Equity/Equality Issues
of Gender, Race, and Class

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Reactions to Chapter 5, "The Struggle to Create a More Gender-Inclusive Profession,"
by Charol Shakeshaft; and Chapter 9, "Delta Forces: The Changing Fabric of American
Society and Education," by Pedro Reyes, Lonnie H. Wagstaff, and Lance D. Fusarelli.

Concerns with equity issues in education have largely given way to concerns about quality and excellence. Bell and Chase (1993) argue that from the beginning of the 1980s, federal policies have focused on the establishment and enforcement of performance standards rather than on equity standards. And even when the focus was on equity, apart from affirmative action policies in some arenas, what was really targeted was equality. Talking of gender equity, in particular, Stromquist (1997) points out that although the U.S. government describes both Title XI of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 and the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) passed in 1975 as legislation for equity, the laws, at best, offer equality of opportunity in terms of access and resources. "To provide equity would be to give greater support to women in order to ensure that they ultimately reach a condition of equality with men" (p. 55). Odden (1995) agrees: "Despite our rhetoric about equal outcomes, our equity orientation has been one primarily of access" (p. 12).

Thus, when Charol Shakeshaft poses the question: "Are women represented in administration in equal proportions to their representation in teaching?" she is not referring to any extra efforts that have been made on behalf of women to enable their entry into administration that would provide equity. She is looking simply at the numbers, unreliable as they are, to determine if there is equality of representation. The answer is no. "Females are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration" (p. 100). Beyond

proportional representation, Shakeshaft uses another measure of equality. Women and members of minority groups are becoming certified as school administrators at a rate that is not reflected in the number of administrative positions that they actually hold. She concludes that this means that "women and minority candidates are certified in much larger numbers than they are chosen for administrative positions" (p. 100). Both equity and equality are at the heart of her discussion.

Likewise, disappointment with the inadequacy of current and postwar reforms in American education to address equity issues permeates Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli's chapter. Drawing on Bastian and Greer (1985), they argue that "the implication of current reforms is that they will reproduce rather than transcend societal inequities and stratifications" (p. 183). Projecting demographic trends that will exacerbate current conditions of poverty and increase the number of students who do not describe themselves as White in America's schools, they fear that in the haste toward quality and excellence, "the value of equity is often the first disposed of and easiest to ignore" (p. 198). Both chapters explore the reasons behind the lack of equity: for students of color and students living in poverty, on one hand, and for women in school administration on the other. Without explicitly stating it, both chapters criticize the failure of the conventional liberal solutions to social problems that have characterized reform efforts in this country since the 1960s. As Marshall (1993) argues,

> By the late 1970s, liberal policy makers had lost faith in the ability of the compensatory programs. In addition, the liberal social agenda was in disarray, with its leaders fighting over the meaning of equality of educational opportunity. . . . The election of President Reagan in 1980 marked the political ascendance of a new conservative consensus . . . in education, an emphasis on excellence and quality rather than equity. (p. 2)

To counter this, Marshall (1993) offers the perspective of a new politics of race and gender. This perspective is informed by a heightened awareness of how policies serve or fail to serve the interests of those whose lived experiences are shaped by gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and their intersections. The new politics of race and gender has grown out of a "disillusionment with conventional liberal solutions" and it is particularly wary of "a view of equity as a zero-sum game that pits blacks against whites, women against blacks, men against women" (p. 4).

Using concepts suggested by the new politics of race and gender, in this article, I consider to what extent the increased research on women leading in education, as Shakeshaft suggests is now occurring, offers any hope of addressing Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli's concerns. In other words, if

administration were to become a more equitable profession, how might this provide a different force shaping educational reform? The first section summarizes the chapters briefly. In the second section, I look at the issues raised in the chapters through the lens of *women's ways feminisms*, a term borrowed from Catherine Marshall (1997). The third section approaches the issues from the perspective of power and politics feminisms (Marshall, 1997). Finally, in the Conclusion, I explore the ways in which this approach addresses the concerns about equality and equity that have linked the chapters.

GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS DISPARITIES IN THE TWO CHAPTERS

In her chapter in the *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, Shakeshaft traces the history of women in school administration. She looks both at inclusion and at equality of representation from the middle of the 19th century, when administration emerged as a profession separate from the teaching profession, until the present. She examines women's representation in administration by providing a comprehensive overview of the number of women holding leadership positions in kindergarten through 12th-grade school systems. Shakeshaft also considers the extent to which administration is conceptualized in "ways that are inclusive of gendered experience and perception" (p. 99). Her purpose is to show that women are still underrepresented in administrative positions at all levels except for the elementary principalship, if one uses the standard of proportional representation by general population. Women make up 51% of the population and 52% of elementary principals. However, if one takes into account the fact that women account for 83% of the teachers in elementary settings, even this figure of 52% needs to be reexamined. Shakeshaft argues that there is an inequitable distribution of administrative positions between men and women and between members of minority groups and Whites.

Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli, in their chapter in the *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, focus on the post–World War II era to analyze the macrolevel forces that have fundamentally shaped the structure of education in America. They are particularly interested in how these forces, which they call "delta forces," have influenced the context of school reform. Arguing that "much of the impetus for change in education has originated not from professional educators themselves, but from policy entrepreneurs largely outside the educational establishment" (p. 183), they explain that the kinds of changes made can be attributed to a widespread belief in a neocorporatist model of schooling. "This model emphasizes competitive,

hierarchical achievement, punitive discipline, and segregation of diverse populations" (p. 183).

The discussion in both chapters is supported by an examination of historical trends and events. Shakeshaft highlights seven significant periods that have influenced the "ebb and flow of women into school administration" (p. 107). These are (a) the bureaucratization of schools, (b) the early suffrage movement, (c) the movement for equal pay and the economic depression, (d) World War II and the postwar period, (e) the cold war, (f) societal expectations for women at odds with leadership and administration, and (g) the recent women's movement. Her overview explains that although women had some early success in gaining entry into administration, especially during the suffrage movement and briefly during the Second World War, their continued success has been hampered by forces external to education. The push for equal pay, for instance, robbed women of the slight advantage they had at a time when some boards could get women as administrators for less than they would have to pay men.

Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli point to the significance of the Great Depression, the cold war, and *Brown v. Board of Education* as the most important national events shaping education policy in the 1940s and 1950s. During this period, under the philosophy of cooperative federalism, and in the aftermath of the successful launch of Sputnik, a number of new federal initiatives expanded the power and influence of the federal government in education. At the same time, against the background of the *Brown* decision, a growing civil rights movement illuminated the social injustices that had gone unrecognized up until then. In assessing the 1960s, the authors criticize the federal housing and transportation policies, showing how both contributed to White flight from the inner cities. The 1960s also were when poverty and achievement gaps between Whites and ethnic groups emerged as causes for concern.

However, the thrusts for equity were short-lived. Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli characterize the 1970s as a period of disappointment and drift. They contend that despite important benefits legislated for children with handicaps and learning disabilities, the federal government did not provide the necessary leadership to improve the situation for most children in the public schools. The 1980s and 1990s have brought a resurgence of conservatism throughout the country. The new federalism ushered in during the Reagan era has devolved much of the responsibility for education to the states. The federal government has remained a major influence on education nevertheless, with its emphasis on national performance standards for students and teachers. The authors also highlight the federal interest in economic productivity that has encouraged business involvement in schooling.

From this historical overview, Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli conclude that it is doubtful that "any of the reforms introduced in the 1980s will actually improve public schools" (p. 191). This is because none of the reforms really address the root causes of student failure to achieve. Although there is some acknowledgement of the race, gender, and class issues that compound students' ability to succeed, current policies largely ignore such factors.

Both chapters conclude the discussion by looking ahead. Shakeshaft uses Schuster and Van Dyne's (1984) stages to conceptualize research efforts that have contributed to the struggle to include women in educational administration. She contends that most of the research up until the last decade or so falls into the first three stages: Stage 1: Documenting the absence of women, Stage 2: Searching for women who have been administrators, and Stage 3: Showing women as disadvantaged or subordinate. Research that is more recent focuses on the next two stages: Stage 4: Women studied on their own terms and Stage 5: Women as a challenge to existing theory. She anticipates that the future holds promise for research at Stage 6: Transformation of theory. At this stage, she argues that there will be a "reconceptualization of theory [of leadership and human behavior in organizations] to include experiences of women" (p. 113).

Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli end by forecasting education and society in the 21st century. Using predictions based on current demographic trends and trends in the workplace, they consider what schools will need to do to meet these challenges. Such challenges include a projected need for increased educational funds as the school-age population grows steadily through the early part of the next century. When this is coupled with the fact that the voting population is aging, mainly White, and without children in schools, the prospects for increased spending on public education look bleak. Thus, the authors argue that "schools of the future will stress the importance of obtaining a fundamentally sound, basic education" (p. 194). They also emphasize the need for lifelong learning, computer literacy, and the capacity to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. To achieve this, Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli acknowledge that schools need to provide a caring environment within which children should develop these skills and attitudes. They point out the need for schools to be places in which students develop quality relationships with teachers and peers, learn civility, and practice democratic values. Most important is that schools must align themselves with students' needs.

Interestingly enough, the research on women's ways of leading suggests that some women administrators prioritize these concerns. Therefore, I turn now to a brief discussion of that literature so that I might explore some possibilities for addressing the challenges identified by Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli.

WOMEN'S WAYS FEMINISMS

The research on women leading in education is not yet very deep, partly because, as Shakeshaft conceives it, much of the early research was concerned either with comparisons of women administrators to men administrators or with the barriers to women's advancement. Another reason that research on women's lived experiences as leaders is not encouraged is the contradictory belief in the academy that enough has been done already. Many of the more traditional scholars consider that gender issues are no longer burning ones. They concur with Diane Ravitch who claimed, when she was assistant secretary of education, that "gender equity problems have been solved" (cited in Marshall, 1993, p. 2).

However, inspired by Biklen and Shakeshaft (1985) and Shakeshaft (1989), researchers (mostly women) have begun, relatively recently, to study women administrators on their own terms. In the larger context, Gilligan's (1993) work on women's psychological development, Noddings's (1984) theory on caring, and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's (1986) insights into women's ways of knowing influenced many researchers' desire to understand how women viewed their worlds. On the understanding that there is no one set of experiences that can be labeled as women's experiences, and that women may be as different from each other as they are alike, we can summarize the knowledge that we are gaining from this ongoing research with contemporary women leaders. It is valuable particularly because so much of our current knowledge of leadership and administration is based on men's experiences. Still, most of our understanding of women in leadership is from research that has been conducted in Stages 4 and 5 as Shakeshaft describes it. Some of these studies include White women and women of color as participants and some of them focus either on White women or on women of color. A very brief overview of major trends follows.

What we are learning about women in educational leadership positions is that they tend to be problem solvers, task oriented, and have high expectations of self and others (Fansher & Buxton, 1984; Grady & O'Connell, 1993; Hill & Ragland, 1995). Research also has found that women have strong instructional backgrounds, a focus on curriculum, and a focus on student growth and achievement (Andrews & Basom, 1990; Dillard, 1995; Fansher & Buxton, 1984; Grogan, 1996). Some of the most common attributes used to characterize women leaders are collaborative, caring, courageous, and reflective (Grogan, 1996; Grogan & Smith, 1998; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, Patterson, Rogers, & Steele, 1996; Regan & Brooks, 1995). Women also are noted for sharing power, creating shared visions, and being change agents (Brunner, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Restine,

1993). Above all, a repeated theme in almost all of this literature is that many women are relational leaders, that is, leaders who strive to get to know students, teachers, and other members of the school community. Based on having good knowledge of others, relational leaders see themselves in relationships that are facilitative of others' efforts rather than in control. It is tempting to generalize but, as Shakeshaft points out, only recently has the literature focused on studying women on their own terms.

If our knowledge of White women principals and superintendents is only partial, even more scant is our knowledge of women of color who are administrators. However, from this emerging literature, we learn that "their ways of leading may be as diverse as their cultural heritages but all rise directly from their own complex social and cultural histories" (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998, p. 140). In some instances, this concept encouraged women of color to redefine their leadership roles and inspired their wishes to make a difference for students (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Dillard, 1995; Hudson, Wesson, & Marcano, 1998; Jackson, 1999; Mendez-Morse, 1999; Murtadha & Larson, 1999; Ortiz & Ortiz, 1993). In their study, Murtadha and Larson (1999) found "that the leadership narratives of African American women are strikingly rooted in anti-institutionalism, rational resistance, a sense of urgency, and deep spirituality" (p. 4). Woven through all the stories of leaders who are also women of color is an especially strong sense of community. In addition, for many who take an activist stance, their commitment to all children, but particularly to children of color, is paramount.

On one hand, this early literature is encouraging. The potential for a different kind of leadership to emerge seems strong. At the microlevel, if greater gender equality were achieved in educational administration, a more caring, relational approach rooted in social justice might become the norm. There is evidence that White men and minority men also are adopting such methods. On the other hand, Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli suggest that the macrolevel forces shape the context of reform in ways that weaken or even negate an individual's leadership capacity.

POWER AND POLITICS FEMINISMS

Marshall (1997) explains that "power and politics" feminist approaches are different from the more liberal women's ways feminisms described above. "This power and politics theoretical strand recognizes that simply gaining power in the context of existing power structures will not suffice" (p. 13). Following this line of thinking, it is imperative that we scrutinize the social, economic, and political structures that influence educational

administration. We need to question the approved administrative practices to discover who they benefit and who they limit. At the same time, we need to assess critically the knowledge base to discover what has been problematized and what has not. It is argued that without a critical inquiry into educational administration, into the sources of knowledge and claims to authority, any efforts to transform the field will fail.

Similar to other critical feminist theories, a feminist poststructuralist account of administration, for instance, pays attention to the way the discourse legitimates a purportedly neutral position. Using the constructs of power, language and discourse, and subject and subjectivity, the theory enables an individual to understand how he or she learns to be a good school administrator. It is not the purpose of this article to describe the theory in depth. For a more complete discussion of feminist poststructuralism used to frame issues in educational administration, see Capper (1993, 1998), Grogan (1996), and Skrla (1999). And see Anderson and Grinberg (1998) and Cherryholmes (1988) for a poststructuralist analysis of educational administration and education, respectively. However, in this discussion, it is helpful to consider the kinds of inequity condemned in the Shakeshaft and Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli articles from such a theoretical position. It allows us to look beyond the numbers to seek understanding of why so few women hold administrative positions, for example, and encourages us to uncover the racism and sexism that continue to contribute to the delta forces shaping educational reform. There are three main insights gained from using this theoretical framework:

1. Women administrators experience conflicting discourses.
2. Women's ways of leading are considered secondary or subordinate to men's ways.
3. There is a manufactured crisis in leadership.

Women administrators experience conflicting discourses. Using the construct of discourse, it is clear that women and men administrators are immersed in different kinds of discourses. The notion of discourse in feminist poststructuralism comes from Foucault's concept of discursive fields:

> Discursive fields consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organizing social institutions and processes. They offer the individual a range of modes of subjectivity. Within a discursive field, for instance that of the law or the family, not all discourses carry equal weight or power. (Weedon, 1997, p. 34)

For example, take the family at present. Mothering discourses often carry more weight than fathering discourses in terms of providing knowledge of

child care. So, stay-at-home fathers often have to fight to gain social approval for their decision not to work outside the home. By contrast, traditional fathering discourses located fathers in the workplace, giving them permission to spend not only less time with the family than do mothers but also relieving them of many responsibilities for child care, such as arranging for medical and dental care. This allowed men the opportunity to spend long hours at work, which in turn helped to mold the traditional work discourses. Educational administration is a prime example of a discourse that has been shaped by men's experiences. Whether married or single, few male administrators in the past have had to include the duties and responsibilities typical of mothering discourses in their daily routines. With the increase in single fathers and dual careers, modern fathering discourses may indeed embrace more of these activities, but the discourse of educational administration remains firmly steeped in past practices.

It is not simply a matter of time. With some ingenuity, women principals and superintendents do arrange their work schedules in such a way that they can also take care of their families; but for many, it is the clash of priorities and values inherent in the different discourses that takes its toll. A good administrator focuses his or her energy primarily on the school or district. Family concerns must remain in the background and must not be seen to interfere with the business at hand. Although there is plenty of rhetoric applauding schools for being family oriented and administrators for being good parents and active community members, there is still a tension created for those who try to meet the demands of family and administration equally well. One of the reasons is that the traditional male administrator was ably supported by a partner or wife whose participation in the traditional mothering and partnering discourses freed him to concentrate on school leadership.

It is not only a conflict between administrative discourses and mothering that many experience. For those administrators who are not mothers but who are partners, and for those who are both mothers and partners, traditional female partnering discourses are also at odds with the discourse of administration. Although it is possible that there are not the same expectations today as there once were, many wives and female partners in the past felt compelled to follow their spouse or male partner as he moved up the career ladder. For some, this meant changes in location across the country. Many women found work in teaching or administration, but few were able to build their own networks of support for their own career advancement (Edson, 1988; Grogan, 1996; Schmuck, 1975). Women accepted these conditions often because of economic reasons. Few teachers or beginning administrators were paid as much as the career professional, whatever his field.

The flip side of the female partnering discourse also reinforces women's lack of mobility. Because there are a limited number of school principalships and superintendencies in any geographic location, the discourse of educational administration approves of individuals who are willing to relocate. Writing of the superintendency, for instance, Carlson (1972) distinguished between two kinds of superintendents: career-bound and place-bound. He found that although there were many desirable qualities in both kinds, there was a subtle favoring of the former. He asserted that a career-bound superintendent was more likely to embrace innovation and to develop the school system than was the place-bound superintendent. This belief certainly helped to establish the image of an effective superintendent as one who can move wherever employment takes him or her. Although many women administrators are not averse to this notion, for those who are also immersed in mothering or partnering discourses that conflict, moving husband and home is not often an option. It is especially risky for women who enjoy the support of a partner who might withdraw his support rather than resign from his job or seek employment elsewhere. The discourse of educational administration almost assumes a support system for top-level administrators. Depending on their particular situations, administrators need both emotional and practical assistance to be able to fulfil the demands of the work.

Women's ways of leading are considered secondary or subordinate to men's ways. Looking at the structures that are in place in educational administration, it is clear that because most women occupy a subordinate position or at best a supporting position, the leadership qualities that are becoming associated with women are devalued. At best, they are considered secondary ones. As Shakeshaft's numbers clearly show, except in the elementary principalship, there are still few women in the top spots. Yet, we know that there are many women in assistant principalships and central office positions. Indeed, the most recent survey conducted by *Superintendents Prepared* finds that women account for 57% of central office positions and 33% of assistant/associate/deputy/area superintendencies (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999, pp. 14-15).

To enter school administration, of primary importance are the rational, objective, neutral stances (at least in gender and race terms) that have characterized educational administration throughout this century. Educational administrators have been conditioned to view school failure as an outcome of poverty rather than to probe the underlying social structures that contribute to the condition in the first place. Even women and minority administrators who have been marginalized themselves tend, on the whole, to ignore the issues.

As Rizvi (1993) argues, "It is possible for women and minority administrators to suspend any reference to their own social histories. Administrators are assumed to be without class, gender and ethnicity" (p. 215). Within schools and districts, class issues are being recognized to an extent, but they are used to mask the underlying gender, race, and ethnicity factors influencing poverty. For instance, it is more acceptable today to blame socioeconomic status for poor student achievement than to recognize race or gender inequities.

If this is so, then very little space is provided within the discourse of educational administration to pay attention to the negative effects of these immutable characteristics. Because many argue for the desirability of a raceless, classless, gender-blind society, anyone who has experienced a life that differs from that ideal is encouraged to be quiet. Feminist poststructuralism and other feminist critical theories help us to understand that there are certain subject positions available to individuals within any discourse. An appropriately feminine one, for instance, should be silently or least passively supportive of the dominant interests. Much research that has focused on women in leadership has concluded that most women are reluctant to name sexism or racism as affecting their own lives and sometimes the lives of others (Bell & Chase, 1993; Brunner, 1997; Chase, 1995; Skrla, 1999).

Not only does this supportive position manifest itself in the attitudes that many women administrators adopt and public assertions many women administrators make but it also contributes to the success of other members in the organization who operate at the most powerful levels. For this reason, it is not surprising that women account for 57% of central office positions. Again, women have historically held things together, performed the kinds of tasks and undertaken the kinds of duties behind the scenes that enabled those out front to achieve their goals. As I have argued elsewhere, women's strengths and the attitudes that inform them might be highly valued

> but only in supporting positions such as assistant superintendencies and other central office roles. Furthermore, these skills can be so highly valued they hamper opportunities for career advancement if the subordinate's contribution to the organization is seen by the superintendent as vital to the district's continuing welfare. (Grogan, 1996, p. 140)

The fact that many women bring traditionally approved feminine qualities to leadership is often seen to reinforce a less than desirable stereotype—one that can also suggest race and class as well as gender. The ethic of care, for example, that is often ascribed to women (Gilligan, 1993; Noddings, 1984) is also associated with work carried out by those with little power. In Tronto's (1993) definition, caring includes those practices aimed at "maintaining,

continuing and repairing the world" (p. 104). She explains that these are practices associated with nursing, caring for the elderly, and cleaning and mopping up. She argues that in "modern industrial societies, these tasks of caring continue to be disproportionately carried out by the lowest ranks of society, by women, the working class, and in most of the West, by people of color" (p. 113).

Therefore, some would debate the desirability of coupling leadership with caring and relationship building. Or put another way, some would agree that caring and relationship building are excellent qualities of a secondary nature. As long as leaders continue to embrace the traditionally masculine notions of objectivity, institutional stability, and hierarchy, there is always room for compassion and understanding.

There is a manufactured crisis in leadership. A critical examination of the ways in which leadership positions are ordinarily filled in educational administration reveals the processes to be gendered. That is to say, they have been designed and modified to maintain the predominance of White, middle-class men in school administration. This is true of mentoring practices, sponsorship, and networking opportunities. It is also true of policy initiatives that are being developed to address the growing leadership "crisis" in educational administration (Young, 1999).

For instance, the practice of mentoring as described by researchers such as Cline and Necochea (1997); Daresh and Playko (1992); Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (in press); and Pence (1995) is steeped in the masculine tradition of reproduction of self, dominant values, and attitudes. As Shakeshaft (1993) points out, when hiring, administrators are drawn to candidates who are much like themselves. Although this does not mean exclusively recruiting other White males, it does mean that those who are not likely to support the dominant discourse are rarely chosen. This affinity for sameness extends to the various processes of mentoring, networking, and sponsorship within the field. Across the board, results of those studies reinforce the message that "the existing mentoring process is designed to perpetuate the status quo" (Cline & Necochea, 1997, p. 142).

One of the issues is that women and minority aspirants to leadership positions are not automatically included in networks that have grown out of male organizations. Blount (1998) explains that male teachers historically gathered together in groups, at first to provide opportunities for socializing, then later to advocate for improved working conditions and status (p. 23). Moreover, because women fought to be accepted into such high-profile organizations as the National Education Association, state or local associations of

administrators and college professors were even less likely to welcome them. For example, in her research on advocacy organizations for women, Schmuck (1995) relates that the group Kansas Women in Educational Leadership "was formed as a dinner club in the early 1970s because the women could not join the men for dinner at the state administrative meetings" (p. 207). Although women formed their own advocacy groups as early as 1910 (Schmuck, 1995), the power remained in the hands of the male groups, both in the unions and in the state and national administrator associations.

Nevertheless, the fact that there is an increase in the numbers leads us to believe that the women's organizations might have had some effect. In 1995, Schmuck listed 45 active ones, state and national, whose activities ranged from providing opportunities for women to meet to offering workshops on how to prepare academically and personally for leadership in the schools. Many of these groups also give practical advice to women, such as how to interview for administrative positions, how to present resumes, and how to get important exposure through work on state committees and task forces. But until the state associations and national associations are significantly more gender equal, women's advocacy groups will effectively continue to operate in the margins. Largely because gender is not part of the discussion for reasons of silence or acquiescence, as mentioned above, issues of access and entry into administration will not be couched in terms that recognize existing inequities.

Young (1999) makes a similar argument in her exposé of policy approaches to address a perceived leadership crisis. Across the country, we are being told that there is a shortage of principal candidates, particularly at the high school level (Houston, 1998). Many state and national administrator associations are investigating the circumstances and looking at policies that will help alleviate the situation. According to Young, there is a consensus of understanding emerging from these reports. Reasons for the decrease in candidates for secondary school principalships appear to range from higher expectations for the position, more onerous responsibilities, high-stress working conditions, lack of training, noncompetitive salaries and fringe benefits, and ignorance of the positive potential of administration (p. 2). If Shakeshaft's numbers are accurate, there are many women out there, certified for administration, who do not appear to be in the pipeline. Therefore, in probing the findings of the various task forces more carefully, we might conclude that there are few White men who want to be secondary principals at the moment.

The power at work here resides not in any individual member of a task force or committee. Instead, as Foucault (1980) argues,

> Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands. . . . Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. (p. 98)

The weight of the findings themselves, because they emanate from such legitimizing organizations as the state and national associations of administrators, have the effect of speaking "truth." That there might have been some gender issues raised along the way, but were not thought worthy enough to make it to the final assessment, is troubling to no one other than the few who brought gender to the table in the first place. Although there indeed might be fewer applicants for administrative positions across the country, and although the reasons given above may well be contributing factors, the absence of any reference to gender is problematic. Young (1999) shows that these findings can be seen as both premature and incomplete. She warns that

> unless policy makers, educational leaders and researchers in the field of educational administration acknowledge and address the leadership crisis as a gendered issue, the theories and solutions that grow out of empirical research and task force work will not only fail to adequately address the predicted shortage but will continue to perpetuate the gendered leadership crisis in educational administration. (p. 3)

CONCLUSION

To return to the central themes of equity and equality identified in the two articles that have prompted the discussion thus far, I consider Green's (1983) comprehensive analysis of the intersection of the three values: excellence, equity, and equality. In distinguishing between equity and equality, he argues that variables such as gender, race, class, or geography should not be regarded as educationally relevant variables that would justify inequalities. "If inequalities arise from these variables . . . our conscience informs us that they are probably also inequities. There is some injustice in permitting them to rule" (p. 325). Obviously, Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli and Shakeshaft believe that they do rule. Green's rationalist, objective view of the world suggests that any right-thinking individual who realized the existence of inequities would work to redress them. In his time, perhaps, there were not the same macrolevel delta forces at work that mitigate against individuals taking action.

In fact, under the umbrella of a new politics of race and gender, Rizvi (1993) maintains that "the educational system not only reproduces inequality,

it also generates it" (p. 205). He advocates the explosion of a number of popular myths about education. In particular, the beliefs that racism, sexism, and poverty are external to education need to be scrutinized. If we accept that through curriculum and pedagogy schools are reinforcing the dominant interests and serving to preserve existing social relations, we will understand why the kinds of reforms identified by Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli are, as they claim, not going to have any positive effect. Even with the best intentions, the push for higher levels of achievement will focus most on addressing the symptoms, not the causes, of school failure for a large number of poverty-stricken students.

Green (1983) argues otherwise. He sees a compatibility between the principles of excellence and equity. Rather than striving for equality, which could bring about equally bad education, Green advocates policies that aim at achieving excellence. He states, "If education provided for children of disadvantaged backgrounds were truly excellent, then—we assume—they would achieve" (p. 332). However, this view of education likens it to a parcel that can be delivered and received intact and whole just as the sender intended. What is missing from this image is the recognition that schools do not simply become excellent just by creating a particular curriculum and testing it, even if there were perfect alignment. The good will and moral righteousness expressed in arguments such as Green's echo the liberal belief that more tolerance and understanding of racial and cultural issues will have the necessary effect of eliminating racism and sexism. Although the pursuit of tolerance and understanding is certainly worthwhile, it is not enough.

A critical feminist approach reveals that the structures in place in schools institutionalize a kind of racism and sexism—a politics of difference that is "necessary for the maintenance of existing power relations" (Rizvi, 1993, p. 214). Whenever issues of resource allocation are raised, for instance, whether they place color against White, male against female, regular education student against special education student, or the poor student against the wealthy one, there is fear of a zero-sum game. The argument goes something like this: Me and my kind will lose out if you and your kind benefit. This attitude works well to keep things pretty much the way they are. With this kind of pervasive belief system in place, what can an individual administrator hope to do?

What of the question posed earlier in the article: If administration were to become a more equitable profession, how might this provide a different force shaping educational reform? It is hard to say. On one hand, the early literature suggests that first, women might bring some different strengths to

administration in the form of caring and relational approaches that could address the inequities on a micro level. Reyes, Wagstaff, and Fusarelli advocate for schools that are aligned with students' needs. If administrators were encouraged to get to know their students and communities well, a needs-based approach might become a reality. But this would only be possible if such attributes were elevated to the level of highly desirable. Educational leadership itself would have to become associated with attitudes and practices of care. Second, many women of color, in particular, also adopt an activist position. Murtadha and Larson (1999) call this a "socially critical, womanist stance . . . [that] makes survival strategies for a marginalized and oppressed community central to practice" (p. 30). This kind of leadership encourages a resistance to systems and processes that fail people of color.

On the other hand, as the power and politics feminisms show, simply increasing numbers in the effort to achieve gender equity in administration is not, by itself, guaranteed to make a difference. Of course, making a difference is a side issue, related but not central to the key issue of achieving an equitable distribution of administrative positions. I have linked them primarily in response to the central themes found in the two chapters that form the basis of this discussion. However, making the connection is not unfounded. It expresses a hope that is rooted in the belief that at Stage 6, according to Shakeshaft, research will have drawn on women's lived experiences as leaders in the new conceptions of leadership theory. We need new conceptions because the current theories of leadership have contributed to the inequities decried in this article. Therefore, it is reasonable to imagine that because women's lived experiences as leaders are different from men's, new theoretical understanding of a leadership that is premised on social justice might emerge.

The feminist poststructuralist framework that I have chosen suggests that, ultimately, we must seek leaders who are critically informed, women and men, White and of color. Their challenge is to avoid becoming co-opted by the current system in the process of learning how to lead. It will take collective action on the part of administrators who are similarly committed to achieve social justice in the schools. Such administrators, who can really accomplish very little by themselves, will need to work together under a commonly held understanding of reform to transform our notions of educational leadership. Above all, reconceived leadership seems imperative. If we can achieve a critical mass of leaders who are prepared to resist the existing structures, I believe, then, that we can address at the micro level the issues of race, class, and gender that have been obscured by the macrolevel delta forces over which we, as educators, have little control.

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