McGill Journal of Education
Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill

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The First Female Academics in Programs of Educational Administration in Canada: Riding waves of opportunity
Savoir saisir l'opportunité : premières femmes universitaires au sein des programmes d'administration de l'éducation

Janice Wallace, Dawn Wallin, Melody Viczko et Heather Anderson

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Résumé de l'article

Notre projet de recherche situe, met en contexte et analyse l'expérience vécue par dix femmes universitaires qui faisaient partie des premières femmes formées en administration de l'éducation au sein de sept des dix provinces canadiennes. Basant notre analyse sur l'ethnographie institutionnelle et l'histoire de vie, cet article explore trois des thèmes ayant ressorti des entrevues réalisées auprès des participantes dans la première phase d'un projet de recherche se déroulant en plusieurs étapes. Ces thèmes sont l'évolution des carrières, la transformation des connaissances et la négociation des tensions institutionnelles existant entre les dimensions personnelles et professionnelles de leur emploi.

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THE FIRST FEMALE ACADEMICS IN PROGRAMS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN CANADA: RIDING WAVES OF OPPORTUNITY

JANICE WALLACE *University of Alberta*
DAWN WALLIN *University of Manitoba*
MELODY VICZKO *Western University*
HEATHER ANDERSON *University of Manitoba*

ABSTRACT. Our research situates, contextualizes, and analyzes the lived experiences of ten female academics who were among the first women in the academic discipline of educational administration in seven of the ten provinces in Canada. Using institutional ethnography and life history to inform our analysis, this article explores three of the themes that emerged from participant interviews in the first stage of a multi-stage research process: mapping careers, transforming knowledge, and negotiating institutional tensions between the personal and professional aspects of their work.

SAVOIR SAISIR L'OPPORTUNITÉ: PREMIÈRES FEMMES UNIVERSITAIRES AU SEIN DES PROGRAMMES D'ADMINISTRATION DE L'ÉDUCATION

RÉSUMÉ. Notre projet de recherche situe, met en contexte et analyse l'expérience vécue par dix femmes universitaires qui faisaient partie des premières femmes formées en administration de l'éducation au sein de sept des dix provinces canadiennes. Basant notre analyse sur l'ethnographie institutionnelle et l'histoire de vie, cet article explore trois des thèmes ayant ressorti des entrevues réalisées auprès des participantes dans la première phase d'un projet de recherche se déroulant en plusieurs étapes. Ces thèmes sont l'évolution des carrières, la transformation des connaissances et la négociation des tensions institutionnelles existant entre les dimensions personnelles et professionnelles de leur emploi.

In 2012, The Council of Canadian Academies undertook a comprehensive review of the effects of gender on the research capacity in Canada. Among its many findings, the report notes that since the 1970s, there has been major progress in both the number of women students at the PhD level and faculty in tenure track positions (Council of Canadian Academies, 2012, p. 3). However, the expert panel also noted that after forty years of greater participation in

academia, women still occupy the lower faculty ranks disproportionately in relation to their overall participation rates, although representation is uneven across the various academic disciplines (p. xv). These findings, while disheartening, are hardly surprising as they reflect years of academic research findings looking at institutional responses and / or resistance to women's participation within universities and their contributions to knowledge production (e.g., Anderson, & Williams, 2001; Brooks, & Mackinnon, 2001; May, 2008; Pierce, 2007; Quinn, 2003; Reimer, 2004; Sagaria, 2007; Superson & Cudd, 2002; Thorne, 2005).

Often described as the "chilly climate" of higher education (Hannah, & Vethamany-Globus, 2002; The Chilly Collective, 1995), most of this literature attends to the experiences of women in faculties where they have traditionally been underrepresented: e.g., Science and Engineering (Burek & Higgs, 2007; Essien, 1997; Ingram, 2005; Manitoba Education Review Commission, 1992); Economics (Stewart, Malley, & LaVaque-Manty, 2007), Archaeology (Spector, 2007), Management (Hornby & Shaw, 1996), History (Kealey, 1990) and Mathematics (Megaw & Rogers, 1998). However, there has been growth in the literature that includes faculties in which women have been more highly represented, such as Sociology (Pierce, 2007), the Humanities (Rosenberg, 2006), Social Work (DiPalma, 1995), Home Economics (Nerad, 1999) and Women's Studies (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), 1976; Davis, 2007; Robbins, Eichler, Luxton, & Descarries, 2008).

Our research adds to this latter body of literature as its focus is on the experiences and contributions of the first women academics in educational administration in Canada. We find this particular group of women compelling as, unlike other fields of academic study in faculties of education, educational administration faculty were almost entirely male until well into the 1990s (Reynolds & Young, 1995, Ch. 1). Women who did take up these faculty positions, did their graduate work, built an academic curriculum vitae and sought positions in a highly masculinist academic environment that provided almost no models of women in academic positions. Further, because the discipline of educational administration details the foundations of organizational analysis and history, and faculty members in this discipline are a logical pool from which faculty administration and leadership is drawn, many of these women faculty were among the first to take on administrative roles in institutions that were largely male dominated. As a result, early women faculty in educational administration programs present a particularly interesting group of subjects for our research. In this article, we draw on data from the first stage of a multi-layered research project that examines the experiences and contributions — both institutional and academic — of female academics in programs of Educational administration in Canada

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The first stage of our research design, and the data upon which this article is based, was comprised of personal interviews with 10 participants – two in British Columbia, two in Alberta, one in Saskatchewan, two in Ontario, two in Quebec, and one in New Brunswick.[1] The personal interviews explored the participants' individual experiences, both personal and professional, at different points of their faculty careers: (a) before graduate school; (b) during their graduate work; (c) securing their position as one of the first female faculty members in their respective departments; (d) the time between securing the position but before tenure; (e) the time after tenure but before thoughts of retirement; (f) nearing retirement; and, if applicable, (g) after retirement. We chose these periods because they represent particular points of time where the individual's engagement with institutional practice and knowledge construction are likely to shift.

Following on the interviews, we conducted two series of focus groups – one in Alberta and one in Quebec. All of the interviews and focus groups were videotaped and videos were produced around emergent themes that formed the basis for the next stage of the research. For example, video themes from the interviews were presented to the group of participants and formed the basis for their response in the first series of focus groups over a two-day period in Alberta. We have also collected curriculum vitae as a source of data and conducted a comprehensive review of the participants' research production and participation in national Canadian academic organizations.

The pool of potential participants was identified through our own knowledge of a relatively small academic field as well as recommendations of colleagues. We contacted potential participants first through in-person meetings or by phone or email and then provided them with written information that provided full details about the project and their role in it. All but one responded positively. While the women in the study were not exhaustive of the entire population of first women in programs of educational administration in Canada, the participants collectively represent the major programs of educational administration across Canada and were, and continue to be, highly influential female / feminist[2] voices in the discipline.

Because the standpoints revealed in these women's conceptualization of the interplay between their personal lives and the institutions in which they worked is of primary importance, this research is informed by Dorothy Smith's (1987; 2005) work on institutional ethnography combined with life history research (Behar, 1990; Chase, 1995; Middleton, 1993) as its research methodology. Such a study is valuable because, as Young (1994) points out, "if we are building our knowledge base, in some respects, about women's viewpoints and experiences, we still know very little about the links between those experiences and the policies and politics of various legislative and organizational contexts" (p. 363).

Institutional ethnography examines texts and conversations to gain evidence of the self-organizing activities of groups and is informed by ethnomethodology, which focuses not only on the overt text of the conversation (what is said), but also on what is not said, in the silences and the omissions that exist. As Smith (2005) suggests, power is not located in the texts themselves; instead, it is exercised through text by those who rule.

We used life history research to complement institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987) because of the temporal period under examination. Conversational interviews as well as focus groups provided an opportunity individually and collectively for the participants to share their life experiences, both personal and professional, during the time of their careers as the first female faculty members in programs of educational administration in Canada. It was our view that, given the career stage of each participant — three of whom were retired and the rest were near retirement and all were regarded as senior scholars with tenure as full professors — they had been provided the time, tenure, experience, and distance to reflect upon their experiences and solidify sophisticated standpoints. Therefore, conversations with and between them offered a rich tapestry from which to study the "ruptures" between lived experiences, knowledge production, and institutional practice. We chose this layered approach to data collection not only to provide rich description and an opportunity for co-construction of knowledge, but also to heed Smith's warning that researchers may ascribe personal characteristics to experiences that were institutionally / socially constructed.

In the remainder of the paper, we explore three themes that emerged from the ten personal interviews: mapping new career territory, transforming knowledge, and negotiating institutional tensions between the personal and professional aspects of their work.

EMERGENT THEMES

Prior to discussing some of the themes that developed from the analysis, it must be noted that these women's careers and / or personal backgrounds do not fit neatly into a generalizable pattern. In addition, the environmental factors that shaped their careers over time were different for each individual. However, all participants were white women who grew up in predominantly middle class homes, and many acknowledged backgrounds of privilege that had benefited them in a variety of ways. Three of the participants had immigrated to Canada, and seven were born in Canada. They ranged in age between mid-50's to early 70's. Seven of the women had partners, one was divorced, one was widowed, and another was single. All but one of the participants identified as heterosexual. Six of the ten women had children. Those participants with children generally waited to pursue graduate studies until their children were in school or grown, though one had her children while doing her doctoral studies

and another while doing her graduate work. Most entered higher education in their late 30's or early 40's, with one woman entering when she was 50. Three of the participants were retired at the time of the study.

Careers: Mapping New Territory

While many of their male colleagues had followed a traditional path from teacher to school principal and sometimes to school board administrator prior to pursuing a doctoral degree and becoming a faculty member in educational administration, these women followed "winding tracks" (Elgqvist-Saltzman, 1992) and came to their scholarly work from divergent career locations: none from hierarchical line positions in school board administration. For example, although nine of the ten participants were teachers at some point in their careers, prior to their entry into graduate studies, four worked as teachers in a Canadian school system, two worked in international settings, two were music consultants, one worked in post secondary administration, and one worked in the post-secondary and non-profit sector. Their entry into studies in educational administration reflected the trajectory of gender equity policy in Canada (Wallace, 2001). One of the women completed her doctoral degree in the mid-1970's, two in the early 1980's, two in the late 1980's, and the remainder between 1991-1995. Four participants spent their entire academic career in one university; another four spent their careers at two universities; one moved across three universities, and one participant moved across four universities throughout her career. All were full professors when interviewed and only two of the participants had not taken on a formal position as a university administrator; the remainder had assumed a variety of administrative positions, including Coordinator, Director, Deputy Head, Head, Associate Chair, Chair, Associate Dean, Vice Dean, Dean, Registrar, and Vice-President Research.

Institutional "fit". At the time that these women entered graduate studies in educational administration, their presence was an anomaly in that there were almost no female professors of educational administration and very few women in administrative positions in schools and universities (Rees, 1995). However, the gender equity policy environment was becoming more formalized in Canada by the mid-1980s, which, as already noted, was also the time period in which most of these women were entering their graduate programs. While the formal policy language was changing, the lived experience of women practicing or studying about educational administration, particularly in provinces outside of Quebec, had improved only slightly. The Quebec context differed because its policies continued to be influenced by the equity considerations of the Quiet Revolution[3] and programs were developed around social theory, including feminism. Those participants who began their careers in the 1980's spoke of the difficulties in accessing positions due to economic downturns and limited tenure track openings. The early 1990's brought with it an increase in the number of openings in faculties across Canada as well as the proliferation of

equity policies and committees within educational institutions influenced by legal activism based on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and social movements advocating for equity for women and other equity groups.

As a consequence, this ebb and flow of opportunity for women (and feminism) in educational administration runs through the transcripts of participants metaphorically as waves over time, just as the work of feminism has been characterized as waves. Interestingly, however, these participants suggested that the waves for women in educational administration tended to "crest" a few years later than the waves in other disciplines such as sociology or women's studies. Essentially, our participants suggested that they felt more or less able to exercise choice or agency at different times and in different contexts given the constraints of social and economic environments that framed their entry into and movement within programs of educational administration.

In many places across Canada, these women embodied "difference" in the traditional career trajectories found in educational administration and within the highly contested discourse of equity across Canada (Wallace, 2002). In many cases, participants entered programs of educational administration by default or because it was the closest discipline to their academic interest. For example, one participant's department was closed during her doctoral studies and one of her choices was to transfer to educational administration. Two other participants did a graduate degree in music and, through various circumstances, took on administrative and consulting work, which led to an interest in administrative studies. In some cases, as one participant stated, entering educational administration was "serendipitous." In fact, in only one case was the decision to enter into educational administration made with the intention of taking on an academic position. Most participants alluded to the idea that at the time of their entry into educational administration programs, their "generation" of women was perhaps less strategic about their career choices than women may be today who, as one participant described it, are "following in their wake." Thus, their institutional fit was often less than comfortable upon their entry, and many women spoke of the fatigue that inevitably set in as they strove to gain legitimacy and to access academic opportunities. They spoke at times of feeling as if their work was perceived to be on the "fringe" in programs of educational administration. They also spoke about attempting to transform institutional positions or practices to ameliorate this fit, but suggested that such transformations often occurred "in a particular place, at a particular time, for a particular purpose," and acknowledged the wave-like nature of such transformations that could alter changes in circumstance or context, but did not necessarily last in perpetuity.

Navigating the waves. While their entry into academia was, in most cases, not a planned career path, these women were clearly agentic in their pursuit and enactment of an academic career — a point that was reiterated several times

during subsequent focus groups. Although the issue of fit, as described above, created some tensions, participants used political acumen, positions of privilege, and "grit" to make / take their place within the academy. One participant described that initial step into the male-dominated waters of a large department of educational administration like this:

> ....but at some point, for some reason, I said to (a senior prof in the department), "I think I'm just going to put my name in [for an upcoming faculty position] to signal my intentions." And literally that's all I was doing. But I guess I'd begun to think... I was really thinking in terms of an academic, well, academic employment. I wouldn't even see a career at that point.

Another participant spoke of her experiences in not obtaining a position in an educational administration program after being asked to apply for one:

> I ended up being the only applicant... the guys on the committee tried to close the search down because they didn't want me... they didn't want a feminist within the department. And then to their credit, the women who were in the department... they actually came to my defense and said they did want a feminist.... Push came to shove, they closed the search, they didn't proceed with it.... I think what was really behind it was they wanted to hire a male colleague from [another institution]. He hadn't applied and they couldn't do it because they had already gone forward with the search, and they wanted to bring him in as a transfer, not as a result of the search. Things were done like that before.

On the other hand, a third participant had an uncomfortable experience obtaining her position because the department was overtly advocating for hiring a woman:

> And why was I appointed? Because the Dean told them they had to appoint a woman. They had actually appointed a woman the year before. She either accepted something else or turned it down, and so they went to the next person on the list who was a man and the Dean said, "No. You've got to appoint a woman." And so the position was vacant for a year.... Why they didn't shortlist three women, I don't know, but they shortlisted two men and one woman. They said I was the best anyway.... But I was very well accepted in my department.

Upon gaining their positions, participants made a space for themselves within their departments and did the emotional labour (Blackmore, 1996) of creating positive work relationships with many of their colleagues, male and female. However, in an atmosphere of "academic machismo" (Spurling, 1997), they acknowledged that at times they faced various degrees of sexist or marginalizing behaviors. One participant recalled an incident of such behaviour and described her response: "One of my male colleagues made a 'cute' comment out in the hallway when there were people around. I dealt with that [snaps fingers], everybody laughed, we moved on." These types of incidents were the ones that occurred most frequently and were often viewed as the most "harmless" because they were "nipped in the bud" with humour. Other exclusionary acts

by male colleagues that were mentioned by participants included silencing or de-legitimating their own or female colleagues' work / ideas, and / or claiming credit for their work / ideas when it was beneficial to do so, the assignment of inequitable teaching assignments or loads, or the denial of opportunities for leadership. For example, one participant recalled finding out about the unequal distribution in teaching load in the following way:

> At the B.Ed. level I used to have classes of 80 until I wised up on what was happening. We never admitted who was teaching what section and we kept them at 50. It was when I walked into a class to take a class of one of my colleagues and it was 5 students, and said, "Oh where's the rest?" and he said, "Oh, this is it" and I thought, "Right. I'll deal with this one."

Another participant spoke of being denied opportunities for leadership:

> I think that there were people who thought I... they would like to support me to be Chair. I think I would have liked to have a crack at it. I think there was absolutely no room. There was no room.... But I would have, I certainly would have been happy to be Acting Chair for a year to see what I could do toward opening things up and so on and so forth and increasing collegiality... there just weren't, there was no openness in the organization to me being a candidate. None whatsoever. You know, there was a clear succession planned.... I was greatly surprised when they named [Name of person] as Acting Chair... it was a very clear statement that we have two experienced women with appropriate experience and we're going with the guy who has no experience at all.

Unfortunately, there were also overt incidents of sexual harassment described by participants that included those perpetuated against these women or to others on whose behalf these women had to act as administrators. One participant described her experience in becoming Chair of her department in competition with another male colleague:

> A colleague came to see me and said: "There are many who, like it sometimes happens in the department, would like you to become the head of the department."... At some point, this other person, very macho, invited me to his office and told me: "It seems that you are applying for the position of head of the department." I said yes. He replied: "What makes you think that you deserve to be head of the department?!" I will always remember the expression on his face!! I told him that if people were asking me to apply, it meant that they believed I could do a good job, etc.... Once a colleague came up to me and said: "You should go see into the men's room, it seems that they have written something nasty about you." Well, I said, "that takes the cake!" No, no, I did not go into the men's room to see!

A second participant described her experience as a beginning academic with a senior male colleague who had been annoyingly flirtatious. The Department secretary told her that he needed to see her urgently. She agreed to meet with him but,

> I said to her, "If I'm not back at ten after ten, you need to phone the Dean and say, quickly go to that office." She looked at me, and I said, "Promise me you'll do it. If he's not there, get the Assistant Dean, but go to that office and you come too, as fast as you can." Ten minutes I thought I could handle. I went to the office and just as I thought, it played out. He locked the door, moved over, put his hand between my legs, and then I said, "This stops here and now. I have done nothing, nothing to entice you", and I said, "I am starting at this building and I'm going to have a career here and you are not going to screw it up for me." And I said "if you don't open that door in four minutes and let me out, the Dean will be waiting outside." And he just jumped back and said, "Well obviously I've been misinformed." And I said, "obviously you have been misinformed, and this ends now." And I said, "I'll tell you something," because I had talked to my husband the night before because he told me about the old boys in the bathroom, "if there is any problem and any innuendo coming from you, I'm going to sue you." I was just furious!

In addition to her pre-emptive actions and firm response to unwanted attention, this participant, as did others, worked very hard throughout her career to ensure that students and other faculty were protected in similar circumstances by anti-harassment policies and practices.

Minimizing or disabling behaviors were not the sole territory of men. Some of the women spoke to experiences in which other female professors or colleagues had undermined their confidence, work, or credibility. For example, a female advisor's actions almost made one of the participants quit the PhD program:

> I had to take...a required course in ed planning, I was the only woman in the course, I was the only one who didn't have a car, and a female professor sent me to [name of a city] to do my assignment and she also told me at the end of the first class, why didn't I look around and realize that I shouldn't be in there. I just... I had had it. I went upstairs to withdraw.... I went to her because she was a female prof, I thought she would be supportive, I didn't realize, I think in retrospect that she was scared, because we know it's not just the student going for defense, it's the prof as well. I was her first student, I was female, and she really disappointed me. I thought I was, I found more in the PhD program more support from the men than the women.

Given the above examples, it could be assumed that a stance of victimization might have been embedded in the stories of the participants. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, these incidents could be seen as "talking back" (Acker & Dillabough, 2007) with "grit" and strategic action as the participants moved forward in agentic and purposeful ways in careers that they deeply enjoyed. For example, many participants spoke about the pleasure they found in teaching, although most reported that they took on very heavy responsibilities in this area of their work. They spoke of the courses they had developed and how their teaching fed into their service commitments and research areas of interest, thus providing them with means for influencing people's thinking in order to encourage systemic changes in practice. They were also very active as supervisors of graduate students. As one woman suggested about her teaching:

> I was able to say things... that someone living in that situation could not have said. And second, simply, that I therefore was able to place on the table things that women who were out in the working world of, you know, government and K-12[4], and so on, could never possibly have voiced. And once in a while they would say things after I spoke and I thought, "This is my work."

Another participant suggested the following:

> My teaching philosophy, which is that of lifelong learning.... I think there's a real continuum to how we learn so I brought that to my teaching and tried to teach in that way so that I would never speak in a glorifying way about being a graduate teacher.... The rest of my time was working with doctoral students, and we called the process "by special arrangement." We didn't have a doctoral program so we would take each of the doctoral students and we did it entirely on our time. We got no course release, no credit for any of that. But on the other hand, we learned we could choose our doctoral students.... It was an entirely enriching experience whereby they were teaching me every bit as much as I was teaching them.... Teaching is a tremendous gift and responsibility.

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, these women undertook significant committee work and various administrative positions — Vice-President, Dean, Associate Dean, Department Chairs, and Graduate Chairs. While learning management was grueling (see Acker, 2012), in many cases, their administrative positions enabled participants to encourage departments to reconsider the academic discipline of educational administration in ways that reflected their commitment to equity and social justice in theory and practice, as well as a more expansive view of the academic discipline of educational administration. This ability to shape practices is illustrated by one participant who described the changes she observed after several years of administrative influence on hiring committees and departmental administration:

> Probably about 2001-2002, we were starting to shift the program and to start thinking about the program in terms of, not only the traditional leadership and values kinds of scholarship strands, and to some extent policy as well, but also thinking about social diversity and educational change as part of what we did. And that the shift in the faculty profile in the whole department, and in ed admin was so profound that at a certain point in the mid-2000's, in talking to my colleagues, we were writing up a job announcement to advertise for people to apply for a new faculty position, I found myself saying, "I don't even know if we need to emphasize a commitment to and expertise in social diversity anymore. It's become such a given."

Another participant, while Chair of her department, spoke of the current battle to maintain the educational administration program at her university due to the move by the provincial government to restructure teacher salary schedules that no longer recognize increases in educational credentials past a baccalaureate degree:

What happened to the department of ed admin, which almost disappeared completely, it happened at the time when all these women were hired.... There is only one man left and he is retiring in December. Which means that from a department where there used to be twenty, seventeen men, no sixteen men and four women when I did my graduate studies in the mid nineties... in 2010, there are seven people left; one man and six women... we realize the challenge we are facing and the dangers that the program may even disappear and we don't want that. I think now maybe I'm going to start to influence the field and the programs. I know my research is being used... in training programs.... We really want to save that program, both programs matter, Masters and PhD. We don't want the field of ed admin to be lost.... It was one of the most important programs.... It was very renowned, very respected.

Her encounter with institutional "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1987) demonstrates the potential as well as the paradox of women in leadership whose own life and career experiences became the impetus for reconsidering institutional practices while enmeshed by them. Still, our research confirms that, through their administrative influence and academic contributions, the academic discipline of educational administration and the departments in which it was taught were transformed over the duration of the three decades framed within this study.

Contributions to/transforming of knowledge construction and mobilization

Following on the first theme, the second reveals that both their non-traditional career trajectories and lived experience inevitably prompted participants to explore non-traditional research questions in educational administration that, in some cases, led to feminist analysis and were predominantly attuned to issues of social justice in the context of institutional practices in education. As Butterwick and Dawson (2005) note, citing Jaggar (1992), "the reconstruction of knowledge is inseparable from the reconstruction of ourselves" (p. 64) for, as these participants built their careers, the influence of career trajectory and its intersection with personal responsibilities often prompted innovative research as well. For example, one participant, who had taken several sessional positions in her early career because tenure track positions were difficult to obtain at that time, began to research distance education because that is what she found herself doing in one of her positions during the early years of satellite course delivery. She is now considered an international expert in the area of distance education. Another participant, who is Francophone and had worked in international settings, brought that perspective and life experience to her innovative research which explores:

The meaning of education leadership in the official linguistic minority settings. At first it was French speaking minority in Canada. Then I started looking at First Nations, Natives, and English speaking school directors in Quebec; which is the official linguistic minority in Quebec is the English speakers. I also realized there was very interesting research done on education in official linguistic minority settings all around the world.

Many of the participants specifically pursued research on various questions related to women in positions of educational leadership.[3] Their work provided the core analysis for many students of educational administration and opened up a field of inquiry that had not previously been given much credence in Canadian departments of educational administration. One of the authors of this paper — like many other graduate students — felt emboldened during her doctoral studies to pursue a feminist analysis of equity policy in educational organizations, despite significant resistance from senior academics, because of the support and scholarly work of several of the women in this study. Two of the study participants edited, and several other participants contributed to, a collection of papers that mapped out the terrain of feminist and gender-based analysis of women in educational administration in Canada. Other participants looked outside the traditional hierarchical relations in educational organizations to explore a critical analysis of the political influences in educational organizations, including industrial relations and the professional development work of teacher federations / unions. Some participants explored aesthetics, emotions, and spirituality in leadership, which opened up fresh philosophical opportunities to think about educational administration in new ways. Others explored innovations in organizing schooling, including twinned principalships and year round schooling.

Clearly, the scope of the work taken on by these women, a fraction of which is represented here, has made a significant contribution to the scholarly literature in Canada and has been influential internationally. The nature of the research and the methods chosen for the research have pushed on entrenched masculinist boundaries around the knowledge base in educational administration. As the walls were permeated, new insights about traditional subjects of inquiry as well as unexplored territory were made visible on the scholarly landscape. This did not happen without resistance, but participants responded to that resistance with excellent individual scholarship and collective strategic action. One participant recalls meeting with resistance at the Canadian Association for Studies in Educational Administration (CASEA) but moving forward with issues that she saw as an essential part of the academic conversation:

> I began at conferences like CASEA to propose sessions about social justice and remember entering into conversations and huge debates with people like [names of two male colleagues] about the role of social justice. I do think that's something that my generation of academics and particularly female academics has contributed to the field, not just in Canada but in the U.S. as well. When you think of all the social justice people — [several scholars named] you can go on and on — we're all about the same age and entered about the same time, just a little bit earlier than the two of you [the interviewers] did. And [names of two male colleagues] and people like that, for whom I have great affection and respect, kind of treated it as a joke. They would organize counter panels or say, well, you can represent the social justice perspective, but.... And so it was never treated very seriously and yet in the 20 years now

since I've been an academic, it's obviously gained a lot of currency.... But certainly in terms of its acceptance as part of the discourse, it's there. I'm just not sure it's moved the field away from the rational, technical, instrumental approaches that I would like it to have done.

This story demonstrates that the problem of "fit," with which these women struggled in their academic institutions, was one that they encountered in their scholarly organizations as well. Collective action and collaboration were often important in moving their academic work forward but this was difficult for faculty women in educational administration as their numbers were small and academic institutions scattered across the vast geography of Canada. The idea for an organization that would support women's scholarship and provide a rigorous and supportive environment across academic disciplines in education was born. Of the ten women participating in this study, three were founding members of the Canadian Association for Studies on Women and Education (CASWE), an association to promote and support women's scholarship that is part of the Canadian Society for Studies in Education (CSSE) – the largest Society in the Congress for Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH) in Canada. Most of the participants have been involved formally and informally in CASWE and many have presented papers since its inception. In addition, their academic influence has been significant in national academic organizations: for example, one participant has been President of CSSE, and three have been presidents of CASEA, also part of CSSE. Further, as these women disseminated their work at CSSE, their scholarship had a significant influence on new scholars and expanded the scope of topics at CSSE – especially CASEA and CASWE – to include issues of equity and social justice, expand notions of leadership to include teacher leadership and leadership in professional unions and associations. One participant spoke of the importance of these collective efforts in supporting her work:

Life within the department could be very difficult. And that could be because I was outspoken about not only feminist stuff, but things like undergrad and how it was undervalued. I mean, I spoke up about a lot of things and it was very, it was very difficult. Um, what, what I think kept me going, not just the support of individuals... was the existence of CSSE and these, you know, the people within CASEA and CASWE, with whom I had things in common. And I mean really that made all the difference in those early days.... I can't imagine what it was like for the earlier women, for someone like [name of female colleague who had preceded her], you know.

In addition to more formal academic venues for knowledge mobilization, the interviews revealed that participants worked closely with teacher unions, spoke at professional conferences, edited academic journals, and conferred with Ministries of Education. They developed close working relationships with students who were often current or future school administrators, union leaders, higher education administrators, or adult educators and ensured that their courses reflected the expanded knowledge base that they were creating. As

they did so, that knowledge became a part of the basis upon which education policies and practices were developed. Although the contribution these women made to Canadian scholarship in educational administration was significant, some felt that it was appreciated more by international scholars than their Canadian colleagues. During one interview, a participant noted that Charol Shakeshaft's work (eg., 1987) was the only paper included in her graduate courses that discussed gender and both interviewers noted that, many years later, it was still the only feminist work included widely in graduate courses. The participant sighed upon hearing this information and then noted:

> Pat Schmuck in the United States, too, her work is like standard so she's on the reading lists, and then of course some of the Australians, some of the New Zealanders, Jill Blackmore, and others started showing up on the reading lists. But I think we're still fighting, as Canadian scholars, women in ed admin, a lot of people don't know about us. And they don't know of our twenty years of publishing and work, and the international contribution. We're better known when we go to international conferences. Two years ago in New Zealand, somebody came up to me who was just finishing her dissertation in Auckland and she said, "oh [participant's name], I read all your work, and you're my hero!" and all this kind of stuff. But here she is in New Zealand and she knows all my work, and I'm sure there are people in Manitoba or in BC who don't know anything about my work.

When this comment was noted during the focus group, there were nods of assent around the circle. It is difficult to determine why this might be the case,[5] however, it was clear that the ways in which some of these women were positioned within the Canadian academic community had some challenges that continued to linger.

Participants were actively engaged with local school boards, principal associations, or community organizations and all spoke of the importance of their work with students in carrying forward the work about which they cared so much. While they were hopeful that the work would go forward, they were certainly not naïve; they had lived with the resistance to moving their work forward for a long time. One participant sums up this tension nicely:

> I think my research and teaching have influenced a number of people who have either been my students or who've read my work to see the social world of education in some different ways. I think that's some of the most powerful stuff we do. I can see that some of the social dynamics that I was instrumental in helping to redefine and some of the organizational routines that I put in place but as I said, I've become much less naïve about my own ability to change the world and I'm much more likely to think that if you're in a position of leadership, what that's good for is trying to mitigate harm during the period when you're in leadership and that's it. I don't think it's appropriate to look for durability as some sort of an indicator of *I did a good job or I didn't do a good job*. It's too harsh an environment to really expect that. In many ways this is still a really good department, we have a good program, I can claim some credit for that, but it's also much bigger than you and I.

Another participant shared her optimism that her work with school principals during a lengthy academic career had been transformative:

> The hope, I think, is that, if you were helping to prepare principals or superintendents, that you could have an impact on a wider segment of society, a larger number of people that maybe you could make a difference. That's pretty optimistic, pretty idealistic, I'm not sure, that any of us have made the kind of difference we want to make, but...

In each case, their hopeful assessment of their career in academia is tempered by the realism that comes from experience within institutional arrangements that are often inhospitable and highly gendered (Connell, 2006) — particularly as those institutions have become more traditional and conservative in the wake of broad acceptance of neo-liberal ideologies (Blackmore & Sachs, 2001).

Negotiating institutional tensions between the personal and professional

Negotiating the tensions between the personal and professional domains was a challenge taken on by all of the participants, although in different ways depending on the institutional contexts of both their family and academic life. As gendered subjects, they were positioned as disruptive to the status quo throughout their careers. That is not to say that they all purposely set out to disrupt, but they made an agentic choice to resist and prevail in ensuring that the knowledge base in educational administration grew to accommodate their scholarly interests and concerns. Doing so, however, created a certain weariness and a sense that pursuing their careers had taken a toll, which became evident in some of the interviews. One participant who was well known in both academic and professional contexts for her feminist analysis of the ways in which women were positioned in educational organizations, was dealing with significant personal challenges at the time of our interview. She noted that she often felt, in speaking to the issues, that she was also expected to organize activist responses to the issues:

> Well, it just occurred to me as I was thinking about the later part of my career that that was part of the fatigue that set in, I think, you know? Cause I really had fought quite a lot of battles on quite a lot of fronts, but I just needed to not have to be doing that for a while at least. But everywhere I looked, out here still, even though there are ways in which things have changed that are great, and I celebrate those for sure, but there were other places where it was so discouraging, you know? [laughs]

Perhaps the regrets and sense of frustration many participants expressed were an inevitable result of their heightened awareness honed by the critical scholarship in which they had engaged throughout their careers. After discussing the guilt she felt in relation to not spending as much time with her children as she would have liked, one participant explored the notion of guilt within a wider social context:

> But there is a sub-theme of guilt in my work history, my life history. But some of it is the white privilege too. When you really do realize how privileged you are... and at [name of institution], that street that I had to walk, homeless people on every street corner, and actually well known in the... building, we had four homeless people that were like shadows, they lived in the... buildings.... In the cold, cold weather, they basically just moved around in the building. And as I was moving you would kind of just see them out of the corner of your eye. Here's this hallowed hall of all this privilege and intelligentsia and disseminating knowledge and saving the world and all the international work and all the development work and there's people right in the building that we can't save or we can't seem to help and that we can't even seem to see.

Although weariness and pessimism were evident in some comments, along with an awareness of the challenges in finding balance among the multiple responsibilities that were important to them, they also expressed deep satisfaction in the choices they had made. For example, one participant spoke about her satisfaction in finding balance between her home and work responsibilities, but she also signals that a price, in terms of the possibilities of her academic career, had to be paid:

> I am pretty happy with my publication record. I don't want to be a star. I am too busy doing other things in my life to pretend that. I think to become like our colleagues who are known around the world, are quoted all the time... I think that is good but I think it has to be something to focus on so much and spend so much time on.... I am a mother, I am very active in social work like volunteer work, I am a grandmother now.... With what I wanted to do in my career, I am very satisfied.

Her remarks point to the classic dilemma for female academics who must negotiate the tensions at the intersection between the two "greedy organizations" that are central to them: home and work (Blackmore, 1996). Doing so has particular challenges for women with children for, as Armenti (2004a; 2004b) has demonstrated, the timing for having children and the exigencies of caring for children requires considerable strategizing in light of the demands of graduate studies and building an academic career. For example, of the six women with children in this study, two women gave birth to children during their doctoral studies, one had her children after she obtained a faculty position, two did not pursue graduate studies until their children were grown, and another chose her graduate courses based on the evenings her childcare arrangements were available. One participant, who was one of the first women to receive a doctorate in educational administration in Canada and whose doctorate preceded many of the others in the study, remarked that she brought her baby to class "but I never did that again." She also noted, "No one ever asked about the kids. I had no photographs — I didn't bring them. They just didn't exist in this place [i.e., the department in which she did her graduate studies]. And I was deliberate about that too." When asked in what way she was deliberate, she added, "It was not something I saw other people [i.e., male colleagues and faculty] do, so I didn't either."

Her story points to the ways in which women who were graduate students or faculty with children worked to "fit" in an environment in which children were a personal responsibility that did not impinge on the professional domain. Children, even pictures of children, were a reminder of dominant expectations for the role that female participants were expected to play as well as a physical reminder of their intrusion in a male dominated domain. Other participants without children noted, with some passion, that they found it too easy to become consumed by their career and sought, with mixed success, to "have a life" outside the institution. While juggling the demands of life outside the academy and career was a challenge, participants noted that their home life and activities beyond the academy provided strength and support and were essential to their wellbeing.

Despite the challenges at the intersection of personal and professional, the participants' work was informed by a critical awareness of their work inside and outside the academy. One participant described the ways in which her professional service reflected her critical academic and public engagements that continued into her retirement:

> I considered my political work as service because... I knew I couldn't be a member of parliament, but I knew that every talk I gave, every letter I wrote, I was saying the very same things I was bringing to my classes, so I saw that as an intellectual service to the community and that was just barely tolerated [by the faculty administrators]. So now as a retired person, when I [ran again for parliament], nobody was standing in the way, and I could do this again.

In this story we see an example of many that participants told of negotiating the tensions between the personal and professional — the private and the public domains of women's lives — in order to prompt students, colleagues, educators, and administrators to rethink the status quo and move towards social practices that promote critical inquiry and speak against oppression. This intersection of the public and private proved somewhat implacable, however, and required reorganizing, postponing or compromising desires for participation in the public domain in order to accommodate the demands of the private.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This paper provides only a small snapshot of the findings from one phase of our study. Although the organizational culture, academic traditions, and knowledge base that have shaped and been shaped by the participants in this study are indeed, as one participant put it, "bigger than you or I," our research provides evidence that the first women faculty members in educational administration added significantly to the broader academic conversation. We note with much interest the unique context of Quebec and how its history has shaped the experience of women in educational administration programs very differently; in this regard, we have only scratched the surface and will spend time in further papers nuancing this difference.

Our participants' entry into educational administration programs and academic positions tended to occur in waves of opportunity that opened or closed given the social and economic environments of the various decades in which they completed their doctoral degrees. Their personal backgrounds had a significant impact on the choices they made throughout their careers as well as the ways in which they were perceived or treated by others. Though the majority of these women had not set out to engage in a particular academic career in educational administration, they all have become highly successful academics whose research, scholarship, teaching and administrative service is demonstrated in a plethora of local, national and international venues. As a group they have engaged in almost all administrative positions within the academy except for that of university president. Although they encountered institutional tensions and challenges along the way, they persisted because they were deeply engaged with ideas and were committed to their dissemination within the academy, in educational organizations, and in the wider community. They recognized those tensions and managed to take pleasure in all aspects of their work, especially when their personal sense of themselves was holistically integrated across their teaching, service, and research projects. While they typically experienced significant tension in balancing their beliefs and values with their administrative roles, they used those positions to foster program success or to transform programs in ways that created more equitable opportunities for students and faculty.

In conclusion, these women are neither victims nor heroines. Rather, they were highly aware of the contexts in which their work was sometimes promoted and at other times marginalized, and strategized either individually or collectively to create more enabling environments for themselves and others. They seized opportunities when they came, and used them for fostering career growth, institutional transformation, and knowledge construction and dissemination. They also, however, were highly aware that "glory days" come and go like the tide and that with the waves of opportunity come the undertows waiting to drag them under again. Within this sense of realistic optimism, these women have moved forward with purpose, noting that, although they are unable to predict the constancy or consequences of their individual or collective actions, each wave of opportunity that they have weathered has shaped changes in the landscape that constitutes educational administration in Canada.

NOTES

1. It is important to note that these women cannot easily be attached to a particular geographical location in that, over the life span of their careers, most have lived, studied and been faculty members in various locations and institutions in Canada.

2. While most participants would name themselves as feminist, not all would nor did during the study.

3. The Quiet Revolution was a period of rapid social change in almost every realm of Quebec society that represented a shift from a traditional allegiance to the Catholic church to secularization

and economic, political and economic reform that continues to have an influence on Quebec's social and political institutions. See http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/reading/lesage.htm for a brief discussion.

4.   K-12 refers to the grade designations of Kindergarten to grade 12, the grades that are publicly funded in Canadian provinces prior to university or college.

5.   To our knowledge, there has not been any analysis of this phenomenon. However, the "large market" conferences, such as American Educational Research Association (AERA) and University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) pay far greater attention to British and Australian scholars than they do to Canadian scholars. Curious about this, one of the authors discussed this with an American colleague who said that she believed that most U.S. colleagues saw Canada as a smaller version of itself and so didn't pay as much attention, whereas the UK and Australia were seen as more exotic. It is difficult to know how legitimate this analysis is but it is true that Canadian scholars are given more attention by their Commonwealth partners (the UK and Australia) than the U.S. and tend to build stronger connections with those partners as well.

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JANICE WALLACE is Professor Emerita at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. Her research interests focus on social justice issues in educational organizations with a particular emphasis on gender, as well as the effects of neoliberalism on educational administration. wallacej@ualberta.ca

DAWN WALLIN is an Associate Dean and Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. Her research interests lie in the areas of educational administration, rural education, leadership career paths, and women in leadership. wallind@umanitoba.ca

MELODY VICZKO is an Assistant Professor at Western University. Her research interests include sociomaterial approaches to educational policy analysis and multi-scalar governance with a focus on exploring issues of internationalization, democratic governance, gender and social justice. mviczko@uwo.ca

HEATHER ANDERSON is a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Manitoba. Her research interests include gender equity, educational policy, feminist research, curricula analysis. heather.anderson@umanitoba.ca

JANICE WALLACE est professeur émérite à l'Université de l'Alberta, au sein du département d'études des politiques éducationnelles. Ses intérêts de recherche portent sur les problématiques de justice sociale dans les organisations éducatives, en mettant l'accent sur les questions de genre. Elle s'intéresse aussi aux effets du néolibéralisme sur l'administration scolaire. wallacej@ualberta.ca

DAWN WALLIN est doyenne adjointe et professeure au département d'*Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology* de la faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université du Manitoba. Elle effectue ses recherches dans les domaines de l'administration de l'éducation, de l'éducation au sein des communautés rurales, du cheminement des carrières en leadership et des femmes et le leadership. wallind@umanitoba.ca

MELODY VICZKO est professeur adjointe à l'Université Western. Ses recherches portent sur l'approche socio matérielle utilisée pour l'analyse des politiques éducationnelles et sur la gouvernance multi-niveaux, explorant plus précisément l'internationalisation, la gouvernance démocratique, le genre et la justice sociale. mviczko@uwo.ca

HEATHER ANDERSON est doctorante à l'Université du Manitoba. Elle s'intéresse aux questions d'équité entre sexes, aux politiques éducationnelles, aux recherches portant sur le féminisme et à l'analyse des programmes. heather.anderson@umanitoba.ca