall experience—academic, athletic and spiritual affairs—remain front-and-centre. The values of the institution remain steady. These include, but do not seem limited to: responsibility, bravery, truthfulness, ingenuity, respect, compassion, and tenacity. What seems to have emerged from the collaborative brainstorming and planning sessions, however, is a consideration for alternative approaches that emphasize the importance of nurturing the whole boy and the need for authentic learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom (Anonymous, 2018). There is an urgent call on the part of school stakeholders to help boys come to understand the importance of inclusivity and to support the development of meaningful relationships. There appears a willingness to step beyond the hallmarks of old-school “conservativism”, “tradition”, and the “hyper-rational” (Keddie, 2008, pp. 571-583). That the spirit of this strategic plan is more humanist seems a result of a variety of factors, the most apparent being the collective recognition on the part of its creators that mental health matters, and an awareness that understandings of teaching and learning are changing.

Of importance to this OIP, there appears to exist at least a tacit acknowledgement in Macdonald Hall’s most recent strategic plan that current stereotypes of masculinity, as expressed and performed both within and outside of the culture of the school, are contributory to boys’
hidden anxieties and/or perceived dislocation from the community (Anonymous, 2018). The supposition that gender is a performance has, over the past 30 years, been documented by a myriad of scholars identified within this OIP. Curiously, emancipatory post-structuralist understandings of gender are not reflected in the institutional publications produced by local schools for boys in Ontario. Instead, essentialist positioning seems to dominate school marketing materials, whether in print or on websites. Indeed, at the time of writing this document, I have been working alongside our communications office to revise the language used in Macdonald Hall marketing materials in an effort to reflect a constructivist understanding of gender.

**Masculinity, Masculinities, Gender and Gender Identity**

To define masculinity, masculinities, and gender in the context of this OIP, I draw upon the work of Connell (1996, 2005, 2011, 2012). Connell’s work is influential within the field of critical men’s studies (van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004). Connell’s most significant work, entitled *Masculinities* (2005), provides a historical overview and theoretical reinterpretation of masculinity. One particular section of this text is instructive in the context of this OIP. In discussing the anthropological field of study termed “Other ethnography”, Connell identifies Marilyn Strathern’s unique insight into the way gender can be interpreted as metaphor rather than sex role. In reference to Strathern’s observations of the people of Hagen in the New Guinea highlands, Connell notes:

> When someone at Hagen says (meaningfully) ‘our clan is a clan of men’, they are not saying that there are no women in the clan, nor that the women adapt a male sex role. They are saying something about the capacity and power of the clan as a collective. The idiom contradicts the idea of sex difference and disrupts a positivist definition of masculinity. (2005, p. 33)
The field of ethnography has been particularly active in challenging essentialist notions of gender because comparative studies have revealed that gender identity is unstable when viewed over time and across cultures (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 2005; Weaver-Hightower, 2003). Given this is the case, how is one to find a stable definition of gender-specific terms such as masculinity and femininity? To answer this, Connell (2005) suggests “[g]ender is a way in which social practice is ordered” (p. 71) in relation to the reproductive arena, which is, for Connell, society (Connell, 2005). To add dimensionality to his definition, Connell suggests that “gender is organized in symbolic practices that may continue much longer than the individual life” (2005, p. 73). In this way, Connell’s work seems grounded in the thought of Foucault, who views human endeavours as structured in such a way that human apparatuses, such as schools, prisons, and hospitals respond to problems and matters of power in very concrete ways (for a collection of Foucault’s works, see Rainbow & Rose, 2003).

**Post-structuralist Thought: Understanding Gender as Performance**

While Connell (2005) defines gender as a form of social practice that supports the replication of patriarchy, feminist scholars like Butler (1990/2007) add further dimensionality to this perspective, noting that gender is a social performance, one that appears to be self-reinforcing:

…*gender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse or the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be…There is no gender identity behind the expressions of
gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results. (Butler, 1990/2007, p. 34)

Participating in Butler’s position of gender as a performance, van Hoven and Hörschelmann (2004) borrow from the work of Blunt and Willis (2000) to realize the potential in pursuing the notion of what they term “the dynamism of identities” (p. 9). Van Hoven and Hörschelmann (2004) suggest that by destabilizing conventional binaries, we might be able to have a more “fluid” notion of masculinity, one that “can be shared and contested by both genders and that becomes embodied in a plurality of ways” (p. 10). Van Hoven and Hörschelmann’s (2004) work further helps us to see that masculinity in its singular form prompts essentialist, limiting notions of maleness, while masculinities as a plural noun can open the door to a variety of performances of the masculinities script.

**Key Definitions**

As such, for the purposes of this paper, masculinity shall be used to denote traditional, essentialist performances—by men particularly, but not necessarily limited to men—of maleness in opposition to the female, including the accompanying imagery and/or connotations of such. *Masculinity* in this limiting sense is a word that is representative of a form of power that has, over time, been mobilized to reinforce the patriarchy. To provide further dimensionality to this definition, Keddie (2008) offers that dominant constructions of masculinity resonate with the spirit of “power, control, non-emotion and the denigration of females” (p. 572).

*Masculinities*, on the other hand, shall be used to denote an unbounded array of identity performances that may be purposely enacted by men, including, but not limited to, those limiting attributes of masculinity as described above. To speak of masculinities in the plural (Connell, 2005; Giese, 2018a; van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004) is to recognize the potential for men to
transcend toxic or limiting constructions of maleness without having to feel shame about being male (Bly, 2004).

*Gender* shall be viewed through the lens of critical theory. Borrowing from the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s *Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression*, the following definitions shall apply:

- *Gender identity* is each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

- *Gender expression* is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

**Organizational Analysis**

Having outlined these concepts, I return to Macdonald Hall, in an effort to demonstrate how these understandings resonate within the organization itself. Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols (2016) offer insight into the formal structures that enable organizations to carry out their objectives. They identify that “[a]n organization’s design impacts the behavior of its members” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 155). Indeed, Macdonald Hall’s design impacts its operation and product. Macdonald Hall may be a small school relative to others, but it is organizationally complex in that it encompasses many departments essential to its operation. For example, individual schools within the public system do not require admissions, advancement, and
business/financial offices, as students are drawn from a given catchment area and boards of education direct funding based on need via the province. Macdonald Hall has a much larger scope than a similar-sized public institution offering elementary and secondary curriculum.

As a result, the organization is centralized, and a relatively hierarchical chain of command is in place, with the Headmaster overseeing all departments. Communication between departments is essential, and information flow affects workflow because though each department utilizes similar data, the various applications utilized by each department differ. Thus, while the formal structure of the organization is centralized, informal relationships abound. These informal relationships, which extend both horizontally and vertically within the organization, seem to be strengthened by virtue of the extant boarding program, which necessitates the replication of familial relationships such that the boys in residence feel at “home”. In this way, the school’s organizational structure is relatively integrated, with the SLT taking on the responsibility to align the various systems and structures with the mission, vision, and values of the school.

School Leadership Approaches and Practices

The SLT is a close-knit group of skilled, well-intentioned, and long serving members of the Macdonald Hall community. Given that there are ten individuals working in tandem, it would be difficult to identify a specific leadership style that is representative of the whole. So many different styles are employed at different times in different ways, including ethical, situational, and adaptive approaches that serve to make the school a most enjoyable place to work and grow. That said, two common themes emerge from a subjective analysis of this group’s behaviours that bear relevance to this particular OIP.

The first theme that emerges that has meaning in the context of this inquiry is that at Macdonald Hall, personal traits matter, extraversion is expected, and “hero” leadership is
celebrated. One might understand this in the context of early trait theorists such as Stodgill (1948) and Mann (1959) who attempted to establish a correlation between an individual’s behaviour and his or her status in a group. In his review of the literature to date on personality traits and perceived leadership status, Stodgill (1948) noted: “The items with the highest overall correlation with leadership are originality, popularity, sociability, judgment, aggressiveness, desire to excel, humour, cooperativeness, liveliness, and athletic ability” (p. 63). Similarly, Mann (1959) identifies the traits of intelligence, adjustment, extroversion, dominance, masculinity and conservatism as bearing a relationship to perceived leadership status. Though trait theory seems to have fallen out of favour in relation to Western leadership studies (Murphy, 1968; Northouse, 2019; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008), it remains helpful within the context of understanding the types of behaviours that are accepted and to some extent expected from leaders at Macdonald Hall.

Secondly, and very much aligned with the accepted and expected traits identified above, the leadership at Macdonald Hall might be defined as paternalistic, or parental, in nature; further, one might aptly define the organization as being paternalistic overall. Schein (2004) defines a paternalistic organization as one which generates “strong family feelings and a degree of emotional dependence on leaders or formal authorities” (p. 121). While paternalistic leadership has fallen out of favour in Western contexts because there is doubt about the “benevolent intent” of leaders in general, there is research to suggest that paternalism can be an effective leadership style in non-Western countries (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). This is to say that paternalistic leadership continues to have relevance in certain cultural contexts, regardless of its perceived authoritarianism. Given the international nature of the Macdonald Hall community, there may well be some expectation from non-Westerners that paternalistic approaches are valid.
I would argue that benevolent paternalism has long been a hallmark of Macdonald Hall, stretching back to the days of the school’s most lauded Headmaster from the early 1900s, a man whose portrait continues to occupy a central position in the school library and whose name and photograph adorns many of the displays throughout the institution. Given its boarding program and the clear absence of students’ real mothers and fathers, it seems reasonable that faculty have long been seen as parental figures in the lives of students; that this is transferred to the faculty and staff culture seems a curious feature of the holographic nature of organizations as whole. It does seem, however, apt to question the paternalism at Macdonald Hall in light of the way it might reinforce hierarchy and patriarchy.

Paternalistic or not, on a day-to-day basis, the leadership at Macdonald Hall responds to the various needs of their followers in a careful manner. They are an intuitive and flexible group who care deeply about those over whom they have oversight. An overarching characteristic of the SLT’s leadership approach is its commitment to developing relationships with other members of the faculty and staff. Recent faculty satisfaction surveys are indicative of a relatively high faculty morale. For example, the June 2019 faculty survey—to which 74% of the faculty responded—revealed that 94% of faculty are very or extremely satisfied with the availability of resources to support teaching; 89% are very or extremely satisfied with professional development opportunities; 86% said community members treat each other very or extremely respectfully; and, 86% are very or extremely satisfied with the School’s leadership (Macdonald Hall, 2019).

**Leadership Position and Lens Statement**

Within this complex structure, I hold the position of Assistant Headmaster, with responsibility for the academic program. Broadly, my responsibilities entail the interpretation,
articulation, and execution of the academic program. On a more granular level, this role requires me to work alongside faculty to ensure that we are meeting with Ministry of Education Ontario curriculum, policies, and procedures. As such, I oversee professional development of faculty, faculty recruitment and training, and individual professional growth plans. Oversight of scheduling and timetabling is included in my responsibilities, though I work with a talented group of individuals across departments, including Guidance and Information Technology, to achieve these ends. I am also responsible for student course selection and general academic behavioural issues, such as managing academic integrity issues, or working to resolve parental, faculty, or student concerns. A recent crisis at a neighbouring school for boys involving the alleged enactment of criminal behaviour has resulted in some recognition that my responsibilities also include working in conjunction with communication as it pertains specifically to supporting and defending all-boys education.

Personal Agency

These responsibilities outline the manner of my agency within the school; at times, this agency extends through to our provincial and national affiliations, though to a much lesser degree. Having held this position for approximately 10 years, I have experienced a shift in my leadership approach and vision. When I started the role, I believe I was a conciliatory and “paternalistic” leader who viewed my immediate reports as family: I tended to reward loyalty and made many decisions unilaterally. As time passed and my knowledge, confidence and capacity for developing trusting relationships has increased, I have begun to see the value in a leadership vision that recognizes the power of collaboration. Further to this, I have developed my thinking on moral, ethical, and philosophical levels, and have begun to see that I have a much deeper responsibility than I had originally thought. In my early years, I viewed myself as a
manager, relatively powerless to shape the larger culture or ideology of the institution. I am now much more aware of my responsibility to embrace both a transformational and team-driven approach to leadership. To that end, I have decided to enact a type of leadership I will call disruptive leadership. To explain this position, I must first provide a philosophical backdrop for my reasoning.

**Philosophical Lens**

Throughout this OIP process, I have sought to ensure the philosophical beliefs that underpin both my line of inquiry and my leadership position are defensible in that they reflect a kind of internal coherence, one where the rationale for a given position is aligned with a consistent ontological and epistemological viewpoint. To that end, I have relied primarily upon the work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Morgan (1980) to sketch out a philosophical position that serves to challenge essentialist, fixed notions of what is possible not only in terms of leadership behavior and methods, but also in terms of what is possible for organizations and individuals. As a student who has studied language and literature, I have come to understand the world from a nominalist point of view, seeing the individual consciousness as primary, and recognizing that “[i]ndividual cognition is made up of nothing more than names” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 4).

From an epistemological point of view, I have adopted an anti-positivist stance, understanding that the “social world is essentially relativistic and can only be understood from the point of view of individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 5). Further, I believe it is important to see the subject as free-willed, and, as Sartre (1956) has identified, ultimately responsible for her/his actions. Thus, in the context of understanding the social sciences, and more specifically organizational theory, I
subscribe to the interpretivist paradigm which posits that “the social world has a very precarious ontological status, and that what passes as social reality does not exist in any concrete sense, but is the product of the subjective and inter-subjective experience of individuals” (Morgan, 1980, p. 608).

Finally, I have come to see value in understanding the world through both feminist and Marxist lenses. Feminist thinkers such as Butler (1990/2007) and hooks (2015) have helped me to navigate the challenging world of gender identity and gender politics and have helped me to understand that gender scripts are tied to inclusivity and equity. Marxist thinkers such as Badiou (2015), Freire (1970/2000) and Žižek (2009) have helped me to understand the power of “the Idea” (Badiou, 2015, p. 192) and the political ideal of communism as it pertains to advocating for a more equitable and sustainable society. They have inspired my desire to operate through the lens of disruptive leadership, a hybrid and extension of both team and transformational leadership.

This philosophical positioning affords the organizational leader a sense of hope that change is possible through collaborative interrogation of socially-constructed meaning.

**Team Leadership**

Foundational to my bid for a collaborative interrogation of socially-constructed meaning at Macdonald Hall is a recognition that a team approach will be required if we are to achieve our ends. Team leadership seems to find its origins in the work of Senge (1990), who provided an insight into how collaboration can have the positive result of engendering a “learning organization” (p. 3). Senge’s (1990) work seems to have inspired both collective and shared/distributed models for leadership as espoused by Fullan (2006) and Grogan and Shakeshaft (2013). Fullan (2006) suggests that systems thinking can foster sustainability in part
because of its capacity to engender “deep learning” and vertical relationships that are “co-dependent” (p. 115). For Fullan (2006), the systems approach to leadership creates “collaborative cultures of inquiry” that can be leveraged to “solve difficult or adaptive problems” (p. 119). Grogan and Shakeshaft’s (2013) vision of collective leadership posits that diverse teams are likely to be able to produce what they term as a “cognitive shift” (p. 121), a new way to look at a given problem. Working together from a variety of perspectives might provide ways to view problems, solutions and constituencies in a different light, and allow “a greater chance for questions, tensions, and incongruent explanations to emerge” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2013, p. 125).

Collective leadership as described by Grogan and Shakeshaft (2013) might provide a layer of depth to the decision-making process that would not otherwise exist in a traditional or hierarchical model. With its focus on lateral decision making and the flattening of traditional hierarchical structures, the team leadership approach—a fusion of systems thinking, and collective or shared leadership theories—challenges conventional or hierarchical notions of leadership, allows for individual voice, and requires the negotiation of complex subjectivities (Northouse, 2019; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2013). To that end, team leadership is philosophically and practically aligned with the purpose of this OIP. The challenge lies in finding ways to transition successfully from a centralized, paternalistic and tacitly autocratic model to a democratic approach in a setting were unilateral decision-making is considered acceptable.

**Transformational and Transformative Leadership**

The second leadership position that aligns with my philosophical position is that of transformational, and more particularly, transformative leadership, which I view as an extension of the former. It is important to note the differences between transformational leadership and
transformative leadership. Shields (2010) offers some clarity with respect to the way in which these two terms, which are often used interchangeably, must be understood. For Shields (2010), transformational leadership is a term that gained ascendance following J. M. Burns’ 1978 text entitled Leadership. Shields (2010) summarizes transformational leadership has as its focus the improvement of “organizational qualities, dimensions, and effectiveness” (p. 564). Northouse (2019) offers a definition of transformational leadership that is complementary to yet perhaps more aspirational than that of Shields (2010). Northouse (2019) suggests that:

“…transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 164). Shields (2010) accedes that transformational leaders in this context concern themselves with liberty, justice and equality, yet Shields (2010) views transformative leadership as a kind of elaboration of transformational leadership, a form of leadership that values “liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice” (p. 563). For Shields (2010), transformative leadership is defined by the way the leader interrogates the way in which power and privilege may be serving to “perpetuate inequity and justice” (p. 564).

Shields, Dollarhide and Young (2017) and Brown (2004) offer further insight into transformative leadership by identifying that it is grounded in critical theory, which “address[es] issues of power and privilege” (Brown, 2004, p. 78). As Rottman (2007) identifies, critical theory “has come to function as an umbrella term for antiracist, feminist, anticolonial, queer, neo-Marxist, and other anti-oppression theories”, and it offers a helpful lens through which to view systems that have been shaped by neoliberal ideology (p. 76). As Rottman (2007) suggests, neoliberalism seems to have highjacked the education reform agenda and may be a causal factor in maintaining the status quo of inequity on a number of levels. As the transformative leadership
concept has evolved, eight tenets have been established that might be used to guide the transformative leader beyond the status quo. These tenets include establishing “[a] mandate for deep and equitable change”, “[a] focus on emancipation, democracy, equity and justice”, and “[a]n emphasis on interconnectedness, interdependence, and global awareness” (Shields, Dollarhide & Young, 2017, p. 3).

This leadership vision becomes complicated in the context of schools of privilege, such as Macdonald Hall, for which the cost of annual tuition is equivalent to the expense of a luxury automobile. I am struck by my own complacency in working within this context and how numbed I had become to issues pertaining to power and privilege; further, I am surprised at how myopic my vision had become with respect to gender equity. I have resolved to use my agency for the purposes of advancing inclusivity, social justice, and a general awareness that the status quo will not suffice. I do not believe it will be an easy path. I have come to see that challenging the status quo and advocating for social justice and equity often evokes sentiments of fear and resistance. Brown (2004) notes “[t]ransformative learning actually poses threats to psychological security as it challenges comfortably established beliefs and values, including those that might be central to self-concept” (p. 88). The disruption of the status quo seems a hallmark of the transformative leader. Lewis (1990) offers insight into managing the discomfort and perceived threat within a politicized classroom in her article entitled: “Interrupting Patriarchy: Politics, Resistance, and Transformation in the Feminist Classroom”. In this article, Lewis seeks strategies for helping students to problematize their social location and beliefs through a careful consideration of “the other side of the story” (pp. 478-479). This strategy hints at the type of boundary exploration that may be required in the execution phase of this change initiative and is paralleled, or at least complemented, by the protocols identified by Ulrich (2005) in Chapter 3.
**Constructivist Leadership: A Limiting Model?**

The question thus becomes whether there might be a unified notion of the type of leadership I believe is required to accomplish the task at hand. I had thought of conjoining the team and transformational leadership approaches into a tidier vision that might be termed “constructivist leadership”. Lambert (2002) has offered a theoretical exploration of such a position in a text entitled *The Constructivist Leader*. Through this text, Lambert (2002) and her colleagues attempt to provide a theoretical grounding for a leadership approach that was aligned with constructivist pedagogy. It does appear that Lambert (2002) has been critiqued for failing to offer practical strategies for the constructivist leader (Keiffer-Barone, 2004). It would appear little further research in this area has been done to date, though such research would appear warranted. That said, I do believe that to define this project’s leadership approach as constructivist might be limiting. Adopting constructivism as my primary leadership lens might result in two significant dimensions of the current problem being overlooked. The first is that constructivist thinking does not seem deeply concerned about social justice issues in the way that transformational and transformative leadership is (Brown, 2004; Shields, 2004; Shields, 2010). Secondly, constructivist leadership might not require its proponents to think broadly about systems; team leadership approaches seem to participate in systems thinking (Northouse, 2019).

To that end, I do believe there is validity in remaining committed to both transformational, and more precisely transformative, leadership, and team leadership approaches.

What is particularly healthy about considerations of constructivist approaches to leadership is the way in which constructivism is aligned with some of the philosophical underpinnings and possible solutions which drive this inquiry. For example, this project’s focus on the potential for a Jungian approach to education (Mayes, 2005) may be considered
constructivist in nature, in that a fundamental undercurrent in Jung’s philosophy was the individual’s capacity for personal growth through the exploration of the full self, and most importantly the unconscious. That said, constructivist leadership does not speak to the need for a more deliberate disruption of the gender regime being employed in the Macdonald Hall context.

Certainly, both transformative and team leadership approaches lend themselves to a constructivist and therefore social constructionist agenda. Transformative leaders view their actions through the lens of social justice, and, as such, understand the world as a place where leadership can lead to new possibilities (Fullan, 2006; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2013; Senge, 1990). Those who espouse team leadership understand the power of the collective to construct new realities through collaborative endeavours (Shields, Dollarhide and Young, 2017; Brown, 2004; Rottman, 2007). While both leadership styles participate in the spirit of this inquiry, neither seems to encapsulate the entirety of the leadership style required to interrogate adequately program, policies, and cultures at schools for boys. Conjoined, these two leadership approaches lack the dimension of positive disruption necessary to interrogate the status quo for the purpose of developing more equitable, inclusive and sustainable policies, programs, and cultural practices.

**Disruptive Leadership: A Hybrid of Team and Transformational Leadership**

Disruptive leadership in relation to this particular OIP borrows not only from team and transformational leadership, but from the post-structuralist understandings of feminism (Butler, 1990/2007; hooks, 2015) and the philosophical underpinnings of Marxist thought (Badiou 2015; Freire, 1970/2000; Žižek, 2009). The position seems best outlined by Schein (2017) in the fifth edition of his influential text *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, though it is not evident that Schein’s work is derived particularly from feminist or Marxist thought. Schein (2017)
provides a breakdown of the evolutionary stages of organizations, and his assessment is particularly appropriate in the context of Macdonald Hall. It does seem appropriate to suggest that Macdonald Hall has emerged from its “midlife”, which might be defined in the context of “technological seduction” (Schein, 2017, p. 242), with the implementation of a robust tablet-laptop program, and the construction of a high-tech theatre/auditorium. Interestingly, with the school entering into a phase of “maturity”, it has been challenged by a recent scandal at a neighbouring school for boys in which boys from various athletic teams were criminally charged for engaging in hazing rituals involving sexual assault. The resulting media frenzy with its accompanying criticism of schools for boys as incubators for toxic masculinity has required Macdonald Hall to enter into a defensive position on the validity and value proposition of all boys’ education.

Schein (2017) offers insight into how such scandal can contribute to new leadership approaches in organizations:

Public scandals force senior executives to examine the norms and practices and assumptions that had been taken for granted... Disasters and scandals do not automatically cause culture change, but they are a powerful disconfirming force that cannot be denied that starts, therefore, some kind of public self-assessment and change program. (p. 247)

It is this idea of disconfirmation that seems to engender the need for transformation in which the leader must help followers overcome learning anxiety to achieve psychological safety in learning “new things” (Schein, 2017, p 340). I am struck by Schein’s (2017) insight into the way in which a leadership of disruption and cultural dismantling or disaggregation can serve the needs of Macdonald Hall as we attempt to move into organizational maturity by challenging essentialist
and conservative notions of what it means to be a school for boys. As will be shown in this OIP, disruptive leadership seeks to destabilize, dislocate, and disrupt culture for the purposes of engendering more meaningful, research-informed ways to educate our boys.

It is important to note that the term “disruptive leadership” has recently emerged in the management and organizational leadership field as a response to the way in which leaders might respond to or proactively mitigate risks associated with disruptive technologies or promote a culture of disruption for the purposes of innovation (for an example of this line of thinking, see Kao, 2018). Although this thinking about leadership seems to have affinities with the spirit of this OIP, in the present context, disruptive leadership might be considered as the behaviour exhibited by leaders that serves to undercut and challenge the status quo for cultural and political purposes.

**Leadership Problem of Practice**

This OIP endeavour has ultimately been a quest for the wisdom of elders and contemporary thinkers on how best to raise boys safely—in safety—for safety. We must mitigate the damage that can be caused if or when boys choose to act out more toxic notions of the masculinities script. Schools for boys can inadvertently or carelessly encourage—through programming, policy, or culture—unhealthy, non-inclusive or limiting gender performances, thereby forestalling the potential for their students to become the expression of their most human selves.

In an article entitled “The problem of boys’ literacy underachievement: Raising some questions”, Watson, Kehler and Martino (2010) call upon secondary school teachers to “interrogate…[t]he dominant images of masculinity and femininity exalted in secondary schools” and “[t]he way teachers convey and support particular versions of masculinities and
femininities” (p. 360). The authors argue that a destabilization of conventional gender constructions might serve to improve boys’ achievement in the area of literacy because boys would no longer be chastised for embracing and excelling in “feminine” pursuits such as reading, writing, listening, and collaborating (Watson et al., 2010, p. 360).

Borrowing conceptually from Watson et al. (2010), the Problem of Practice (PoP) under investigation in this OIP is the failure on the part of leaders at schools for boys to interrogate adequately programs, policies, or cultural approaches that might contribute to the promotion of unhealthy, non-inclusive or limiting gender performances. Further, there seems to be a disconnect between the extensive research in this area and current practice in schools for boys.

I often wonder in what ways our “conservative”, “traditional”, and “hyper-rational” structures might be inadvertently promoting patriarchal or toxic expressions of masculinity and forestalling the academic potential of boys (Keddie, 2008, pp. 571-583). Keddie (2008) helps us to see that one way to help boys broaden their understanding of masculinity is to deprivilege the pedagogy of rationality which she perceives as common in contemporary schooling. She suggests that an overemphasis on the rational on the part of educators serves to reinforce authoritarianism and relations of dominance. Keddie (2008) proposes that tremendous social benefit can be derived from moving beyond a hyper-rational agenda to encourage boys to be more emotionally responsible, nurturing, and committed to community.

Symptoms of the existence of a problem at Macdonald Hall specifically include the presence of essentialist understandings of gender identity in school marketing materials, the continuation of antiquated hierarchical nomenclature, and suggestions on the part of the student body that a boy’s status is tied to his participation in hyper-masculine activities such as contact sport. Some students have expressed concerns about what might happen if they were to explore
or perform non-stereotypical constructions of masculinity. Some stakeholders, including faculty and parents, state outright that as boys, our students should not be expected to be as good at reading or writing as the girls. At times, a “boys will be boys” culture offers a default explanation for the “way it is around here”. Ideally, following the proposed change initiatives within this OIP, the symptoms of the problem will be somewhat lessened.

All-boys educators have a moral and ethical obligation to ask challenging questions about the purpose of their endeavours; if the answers come easily, that is the indicator that more work needs to be done. As the academic vice-principal of an all-boys independent school, I have both the responsibility and authority to shape program, policy, and culture such that our faculty regularly and carefully consider how their pedagogical and curricular choices can shape student understandings of gender. It is promising that there appears to be a growing awareness that considerations such as these are essential for all-boys educators moving forward.

Framing the Problem of Practice

Masculinities Awareness in the School’s Strategic Plan

The current Macdonald Hall strategic plan identifies two specific strategies that require faculty to consider how gender identity matters might factor into both pedagogical and curricular approaches (Anonymous, 2018). The first strategy explicitly calls upon the faculty to explore the intersectionality of gender, sex, race and class as they pertain to instructional strategy (Anonymous, 2018, Harnois, 2016; Parent, DeBlaere & Moradi, 2013; Shields, 2008; Roy, 2000). The second strategy requires faculty to explore ways to embed critical understandings of gender identity into the curriculum in the hopes that increased awareness might translate into healthier and safer masculine performances (Anonymous, 2018; Blackburn, Clark, & Martino, 2016; Watson et al., 2010). Further to this, two related strategic initiatives seem connected to
explorations of masculine identity. The first calls upon teachers to actively seek ways to promote empathy within the program (Anonymous, 2018). The second strategic initiative connected to the theme of masculinity requires faculty and staff to develop a program that would help students to develop healthy relationships with girls, whether in person or online (Anonymous, 2018). This second initiative seems to be designed to combat a culture of heteronormativity, where, for example, a boy’s main interaction with girls from other independent schools occurs during school dances.

**Essentialist Approaches at Macdonald Hall**

As an English teacher in my early days at the school, I had thought that there might be value in teaching boys literature texts with strong male protagonists, and I believed that there might be real value in ensuring boys had strong male role models as teachers. Additionally, as a faculty, we believed that boys brains were in some way different from girls, and that this resulted in boys having a reduced attention span. We committed to changing our instructional strategy every 15 minutes for the purpose of making the curriculum accessible to boys whom we perceived were incapable of focusing for any significant length of time. We earnestly believed that the there was a boy crisis in education, and that it could be addressed through instructional practice and role modeling which reinforced the notion that boys were fundamentally different from girls.

My research has helped me to challenge this essentialist positioning. For example, Martino and Kehler (2006) and Pennycook (2011) have helped me to see that the call for male-friendly texts and strong male role models in the classroom may be perceived as a strategy employed by those who would enact a form of recuperative masculinity politics. This stance participates in a non-inclusive vision which casts men and boys as “victims of the feminization
of schooling” (Martino & Kehler, 2006, p. 122). Such a position may serve to merely reinforce traditional masculinities.

With respect to understanding boys as fundamentally different from girls, I have drawn from studies in the area of neurobiology, and in particular the work of Eliot (2009, 2013). There appears to be little evidence to suggest that structural differences in the brains of boys and girls leads to differences in motivation and achievement; rather, the plasticity of the brain is paramount, and environmental factors such as gender stereotypes are much more likely to impact learning than any real learning differences between the sexes (Buckley, 2016; Eliot, 2009, 2013). Further, Eliot’s (2013) work entitled “Single-Sex Education and the Brain” seeks to outline potential flaws in the research used by popular proponents of gender segregation in the classroom. Eliot (2013) critiques the “tautology” in play in the reasoning of some of the educators who might call for gender segregation: just because boys perform differently in the classroom does not necessarily mean that they learn differently (p. 375).

**Is There Really A Boy Crisis?**

Marcus Weaver-Hightower’s (2003) review of the literature pertaining to the apparent turn in research toward boys’ education may provide further clarity with respect to my purpose, should it be misinterpreted or misunderstood. Weaver-Hightower (2003) offers a balanced critique of the way in which recent educational research from the 1990s onward, both theoretical and practical, taps into popular fears about an apparent emerging boy crisis, despite the fact that it is well documented that “in every society[.,] women as a group relative to men are disadvantaged socially, culturally, politically, and economically” (p. 471). As Weaver-Hightower (2003) explains, this well-intentioned but often misguided research seeks to explore the typologies of masculinity to address such things as bullying in schools, or poor test scores on the
part of boys. On the practical level, it seeks boy-friendly pedagogy and curriculum that might serve to assist educators as they tackle challenges boys face in the classroom or in social situations. Weaver-Hightower (2003) argues that this research is often inadequate because it is essentialist in nature; it reinforces conventional binaries; it focuses on “visible” and commonly atypical masculinities rather than the everyday performances; and, it offers under-researched “quick-fixes” for classroom interventions (p. 474). Weaver-Hightower’s position has been reaffirmed by scholars such as Kehler and Martino (2007).

As Weaver-Hightower (2003) notes, more careful work must be done to find new ways to theorize about boys’ education such that programmatic choices can be informed by “the effects of masculinities on learning” (p. 488), more researched classroom practices, and a more careful understanding of how curricular choices impact boys’ learning and wellness. Researchers must find ways to address boys’ learning without inadvertently “hurting people who have other problems” (Weaver-Hightower, 2003, p. 490).

**Theorizing Boys’ (and Girls’) Education**

Over time, I have come to see that the boy crisis in education might well be exaggerated, at least in a Canadian context; for example, the 2015 PISA results indicate that boys and girls in Canada fare similarly in science and mathematics, while girls outperform boys only slightly in the area of reading (OECD, 2016). A 2015 OECD report pertaining to an apparent gender gap in the 2012 PISA scores reveals that literacy gap varies relative to socioeconomic status, and that boys at the top end of the scale tend to perform better than girls overall (OECD, 2015). A report on the state of women in Canada published by Statistics Canada reveals that it is the girls who are currently experiencing a decrease in high school completion; boys’ completion rates have remained relatively stable (Statistics Canada, 2016). Additionally, it has become apparent that
once boys graduate into the work world, they more than make up for any perceived disadvantage given the gender wage gap (Gender Wage Gap | Canadian Women’s Foundation | Gender Equality Advocates, n.d.). Focusing on a perceived crisis on the part of boys may distract from the real needs in the area research regarding girls’ education. Weaver-Hightower (2003) is correct that research in the field of boys’ education predicated on solving the boy crisis should not displace resources dedicated to advancing understandings within the field of girls’ education.

While we are not on the verge of a “boy crisis”, boys’ education remains an important field of study. On a societal level, our collective failure to consider carefully the ways we educate boys may be the cause of both visible and invisible problems. Canadian thinkers who have begun to recognize these problems as systemic, such as Giese (2018a) and Jivani (2018), suggest that boys require a sense of belonging and membership in a community if they are to live meaningful and healthy lives. It is becoming clear that to ignore boys’ call for recognition by elders (Bly, 2004) may result in dislocation from their community, and, in the extreme, lead to violence. For all too often, the perpetrators of violent crimes such as shootings, and, more recently, vehicular attacks, are discovered to be young men who are in some way disconnected or detached from their community or bullied with respect to their perceived failure to live up to a masculine ideal (Giese, 2018a; Jivani, 2018; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). Instead of perceiving the problem in terms of a crisis with boys, it may be time to come to understand how boys are affected by what might be termed a “crisis of masculinity”.

Private Spaces, Student Self-Governance, and Gender Regimes

While some boys who are disconnected from their communities may turn to violence, there is also a growing sense that some boys occupy two or more worlds, one of which is public, while the others are private. Private, undefined and/or unsupervised spaces, whether physical or
virtual, can be very dangerous places for boys and students in general (Astor, Meyer & Behre, 1999; Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Patton, Hong, Ranney, Patel, Kelley, Eschmann & Washinton, 2014; Stuart, 2013). Stuart (2013) suggests that in these private spaces, in the absence of authority, students attempt a form of self-governance whereby they establish gendered hierarchies to keep the younger students “in their place” (p. 380). This is to suggest that hazing behaviour is less about initiation and more about power and the establishment of a local gender regime. The recent events described above involving boys from a Toronto independent school who engaged in sexual assault during a hazing ritual in a private locker space reveals that we need to be clear that one’s responsibility has no bounds. The viral circulation of this heinous act via social media is another example of how students interact in private worlds that can be ignored or misunderstood by adults.

**The Populist Politics of Gender**

While there is a growing awareness of the importance of keeping boys connected to their communities and keeping watch over their private spaces, on a grander scale, issues surrounding misogyny on the part of boys and men have taken centre stage in the news. The #MeToo movement has served to hold men accountable for all manner of inappropriate and/or illegal behaviours directed at women. Systemic misogyny leads the national and international news cycle, prompting some to ask what is to be done about it. In a recent article posted to CNN titled “When boys humiliate girls at school”, Jill Filipovic, an attorney and feminist, writes: “misogynist men are made, not born” (Filipovic, 2018). At Macdonald Hall, much of the time spent in assembly, advisory sessions and chapel is dedicated to issues that emerge in the news, including issues pertaining to misogyny and masculinity. We have tried to give boys the language and strategies they need to treat others well. Recently, for example, we spent some time
with faculty and subsequently students on the topic of consent as an educational piece associated
with our collective honouring of the White Ribbon campaign. The primary text which drove
these discussions was drawn from Michael Kaufmann and Michael Kimmel’s (2011) The Guy’s
Guide to Feminism.

**Populism and Educational Policy in Ontario**

Paradoxically, the conservative provincial government in Ontario has redacted the 2015
Grades 1-8 Health and Physical Education curriculum, replacing some sections pertaining to
healthy living with curriculum from 1998 under the pretense that the 2015 curriculum was not
age-appropriate. In doing so, the government may have served to restrict the dialogue on such
relevant issues as gender matters, sexting, and consent (Warzecha, 2018). It is striking that at the
very time careful language surrounding gender matters might help to raise awareness and
potentially prevent violence, populist politics serve to reinforce the status quo by tacitly
sanctioning heteronormativity and failing to help students manage emerging complexities in the
areas of identities, relationships, and technologies. The failure on the part of the government in
this area has impacted Macdonald Hall as the health teachers have expressed concerns that they
must adhere to the revised curriculum. This significantly limits discussions pertaining to gender
identity in a school where considerations surrounding gender expression and identity are crucial
for the development of healthy notions of gender performance. Interestingly, a recent study
completed through the University of Illinois at Chicago by Peter, Tasker and Horn (2014) has
shown that parents in Illinois are supportive of granting their children “access to a broad range of
sexual health information” (p. 71). These findings may indicate that Ontario’s 2018 Conservative
government may have misinterpreted or misunderstood the desires of its electorate as it pertains
to sexual literacy.
Inclusive Policies in Independent Schools

Matters pertaining to inclusivity are being tackled within the various affiliations to which Macdonald Hall belongs. The school’s provincial affiliate, the CIS, has recently drafted policies pertaining to guidelines for respecting and accommodating transgender students. Drawing on the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression, this draft policy speaks specifically to the challenges arising when single-sex schools are presented with transgender applicants. By “acknowledging and supporting the fluidity of gender and gender identification”, the CIS has provided some of the necessary language for schools like Macdonald Hall to embrace diversity and pursue inclusivity (Conference of Independent Schools Ontario, 2018).

A similar policy document has been produced by the National Association of Independent Schools. Titled “NAIS Checklist for Working with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students at Independent Schools”, the document calls specifically upon single gender schools to pay attention to the way in which “school traditions, rituals, and invisible culture” might require proactive interrogation on the part of administrators if they are committed to embracing diversity (National Association of Independent Schools, n.d.).

These independent school policies align with those found in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016 which requires schools to build “[h]ealthy, [s]afe, and [a]ccepting [s]chools”, and “to foster positive school climates in which all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted” (Ministry of Education – Ontario, 2016, p. 10). It is interesting to note that authors such as Kehler (2010) and Lingard Mills and Weaver-Hightower (2012) have identified that some Ministry policy pertaining to addressing the perceived boy crisis, by virtue of its essentialist and recuperative
nature, seems to contradict the philosophy of inclusivity implied in *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016*.

**Internal Policies and Data**

Much work has been done at Macdonald Hall to ensure a mutually respectful community. Only recently, however, have these policies been more carefully considered in light of emerging understandings of gender fluidity and systemic misogyny. Members of the SLT are only now engaging in committee work pertaining to revising internal policies regarding inclusivity and diversity. Very little internal data exists pertaining to understandings of gender matters, whether on the part of boys, faculty, staff, or parents, creating a blind spot pertaining to issues of privilege and heteronormative thought. Additionally, very little comparative data exists with respect to boys’ academic achievement. Most of the triennial survey work being done by the school pertains to perceptions about perceived value rather than values themselves. Some of the work being done to determine institutional risk reflects a budding awareness that a failure to remain vigilant about gender matters poses a threat to the long-term sustainability of the organization, whether as a result of being unable to respond to past and present grievances, or being unable to respond to the expectations on the part of parent-clients that the school’s approach will be progressive.

**Guiding Questions Emerging from the PoP**

A myriad of often overlapping challenges and opportunities arise following careful consideration of the PoP both in terms of contributing phenomena and potential lines of inquiry.

**Challenges**

Language matters problematize approaches to this PoP. On the surface, school nomenclature reflects hierarchical and patriarchal notions. For example, the school principal is
identified as the Headmaster. At a deeper level, institutional literature is inconsistent with respect to presenting a coherent rationale for all-boys education. Often, segregationist and essentialist language are used to justify the school’s single-sex mandate. At times, Judeo-Christian and colonial ideology resonates through school traditions such as chapel hymns. Embedded within this colonialism is the implied participation in hierarchy, binaries, and heteronormativity.

One example of the way in which language matters complicate this problem emerged through the development of the strategic plan. Some school leaders resisted the use of the word “hegemony” in relation to considerations of masculinities. The explicit identification that masculinity is a construct that can serve to replicate patriarchy was found to be unpalatable and was ultimately rejected under the pretense that the use of the word “hegemony” was elitist or overly academic. It has been difficult to determine the bases for the rejection of language that has, within academia, become mainstream in the study of masculinities. That this language was the cause of discomfort may reflect a rejection of constructivist and social constructionist understandings of gender, or a tacit disregard for the dangers of patriarchal structures.

Further, challenges exist in that the disruption of hyper-masculinity, heteronormativity and essentialism may threaten the current business model as these perceived attributes constitute a key value proposition for some stakeholders and clients. This is particularly problematic as it pertains to international student parents who often expect a school for boys to promote heteronormativity and celebrate hyper-masculinity.

Measurement of the problem and its possible rectification poses a significant challenge. What is to be measured? What tools might be employed for measuring the efficacy of cultural and programmatic change in the area of gender awareness?
Understanding the impact of technology and the media on boys’ understandings of gender matters presents another problem for this change process. Attempting to understand how technology and the media impacts formations of gendered identity may extend well beyond the scope of this OIP. However, student access to and interaction with this information must, at least in part, inform the interrogation of our own practice and culture.

**Opportunities**

Opportunities abound as we begin to question our collective approach to promoting healthy masculinities. Some lines of inquiry are presented below:

- Are there particular instructional practices that might serve to transcend the hierarchy implicit in conventional classroom practice?
- How might we modify our curriculum to be more inclusive?
- What practical programs might be initiated outside of the classroom that will help boys to understand their own identities and the impact they might have on others?
- What traditions, symbols and/or rituals are worthy of keeping?
- Do our organizational structures and physical spaces align with an inclusive approach?
- How might we structure our professional development such that gender matters are at the forefront of our considerations?
- How is technology to be managed such that it contributes to student wellness?
- How might we engender empathy?
- What type of community engagement, whether on the part of students, faculty, staff or parents, would help us to promote healthy expressions of masculinities?
- Will our efforts translate into measurable improvements in our boys’ learning?
Jungian and Indigenous Insights: From Theory to Practice?

Two additional philosophical concepts might provide further opportunities for insight as we attempt to promote healthy masculinities. Anne Waters, an indigenous philosopher, provides an alternative to thinking about the world in discrete ways that reinforce binaries. Waters suggests that the indigenous peoples of the Americas embraced a non-discrete, non-binary world view (Waters, n.d.)

The openness of indigenous thought helps us to reframe the work done by the Jungian-inspired Mythopoetic Men’s Movement of the 1990s, led in part by Robert Bly, Robert Moore, and James Hillman. This movement sought to provide men with strategies for managing personal shame and powerlessness in a post-industrial world; put more positively, these thinkers attempted to help men develop by connecting with their unconscious through engagement with poetry, myth, reflection, confession and song. While these thinkers embrace sex-role theory rather than a constructionist or performative understanding of gender (van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004), Weaver-Hightower (2003) suggests there may be significant value in exploring how practical work of this nature, which includes practical suggestions for healing and growth, might inform boys’ education; Waters (n.d.) offers a philosophical approach that may help us transcend our understanding of the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement as merely recuperative in nature.

Understanding the work of the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement through the indigenous lens as proposed by Waters (n.d.) directs the focus away from limiting binaries toward the mythic, symbolic, and universal aspects of the human condition. In this way, Bolman and Deal’s *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (2008) text, pertaining to understanding organizations through symbolic frames, might prove particularly instructive
throughout this study. Further, embracing both Jungian and indigenous philosophy might serve to provide opportunities to counter the hyper-rational positions that Keddie (2008) identifies as particularly problematic in schools for boys. While Keddie (2008) seems to be addressing instructional strategy and relational structures within schools, I have extrapolated from her vision the idea that boys might develop broader agency and potential if greater emphasis is placed on exploring and celebrating the whimsical, the imaginative, and the irrational. Employing strategies inspired by Jung and the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement should not be viewed as a means of enacting recuperative masculinity (Lingard et al., 2012) but rather as a means of destabilizing the overly rational and traditional in boys’ lives. We need an openness to accepting that there may well be hidden wisdom in the work of the men’s movement over the past half-century.

Additionally, new understandings within the medical community seem to suggest a growing awareness regarding how men’s perceptions and performances of masculinity can impact men’s long-term health (Connell, 2012). When men are not able to perform the masculinities script with which they most identify, they are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression (McKenzie, Jenkin & Collings, n.d.; Valkonen & Hänninen, 2013). Research in this area may afford opportunities at a local level to consider ways in which our school counselors and other healthcare staff can inoculate our boys against dangerous self-perception.

**Leadership-Focused Vision for Change**

**Desired Future State**

The preferred future state of the organization sees students as the primary beneficiaries of intentional implementation of curricular and pedagogical approaches driven by the need to promote inclusivity and wellness. Classroom structures, procedures, and cultures will serve to
support the development of boys who are self-aware and who understand their agency within their community. Boys will come to understand that they can enact the script of their most human selves, rather than being tied to limiting, expected, or stereotypical performances of masculinity. Outside the classroom, a myriad of programs might help boys to experience the arts, athletics, and academics in alternative ways. Regular engagement with the community will afford boys the opportunity to come to understand and appreciate the world in its diversity. What it means to be a boy at Macdonald Hall will not necessarily be dependent on the hegemonic norms prevalent in the media.

Faculty and staff who are deliberate about boys’ education can have confidence that they are not merely “enthusiastic amateurs” but expert practitioners in the field of boys’ education (Fullan, 2013, p. 9). Professional development opportunities will focus on the ways in which a proactive consideration of gender matters can enhance the curricular and co-curricular experiences. Faculty will develop specific programs to help boys navigate technologies, challenging personal relationships, and the media. The direct result of these initiatives may well include a measurable improvement in our boys’ learning (Watson et al., 2010).

Ideally, the enactment of this vision will see the eradication of traditions, rituals, and aspects of school culture which have in the past served to reinforce hierarchy, endorse heteronormativity, and replicate the patriarchy. The school’s internal literature will reflect contemporary understandings of gender and will serve as a vehicle for the generation of further dialogue on the subject. School policies will be revised to reflect emerging understandings of inclusivity and diversity. The community will come to see the school as having a coherent, intentional approach to all-boys education; this consolidation of purpose may have the effect of increasing the perceived value of the Macdonald Hall experience, and may help to ensure the
sustainability of the institution. Ideally, no singular vision of masculinity will be explicitly or tacitly endorsed at the school.

Additionally, the organizational structure of the school will model equity and inclusion such that when boys move into their adult lives, they will see the organizational features of the school as a model for what might be possible in their own work lives.

**Priorities for Change**

Three immediate priorities exist as this leadership-focused vision for change is enacted. The first involves identifying “transformational” leaders from the various stakeholders of the institution who believe in the need for an interrogation of our current programs, policies, and culture (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 112). The second priority is to stimulate discussion about gender issues, using accessible language, such that the initiative is recognized as urgent, transformational in nature, and based on “higher-order values” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 113). The third immediate priority is to find a way to embed the emerging discussion pertaining to gender performances within the existing professional development framework of the school such that the project becomes an expected and regular feature of professional dialogue.

Language considerations must remain a long-term priority of this change initiative. Gender understandings are socially constructed through language endeavours; how we “talk” as an institution will affect how we “walk” through these issues. Further, we must avoid falling into the trap of becoming overly theoretical about the project; the development of practical programs to help boys navigate their identity in a complex world must remain a primary focus of this work.

**Change Drivers and Potential Roadblocks**

Force field analysis, as defined by Cawsey et al. (2016), provides a model for considering the change drivers—both people and ideas—that might be pushing and pulling the organization
forward in the area of gender awareness, and the forces that might serve to forestall or actively prevent progress in this area.

Push-and-pull imagery might be useful in defining the types of change drivers that are both pushing and pulling the institution toward the interrogation of program, policy, and culture at Macdonald Hall. Pulling the institution into the future is increased societal awareness of gender issues, whether it be because of the presence of gender issues in the news, the focus placed on gender matters in academia, or policy changes in the workplace. Faculty, parents, and board members are asking to what extent the school is responding to the need to ensure we are pursuing inclusivity as an institution. Internally, it is becoming clear that failure to address this issue directly may pose a threat to the institution’s success and/or sustainability. This internal awareness, which is reflected indirectly within our risk matrix computations, seems to be pushing us toward the desired change.

The forces that seem to be forestalling change are complex in that they include people, processes, and ideology. Some stakeholders, including faculty, staff, parents and board members, have expressed anxiety or discontent with the suggestion that we depart from essentialist positions regarding gender. To expand on this, some stakeholders have suggested that boys should be educated in a segregated environment in part because they learn differently from girls, invoking such popular essentialist texts as Gray’s 1992 *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. It has become apparent that some individuals, while well-intentioned and supportive of inclusive behaviour, are personally uncomfortable with an interrogation of the identities they themselves perform. In the past there had been some resistance to the creation of a Gay-Straight Alliance group within the school, and concerns regarding the formation of such a group ranged
from fears about outing group members to concerns that our stakeholders would disapprove of the explicit recognition of individuals who did not fit the heteronormative mold.

Additionally, the 2018 Ontario government’s redaction of the 2015 Grades 1-8 Health and Physical Education curriculum reflects the state’s participation in the reproduction of heteronormativity, providing those who are in disagreement with or apathetic to this proposed change some further bases for remaining committed to the status quo. Finally, I wonder whether media representations of gender contribute to boys’ adoption of limiting, stereotypical expressions of masculinity, and whether the adoption of such performances might be forestalling boys’ academic engagement both at Macdonald Hall and in other school contexts.

Organizational Change Readiness

Developing an understanding of both change drivers and potential obstacles to change is a necessary part of understanding the readiness of Macdonald Hall for complex change. Holt, Armenakis, Feild and Harris (2007) suggest that leaders need to analyse the gap between their own expectations for change and those of other members in their organization and to take action to close these gaps prior to attempting change. They define readiness as “the extent to which an individual or individuals are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo” (Holt et al., 2007, p. 235). Individuals will be accepting of change if they believe that the cause is worthy, feasible, and beneficial to themselves and the organization to which they belong (Holt et al., 2007). Good leaders understand that “[c]hange readiness must be consciously developed, aligned with supportive systems and structures, and then put to use as a source of competitive advantage” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 111).
Perhaps the best way to stimulate change readiness within an organization is to adopt a systems mindset whereby the organization is a “learning” one (Senge, 1990, p. 3). The team leadership model, which places primacy on the value of collaborative interaction, has the potential to ensure that institutions are in a continual state of readiness for change. In learning organizations where individuals are empowered and feel that they are responsible to themselves and the larger community, there is the potential for a sustainability in the face of inevitable change (Salumaa, 2007; Adelman & Taylor, 2007). Thus, a team approach sets the backdrop for the transformational leader who would “create… the readiness mindset” (Dudar, Scott & Scott, 2017, p. 173).

While much work remains to be done at Macdonald Hall to enact the vision set out in this project, some of the foundations have been cast because the organization has a strong sense of community, and structures exist that facilitate regular collaboration (Lambert, 2007) and trust. Next steps include communicating and inspiring a vision for change in which invested members of the community will feel empowered to work collaboratively to respectfully question current approaches.

While this project looks toward a reconsideration of programming for the purposes of engendering wellness and improved learning for boys, its primary objective is to affect a change in culture. Dudar et al. (2017) note that “…culture changes…require significant philosophical shifts in thinking and behaving” (p. 174). To that end, the disruptive leader must be sensitive to the various values and beliefs of the people upon whom this intended cultural change will be thrust. As has been identified through force field analysis, the well-intentioned stakeholders at Macdonald Hall are varied in their philosophical positioning with respect to gender matters; it must be assumed then that they will be varied in their willingness to embrace the change
initiative to interrogate our programs, policies, and culture through the lens of gender. This is not
time for autocracy, or top-down directives. What is required is a commitment to discourse, and
the fostering of culture that embraces diverging viewpoints.

**Co-construction of Vision**

Cawsey et al.’s (2016) Change Path Model prescribes a series of steps to be taken to
effect change within an organization. In the “awakening” phase of a change project, the leader
must identify a gap between what is preferable and what is extant within an organization, and
then he/she must establish a powerful vision that will appeal to the various stakeholders within
(Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 98). Cawsey et al. (2016) recommend that during the awakening phase,
leaders create a sense of urgency by identifying a crisis that stands to threaten the sustainability
of the organization. Similarly, Dudar et al. (2017) identify the need for leaders to develop a
vision, but they add further dimensionality to this idea by suggesting there may be value in
“involving staff in a genuine and transparent manner to reshape and/or modify the vision to
promote buy-in and a culture of trust” (p. 117). The recommendation by Dudar et al. (2017) to
involve staff in the development of vision creates an intriguing problem: if one is to adopt a team
approach to leadership, the vision for change will be in flux until various stakeholders have
helped to shape it. The co-construction of vision seems relevant within the context of this OIP,
especially given the wide-ranging viewpoints that are likely to exist amongst the stakeholders
with respect to gender understandings. Hence, the only legitimate leadership approach that an
individual of integrity might adopt is that of benevolent disruption of the status quo through the
proposed approach of disruptive leadership; it is up to the collective to respond to this disruption
in the manner they see fit. To that end, disruptive leadership may help to engender collaborative
dialogue aimed at destabilizing and then stepping beyond the status quo at Macdonald Hall.
If the co-construction of vision is an important facet of the change process, this particular project’s leadership-focused vision for change must be heuristic rather than prescriptive in nature. In the long term, the institution is well served when individual stakeholders articulate the rationale for the decisions they make as they go about the daily business of teaching or working in an all-boys school. The challenge, of course, is to establish the appropriate chemistry that will drive this interrogation, such that the investigation is collaborative, and the results are coherent (Fullan, 2013, p. 1). This is one of the most significant leadership challenges posed to me at Macdonald Hall.

**Chapter 1 Conclusion**

The intersection between leadership, language and behaviour seems to have particular significance here. Trust will only be fostered amongst followers if the leadership is seen to embody the change within their own actions. This project is predicated on exploring how a disruptive leadership approach might assist in the interrogation of programs, polices, and cultural aspects of Macdonald Hall that might serve to replicate patriarchy and reinforce heteronormativity. If leadership merely speaks to this change initiative without reframing their own approaches to leadership and daily activity, it is unlikely followers will have faith in the vision. This is to say that hierarchical, paternalistic, and/or hero leadership strategies may not suffice to create the conditions for the necessary change. As Keddie (2008) has suggested, gender equity in boys’ schools is only possible when organizational structures, norms, pedagogy and curriculum are aligned. This shall form the focus of Chapter 2.
Chapter 2 – Planning and Development

Introduction

This OIP draws upon the celebrated work of both Connell (2005) and Butler (1990/2007) in its understanding of masculinities as individual and collective scripted performances that participate in the ordering of a gendered society. Connell helps us to see that “gender is about how our reproductive bodies enter into social processes…” (Connell, 2011). A central concept in Connell’s work is the way in which the body, which performs both gender and sexuality, is the locus of expression that ultimately participates in, and helps to create, a gendered order. What is promising about Connell’s vision is that “because it’s historically constructed, it’s always open to change” (Connell, 2011). This offers the promise that educators have an opportunity to promote performances of masculinities that might contribute to healthy, safe, and inclusive communities (Ministry of Education – Ontario, n.d.) while simultaneously negating those performances that are limiting or dangerous.

Wittgenstein’s Language Games: A Visual Model

If we view Connell’s (2005) vision of masculinities through the lens of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, an analogy emerges that can be instructive in terms of thinking about this PoP in a more concrete manner. Throughout the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein refers to language as a game. In his exploration of the nature of language, Wittgenstein attempts to show how words, like the various pieces on a chess board, have no meaning outside of the context of their usage (Wittgenstein, 1953). Consider the king piece on a chess board: it has the capacity to move at will in any direction and negate oppositional pieces. However, set upon a
fireplace mantle, outside of the context of a chess board, a king is a trinket, a small decorative object (Wittgenstein, 1953).

What if we were to consider gender identity in the same light, through Wittgenstein’s metaphor of the chess piece? The human body steps onto the “chessboard” of human society and is assigned a rank relative to other bodies. Here there is an intersection between gender identity and sexual identity, as well as a myriad of other identity markers including race, socio-economic status, and creed. We term this intersectionality (Harnois, 2016; Parent, et al., 2013; Shields, 2008). In a patriarchal world, it might be argued that the cisgendered white male steps onto this game board with king status, barring any identity markers that might serve to disadvantage him relative to his peers. It could also be argued that the gay white male steps upon the stage already disadvantaged; that said, he may perform masculine identities that “reinstate” elements of his power, such as exhibiting traits admired within the heteronormative social imaginary or local hegemonic regime, while never living out aspects of his true identity.

To carry this analogy one step further, a heterosexual white woman might step onto the plane with automatic queen status, but what of the lesbian woman? As one can see, the chessboard can provide a helpful metaphor for understanding how the patriarchy, as Connell (2005, 2011, 2012) views it, presents in the world. Connell (2005, 2011, 2012) uses the word “hegemony” to denote masculinities that command power within a gendered society, and further suggests that the various institutional apparatuses in society, such as schools, have their own unique hegemonic regimes.
Figure 2. Destabilizing the Gendered Social Imaginary. A pictorial, using Wittgenstein’s (1953) analogy of the chess piece in the context of his notion of the language game, identifying the possibilities for greater equity within the context of a destabilization of the various gender constructs within the social imaginary.

Destabilize, Dislocate, Disrupt

Those who would advocate for social justice must attempt to destabilize the ranking of the various pieces on the playing board of gendered society to inoculate players from the disease of dominating hegemony. Ideally, the various players in this social imaginary become self-aware of their commonality with and interdependence upon the other players—they come to understand their position as human rather than gendered. The hierarchy inherent in the game is lessened—it becomes much more egalitarian, perhaps more akin to the game of checkers. Accepting that this analogy offers a crude and oversimplified vision, it may be helpful in elucidating the intended
outcome of this project. Figure 2 provides a pictorial example of this analogy in the context of Wittgenstein’s notion of the language game, identifying the possibilities for greater equity within the context of a destabilization of the various constructs within the social imaginary.

The questions for this inquiry, then, are as follows: is it possible to dislocate and destabilize the gendered social imaginary and/or the gender regimes implicit of a given school environment? What strategies might be employed to influence such a disruption? What new possibilities or solutions might emerge from this action? What ethical challenges exist in the attempts to execute such a plan? These are the foci of Chapter 2.

**Leadership Approaches to Change**

In their editorial work pertaining to the “queering” of pedagogy, Blackburn, Clark and Martino (2016) ask how teachers might “provoke, foster, and navigate complicated conversations about sexuality, queer desire, gender creativity, gender independence, and trans inclusivity” within the classroom (p. 804). This question is transferable within the context of the PoP under consideration: how might a school administrator in an all-boys environment stimulate a dialogue about, and provide practical and researched strategies for navigating conversations about gender matters within an all-boys context?

Two particular problems emerge from this question. The first pertains to how to mitigate the emotional responses inherent with such a provocation. Early responses to my suggestions that these issues require consideration have ranged from apathy, to discomfort, to shame. The latter is perhaps the most problematic response to the provocation, because I have found that shame typically results in self-defensive attitudes. In fact, I have found through most of my study regarding the subject of masculinity that many men and boys are presently ashamed of firmly claiming their identity as men within a world where #MeToo is a resonant part of both local and
national newscasts. I have perceived that men who are challenged to interrogate their own assumptions in this area tend to retreat to a defensive position whereby they tend to “double-down” on conventional notions of masculinity. The exercise, then, becomes self-destructive. This is very likely one of the foundational obstacles to the propagation of gender-inclusive ideology. Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher who paradoxically laid the groundwork for the post-modern destabilization of convention while simultaneously invoking misogynist and anti-Semitic language, provides deep insight into the burden of individual shame when he writes: “What is the seal of liberation? – No longer being ashamed in front of oneself” (Nietzsche, 1882, p. 226).

The second challenge I am facing is that I would like to avoid the perception that this initiative has been prescribed by the SLT because it is believed to be of importance. As noted in Chapter 1, this work must be heuristic rather than prescriptive if it is to have any efficacy. That the work must be heuristic is participative in the leadership approaches chosen for the purposes of enacting the project, disruptive leadership, a radicalized hybrid of team and transformational leadership. Further, a heuristic approach is aligned with both my personal philosophy and would seem to be necessary in the context of promoting a framework of inclusion. It would be ironic to engender equity through means that are inequitable or coercive. Perhaps a particularly inspiring way to think about enacting heuristic change is to have faith in the idea that many teachers are inherently motivated to explore new approaches and initiatives as a result of personal and professional experiences (Emo, 2015).

**Framework for Leading the Change Process**

**Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols: The Change Path Model**
Cawsey et al. (2016) provide the overarching change framework model for this project. The Change Path Model offers a hybrid of both current and past theory pertaining to change and offers a four-stage process for considering how to wake, mobilize, accelerate and embed all manner of change within organizations (Cawsey et al., 2016). Although the framework is not designed specifically for schools, most of the concepts are directly transferable to any school setting, including larger school organizations like boards or districts. This is important because I believe the possible solutions to this PoP under investigation may be applicable to other schools, and even those which are coed. Implicit in the Change Path Model is a recognition of the value of team and transformational leadership approaches. For example, in their explication of one of the key steps along the change path, mobilization, Cawsey et al. (2016) refer to the encouragement of “creeping commitment” and “coalition building” (p. 165). Such leadership behaviours entail both a recognition of the power inherent in affinity groups or teams having a “unified commitment” (Northouse, 2019, p. 376) within organizations as well as the need for the leader to “precipitate change” (Northouse, 2019, p. 164)—the former being an attribute of team leadership, the latter being an attribute of transformational leadership. Additionally, Cawsey et al. (2016) offer a myriad of practical assessment tools and visual guides for assessing the various stages of the project, be they developmental, diagnostic, or related to the implementation and consolidation phases of a change project.

One challenge with respect to understanding Cawsey et al. (2016) in the context of this inquiry is the way in which it implies a vision of workplace control. Mumby (2005) explores how much of the work being done in the field of management and organizational studies is focused on strategies that might be used for control; as such, they tend to reinforce the binary of resistance and control rather than see the potential in a more dialectical approach to the issues. In
this way, Cawsey et al. (2016) is not entirely aligned with my overarching philosophical position, which seeks to disrupt and dislocate binary and conventional thought. That said, it cannot be overlooked as a comprehensive tool for considering change management, and much of the text’s overarching model is derived from ideas that participate within my vision, such as the work Gentile (2010), *Giving Voice to Values*, which will be outlined further below not only as a frame for change but also as a component of the possible solutions to this PoP.

**Gentile’s Giving Voice to Values**

Cawsey et al. (2016) identify Gentile’s (2010) *Giving Voice to Values* (GVV) as a specific contemporary framework for viewing organizational change in the context of a values-laden problem, and I believe it worthy of consideration in light of the dimensionality it adds to the Change Path Model approach. The GVV program might serve as a professional development tool in the context of my project. It is aligned with both transformative and team leadership in the sense that its focus is on both ethical behaviour and collaborative processes for coming to understand how individuals might or might not choose to speak out when there is a conflict between personal values and organizational practices.

Gentile’s (2010) GVV vision provides insight on how to create a culture of discourse, and ultimately disruption. Given the PoP calls for an interrogation of key values-laden aspects of the institution, perhaps the GVV framework serves to ensure that dialogue informs change, and that nothing is more important than remaining an inclusive, forward-thinking community.

**Bolman and Deal: The Four Frames Model**

Of value to this inquiry is the work of Bolman and Deal (2017), who offer two uniquely practical ways of thinking about my own organization. The most important insight Bolman and Deal (2017) provide is that organizations can be viewed through a symbolic lens. Viewing an
organization like Macdonald Hall in this manner bears fruit when it comes to identifying and then diagnosing changes required in various aspects of the organization that might be contributing toward the reinforcement of binary, the patriarchy, and heteronormativity. Of equal importance is Bolman and Deal’s (2017) identification of the types of organizational structures that might complement collaborative leadership approaches which are inherent in the disruptive model of leadership.

Symbol and Ritual at Macdonald Hall

Bolman and Deal (2017) embrace the types of thinkers who have informed this project. For example, in their discussion on symbol, myth and ritual, the authors cite Jung and Campbell, both key influencers in the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement. Their discussion on symbol, myth and ritual provides the opportunity to see an emerging problem. Judeo-Christian symbols, military symbols, and architectural conservatism are ubiquitous throughout the campus. Ritual, such as morning chapel, the wearing of a particular uniform, and the celebration of Scottish annual highlights, is expected. Stories and myths pertaining to days long past are archived in the basement of the library. The various constituents of the school, including students and faculty, are proud of these cultural aspects of the school, though at times these attributes may contribute to the reinforcement of conservatism and patriarchal notions. To what extent might the interrogation and potential disruption of some of this symbology negatively affect culture? If ritual and ceremony serve to “socialize, stabilize, reassure, and convey messages” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 255), surely this project’s intent might serve to weaken school culture. This, in turn, might pose a threat to the school’s perceived value and sustainability. Tackling these aspects of school culture will be challenging because the resulting emotional tension will be felt
by all constituents, including alumni. As Bolman and Deal (2017) note, “[t]he power of ritual becomes palpable if one experiences the emptiness of losing it” (251).

In its discussion of organization as dramaturgical, the text of *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* (Bolman & Deal, 2017) reinforces one of the driving arguments of this inquiry: culture is socially constructed and performed, just as gender is. It is interesting to consider to what extent Macdonald Hall’s performance as a boys’ school is reflective of the various forms of isomorphism identified by Bolman and Deal (2017). For example, to what extent is the institution mimetic, replicating the cultures, programs, and practices in most other all-boys institutions? The opportunity to break from this mimicry seems an organizational opportunity, and a way to differentiate the institution from that of other boys’ schools. Additionally, one is led to question to what extent the performances of boys’ schooling reflects coercive isomorphism—how much of the “performance” of the institution is predicated on societal expectations? In other words, are we enacting a script we believe others expect to observe? Finally, I am struck by the following statement: “If an institution or its environment changes, theatrical refurbishing is needed” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 286). What does the Macdonald Hall script, campus, and culture look like when its symbols, myths and rituals are reconsidered? What must be jettisoned? What can be salvaged? How does reviewing the organization from the Four Frames perspective impact our decisions about the core ideology of the school?

Bolman and Deal (2017) offer a unique opportunity for a collective review of our practices and culture. They have shown that “[d]ramaturgical concepts sharply redefine organizational dynamics” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 294) Their suggestion that symbol, ritual
and myth “can transform a place of work into a beloved, revered, hallowed institution and an all-encompassing way of life” (243) problematizes the current PoP in significant ways.

Critical Organizational Analysis

Having thus determined a framework for change, considered the appropriate leadership strategy and analyzed the organization’s readiness for change, it is now timely to determine what kinds of institutional changes might be possible in the context of the current PoP. The driving question appears to be as follows: given we have begun to interrogate programs, policies, and culture that might serve to reinforce hierarchy, heteronormativity, and patriarchy, what aspects of the organization might require tweaking such that boys might embrace their most human selves, and engage in healthy gender performances? The following section identifies possible areas for consideration. Given this project is heuristic in nature, these considerations form only the beginnings of this inquiry and interrogation.

Language Matters

Bolman and Deal’s (2017) framework, alongside the work of Connell (2005, 2011, 2012) and Butler (1990/2007), suggest that the most significant gap between the desired future state of the organization and the present is the institution’s use of binary-reinforcing, heteronormative and colonial language. Job titles resonate with patriarchal notions, such as “dutymaster”, “housemaster”, and “headmaster”. The school’s motto, derived from a New Testament passage requiring men to be “strong”, fails to carry through with its intended corollary—that strength is derived from the enactment of charity. These may well be vestiges of a time long past, but they continue to appeal to many stakeholders.

Additionally, essentialist language abounds within school literature and online resources. This seems a reflection of coercive isomorphism as identified by Bolman and Deal (2017). A
review of similar local all-boys school websites has revealed that there is a common benevolent essentialist and segregationist thread running through the various rationales for single-sex schooling. Various other school policies, including the parent handbook, the faculty handbook and human resource personnel policies contain language that participates in antiquated notions of gender, reinforcing hierarchy, heteronormativity, or limiting binaries. These policies are derived both internally and externally and are often a hybrid of what are considered “best practices” in context.

**Symbol and Ritual Matters**

Similarly, the school must ensure that its symbols and rituals do not inadvertently endorse heteronormativity or reinforce hegemonic or patriarchal notions. Some of these symbols and rituals are formal, such as the school crest, the school hymn, and key ceremonies like Prize Day. Others are informal, such as faculty and/or staff created popular iconography, which are often used to promote the school and stimulate school spirit. Ceremonies such as the triannual academic assemblies may promote unnecessary focus on rank rather than on effort and learning skills. Further, assemblies are currently faculty driven, which reflects that hierarchy is embedded within the culture of presentation. Keddie (2008) identifies that conventional approaches to content delivery, regardless of the nature of the content, might serve to reinforce hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Keddie’s (2008) insight also suggests that hyper-masculine or traditional ritual serves to reinforce heteronormativity.

**Organizational Structure Matters**

Keddie’s (2008) insights lead to a reconsideration of the overall structure of the organization. Macdonald Hall’s current organizational structure is hierarchical, and, at times, the “Magic Leader Principle” is in play (Nadler & Tushman, 1989, p. 200). Nadler and Tushman
(1989) call organizational leaders to ask: “…what…elements of organization will have to be changed to enable the organization effectively to anticipate, respond to, and even shape the challenges to come[?]” (p. 197). There does appear a gap between the current hierarchical organizational structure and paternalistic leadership approach in light of this project’s vision to develop a more collaborative, systems-informed team approach. Bolman and Deal’s (2017) description of the “all-channel network”, which celebrates the interdependence of every team member, seems far removed from the current organizational structure of Macdonald Hall (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 101). The all-channel network has been identified to be effective when the task at hand is complicated, though Bolman and Deal (2017) also note that the drawbacks of such a structure may be such that decisions are long in the making.

There is also something to be drawn from an analysis of the current leadership style of the SLT. At times, the “Magic Leader Principle”, as defined by Nadler and Tushman (1989, p. 200) creates a situation of dependency, whereby one key member of the leadership team seems to be driving the necessary change. In the absence of this leader, the efficacy of the change initiative is at risk. This over-dependence on one charismatic leader serves to detract from a team mindset and may further reinforce notions of hierarchy. Nadler and Tushman (1989) speak to the importance of ensuring that projects are not dependent on a single leader, but rather the whole:

Successful changes are characterized by a large investment in the executive team, both as individuals and as a group. This team needs to share and own in the vision, to become over time more visible as champions, and to come to grips collectively with the task of managing… (p. 200)

Communications and Change Protocols
One of the challenges emerging from this investigation is the way in which executive leadership is privileged within the organizational studies literature, as evidenced in the passage above which is drawn from Nadler and Tushman (1989). Given this project seeks a destabilization of the conventional and traditional, the question becomes how flattening the leadership model might impact administrative efficacy at Macdonald Hall. Indeed, school leadership is not limited to members of the SLT, but its existence and perceived status problematizes the bid for a distributed, inclusive, team model. That said, destabilizing the SLT seems a poor decision in terms of ensuring institutional stability.

The school seems to require two additional organizational features that might serve to enhance team development and ensure transformational outcomes. The first pertains to the need for a more elaborate communications protocol or system, one that ensures the various administrative and leadership decisions are shared and deliberated upon. Some recent progress has been made in this direction, but concerns continue to be expressed to me regarding the inadequate flow of necessary information and the apparent lack of understanding of the interrelationship between one department and another department’s needs. This is to say that decisions are sometimes made in the absence of collaboration, and a process, structure, or system is needed to overcome this systemic problem.

Secondly, Macdonald Hall’s leadership and administration is particularly creative, and innovations seem to emerge quickly. Some protocol for change management seems equally absent from current practice. It would seem that new ideas deemed worthy by a change champion may be enacted with relative ease, without appeal to any due process. While this is one of the most liberating facets of working within the independent system, I am beginning to come
to an awareness that the increased complexity of the institution may be problematizing the
effective implementation of such spontaneous innovation.

Ultimately, collaborative processes and team structures, including inter-team coalitions
appear to require greater development within the school.

**Formal and Informal Curriculum and Pedagogy Matters**

One of the greatest opportunities for growth at Macdonald Hall stems from an apparent
gap between current predominant curricular and pedagogical approaches, which might be
identified as traditional and conventional in nature, and curricular and pedagogical approaches
that might promote an agenda of social justice. Though the school’s curriculum is determined by
the Ministry of Education’s curricular expectations, there seems an opportunity and willingness
to challenge curriculum that oversimplifies or denies students access to the complexity of equity
and gender matters; the local and provincial response on the part of teachers and parents to the
redaction of the 2015 Grades 1-8 Health and Physical Education curriculum as discussed in
Chapter 1 reflects a growing awareness that some believe curriculum choices need to be
revisited. The inclusion of LGBTQIA2+ topics within various curricula seems apt within the
project’s context. Blackburn et al. (2016) advocate for the “queering” of the curriculum for the
purposes of promoting social justice issues: “[w]orking to queer an LGBT-inclusive curriculum
offers an alternative approach that while sharing the goal of combatting homophobia also strives
to interrogate rather than reinforce heteronormativity and cisnormativity in the spirit of
embracing sexual diversity and gender democratization” (Blackburn et al., 2016, p. 801). Wargo
(2017) offers the concept of “hacking heteronormativity” within the middle school language
classroom as a means of extending students’ understanding of gender and sexuality while
simultaneously promoting a culture of inclusion.
**Metacognition as a Key Constructivist Approach**

The recent strategic planning process at Macdonald Hall calls upon teachers to adopt a more holistic approach to instruction (Anonymous, 2018), and this was derived from a perceived gap between current instructional practices and potential instructional opportunities. Inquiry-driven (Chiappetta & Adams, 2004), experiential (Hutchison & Bosacki, 2000; Quay, 2003) and interdisciplinary approaches (Applebee, Adler & Flihan, 2007; Rives-East & Lima, 2013) might serve to redefine the relationship between teacher and student, such that the teacher is no longer seen as the font of knowledge. Further, these approaches seem aligned with constructivist theory, which sees knowledge as socially constructed. A focus on metacognitive strategies for boys seems necessary to provide the tools required for sound learning (Jiang, Ma & Gao, 2016; Joseph, 2009; Meyer, Abrami, Wade, Aslan & Deault, 2010; Richmond, Bacca, Becknell & Coyle, 2017). Metacognition seems essential in the context of an educational setting where conventional understandings of gender are being interrogated for the purposes of promoting greater inclusivity and “self-compassion”, a necessary feature for the reduction of personal shame among males (Reilly, Rochlen & Awad, 2013, pp. 1-6).

**Technology and Media Awareness**

Macdonald Hall prides itself on being a leader in the integration of information technology in the classroom. Every student receives a tablet laptop and an impressive array of applications from which to access course material, collaborate, and create. The vision is developing rapidly as demand for engineering and robotics programming has increased substantially year-over-year.

That said, no specific curriculum currently exists to help boys navigate what they might experience online, and in particular how to manage self-governed virtual spaces. The school has
taken steps to help boys understand their legal and ethical responsibilities when it comes to their engagement in social media. I cannot help but think that there are many boys who are confused or troubled by the sexualized media they encounter. Further, the ubiquity of cell phone technology and social media seems related to an upswing in anxiety; while this matter may well be beyond the scope of this project, it is certainly related, and must play significantly into boys’ understanding of themselves.

In the introduction to the text *Gender and Technology: A Reader*, Lerman, Oldenziel and Mohun (2003) explore the way in which understandings of gender and technology co-evolve through historical processes:

…we must recognize that both gender and technology are about power: social, cultural, economic, political. Differences are not simply descriptive but shape opportunity and access in industrial capitalism as it has developed in North America. The association of maleness and technological prowess in a society that values technological change camouflages the privileges accorded men; they are labeled privileges of technological knowledge rather than of masculinity. (p. 7)

Macdonald Hall does not currently interrogate adequately the way in which the presence of technology shapes boys’ understandings of gender in the world, or more specifically the way in which the culture of gaming that seems prevalent in North American society might impact boys’ understandings of themselves. On a more philosophical level, the school must consider the way in which technology is gendered (Lerman et al., 2003). Recognizing technology as a gendered tool might help to destabilize assumptions that access to technology should be an institutional given.

**Health and Wellness Matters**
Macdonald Hall offers a myriad of ways to ensure physical health; this has become a major focus at the school, though the institution has always had a robust competitive athletics program. A medical centre is staffed with a full-time director, and a counsellor is onsite for most of the academic period. Two full-time athletic therapists serve the student community; this is important given that each student is obligated to participate in sport at least two out of three terms per academic year. The school’s athletic facilities are modern, and include an arena, a swimming pool, squash courts, two full-sized gymnasiums, and acres of outdoor playing fields, including a turf field that also operates as a track and field centre.

Two immediate areas of concern emerge in the consideration of the school’s health and wellness initiatives. The first is the level to which medical practices, and in particular counseling practices, are aligned with emerging understandings of gender. This is not to suggest that counselors do not take gender into consideration when treating students; however, the focus of the centre seems to be on promoting mental health through personal care. There may be real value in having health care workers at the school further explore relationship between gender self-perception and male health (Connell, 2012; McKenzie et al., (n.d.), Valkonen & Hänninen, 2012).

The second area of concern emerges from the school’s tacit endorsement of hyper-masculinity, particularly as it exhibits in sport. Boys are celebrated for athletic achievement, and seasonal championships are highly lauded by all in the culture. While a great deal of effort is placed in the area of designing practices, I wonder to what extent the athletic program might incorporate programming that would call to attention the way in which sport can serve to promote oversimplified, conventional notions of masculinity (Keddie, 2008). I also wonder how we might leverage student athletes in an effort to promote inclusivity and awareness; student
athlete leaders are admired by their peers and may serve as role models within in the community and promote the ideals identified within this inquiry.

**Community Awareness**

While little quantitative data exists to support the need for greater community awareness in the ways the school is tackling gender understanding, qualitative evidence abounds. On a personal level, I am regularly asked what strategies the school is employing to forestall the potential for raising misogynist boys in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

**The Limitations of Critical Theory**

Thus far, we have undertaken to diagnose the gaps between a future desired state at Macdonald Hall and the present state as it pertains to programs, policy, and cultural aspects that may affect boys’ performances of masculinity. My argument has been framed around men’s critical studies, critical theory, and feminist approaches to masculinities. Overall, I have come to see that the destabilization of conventional gender understandings, and a reduction of the “hyper-rational” (Keddie, 2018, pp. 571-583) might provide the context for the fostering of healthy and safe expressions of masculinity.

In his critique of the apparent “boy turn” in education, Weaver-Hightower (2003) proposes that both the theoretical and practical camps of this movement must work together to improve the quality of the outcomes of the project:

Reuniting these traditions would serve their common aims of increased equality by producing ‘better’ masculinities, reduced status between theory and practice in the academy, and increased readership for both bodies of literature. (pp. 484-485)

As has been stated above, this project cannot locate itself within the theoretical alone. Connell (2012) has noted that post-structuralist theory has failed to provide the traction necessary to
engender change. Seeking this change, Connell (2012) advocates for a view of gender as relational and suggests more local understandings of gender regimes might help to affect a greater willingness to embrace the need for change. Indeed, more practical solutions are required. And, while the theoretical may help to guide the institution through the interrogation of policy and culture, programmatic approaches must be, at least in part, driven by practical ideas. However, as Weaver-Hightower (2003) notes, many practical solutions to the apparent problem are grounded in essentialist or flawed theorizing.

Possible Solutions and Opportunities to Address the PoP

Potentialities vs. Concrete Directions

I should like to frame this section in the light of Dewey’s statements in his 1916 essay entitled “Aims in Education”. Dewey notes that all aims are heuristic and tentative in nature; they are ever changing and evolving:

The aim as it first emerges is a mere tentative sketch. The act of striving to realize it tests its worth. If it suffices to direct activity successfully, nothing more is required…But usually—at least in complicated situations—acting upon it brings to light conditions which had been overlooked. This calls for a revision of the original aim; it has to be added to and subtracted from. (Dewey, 1916, p. 252)

In this way, the solutions offered here are possibilities in the sense that Dewey would have understood them to be: potentialities subject to change through the social interaction that takes place during professional discourse.

Thus, while the solutions for change must be co-developed by the various constituencies at the school, the practical approaches offered here can only offer inspiration for a multiplicity of alternative solutions that could work jointly and coherently to help promote healthy masculinities
scripts. It is hoped that these strategies might benefit not only the students at Macdonald Hall, but also the school’s various constituents, including faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and associated community members. Further, it is hoped that any strategy that has merit at Macdonald Hall might have merit at other schools for boys, or even co-educational schools. The categories roughly mirror those set out in the Critical Organizational Analysis section above.

**Micro and Macro Change**

The work of Kang (2015) is particularly useful here in understanding how the proposed change initiatives might fit into a model for change management. Kang (2015) identifies that macro change initiatives seek to modify “organizational directions, structures, processes, and capabilities” (28). Micro change management, on the other hand, considers more specific components of the intervention and the management of such. To that end, macro change initiatives seem best driven by those in senior leadership, and micro changes seem best driven by leaders within divisions under the support of senior leadership (Kang, 2015). I will attempt to label the potential solutions in the context of whether they might fall into the category of macro or micro change.

**Alignment with Current Professional Development Structures at Macdonald Hall**

Additionally, it is important to note that these approaches align to some extent with the currently existing expectations and processes for professional development, communication, and change. Macdonald Hall has, in the last decade, developed a professional development model whereby a number of thematic groups pertaining to pedagogy, technology and health and wellness work as investigative focus groups and report to the larger faculty approximately once a month. These groups spend a great deal of time independently researching and discussing self-selected topics derived from the strategic plan and bear a responsibility to generate full faculty
dialogue on the same within the professional development cycle. Additionally, faculty and staff are frequently called upon to participate in steering or focus groups, whether it be to solve a particular emerging problem, develop specific strategic initiatives through the strategic planning process, develop responses to Ministry or CAIS inspection reports, or work collaboratively in the hiring of key positions in the school. Further, departmental work and focus groups are often likened to what has been termed “professional learning communities”, though Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas (2006) have helped to show that the definition of such a phrase is loose and PLCs exist in many different ways in many different contexts. Thus, the proposals below are contextually valid given the expectation on the part of faculty and staff that collaborative focus groups may be struck for both short and long-term needs.

**Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee: Macro Change Initiatives**

It would seem that a starting point for engaging in disruptive leadership involves seeking “allies” (Gentile, 2010, p. 59), “architects” (Thomas & Nolan, 2010) and “elders” (Moore & Gillette 1991, pp. 5-6) who are committed to working collaboratively to interrogate the school’s programs, policies, and culture. The establishment of such a committee might help to engender a dialogue with respect to macro change initiatives. This committee should consist of a diverse array of faculty, staff, students and parents who represent a variety of perspectives within the community. In the early phases of its mandate, this committee would be focused on issues pertaining to language, policy, symbol, ritual, and organizational matters. This committee, hereafter named the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee (EDIC), might take the form of a professional learning community/committee and serve to inform and inspire the more specific work in the areas of internal communications, curriculum, technology, health and wellness, and community awareness.
Below are some of the key early investigations that might be tackled by the EDIC:

**Language and policy matters.**

- Identify noninclusive content, the school’s nomenclature, including language used in school job titles, marketing and admissions materials, advancement materials, online representations, curriculum documents, and parent communication with the express purpose of providing recommendations for revision, substitution, or deletion to the Chair of the Board and the Headmaster (Roy, 2000; Schein, 2004, 2017)

- Explore, alongside the Director of Human Resources and Director of Admissions, Marketing and Business Development, the school’s internal human resources policies, admissions policies, and academic and pastoral policies are aligned with the expectations identified in the policy work of the school’s provincial and national independent school affiliates, CIS and CAIS; consider the establishment of practices that promote diversity within the context of hiring faculty predicated on the Government of Ontario’s *OPS Inclusion and Diversity Blueprint* (Ontario Public Service, n.d.)

**Symbol and ritual matters.**

- Investigate, for the purposes of identifying noninclusive content, the school’s symbols and rituals, including iconography both past and present, school events and ceremonies and the content thereof, with the express purpose of providing recommendations for revision, substitution or deletion to the Chair of the Board and the Headmaster (Bolman & Deal, 2017)

- Consider the development of a “Hippocratic Oath” for educators of boys, and ensure this is published and accessible to the entire community (Khurana & Nohria, 2008)
Organizational and structural matters.

- Work alongside the Director of Human Resources to explore opportunities to leverage “circle” and “all-channel” networks within the school’s organizational structure (Bolman & Deal, 2017, pp. 100-101) as it pertains to the fostering of hierarchical and paternalistic notions
- Consider ways to ensure school ceremonies and other rituals are student led and student driven and propose necessary changes to the Student Life Team
- Reflect on how best to establish meeting protocols that ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to share their ideas and contribute to decision making (Cawsey et al., 2016)
- Consider ways to ensure that the spaces and places we inhabit do not reinforce the notion that one is not in the “eye” of the community or owned by an ally, elder or architect (i.e. locker rooms, basement hallways) (Astor et al., 1999; Stuart, 2013)
- Explore how the spaces and places might resonate with a spirit of openness that lends itself to inclusivity by virtue of not segregating various groups and not representing misleading and limiting symbols

Communications and change protocols.

- Explore the development of a school-wide meeting/focus group protocol that seeks to empower all community stakeholders to give voice to their values (Gentile, 2010)
- Consider the development of a more rigorous internal communications protocol that enables vertical and horizontal communications (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Cawsey et al., 2016)
• Investigate the possibilities for a school-wide change protocol that might enable all stakeholders the capacity to contribute their ideas as soon as possible when innovation unfolds

**Networking.**

• Explore the opportunities to network with local schools for boys with an eye toward engaging in both generative dialogue and comparative analysis of the way policies, programs, and cultural practices might shape understandings of gender with local contexts (LeMahieu, Grunow, Baker, Nordstrum, & Gomez, 2017; Moore & Kelly, 2009)

**Beyond EDIC: Micro Change Initiatives**

The following areas require the work of more specific managers within the community who have responsibility for a particular programmatic or administrative area.

**Formal and informal curriculum and pedagogical matters.**

Direct members of the academic administration to:

• Seek to promote and celebrate the arts regularly (Anonymous, 2018)

• Seek to explore the possibilities inherent in including LGBTQIA2+ content within the curriculum (Blackburn et al., 2016; Roy, 2000; Wargo, 2017)

• Consider providing language arts instructors with specialized training in the area of boys’ literacy as per Alloway, Freebody, Gilbert & Muspratt, 2002

• Consider ways to help faculty to tackle gender surveillance, homophobia, transphobia, and gender stereotypes (Kearns, Mitton-Kükner & Tompkins, 2017)

• Consider the best way to provide faculty with further training in the areas of constructivist theories of instruction, including metacognition, inquiry-based learning
(Anonymous, 2018; Chiappetta & Adams, 2004), experiential learning (Anonymous, 2018; Hutchison & Bosacki, 2000; Meyer et al., 2010; Quay, 2003), interdisciplinary learning (Anonymous, 2018; Applebee et al., 2007; Rives-East & Lima, 2013)

• Investigate best ways to provide faculty with training in the area of intersectionality (Anonymous, 2018; Harnois, 2016; Parent et al., 2013; Shields, 2008; Roy, 2000)

• Look to partner with schools such as Canada’s National Ballet School, so that boys at Macdonald Hall can engage other students performing a myriad of gender scripts

• Continue to develop student leadership as it pertains to participation in committees such as Jack.org, the Social Justice Committee, and the White Ribbon Campaign (Connell, 2005)

• Investigate the ways in which the school’s Cadet program impacts boys’ understandings of masculinities

• Investigate the Hjalli Model of education as proposed by Margrét Pála Ólafsdóttir, which seeks to counter the learned gender stereotypes of kindergarteners, for the purpose of identifying its purposes and strengths as a pedagogical model (Jóhannesson, Lingard & Mills, 2009; The Hjalli Model, n.d.)

**Technology and media awareness matters.**

Direct members of the IT Administration and Student Life Team to:

• Consider the initiation of a steering committee to explore the gendered nature of technology and consider strategic ways to utilize technology in ways that destabilize gendered understandings of these tools as they emerge throughout the school (Lerman et al., 2003)
• Investigate the validity of developing a system-wide advisory program to help boys manage their online experiences with an emphasis on safety and the deconstruction of sexualized and non-sexualized content

• Investigate the validity of developing communications plan that keeps parents and students informed of the hazards and opportunities for online learning, surfing, gaming, and daily cell-phone usage (Steiner-Adair, 2013)

• Investigate the potential for the inclusion of media studies as a formal course at the school

**Health and wellness matters and athletic coaching-specific programming.**

Direct the members of the wellness and athletic programs to:

• Investigate existing social/self-awareness/self-compassion programs for young men such as My Brother’s Keeper (Obama, 2014; Zell 2011), Wiseguyz (Giese, 2018a), and the RISE High School Leadership Program (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018)

• Explore ways in which the health care staff might receive training in gender awareness, with emphasis on the way perceptions of gender impact self-esteem, self-compassion, and shame (Reilly et al., 2014)

• Reflect on ways to leverage boys’ admiration for coaches as a means toward developing programs that provide opportunities within existing athletic programs to challenge hyper-masculine constructs emerging from these activities and to promote personal development (i.e. Coaching Boys into Men, 2017)

**Community awareness matters including marketing, online representation, and external communications.**

Direct the members of communications and marketing teams to:
Consider developing a media outreach campaign that differentiates Macdonald Hall from those “conventional”, “traditional”, “hyper-rational” (Keddie, 2018, pp. 571-583) boys’ schools for boys that serve to replicate heteronormativity, hegemony, the patriarchy, and limiting understandings of masculinities.

Consider the implementation of a process whereby alumni can step forward to air potential past grievances with the commitment from the school that their well-considered cases will shape school program, policies and practices to prevent recurrence.

**A Jungian Approach?**

One practical approach that may be flawed in its philosophical underpinnings but valuable in the context of providing programs that undercut the hyper-rational within all boys’ environments is the work of the Jungian-inspired Mythopoetic Men’s Movement. Loosely led by American poet Robert Bly and Jungian psychoanalyst Robert Moore, the movement sought to reduce the shame of men whom they posited were suffering from dislocation from society as a result of the fundamental change to their roles and relationships in the post-industrial age (Pulé & Hultman, 2019). Two popular books: *Iron John: A Book About Men* (2004), and *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* (1991), written by Bly and Moore and Gillette respectively, frame out the movement’s core values.

Criticism of the movement is ubiquitous throughout recent academia, most likely a result of the movement’s apparent rejection of masculinity as a performative construct (Connell, 2005, van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004). These Jungians view the male and female psyche as burdened by essential archetypes that must be acknowledged and supported if one is to develop and find a place of personal wellness. Strategies for accessing these archetypes include writing...
and reading poetry, enjoying music, exploring myths and fairy tales, and talking with others about the contradictory emotions of grandiosity and shame that seem to accompany modern life (Bly, 2004; Moore & Gillette, 1991).

While it is evident that the movement is predicated on a form of sex-role theory (van Hoven & Hörschelmann, 2004), and, as such, is not entirely aligned with this project’s philosophical underpinnings, there is much to be gleaned from the practical solutions offered by the movement’s proponents, as they speak to the mythical, the mystical and the spiritual rather than the rational. Further, having read and listened to the work of these men, it is clear that they are participating in a long line of human wisdom, both in the areas of Western philosophy and ethnography. For example, their vision of eldership might be quite useful in helping boys to see their connectivity to both present and past (Moore & Gillette, 1991). Finally, to critique this movement is to overlook the value that Jungian psychology and ideology might add to our collective cultural well-being. Jung’s work is critiqued because it is viewed as participating in discrete, binary, and dualistic frames of thinking. A close reading of Jung belies this oversimplified view of his vision—my sense is that Jung views archetypes as human, and that gendered aspects of these components of the psyche are ubiquitous in all individuals, whether they be male, female, or otherwise (Jung, 1933/1955; Jung, 1957/2006).

**Recuperative Masculinity**

The educated reader may critique my position as participating in a form of recuperative masculinity, a notion identified by Lingard and Douglas in 1999 (Lingard, Mills & Weaver-Hightower, 2012), as a result of my invocation of Jung and Bly. Recuperative masculinity is a political concept in which the work of such thinkers as those connected to the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement and men’s rights politics are viewed as a means towards a reversal of current
gains made by feminism and social justice advocates alike for the purposes of the restoration of a societal order which seeks to affirm essentialism, heteronormativity, and the patriarchy (Bazinet, 2015; Lingard et al. 2012). I do think there is real value in considering carefully the ideas of Jung or Bly; however, one must view their work in light of the historical contexts in which they were written or risk falling prey to a limiting and pernicious ahistoricism. I do see the value of mining these thinkers for the wisdom they might share with us about the human condition.

**Indigenous Insight**

Indigenous philosophy has the most potential for helping us see the power in Jungian thought, and for aiding in the destabilization of gender binaries. Anne Waters (n.d.) offers insight into the manner in which indigenous peoples of North America hold a different ontological viewpoint from Europeans. She identifies this position as nonbinary, complementary dualism. Viewing the world through the lens of nonbinary, complementary dualism “would place…two constructs together in such a way that one would remain itself and be also a part of the other” (Waters, n.d., p. 2). This mindset is what is required if we are to transcend current restrictive and limiting understandings of gender expression. Waters’ viewpoint reshapes Western understandings of the relationship between the European and Indigenous peoples and has the potential to redefine the public discourse with respect to indigenous issues.

Indigenous and Jungian thought, coupled and uncoupled, might provide some practical directions for the diminishing of hyper-rationality in schools for boys. Further, each mode of thought may help to further destabilize notions of gender, thereby laying a groundwork for greater equity and humanity. To that end, it would appear that there is great potential in viewing boys’ education through a Jungian lens (Mayes, 2005) and finding ways to indigenize the curriculum with the support of those within indigenous communities.
The following micro change initiative opportunities might further be considered by the academic team:

- Interrogate the validity of embedding Jungian approaches as identified by Mayes (2005) in various aspects of the program for the purposes of mitigating the hyper-rational; promote opportunities for students to explore the active imagination and the symbolic

- Weigh the value in seeking to thread indigenous issues throughout the curriculum, to encourage indigenous speakers, and to expose students and other school stakeholders to indigenous ritual, symbol, myth and tradition for the purposes of providing non-discrete, non-binary philosophical positions into the culture (Waters, n.d.)

- Consider ways to incorporate poetry, music, mythology and fairy tales within the existing curriculum in light of the work of the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement while carefully navigating “noble savage” stereotypes that might interrupt this initiative (Bly, 2004; Moore & Gillette, 1991)

**Resource Needs**

Because this change is cultural in nature, the project requires significant human resources and dedicated time. Given my agency within the organization, I am able to set aside time in both formal professional development sessions and during the academic week to ensure both the EDIC and smaller groups have the necessary time to meet. Additionally, it is likely that financial resources dedicated to the research of the project may be required, and the resulting action may have financial implications, particularly as it pertains to reprinting outdated materials, reworking signage, and initiating programs. Further, if programmatic change results from these macro or micro change initiatives, financial resources or further personnel may be required. I do believe
that the benefits of this focused work outweighs the potential financial costs—that said, a hidden cost may be disillusion or resistance on the part of some constituents within the community. This will be further explored in Chapter 3.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change Issues

I prefaced this chapter with an analogy which posits that human beings enact their lives upon a kind of patriarchal chessboard that privileges heteronormative players. The rules of the game, which represent the rules of society, are rigged against those who might choose to enact unconventional gender identities. That life is lived upon a competitive playing field is unavoidable. That said, there is much we can do on a cultural level to destabilize the rules such that they become much more equitable, and all the players have an equal opportunity (Trudeau, 1998).

The destabilization of convention, however, is not an easy objective to attain. I am reminded of Christopher Nolan’s 2010 blockbuster sci-fi movie Inception. In this film, the main character is a thief who has the ability to steal information from people’s dreams. His most recent assignment is just the opposite—in order to commit corporate espionage, he must implant an idea in the head of his opponent, such that his opponent, upon waking, acts out the inception in his real life (Thomas & Nolan, 2010). In some ways, this project requires the inception of ideas; conscientization, as indentified in this chapter’s conclusion, may offer a model for such an approach.

My objectives cannot be met through top-down directives, or covert manipulation of my colleagues, the latter being the hallmark of the film Inception. Its guiding vision must be adopted willingly by the school’s constituents. The values that shape this vision must be caught as much as they are taught. To that end, the leaders at Macdonald Hall who would enact this interrogation
must approach the plan obliquely, steadily, and confidently. In many ways, the fictional concept of inception as posited by Nolan is instructive—tap into followers’ dreams about what is possible, and they might—or might not—participate differently in the gender game throughout their daily lives.

The ethical ramifications are significant and important, and many questions emerge. The first has to do with whether the beliefs that underpin my inquiry are as legitimate as I believe they are. There are many who would dispute constructivist notions of gender expression, arguing instead for essentialism, and the status quo.

I am not entirely certain what the effect(s) of my intended disruption will be. I have fears that such action may in fact tear at the heart of the community in which I live. When I encounter this ethical dilemma—that is, that my core beliefs are wrong, and my bid to destabilize the status quo is inherently flawed—I am reassured by the work of Gentile (2010):

In fact, one of the most common objections to the idea of voicing and acting on our values is the concern that we may be wrong, that our values might spring from a place of self-righteousness or incomplete understanding…Unfortunately, too often this concern serves to silence us…[E]ven if in the end we conclude that our going-in position was incorrect, the process of analyzing and sharing our concerns can improve our organizational decision-making process. (p. 20)

The concern that I have is that the proposed destabilization which I feel empowered to enact may emotionally impact people within my own community for whom I have deep respect and compassion. As such, I have determined to return to the value of coherence; that is to say the spectrum of activity and thought which informs this work must be aligned with a deep belief in
the potential for us to create a better world together. Coercion, or teleological approaches to the ethics of daily activity, have no place within this project.

This inquiry has drawn upon the wisdom of many philosophers, and one philosophical text that brings greater focus to the ethical implications extant is the *Being and Nothingness* by Jean-Paul Sartre (1956). In this text, Sartre painstakingly outlines an ontology for the coexistence of being and nothingness, and then asks what the fallout of such a position must be. One of the most powerful corollaries of Sartre’s work is that we are all individually responsible for our own lives. He suggests that to think otherwise is to operate in “bad faith” (Sartre, 1956, pp. 86-116).

To blame one’s predicament on someone else is a form of a denial of free will. I firmly believe in the work of Kurt Lewin as espoused by Burnes (2009). Burnes (2009) writes of Lewin’s philosophy of management: “Instead of attempting to change behaviour by imposition and coercion, what is required is an approach to change which promotes ethical behaviour and allows those concerned to change of their own free will” (p. 361).

To believe otherwise is to be a pseudo-transformational leader as per Aaronson (2001):

Pseudo-transformational leaders care about their own personal power and status, often depending on conspiracies and excuses, and resorting to distortion of truth and manipulation of followers for their own ends. They also tend to be concerned with perpetuating followers’ dependence on them. (p. 253)

This project is grounded in part within the notion of a transformational approach to leadership, and to be a transformational leader, one must behave ethically:

Transformational leadership and ethical leadership overlap in their focus on personal characteristics. Ethical and transformational leaders care about others, act consistently
with their moral principles (i.e. integrity), consider the ethical consequences of their decisions, and are ethical role models for others. (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 599)

To that end, while I have some fears that my beliefs may be erroneous and misguided, I am compelled to act because I believe that I am working in good faith with the best interest of my community in mind.

Ellsworth (1989) provides an insightful critique of her own experience of teaching for the purpose of enacting social change which has helped me to consider further the ethical complexities of the interrogation and disruption I am proposing. As a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the late 1980s, Ellsworth was charged with leading a group of students through a course on anti-racist pedagogy. Through her work with this class, she came to understand that her emancipatory agenda was steeped in the language and philosophy of the rational, and, as such, was limited and paternalistic in its capacity to solve the challenging power imbalances within society.

Ellsworth (1989) struggled to find ways around this apparent conundrum. Something of a solution emerged as she pondered the way in which feminist post-structuralism helped her to understand that every point of view is partial in nature, and that affinity groups can be helpful in terms of providing individuals safety in diverse, large groups seeking means towards equity and common understanding. Ellsworth’s (1989) caution that an overly rationalistic, paternalistic approach to challenging asymmetry in power relations can serve to do more harm than good is meaningful to me. While interrogation and disruption guide this endeavour, I must be careful to acknowledge that I am partial and interested, and, as such, a potential but unintentional oppressor. As Ellsworth (1989) notes, recognizing and stating this explicitly, as well as seeking
to better understand the differing and valid viewpoints of others, should be a first step towards emancipatory work of this kind.

There are many stakeholders, including parents, within the school who fundamentally disagree with my position and might remove their sons from the care of the school if they perceived that I intended to interrogate gender performances in schools for boys. To that end, the project might threaten both the values of an individual family, and the sustainability of the institution. Again, I return to Gentile (2010) for assurance. In one of the key assumptions of the Giving Voice to Values text, the author notes that we can never assume to know who will share one’s values (Gentile, 2010). As Cuilla (2001) notes: “The ethics of people, organizations, and societies are complex systems that rarely lend themselves to neat boxes and diagrams” (p. 319). At best, we can only be open to possibility for dialogue by being transparent.

To participate in the operation of a school is to take on great responsibility in the face of the unknown. While the school is bound by the ethical requirements as outlined by the Ontario College of Teachers’ Ethical Standards. (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.), the level of responsibility seems more complicated by virtue of the school being unconventional in its mandate. The school takes its ethical responsibilities seriously. It is uniquely—and somewhat paradoxically—positioned to take on the challenges associated with promoting healthy masculinities. To that end, I believe the project to be ethically thorny, but ultimately defensible.

Chapter 2 Conclusion: Conscientization as a Disruptive Leadership Method

In the text Pedagogy of the Oppressed (2000), Freire proposes that a methodology of conscientization might help to lift the poor and illiterate of Brazil out of the clutches of their oppressors. Freire’s ideas (1970/2000) might serve to inform the work I anticipate completing at Macdonald Hall. Freire (1970/2000) is adamant that this pedagogy “must be forged with, not for,
the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity” (p. 48). In a most interesting analysis of the psychology of oppression, Freire (1970/2000) offers two poignant insights. The first is that the oppressed are unable to objectivize their situation and tend to adopt an attitude of “adhesion” with their oppressors (p. 45). Freire suggests that the oppressed are in some way submersed in and unable to transcend their circumstances having identified with their aggressors. In this way, they are unable to see a way forward, or understand their agency to transform their world in their bid for a “fuller humanity” (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 47). The second insight offered by Freire (1970/2000) is that in dehumanizing their subjects, oppressors become the oppressed themselves because their actions devalue their own humanity. This vicious cycle can only be broken by the oppressed, who, through conscientization, have the capacity to liberate both themselves and those who have held them back.

Freire’s insights provide the aspiring transformational educational leader with a few key takeaways. The first is that transformation is a collective effort, one in which there is no place for the tools of domination and coercion, identified by Freire (1970/2000) as “[p]ropaganda, management, [and] manipulation” (p. 68). The second is that we all suffer in some way from injustice, whether we be an unwitting or conscious victim of discrimination, or a well-intentioned or malevolent perpetrator of inequality. We cannot claim our freedom until such time as we have come to an awareness of our role in the propagation of our own freedom and the freedom of others. By destabilizing the binary of the oppressed and oppressor, Freire participates in the spirit of the inquiry at hand, which seeks to utilize disruptive leadership to destabilize limiting understandings of gender identity and create a consciousness on the part of boys’ educators with respect to how their decisions can positively or negatively impact boys’ understandings of masculinities.
That said, the context in which Freire (1970/2000) proposes an enactment of his methodology stands in stark contrast to the privileged context of Macdonald Hall. It begs the question—in the context of privilege, what hope is there for a conscientization of community? Is it possible to awaken educators of boys to the dehumanizing structures and approaches that serve to reinforce heteronormativity, hypermasculinity, the hyper-rational, limiting binaries and the patriarchal? Further, is this language accessible or palatable to those who are submersed in convention and tradition? What specific approaches must be taken to enact the interrogation of program, policy, and culture? These are the foci of Chapter 3.
Chapter 3 – Implementation, Evaluation and Communication

Introduction

In the text *Organizational Culture and Leadership (5th Ed.)*, Schein (2017) places special emphasis on the way organizational founders have a profound impact on organizational culture and sustainability. In the case of Macdonald Hall, the vision of the early founders to foster in boys both social responsibility and well-roundedness has, whether accurately or inaccurately, been attributed to the work of educational philosopher John Dewey, whose constructivist and pragmatic vision of education still seems to resonate in the professional dialogue of the school. What is most appealing about Dewey’s vision is its apparent relevance in the current context and its promise for a society founded on collective responsibility. In his 1960 work entitled *Theory of Moral Life*, Dewey writes:

> Our discussion points to the conclusion that neither egoism or altruism nor any combination of the two is a satisfactory principle. Selfhood is not something that exists apart from the association of intercourse. The interests that are formed in the social environment are far more important than are the adjustments of isolated selves. We must realize the fact that regard for self and regard for others are both secondary phases of a more normal and complete interest, regard for the welfare and integrity of the social groups in which we form a part. (as cited in McDonough & Portelli, 2004, pp. 163-164)

That the founders of Macdonald Hall appear to have participated in a Deweyan vision of a society in which its students were called upon to be good citizens—and that this vision continues to be embraced by virtue of its presence in the written mission of the school—bodes well for the future of Macdonald Hall and might provide focus for a path moving forward. Beyond the
individualism inherent in helping boys to see that they might enact the masculinities to which they are most drawn lies a greater responsibility to the collective. For students, this means that while they have a right to be who they are without fear of reprisal or harassment, they must also honour the rights of others for the same. For educators, the responsibility is multiplied: not only must they create cultures of inclusivity; they must also create environments that sustain pluralism. While this chapter is focused on the former, it will become clear that following work in the area of gender awareness, an opportunity exists for both a revisitation and refreshment of the mission of the school which might serve to safeguard its sustainability long into the future.

**Change Implementation Plan**

**The Change Path Model: Three Dispositions**

Cawsey et al. (2016) offer a framework for change predicated on the collective findings of a myriad of organizational change researchers, including Lewin, Nadler and Tushman, and Kotter. While the model is prescriptive in nature, it is still instructive with respect to providing guidance to a more heuristic change initiative, one which may require frequent reassessment and redirection. Perhaps of greatest importance to this inquiry is the selection of an appropriate “path” to change that is aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of the project.

Three primary dispositions outlined by Cawsey et al. (2016) seem valid in the context of this inquiry. First, given the project is complicated and relatively uncertain because it seeks to disrupt current program, policy, and culture within the school, adopting a “doing first” strategy may help in establishing some sense of momentum. Cawsey et al. (2016) suggest that a “doing first” approach “is a response to even more ambiguous situations and takes the process of exploration further in the search for new paths forward” (p. 302).
The second disposition that might be helpful to adopt is to view the change as “emergent” in nature. Cawsey et al. (2016) identify that viewing a change initiative through the lens of emergent change is helpful when the organization’s workforce is highly skilled, knowledgeable, and understanding of the various opportunities and hazards that lay on the path ahead. Developing an understanding of the change initiative as emergent in nature may be particularly helpful given this inquiry tackles emotionally charged issues such as heteronormativity, hyper-masculinity, and hyper-rationality. The proposed change is “ambitious, incremental, [and] challenging” and may benefit from approaches that employ “metaphors, experimentation, and risk taking” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 303).

Finally, understanding that this change must address norms in a participative manner is aligned with the leadership and philosophical substructure of this OIP. Cawsey et al. (2016) suggest that changing norms implies changing relationships. To achieve the desired future state will require a fundamental shift in the way the various stakeholders at Macdonald Hall work together and learn together. While such proposed change is daunting, it is also promising, open, and full of possibility. Table 1 outlines in brief the proposed change implementation plan, including considerations pertaining to resources, supports and timelines.
Table 1

*Overarching Change Implementation Plan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals/Priorities</th>
<th>Implementation Process</th>
<th>Implementation Issues/Limitations</th>
<th>Supports/Resources</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDIC MACRO Committee:</strong></td>
<td><strong>EDIC MACRO:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Buy-in, both in terms of committee members at the Micro level, and with respect to the philosophical underpinnings of the endeavour</strong></td>
<td>Human Resources (time!)</td>
<td><strong>EDIC MACRO:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Utilize the Critical systems heuristics protocol to define boundaries of the interrogation and the short and long-term mandate of the committee</td>
<td>- The formation of a Macro committee pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the context of a school for boys</td>
<td>- Unknown, vague timelines</td>
<td>- Textual Resources (based on required research) -- $2000</td>
<td>-6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disaggregate nomenclature, policy, symbol, ritual, organizational structures in light of gender matters via the lens of equity, diversity and inclusivity</td>
<td><strong>EDIC MICROS:</strong></td>
<td>- Effective communication of committee ideas</td>
<td>- IT Infrastructure (pre-existing)</td>
<td><strong>EDIC MICROS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Propose amendments and additions to the work in these specific areas to leadership</td>
<td>- The formation of 4 related Micro committees pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the context of a school for boys</td>
<td>- Networking challenges</td>
<td>- Programmatic changes may result in unexpected costs; I do not anticipate significant costs as this involves culture change, but programmatic changes to athletics may range from $25-50,000</td>
<td>-Projected 12, 18, 24, 30 months to exhaustive committee work is complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communicate the group’s work regularly for the purposes of enacting a form of conscientization within the community</td>
<td><strong>EDIC MICRO Committees</strong></td>
<td>- An ambitious, disruptive plan</td>
<td>- Possible professional development costs such as guest speakers: $10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDIC MICRO 1: Academic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Formal and informal curriculum and pedagogical matters</td>
<td><strong>EDIC MICRO 2: Information Technology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Technology and media awareness matters</td>
<td><strong>EDIC MICRO 3: Athletics and Wellness</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This chart outlines a set of committees that will serve to promote or extend from the potential solutions in Chapter 2. These committees will consider school nomenclature, symbols,
rituals, cultural matters, hiring policies and practices, overall policy matters, internal
organizational structure, pedagogy and curriculum, technology, health and wellness/athletics
programming matters, and communications with internal and external constituents. Resources
and supports are contemplated, but given the heuristic nature of the change plan, there remain
many unknowns.

**A Matter of Some Urgency**

As identified in earlier sections of this OIP, recent events pertaining to acts of sexual
assault allegedly committed by students at a neighbouring school for boys have expedited the
requirement to begin this important work; as such, some preliminary groundwork has already
been laid. The incidents involved locker room hazing and were represented in the media as a
form of male initiation and/or typical of the type of toxic behaviour that schools for boys
apparently engender (for examples of negative media coverage pertaining to schools for boys
resulting from this crisis, see Giese, 2018b; MacDonald, 2018; Mallick, 2018; Williams, 2018). I
draw upon Stuart (2013) to reframe the matter not as an initiatory rite of passage, but rather
another example of how, in the absence of adult supervision, students opt for self-governance.
Stuart (2013) writes:

> The way that they do that, in the framework of hegemonic masculinity, is to treat those
younger team members as though they are not fully masculinized, but rather feminized.
The younger team members are thus treated as if they do not conform to gender
stereotypes and cannot conform until they become either peripheral to the hazing or
perpetrators themselves. (p. 380)
Stuart’s interpretation of these type of acts as gendered reinforces the need for greater understanding of gender performances and regimes, but also helps educators to see that unowned or ungoverned school spaces lend themselves to violence (Astor et al., 1999).

**School Response**

Macdonald Hall’s response to the media scrutiny associated with these charges has been threefold. First, we have revisited our policies pertaining to mutual respect and bullying and republished these in a consolidated format for the purposes of assuring parents that this type of behaviour is not tolerated and is subject to legal recourse. Second, we have focused on the manner in which we will communicate our position as it relates to harassment in particular, but also more broadly our purpose as educators of boys. As a result, we have updated our website such that it does not include essentialist justifications for all-boys education. Third, we have addressed the incidents with our student body through assembly and advisory sessions. Additionally, led by the school’s Social Justice Committee, which includes faculty and student representatives, we have hosted a preliminary session pertaining to masculinities and sexual consent driven by the work of Kaufmann and Kimmel (2011).

**Personal Agency**

In my role as Assistant Headmaster, I have been called upon to provide support primarily for the communications portions of these matters, including the consolidation of our policies pertaining to harassment, weekly parental communications, and website modification. Additionally, I have supported the faculty meetings led by the Social Justice Committee, and in particular, two significant faculty leaders from our English department who are invested in exploring gender matters throughout the school who I hope will continue to lead in the evolution of this project. I have the agency to enact systemic culture change given the number of faculty
and staff who report to me and my mandate as academic principal. I have access to significant human and financial resources and report solely to the Headmaster.

**Disconfimation and Psychological Safety**

In many ways, we have begun the process for managing cultural change identified in the Schein’s (2017) text entitled *Organizational Culture and Leadership (5th ed.)*. Schein (2017) outlines the steps an organization might take after experiencing “disconfirmation”, which Schein defines as “any items of information that show the organization that some of its goals are not being met or some of its processes are not accomplishing what they are supposed to” (p. 323).

Criminal incidents at a neighbouring school and the resulting media criticism of schools for boys has had the effect of “unfreezing” our current operational model in sense of Lewin’s model for change. As a result, the Headmaster, in conjunction with the SLT, have sought to create what Schein (2017) identifies as “psychological safety” (p. 328), which entails the need for simultaneous action in the areas of creating a compelling, positive vision, training stakeholders, involving stakeholders, and supporting new learning through group interaction. It would appear there is clear commitment on the part of the leadership to address the “disequilibrium” caused by these external change drivers.

**Macdonald Hall’s Strategic Plan and Goal Setting**

Some of the work Schein (2017) outlines has already been tackled at Macdonald Hall. As identified in Chapter 1 of this OIP, the current Macdonald Hall Strategic Plan outlines two specific areas for consideration pertaining specifically to gender performance. The first calls upon the school to consider how it might implement programs that help boys to understand that there are various healthy and honourable ways to be a man in contemporary society; the second suggests the need for faculty to consider carefully how gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity
intersect with one another, and how these identity markers effect student learning (Anonymous, 2018). Thus, some of the preliminary work that has been done as a response to the local crisis, and, in particular, the work done with faculty, has opened the door to the school’s capacity to address these strategic items on a practical level.

**Short-Term Goals: EDIC Macro**

There seem to be both short and long-term goals pertaining to this particular change implementation plan, and they resonate with the work of Kang (2015). The short term goals are aligned with what Kang (2015) identifies as “macro change management” (p. 27), in which the target of change is “organizational directions, structures, processes, and capabilities” (p. 28). The formation of a steering committee committed to Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDIC) which will be co-led by our Director of Middle School and me will have the following goals:

- Utilize the Critical systems heuristics protocol to define boundaries of the interrogation and the short and long-term mandate of the committee (Ulrich, 2005);
- Disaggregate nomenclature, policy, symbol, ritual, organizational structures in light of gender matters via the lens of equity, diversity and inclusivity;
- Investigate modifications of and/or additions to existing policy, symbol, ritual, organizational structures;
- Propose amendments and additions to the work in these specific areas to the SLT; and,
- Communicate the group’s work regularly for the purposes of enacting a form of conscientization within the community (Freire, 1970/2000).

**Critical Systems Heuristics**
In an effort to remain committed to enacting a disruptive and productive collaborative leadership approach, I have sought various meeting protocols that would serve to provide all participants with a voice. Ulrich (2005) provides a protocol for setting the stage for this heuristic work which is aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of this project. Critical systems heuristics is a methodology that has been embraced by those who would use critical systems theory as a means toward promoting a critical, emancipatory and pluralistic vision for both research in and the practical delivery of education (Watson & Watson, 2011). As Watson and Watson (2011) note, “[by] encouraging critical thinking about the value judgments that underlie planning decisions, [critical systems heuristics] seek[s] to help those not included in the design process” (p. 73). The protocol requires collaborative groups to consider the sources of motivation, power, knowledge and legitimation of a given project (Ulrich, 2005). As a result, this tool seems powerful to those who might engage in disruptive leadership.

**Long Term Goals: Departmental and Committee Work**

In the long term, the shift will be toward supporting leaders within various divisions of the school to interpret, explore, and further articulate specific actions that might be taken to further embrace the strategic direction of the school in the area of gender awareness and healthy constructions of masculinities, within the context of promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity as a whole. The proposed areas for local, micro-change committee work are as follows:

- **Micro-change Steering Group 1: Academic EDIC Sub-committee**
  - Focus: Formal and informal curriculum and pedagogical matters

- **Micro-change Steering Group 2: Information Technology EDIC Sub-committee**
  - Focus: Technology and media awareness matters

- **Micro-change Steering Group 3: Athletics and Wellness EDIC Sub-committee**
Focus: Health and wellness matters and athletic coaching-specific programming.

- Micro-change Steering Group 4: Communications EDIC Sub-committee
  - Focus: Community awareness matters including marketing, online representation, and external communications

A change implementation plan flowchart, which identifies the topics, workflow and membership of a series of committees pertaining to the review and development of practices pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusivity within a school for boys can be found in Figure 3.

![Change Implementation Workflow Chart](image)

*Figure 3. Change Implementation Workflow Chart.* A proposed organizational flowchart showing the topics, workflow and membership of a series of committees pertaining to the review and development of practices pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusivity within a school for boys.
Stakeholder Analysis

The media’s focus on the policies, practices, and value proposition of a school for boys following the incident at the neighbouring school as noted above provided significant insight into stakeholder perspectives at Macdonald Hall on the commitment to and predisposition for change. Communication from stakeholders to the SLT provided evidence that all constituencies were aware that the current crisis was impacting the Macdonald Hall community in some way.

Parents were particularly keen to understand how the school was protecting their children from bullying, harassment and assault, while others affirmed their faith in existing leadership, policies and practices. Members of the Board of Governors convened for unofficial meetings with the Headmaster, and the actions identified as preliminary steps toward a greater resolution of the issue were identified both during these meetings and through email channels. While all faculty and staff were required to be aware of the school’s protocol for communicating with the media, early leaders emerged who indicated that they were willing to contribute further to student and faculty awareness; as a result, faculty professional development and student advisory sessions focused on the topics of masculinities and sexual consent. Many alumni reached out to the alumni relations officers to offer their insights into their personal experiences while at the school.

Of particular note is the apparent maturity with which the student body responded to the various public assembly times dedicated to addressing the matter, and it was somewhat fortuitous that the annual White Ribbon Campaign ceremony coincided with advisory sessions on masculinities and sexual consent. To that end, the crisis at the neighbouring school galvanized the school’s stakeholders into a state of readiness to address the issues at hand, though there seemed to be little consensus as to exactly what the next steps might be, and precisely what level
of commitment there might be in the long term. Table 2 provides a summary of the various stakeholder’s readiness to take action predicated on these observations; its findings suggest that a focus on faculty professional dialogue is likely to have the impact of building the most momentum for the project.

Table 2

*Analysis of Stakeholder Readiness to Take Action*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Predisposition to Change (innovator, early adopter, early majority, late majority, laggard)</th>
<th>Current Commitment Profile (resistant, ambivalent, neutral, supportive or committed)</th>
<th>Aware</th>
<th>Interested</th>
<th>Desiring Change</th>
<th>Taking Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Innovator/supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Late majority/neutral</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Early adopter/supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Late majority/supportive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Governors</td>
<td>Late majority/committed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Late majority/supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This table provides an analysis of stakeholder’s readiness to take action to ensure that Macdonald Hall is equipped with the appropriate policies, practices and cultural attributes to promote a safe, inclusive, and forward-thinking environment. This analysis was preceded by increased negative media attention on schools for boys as a result of an emerging crisis at a
neighbouring school for boys. Faculty seem most predisposed for taking action to tackle the challenges inherent in schools for boys. (Adapted from Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 205)

**Personnel**

Stakeholder analysis as reflected in Table 2 reveals that faculty are most likely to drive this change process successfully in the short term. Key faculty leads have emerged through the response to the crisis at the neighbouring school for boys. While this is promising, one of the problems is that these leads are currently engaged in other core focus group work (which might be loosely defined as work within a “professional learning community”) and have busy schedules. It is not likely that they will be able to carry the burden of participating on the EDIC Macro committee. That said, they would most likely make the most impact on the EDIC Micro 1 committee given their current strengths in the area of pedagogy and curriculum matters. Overall, the process of investigating division-specific leadership in relation to the need for EDIC sub-committee leadership reveals that there may be much more potential for the current leadership in this area; the issue seems to be one of generating awareness. This is to say that once individuals become aware of the issues at hand, they seem eager to address them. This position is complementary to this OIP’s representation of the concept of consientization (Freire, 1970/2000). This is particularly promising given my agency as faculty lead within the organization: the people who appear most amenable to change are those with whom I work most closely.

**Parallel Leadership and Macro and Micro Change**

One of the key elements of this ambitious change plan is to empower all members of the community to take action to interrogate policies, practices and cultural aspects of school operations and school life that might be contributing toward limiting notions of masculinity.
Andrews and Crowther (2002) offer a leadership model that is complementary to the objective to empower various unsung leaders within the organization, one which transcends the notion of distributive or distributed leadership. Dubbed “parallel leadership”, Andrews and Crowther (2002) suggest that teachers and principals can engage collectively to build capacity. As teacher leaders work along a parallel track to senior leaders, they share the responsibility and success of a given project’s implementation. The work of Andrews and Crowther (2002) seems complementary to the work of Kang (2015) in that teacher leaders might be viewed as leading on a micro level, while formal leaders might be working in tandem at the macro level. In this way, the proposed EDIC model may serve to affirm that “all members of the community are valued” (Andrews & Crowther, 2002, p. 155).

The selection of the EDIC Macro committee members and consults is critical to the well-being of this project. Members of this committee must be motivated to share their own diverse points of view. Further to this, it is important that we draw upon members of faculty who bring diverse perspectives to the discourse, whether in the area of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and school division, department, or constituency. Preliminary discussions regarding creating as diverse a committee as possible has resulted in self-reflection regarding how to approach potential members of EDIC Macro for the purposes of inspiring participation. For, if the membership of this committee lacks diversity, it may not serve to accomplish its purpose. Given my role within the staffing process and the promotion of various faculty to positions of leadership, the prospect of establishing a parallel leadership model is appealing because it entails shared leadership and greater empowerment of those who might not currently feel they have a voice in the organization. I anticipate that shared leadership will lend itself to greater job satisfaction for those who embrace it.
Supports and Resources

Commitment from the SLT and the Headmaster serves to ensure that both moral and material support will be offered in the short term in the form of time and supplementary resources necessary, such as books, meeting space, and the means to communicate the work of the various committees to the larger school community. Additionally, it would seem reasonable to assume that some of the current marketing materials and school signage may be critiqued and revised. Programmatic changes may emerge from the need for providing boys greater support and coaching both in terms of personal development and the broadening of program opportunities. Predicted financial resources have been identified in Table 1 and may approach $100,000. Given this is cultural change, it is difficult to predict what additional resources may be required in the long term. One example of how long-term costs can be more expensive than expected is evident in the context of the school’s recent enactment of a revised schedule which dedicated one afternoon co-curricular session to the arts. The result was the veritable explosion of student interest in various arts programming, which required increased staffing, supplies, and external experts. The work of the EDIC Micro 1 and 3 committees are most likely to generate programmatic changes, which can lead to significant costs. The school is in a healthy position to add layers to its program offerings, but certainly this is an important consideration for school leadership. Additionally, in my role as academic and faculty lead, I am uniquely positioned to endorse the expenditures required to improve the quality and complexity of the program; further, it must be noted that these expenditures will likely unfold over time as the conscientization process is enacted and it is likely that other members of the SLT and parallel leaders within the organization will tolerate these expenditures if they promise a more healthy, safe and inclusive culture.
Limitations

Buy in.

One emerging limitation seems to be the problem of securing buy-in with respect to specific understandings of gender offered in the framework of this inquiry from the proposed leadership of the EDIC 2, 3 and 4 groups. This is not to say that these leaders stand in opposition to the theoretical underpinnings which seek to position gender expression as a performance rather than something essential and immutable. To that end, the nomenclature I have utilized for the work of these groups is intentional: viewing these matters as relational (Connell, 2012) and predicated on equity, diversity and inclusivity seems more palatable. As Connell (2012) has noted, post-structuralist ideas of gender do not seem to have the necessary appeal to mobilize change. There may well be members of the community who reject this project’s underlying premise. That said, regardless of one’s philosophical or political views, it would be difficult to argue against the proactive need to ensure equity, diversity and inclusivity remain hallmarks of professional work.

Unknown timelines.

Another key problem that emerges from the proposed committee work is that given this might be viewed as emergent change, the timeline for the unfolding of the proposed committees is uncertain. The work of EDIC Macro might well take months, given the likelihood that meetings will take place biweekly and will require coverage of various members’ responsibilities. To that end, early meetings will need to be focused on setting goals for enacting a plan-do-study-act (PDSA) model which will ensure that the discursive work of the group is not lost to the larger school population. A contingency plan must be considered in the event that
EDIC sub-committees cannot find their grounding alongside EDIC Macro. It may be that EDIC Micro groups will merge into a larger, long term EDIC Macro PLC endeavour.

**Effective and strategic communication.**

Communicating early findings of the EDIC Macro committee will be key to overall success of the project because it will set the stage for a communications protocol for subsequent EDIC sub-committee work. First and foremost, a significant issue seems to hinge upon the problem of how to make the findings and recommendations of EDIC Macro relevant to the larger community. Klein (1996) provides insight into the pitfalls of failing to be strategic as it pertains to communications when attempting organizational change. Klein (1996) places a primacy on the chain of command and leadership, which runs counter to the philosophical underpinnings of this inquiry, but his suggestions do seem to make sense in practical terms and must be considered.

What Klein (1996) further offers is an awareness of the potential stages of communication during a given change initiative. Early stages seem to require a focus on the justification for the initiative, while mid and later stages of communication need to be focused on making the proposed change relevant to recipients, and ensuring successes are celebrated. Given the heuristic nature of this project, a key consideration must be how to use communication effectively to engage the larger community meaningfully.

**Networking challenges.**

There may well be challenges associated with engaging in networking opportunities with neighbouring schools. There is no doubt that there is great value in leveraging emerging understandings in improvement science pertaining to the concept of networking in this particular endeavour—learning about how other schools for boys approach policy, program, and culture would be particularly instructive and potentially mutually beneficial (LeMahieu et al., 2017).
Primarily, the willingness for a neighbouring school to engage in the investigation and potential disruption of its own policies, programs, and culture is unknown. Additionally, as authors such as Evans and Stone-Johnson (2010) and Moore and Kelly (2009) note, network improvement communities pose challenges in terms of time commitment for the various institutions involved, as well as challenges with respect to coming to terms with negotiating the needs of the individual organizations. That said, our relationships with other schools for boys is bolstered by a common membership in the International Boys’ Schools Coalition (IBSC), and interpersonal connections with staff from these other schools have been strengthened through common international professional development opportunities that have taken place in the past, whether through conferencing or action research.

**An ambitious, disruptive plan.**

Finally, the scope of the work seems daunting, given that it entails generating awareness for the entire community, and may serve to threaten some long-held traditions and beliefs. In every way this project is psychologically and materially disruptive. Its proponents will face the challenges of tackling a broad range of policy, programs, and cultural matters; its opponents will enjoy charged debate about the purpose and value of such disruption. As stated throughout this OIP, the moral imperative to engage in this activity outweighs the potential resistance that will inevitably emerge. Measurement of the impacts of the proposed change might serve to turn opponents of this change initiative into proponents.

**Measuring Change**

**The Science of Measuring Culture**

One of the most significant limitations of this inquiry hinges around finding tools that will adequately measure whether the initiatives are making a difference. Taras, Rowney and
Steel (2009) have been helpful in identifying ways to track cultural change in that they have catalogued and analyzed 121 survey instruments for quantifying culture. Wrestling with the definition of culture, Taras et al. (2009) provide ample warning that the relationships between various aspects of culture are requiring of further research and that there is no single theory of culture that can encapsulate its complexity or multi-dimensionality. They identify, for example, that “it is plausible to suggest that many types of values and attitudes are not cultural” (Taras et al., 2009, p. 369). Additionally, Taras et al. (2009) note that more work needs to be done in the area of understanding the difference between results in-the-moment and results over time, the latter having significance in light of PDSA approaches to monitoring and accelerating change. To that end, they merely open the door for understanding surveys as insights or glimpses into a given culture, and caution against using such tools to generalize beyond the focus of a given study.

That the science of cultural measurement is still unproven empirically is both daunting and freeing. It is daunting because it suggests that the task of assessing culture is an extraordinarily complex task, and there are no standard tools extant to achieve this aim. It is liberating in the sense that it provides practitioners with some flexibility to experiment with measurement without having to be concerned about being accurate. Often, tools designed to measure culture are merely a means toward collaborative dialogue with respect to engaging in the problem at hand.

**A Humble Disclaimer**

I have sought to design tools that might measure whether we are making progress toward broadening the concept of masculinity and subsequently reducing the hierarchical nature of the organization. The proposed tools are merely that—proposals. I make no claims to having
expertise in the area of survey design or quantitative research or methodology. I have taken the liberty of considering the matter at hand and propose cultural investigations that highlight what it is that might be worthy of measurement. I am confident that these proposals would be modified, amended, improved upon or rejected by the proposed committee members.

**Proposed Measurement Tool #1: Student Survey**

The first cultural measurement tool is inspired primarily by Connell (1996, 2005, 2012), who suggests that gender regimes are local constructs. I have designed a survey that seeks to understand what it means to be a boy in the context of Macdonald Hall. Labelled “What Does It Mean to be a Boy Around Here?” the survey requires students to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, a variety of attributes and behaviours that are deemed as either valued or relevant for the student respondent. A total of 34 attributes and behaviours are offered, though each attribute has been paired with a behaviour which has subsequently been separated and randomly distributed through the survey. This doubling of a singular concept may afford more consistent results as an alternative perspective may serve to shape responses in a more nuanced way. Alternatively, it might be found that student perception of an attribute differs from that of a behaviour, which might be interesting in and of itself. The respondent is asked to assess the value and/or relevancy that the given attribute or behaviour has in his own life, and then to judge the value and/or relevancy of the attribute or behaviour in the context of school culture. Please refer to Appendix A to view the sample measurement tool labeled “What Does It Mean to be a Boy Around Here?”

The purpose of the measurement tool is to provide the EDIC committee with a sense of what the hegemonic masculine norm might be at Macdonald Hall. Determining what boys deem as personally valuable and/or relevant in their own might provide important context with respect to the kind of work that might further be done to broaden students’ perspectives on what it means
to be human. For example, a low combined score on the personal rating of the attribute “being good at reading” and the behaviour of “reading for pleasure” might indicate that the school could benefit from developing more robust programs to support boys’ appreciation for reading. A high score with respect to the perceived value and/or relevancy of the attribute of “athleticism” in the larger school context on the part of individual respondents might reveal that students feel that their social status is in some way linked to their athleticism. This in turn might compel the school to consider in what ways a kind of hyper-athleticism might limiting boys’ potential.

Alternatively, the responses might indicate a myriad of perspectives on the part of the respondents, and, as such, indicate no discernable hegemonic norm.

Repeated use of such an instrument over time may serve to provide school leadership insight into how changes to policy, program, and culture might be shaping the school’s gender regime, and the perceived hegemonic masculine norm as understood by the students. As a result, this tool may serve to support a PDSA approach in that it affords an opportunity for the “study” of a given initiative in the context of a plan-do-study-act model. Further, a tool of this nature might be valuable in the context of potential network improvement initiatives in that the differences between one school’s results and that of another might provide opportunity for dialogue as to what aspects of policy, program, or culture are shaping the gender regimes or hegemonic norms of each school. This is to say that the differences in survey results between schools might suggest a correlation with differences in individual school policies, programs and cultures, and these differences could serve as a fertile ground for discussion and further action at the individual school level.

**Proposed Measurement Tool #2: Staff/Faculty Survey**
The second survey instrument that may serve to support the EDIC committee in their bid to lessen the hierarchical and patriarchal nature of Macdonald Hall is inspired by Hofstede’s work in the 1980s pertaining to the measurement of different cultural dispositions amongst peoples of different nationalities (Hofstede, 2011). Through the 1970s, Hofstede came to gain access to a database of IBM employees who worked across the globe. He concluded that he could mine the surveys given to these employees to identify distinguishing cultural patterns on a collective level (Hofstede, 2011). Over time, he came to believe that there were six statistically distinct dimensions of culture, including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, long term vs. short term, and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede, 2011). The peoples of various countries tended to inhabit one end of each dimensional spectrum as a result of the prevailing environmental conditions and cultural expectations. By 2011, Hofstede had come to define culture as “[t]he collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (Hofstede, 2011).

While it might appear on the surface that the cultural dimension of masculinity vs. femininity would have the most relevance to this inquiry, instead I have come to believe that the power distance dimension has more immediate bearing, particularly as it pertains to the organizational structure of the school and its various employees. One proposed solution to the challenges inherent in helping boys come to transcend limiting stereotypes of masculinity is to try to destabilize the hierarchical nature of the organizational structure. Not only might this have the impact of creating a more inclusive culture, but it will show boys that institutions need not be structured in ways that tacitly or explicitly participate in the creation of rigid hierarchy. This is not to say that one could ever fully eradicate hierarchies and/or power dynamics within an
organization; however, one might flatten the model to decrease the power distance relationship, as per Hofstede (2011).

To that end, I formulated a cultural measurement tool that could be used by the Macdonald Hall EDIC Macro committee to assess power distance on the part of employees. Hofstede (2011) defines power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions…accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (p. 9). For access to the full survey model, see Appendix B. This locally relevant power distance survey requires employees to rate, on a five-point Likert scale, their agreement or disagreement with various positive statements pertaining to accessibility to leadership, ease of communications, and personal agency within the organization.

The results of such a survey might provide the EDIC committee insight into the way various employees, be they staff or faculty, perceive the power dynamics of the institution. A series of relatively low scores might indicate that individuals within the Macdonald Hall organization feel empowered, or that they are sharing in a collective leadership of the mission. A relatively high score might indicate that further work needs to be done to create what Bolman and Deal (2008) refer to as all-channel organizational regimes, in which all members of a given project or organizational endeavour are afforded the agency to affect change. A high score derived from the statement “I feel comfortable opposing ideas during meetings” might indicate that meeting protocol is too formal, or that meetings are driven too much by leadership.

This tool might be employed over time to track whether the initiatives of the EDIC committee at Macdonald Hall is having any impact on the organizational culture of the school. To that end, it might provide insight during the “study” stage of a PDSA approach to change management.
Limitations

Some interesting observations emerge from a study of Hofstede’s (2011) work. First, I am struck by the binary nature of his schema and wonder if it is too simplistic. It would appear that Hofstede’s work is inherently essentialist when it comes to gender matters. More research needs to be done to determine the interrelationships between Hofstede’s power distance dimension and the masculinity vs. femininity dimension. To be fair, Hofstede (2011) does acknowledge that gender cultures are “much deeper rooted in the human mind than occupational cultures acquired at school, or than organizational cultures acquired on the job” (p. 3). In this way, he identifies that while the dimensions he has identified seem distinct, they should not be considered as uniform.

Second, Hofstede’s work is predicated on cross-cultural analysis, while my own survey is dedicated to a singular institution. I have borrowed from Hofstede (2011) on a conceptual level but changed the context of his work. That said, the tool could be used in the context of the proposed network improvement community initiative. Again, as in the potential with the earlier survey on hegemonic norms, the tool might help to stimulate dialogue between the networking schools with respect to the way their various approaches to organizational structure and communication is perceived to create or negate a significant power differential.

Protecting the Integrity of the Respondents: Maintaining Integrity

The use of surveys requires those collecting data to ensure that results will be anonymous in nature, stored securely, and utilized for a particular purpose. Doing so is not only ethical but also serves to engender trust within the community. Respondents are more likely to provide honest, thoughtful answers if they know the purpose of the survey and trust that the data will be anonymous and protected. Further, the purpose of the surveys needs to be clear to respondents
and, in the case of student survey work, parents must be informed in advance and provide consent. For a detailed exploration of the ethical implications for the educator seeking to use online survey tools to glean information from students, see Roberts and Allen (2015). Although Roberts & Allen (2015) set their focus on higher education, it does seem that the bulk of their concerns and recommendations are transferrable to the elementary and secondary school context.

At Macdonald Hall, all of these procedures would be expected. Personal information would likely be collected through a private SurveyMonkey account which would automatically anonymize respondents. Further, it would be important to identify that this data would be stored by members of the EDIC Macro Committee and used solely for the purpose of providing a tool for study within a PDSA approach. Faculty and staff surveys would also be anonymous, and it would be identified in advance that the data would only be used to assess the progress of the committee work and plan for action to continue the project in the future. Protecting confidentiality and utilizing data wisely are the hallmarks of effective, safe, and respectful data collection through the use of surveys (Roberts & Allen, 2015). This is a key consideration for all organizations if they intend to utilize surveys over time and/or on a regular basis.

In my role as Assistant Headmaster, I have access to the necessary resources required to store safely the survey materials while maintaining the privacy of the respondents. Further, I have the authority to initiate such surveys, but would only do so in collaboration with the various committee members and following significant consultation with my colleagues on the school’s leadership team.

**Other Means of Measuring the Change**

It does seem that each of the proposed surveys might be deployed within other constituencies of the school population; this is to say that one might attempt to measure
perceived hegemonic masculinity norms from the perspective of staff, faculty, parents, board members, and alumni. Alternatively, one might have students engage in a modified version of the proposed power distance survey tool to gauge their understanding and perceptions of hierarchy and power dynamics within the organization.

Beyond these particular surveys, there are many other ways for the EDIC Macro committee to collect data, both quantitative and qualitative, pertaining to the proposed change. For example, given the primacy this inquiry has placed on boys’ literacy, one might track the school’s OSSLT results over time to determine if the change initiatives are having the impact of improving boys’ reading and writing skills. The school might develop a means toward tracking library usage and/or writing centre inquiries for the purpose of better understanding how boys are engaging with reading and writing. Parent surveys, focus groups, and raw internal data pertaining to grades might all serve to provide the EDIC committee with information about literacy development, but also things such as the apparent deepening or, conversely, lessening of metacognitive skills. In short, Ontario’s Ministry of Education’s initiative to have teachers use observations, conversations and student products (Ministry of Education – Ontario, 2010) to assess student learning might be applied to the collection of information pertaining to the intended change at Macdonald Hall.

**Communicating the Findings**

**Understanding Communications at Macdonald Hall**

External Communications exists as an independent department at Macdonald Hall. Operated through the office of advancement, and led by a separate director, the communications department serves to develop a myriad of passive and active communications documents and connects, including a weekly parental news bulletin, a biannual alumni magazine, a robust
website, and various social media communities. The communications department also carries responsibility to respond to manage school-specific Twitter and Facebook postings and to work alongside the marketing and admissions department to develop effective advertisements. In many ways, External Communications serves to create a boundary between the outside world and the school; they are responsible for responding to media inquiries and ensuring that the message to the larger world is accurate, timely, and mission appropriate.

Internal communications are complex, in part because of the school’s robust technology infrastructure, but also because of the size and complexity of both the physical space and the organizational structure. Communication flows include email exchange, face-to-face meetings, professional development generative meetings, and distribution of various leadership, administrative, or departmental meeting minutes. The school utilizes some task-specific communications software: Edsby acts as a student information system; Reach assists boarding housemasters to track student attendance and well-being; and Alertus serves as an emergency notification system. While the school’s website offers some information relevant to internal communications, such as team rosters, current news, some calendaring information and a clear outline of our strategic plan, it may provide an opportunity for an effective communications strategy pertaining to this OIP.

**The Importance of Strategic Communications**

Klein (1996) provides insight into the importance of developing a robust communications plan. Two key concepts identified by Klein (1996) with respect to strategic communication seem valid. The first has to do with using communication as a tool for providing information about the change and educating those who have not necessarily been part of the process. Effective communication can serve to provide stakeholders with pertinent information as to how a
proposed change will affect a given organizational constituency and may further serve to challenge any misinformation that is circulating within the organization. At Macdonald Hall, this insight seems particularly relevant in that there are literally thousands of stakeholders who have varying perceptions of the concept of masculinities and their relationship to larger equity, inclusivity and diversity matters. As identified in Table 2, while faculty awareness of and motivation for change is relatively high, alumni, who have historically been significant participants in school community events, are likely to be curious about the need for change as a result of recent media attention to schools for boys but they may not necessarily be attuned to the complexity of the matter. This is a complex rather than a complicated one (Higgs & Rowland, 2005), and does not require technical expertise so much as expertise in the area of facilitating a community dialogue in which all stakeholders have a voice.

Internally, there is great need to include non-teaching staff in this dialogue. It has been identified that part of the solution requires ensuring that we are providing an appropriate environment that will enable boys to transcend limiting stereotypes both in the short term and over the course of their lives. Non-teaching staff will be impacted by his change, hopefully in a positive manner, in that the EDIC Macro committee will be tasked to look for ways to reduce the power distance index in the school (Hofstede, 2011). Again, it can be anticipated that the proposed dialogue may have the impact of creating cynicism about the value and relevancy of reconsidering the topic of masculinity as this can be disruptive to the status quo. Moving non-teaching staff beyond essentialist considerations will require significant effort. Further to this, as Goodman and Truss (2004) note, it is essential that organizations ensure that change recipients are not merely told of the change after the fact. This is equally applicable for parents and board...
members; that said, non-teaching staff as immediate members of the organization occupy special status within this communications initiative.

**Blogging as a Disruptive, Collaborative, Dialogic Tool**

The second relevant insight that Klein (1996) offers is the need to moderate communication depending on the stage of change. The initiation phase of this project is already underway, given the requirement to react to media scrutiny during the recent crisis at a neighbouring school for boys. The next phase seems to require Macdonald Hall to make a case for change, and to open a dialogue about the change. To that end, the most fitting strategy for engaging the community in awareness of the need for change seems to be the establishment of an interactive blog on the school’s website pertaining to issues of masculinities and its relation to equity, diversity and inclusivity.

Interactive blogging differs from other forms of social media such as Twitter and Snapchat in that it affords both the author and its respondents the opportunity for more developed, nuanced dialogue (Baxter, Connolly & Stansfield, 2010; Byington, 2011). The generative capacity is not just limited to text—video and pictorial components can be integrated into an interactive blog. In many ways, interactive blogging is significantly aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of this project. First, it offers an online platform for the co-construction of meaning through collaboration (Byington, 2011; Kjelberg, 2010; Nelissen & van Selm, 2008). Second, it offers the opportunity for the disruption of antiquated ideas and the status quo. To that end, it may serve as a tool for conscientization (Freire, 1970/2000). Blogging may serve the purpose of helping to establish an online community; given so many of the school’s stakeholders are not regularly on campus, the establishment of a healthy online community seems particularly important to the long-term sustainability of the school. Blogging
may facilitate opportunities for reflection (Yang, 2009), and indeed may resonate with the spirit of this inquiry by employing questioning that requires metacognitive reflection. Asking readers to ponder why they believe what they believe may serve to stimulate further disruption of status-quo lines of thinking.

Klein (1996) identifies that communication is best when it follows from the line of hierarchy, is personally relevant, and is repeated to the point of redundancy. While it has been identified earlier that Klein’s (1996) emphasis on hierarchy is antithetical to this project, it does seem valid that Macdonald Hall constituents will wish to hear the position of the leadership on the matter of masculinities; done well and with intention, an interactive blog can serve to draw members of the community to share their ideas and, as a result, negate the sense of hierarchy that may stem from engaging school leadership. Utilizing humour and personal anecdotes may serve to enhance the relational aspects of the problem at hand rather than the theoretical. This aligns with Connell’s (2012) concern that post-structuralist theory has failed to secure the necessary change in the area of gender relations; she calls for focusing on the relational aspects of gender matters as a means towards real change.

Some potential outcomes of interactive blogging include the possibility of the recognition for a redirection of the EDIC Macro committee work. An interactive blog may serve to provide further feedback that could contribute to an intentional plan-do-study-act approach to change. Further, an interactive blog may serve to mitigate cynicism that school leadership is incapable of implementing the necessary change as a result of a lack of competency (Thundiyyil, Chiaburu, Oh, Banks & Peng, 2015). Blogging does seem a way of “diagnosing resistance” and may afford the opportunity for a more proactive rather than reactive response to constituent concerns about the proposed change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).
Strategic Timelines and Implementation

Utilizing the blog as the primary vehicle for communication requires some consideration as to the frequency of production. The EDIC Macro committee must look carefully at aligning blog production not only within the context of their own committee work, but also in line with the timings of key faculty professional development meetings. Additionally, some consideration might be made toward embedding the blog into other communications sources, such as the weekly parent bulletin, and the biannual alumni magazine. It may be useful to apply Critical systems heuristics to a discussion on the boundaries and scope of the blog given that such a discussion by the members of EDIC Macro may further help to consolidate the purpose and goals of such an approach (Ulrich, 2005).

Limitations to Blogging

The establishment of interactive blogging as a primary vehicle for communicating the change has some limitations. For example, Ciampa and Gallagher (2015) have identified that blogging does not have significant social impact because it is not face-to-face. The product of the blog must be drawn back into the immediate and the personal whenever possible. Second, blogging might be perceived as a mode of advertising, and this needs to be avoided if the blog is to have relevancy (Schwartz, 2005). Klein (1996) suggests the need for the employment of several media outlets; some consideration should be made to determine how a blog might be integrated into further social media streams. A key problem is that a blog of this nature might engender significantly negative feedback; further, it might draw unwanted media attention. Finally, the establishment of an interactive blog might be time-consuming and impersonal (Klein, 1996). Finally, one might perceive blogging to be an outdated medium in relation to Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. Unfortunately, none of the aforementioned models allow for
the development of complex thought: for example, Twitter’s 140-character limit has long been lamented within the popular media as contributing toward the polarization of viewpoints and the death of complex dialogue and thought (for a humourous polemic on the length of the Tweet, see Silver, 2017).

These limitations do not seem significant enough to reject blogging as a proposed primary means of communications at this early stage in the change implementation process.

Secondary Strategies for the Communication of EDIC Work

The use of an interactive blog as a primary means of communication can lead to secondary opportunities for connecting with various constituents for the purposes of exploring the topics raised in the blog. An interactive blog pertaining to the work of EDIC might drive the content of faculty meetings, parent and community town hall meetings, the content of larger features in the alumni magazine, and weekly parental bulletin updates. Further, components of the blog might be excerpted to social media avenues such as Twitter and Facebook. It does seem that the blog could become the key driver for both the conscientization of the community and subsequent disruption of the status quo, and a means toward stimulating collaboration through dialogue.

Next Steps

Earlier in this OIP, I identified that I was seeking the wisdom of elders and contemporary thinkers on how best to raise boys safely—in safety—for safety. My objective has been to help various constituents within schools for boys to challenge the status quo for the purpose of finding the best ways to promote healthy performances of masculinities in a school context. Through my search, I have found wisdom in the work of many great thinkers, including Carl Jung, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Judith Butler, bell hooks, and Paulo Freire. I am grateful for the luxury of having
my thinking disrupted by these individuals. Each provides access to insights about human psychology, language, and behaviour that can be put to use by the committed educator to help transform society for the better.

As I begin to wrap up this phase of my inquiry, I am struck by the work of Michel Foucault, who has helped me to understand how human endeavour has always been predicated on trying to find solutions to real problems. Foucault (1984) specifically reminds us that relational activities always entail a power dynamic, and that this is natural; a problem, of course, emerges when the nature of power in play is one of domination. Minimizing dominating forms of power is the necessary way forward in a socially just contemporary world. To that end, this project has been an attempt to provide a rational, local framework for minimizing the ideologies of domination extant within a culture of a school for boys; in doing so, we might provide a context though which these boys can live richer, healthier lives in the long term. It is possible that the rationale and subsequent strategies offered here might be extrapolated from the specifics and loosely applied in any school context. Schools for boys merely provide a kind of simplified microcosm that can easily serve to highlight the problem of gender oppression which is ubiquitous throughout society. It is also likely that there are better solutions; this topic is worthy of further research if we are to ensure every individual’s right to self-expression and a more equitable world.

While this project has focused on the individual’s right to self-expression, it has also focused on the collective responsibility of the community to ensure that the appropriate cultural conditions have been established to guarantee that individuals will be safe, free, and honoured for who they are, and, in particular, as a gendered being. It is this collective responsibility that I believe offers a window into what is possible for Macdonald Hall in the future. The mission of
the school holds two ideas as equally valid: the first is the development of the boy into the man; the second is the development of the boy into citizen. The development of the “man” is an individual (and gendered!) enterprise, one pertaining to individual identity in the context of a larger society. The development of the citizen, however, entails looking beyond individual identity to one’s place in the larger context of society. This focus on fostering a culture that promotes citizenship seems the next step in this endeavour. What does it mean to be a citizen of humanity, once our individual needs are met? How can a school engage this challenging question and promote selfless citizenship? How can disruptive leadership serve to engender a school culture that places a primacy on one’s responsibility to humanity rather than one’s self?

**OIP Conclusion**

I should like to close this inquiry by giving the final word to Dewey, to whom I have referred at the start of this chapter, but also at the very beginning of this inquiry. That Dewey shaped the more progressive leaders of Macdonald Hall is evident both in the history and ethos of the school. In many ways, the progressive, pragmatic ideas of Dewey were likely to have served to provide a counterbalance to the rigid conservatism inherent in the Arnoldian and indeed Edwardian and Victorian sensibility that boys schools must engender a kind of muscular Christianity (Mangan, 2010). Dewey’s ideas, now a century old, still offer tremendous hope to educators because his pragmatism is founded on the idea that reason should serve the future, and not waste time wrestling with the past. He was critical of the European philosophers who appeared to spend their time gazing backwards to Kant rather than looking forward into the future.

Dewey’s foresight as it pertains to this OIP is as disarming as it is heartening. In his 1930 essay “What I Believe”, he writes:
Present ideas of love, marriage and the family are almost exclusively masculine constructs. Like all idealizations of human interests that express a dominantly one-sided experience, they are romantic in theory and prosaic in operation. Sentimental idealization on one side has its obverse in literally conceived legal system. The realities of the relationships of men, women, and children to one another have been submerged in this fusion of sentimentalism and legalism. The growing freedom of women can hardly have any other outcome that the production of more realistic and more human morals. It will be marked by a new freedom, but also by a new severity. For it will be enforced by the realities of associated life as they are disclosed to careful and systematic inquiry…

(Dewey, 1930, p. 27)

That Dewey had the capacity to see the need for a destabilization of gender regimes offers symbolic and real promise for MacDonald Hall. For all the “severity” necessary to enact this destabilization, the promise of a progressive future about which Dewey dedicates his philosophical work, not only in the area of education but also politics and psychology, has been explicitly and irretrievably embedded into the culture of the school. What we need to do now is mine this approach in our own context to derive the best results for our boys, and indeed the world.
References


Canadian Accredited Independent Schools. (n.d.) CAIS Governance Guide.


(Original work published 1970)


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https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318905276558


Appendix A

Measurement Tool: What Does It Mean to be a Boy Around Here?

Using a 5-point Likert rating scale, rate the following personal attributes and/or behaviours in two ways:

- first, in terms of the value and/or relevancy you place on the particular attribute or behaviour
- second, in terms of the way the attribute/behaviour is valued and/or relevant at Macdonald Hall

Likert Rating Scale

1-not at all important
2-somewhat unimportant
3-neutral
4-somewhat important
5-very important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute/Behaviour</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>artistry</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supporting friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>athleticism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>using drugs/alcohol</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>eloquence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrating physical strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>being good at reading</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sense of humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sticking to it even when it is difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sociability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting things done right and on time</td>
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<tr>
<td>competitiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>following the rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>cooperativeness</td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrating intelligence publicly</td>
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<tr>
<td>emotionality</td>
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<td>reading for pleasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>vulnerability</td>
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<tr>
<td>intelligence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>joking around</td>
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<tr>
<td>obedience</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligned Attributes and Behaviours</td>
<td>Artistry</td>
<td>Athleticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being sociable</td>
<td>creating new art or music</td>
<td>working out at the gym</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Measurement Tool: Assessing Power Distance (Based on Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions)

Rate the following statements as they pertain to your work at Macdonald Hall based on the following Likert scale:

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- neither agree nor disagree
4- disagree
5- strongly disagree

Table B1: Assessing Power Distance Survey Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements Pertaining to Power Distance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School administrators have an open-door policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel empowered to share my ideas at meetings.</td>
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<td>I am regularly called upon to share my ideas with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I find it easy to talk to members of the school administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I talk often with people from other departments around the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I listen to the ideas of others in meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel safe when I disagree with other members of my department.</td>
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<td>I feel comfortable opposing ideas during meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can make decisions about the work I am doing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel like I report to everyone, not just those in authority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can communicate easily via technology and in common spaces with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that I am included in all communications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a clear “way” we do meetings around here.</td>
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<td>I feel that I am part of the school leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People in authority take the time to talk with me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People at this school use inclusive language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am addressed with respect through my various work duties.</td>
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<td>I am informed when changes are taking place.</td>
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<td>I have a voice when problems arise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New ideas are welcome here.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I hear lots of voices during school activities, including during professional development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is transparency with respect to our actions at this school.</td>
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</table>

The ideas from this survey were inspired in part from the content of the following ResearchGate post forum:
https://www.researchgate.net/post/What_indicators_can_be_used_to_measure_the_power_distance_in_an_organization