WOMEN EDUCATORS

Employees of Schools in Western Countries

Edited by

tricia A. Schmuck

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Preface

Many of the chapters in this book were prepared for a symposium at the Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women held in the Netherlands in April 1984. This was the first international symposium about women's employment in schools. Although international conferences had been held and books with a cross-cultural perspective had been written about women in the labor market and educational opportunities for girls and women, no international meeting or book had previously been devoted specifically to the subject of women as employees of schools. The little attention that has been paid to women's contributions to the educational realm is indeed surprising, considering the fact that teaching has been one of the few professional fields open to Western women in the last century.

This international perspective should enrich and broaden our understanding of the roles that women play in the educational system; it should also reveal themes and issues that transcend cultural and national boundaries. Despite differences in histories, school organizational structures, educational roles, hiring practices, seniority systems, preparatory programs, and educational opportunities, certain common patterns emerge. For example, woman's role as an educational professional is usually related to the existing educational opportunity for girls. In most countries, woman's entrance into the modern systems of education occurred during the industrialization period, when there was a need to create common schools for all students, including girls.

Another common pattern is that the social ideology concerning women's place in the educational realm has changed over the years.

In all countries, at some time, women have been excluded from the teaching profession; teaching was not considered their proper place. This ideology changed, however, to the view that teaching was a proper role for women. In most countries, married women were also at some time excluded from the profession because it was seen as detracting from their primary role as wife and mother (Sysiharju points to Finland as an exception). Yet now teaching is seen as an ideal profession; the working hours and summer vacations allow women simultaneously to contribute to the profession and to fulfill their family obligations. These historical changes are discussed in the chapters by Schmuck (United States), van Essen (the Netherlands), Brehmer (West Germany), and Moeller (Denmark).

Women's presence as educators is also related to labor market trends. In times of war or affluence, women are more highly represented in education. Conversely, their rate of participation in education decreases when there is a large supply of men available for the educational market. Women's representation in education is also related to the availability of other professional roles. Today, in the United States, with opportunities available in other fields, fewer women are seeking careers in education than previously.

Sex-segregated employment patterns are related to sex-segregated educational systems. In schools for girls only, women appear in a variety of roles: as teachers of various subjects, as teachers of elementary and secondary schools, and as educational managers. In coeducational systems, however, women appear in more restricted roles: they are primarily teachers of young children, their number decreases at the secondary level, and they are segregated into certain subject matter areas. This pattern is demonstrated most vividly in countries that have had sex-segregated schools well into the twentieth century; see the chapters by Sysiharju (Finland) and Sampson (Australia).

Sex-segregated patterns also emerge in professional associations such as teacher's unions. Whereas women have been active participants and even founders of teacher's unions, they tend not to be in management or governing positions. Bystydzienski (United States and England); Moeller (Denmark), Sampson (Australia), and Sysiharju (Finland) all address this issue.

In all educational systems, managers and administrators are drawn from the ranks of teachers. Yet despite the greater proportion of women in those ranks, women are disproportionately underrepresented in educational governance in all coeducational systems and are a minority of the principals and district officers. All the

chapters in Part I—Sysiharju (Finland), Sampson (Australia), Fenwick (New Zealand), and Schmuck (United States)—illustrate this phenomenon.

In all countries women's contributions to education have been ignored; educational historians have not recounted the efforts of women teachers, who have often founded schools or professional associations. Women have been virtually excluded as subjects of study in educational history. Gribskov's account of Adelaide Pollock and van Essen's revival of Alberdina Woldendorp, both written from original source material, illustrate the difficulty of finding "lost" women in educational history and of restoring them a place in history.

Indeed, the story of the woman educator may well be the story of all the social and psychological problems regarding gender in the middle-class Western world. This woman is educated, she is usually married, she usually has children, she performs an important social service, she is discriminated against, she works for pay, she is part of a bureaucracy where most of the leadership is male, and she is respected for her work and simultaneously injured by her stereotypes.

This volume is a saga of persistence and frustration. During 1980–81 I had the opportunity to live in Leuven, Belgium, where I tried to extend my studies of women in educational leadership to the European context. I was curious about the similarities and differences in women's roles as educators and began a search for cross-cultural studies on this subject. Although I found many such studies on educational access for girls and women, there was nothing about women as educational employees. I began searching for descriptive data about the proportion of women in the educational work force and what roles women occupied. This was no small feat. However, I had experienced similar problems in gathering such data for the United States and was not totally unprepared. In the United States, for instance, the national sources for educational statistics have not always reported employment by sex, and the categories of role descriptors do not remain constant over time. The data are elusive and often incomplete. My frustration was amplified when I tried to trace similar records for other Western countries. Neither the European Council of Ministers nor the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) could supply the information I requested. Yet I knew such data existed; I had seen Eileen Bryne's excellent summary about educational opportunities for the Council of European Ministers (1978) and her book, *Women in Education* (1979), in England. I could only suppose that the data could be uncovered if one knew whom to ask and where to look. Through a network of contacts, I finally found

individuals in different countries to uncover what data they could and to write about women's role as educators. Upon my return to the United States, I tried unsuccessfully for two years to raise funds to support an international meeting of all the contributors. Time and time again I was told that this effort did not meet funding priorities. So the symposium participants, on their own, agreed to take the opportunity provided by the Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women to meet in the Netherlands. The articles in this book were therefore prepared without funding support. Had funds been available, the analyses and comparisons could have been more extensive than they are.

I hope this volume will generate interest and support for studying women's place in education. Educational institutions play an important role in all Western countries, and we have too long ignored the influence of gender on the educational work force.

Patricia A. Schmuck

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Introduction

PATRICIA ANNE SCHMUCK

Although women professionals have predominated in numbers, if not authority, in all formal educational systems of the Western world, their contributions have received scant attention in the history, sociology, or philosophy of education. The study of teaching and educational administration has been carried out without consideration for the concept of gender. Women as active participants in the profession have been ignored.

This book pays attention to the roles taken and the tasks performed by women as teachers, administrators, and members of professional associations in eight different Western countries. It includes historical portraits, sociological investigations, enthographic studies, and data-based descriptions of schools as sex-segregated systems. And, in 1987, it is the first book to do so.

That is not to say there has been no work elucidating the relationship between gender and education. To the contrary, in the last decade and a half, several texts have illuminated such a relationship. Disturbed by the injustice of inequality in educational settings, many researchers and scholars have questioned the connections between the formal educational system and the blatant and subtle consequences of gender segregation, gender expectations, and gender outcomes. Some hallmark texts in the United States include Frazer and Sadker, *Sexism in School and Society* (1973); Pottker and Fischel, *Sex Bias in Schools* (1975); Guttentag and Bray, *Undoing Sex Stereotypes: Research and Resources for Educators* (1976); Stock, *Better Than Rubies* (1978); Stockard et al., *Sex Equity in Education* (1980); Sadker *and Sadker, Handbook for Sex Equity in Schools* (1981); Kelly and Elliot, *Women's Education in the Third World: Comparative Perspectives*

(1982); Fenema and Ayer, *Women and Education* (1984); and Klein, *Handbook for Achieving Sex Equity Through Education* (1985). And from England there are a variety of texts: Deem, *Women and Schooling* (1978); Byrne, *Women and Education* (1978); Spender, *Learning to Lose: Sexism in Education* (1980); Walker and Barton, *Gender, Class and Education* (1983); and Acker et al., *Women and Education: World Yearbook of Education 1984*. Brock-Utne in Norway (1982), Rijs in the Netherlands (1980), and Brehmer in West Germany (1980) attest to the attention devoted to gender and education in other countries. But although some of these books have included chapters on the role of women as school employees, by and large most studies have been on sex differentials in student learning, access, and outcomes.

There have also been a few books focusing on women in the profession of education; some examples are Gross and Trask, *The Sex Factor in School Management* (1976); Biklen and Brannigan, *Women and Educational Leadership* (1980); Schmuck, Charters, and Carlson, *Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials* (1981); and Ortiz, *Career Patterns in Education* (1982). But although these books have focused on women in education, they have concentrated on the roles and positions from which women are absent—primarily in school management and administration. They have investigated an arena where women are underrepresented but have not focused on the roles and tasks performed by the large majority of women in schools.

In reviewing this corpus of scholarship about gender and education developed over the last decade and a half, I am struck by the advances and changes in our thinking. Polemical treatises have given way to more dispassionate, data-based descriptions of differential treatment and access, and a focus on teaching and administrative strategies to implement sex equitable practices in schools has led to assessments of research and implementation strategies. Most of this effort has been prompted by the ideological commitment to gender equality in schools; scholars and activists have wanted to change the existing systems to offer equality of opportunity and outcomes. Legislation has been put in place, advocates for sex equity have drawn heavily upon the research generated over the decade. In the 1970s, at least in the United States, there was a clear alliance between researchers of gender and activists. This push for equality has led to some observable changes in some schools; we have learned that incremental change is possible. We have also learned how immutable, ingrained, and complex is the relationship between gender and schooling. Perhaps we have learned that it is not possible, nor likely, that in a mere decade we can redress the cultural norms, the psychological orientations, and the school policies and practices which result in sex differentials in opportunities or outcomes for students and employees.

The drive for equity in education has been accompanied by developing scholarship about gender as a legitimate variable for study, and this inquiry has led scholars in a variety of disciplines to raise critical questions about existing knowledge and to begin a process of redefinition. New questions and new notions of significance illuminating women's tradition, history, and culture have emerged. The work of Gerda Lerner in history (1979), Jean Baker Miller in psychology (1984), and Jesse Bernard in sociology (1973), to name only a few, is illustrative of this new scholarship. This work is often referred to as "feminist scholarship" or "the new scholarship on women." By paying attention to women as subjects and objects of study, scholars have found that the extant theories are no longer adequate. For instance, Gerda Lerner (1979) says, with regard to history, that "to document the experience of women would mean documenting all of history. They have always been of it, in it and making it (p. 160)." she means, of course, that to include the thoughts and experiences of women within the traditional domain would be to transform the discipline—history could no longer be confined to the public and productive sectors of society. If we include women, who have been part of the private and reproductive sector, we would change the content and methods of traditional history.

The study of the educational profession, albeit not a discipline in itself, also reveals this development thought. When educational researchers studied issues of sex equity in schools—for students or employees—we began to ask new questions, to form new strategies for investigating the process of schooling, and to develop new systems for critical analysis. Some of the more recent texts, such as Walker and Barton (1983), Acker (1984), Fenema and Ayer (1984), and Klein (1985), address the transformation of knowledge and provide new paths for study. In educational history we can see the process of such a redefinition; Hoffman (1982) and Kaufman (1984) have brought to life the travails and struggles of women teachers—some of those early and forgotten pioneers who were a part of the "feminization" of teaching but who have not been discussed in the textbooks on the history of formal education. The questions facing women students in public schools and institutions of higher education in the United States, for instance, have not received much attention since Woody's classic book, *Women's Education in the United States*, first published in 1929. Maxine Greene, a philosopher of education, shows how the consciousness about gender can lead to a redefinition of the study of education. She argues that women's education in the United States has been based primarily on distinctions of "irrelevant differences," and she calls for a redefinition of education, one which calls for demystifying and enlarging conversations about "the kind of subor-

dination imposed on women and the kind of subordination imposed on schoolchildren." This kind of inquiry can perhaps "transform both men's and women's common world (1984, p. 36)."

In this chapter I will review the development of thinking about women in education as it has appeared in the literature over the last decade and a half. I lay out a framework of five stages of thinking, which are illustrated by the different chapters in this book. The five stages are sequential but not chronological. At any time we see thinking or research that is representative of any one of the states of development. I have adopted liberally from the work of Tetreault (1985), McIntosh (1983), and Schuster and Van Dyne (1984), who have explicated stage-level thinking as applied to integrating knowledge about women in the college curriculum.

Stage 1. *Exclusionary or Androcentric Thinking.* Women and issues of gender are not addressed. Generalizations about men are thought to hold true for women; men are the objects and subjects of study. The thoughts, experiences, and behaviors of women are not considered. This stage represents the primary body of literature on the profession of education in the last half century until about 1970.

Stage 2. *Compensatory Thinking.* Issues of gender are addressed only so far as women's achievements equal men's achievements; in educational history there is the search for the "lost" woman, or current studies on the profession include an emphasis on the "exceptional" contemporary woman. The purpose is to find female counterparts to male success.

Stage 3. *Woman as Deficient: Psychological Thinking.* Issues of gender are addressed to point out the differences in the psychology of men and women that result in social inequality. Females are seen as exceptions to the male norm.

Stage 4. *Women as Oppressed: System Thinking.* Gender is seen as the variable by which existing organizational practices discriminate against women. The focus is on the institutional processes and practices which treat women differently from men.

Stage 5. *The New Scholarship.* The variable of gender, as it applies to both men and women, becomes a primary area of concentration. Research is modified to include women as well as men as the objects and subjects of study. This scholarship is corrective: it provides alternative points of view and transforms existing knowledge.

Stage 1: Exclusionary Thinking

Exclusionary thinking represents an androcentric bias. It assumes that the experiences, thoughts, and expressions of one group

of people—men—reflect the thoughts, experiences, and expressions of all human beings, including women. This stage might be called "genderless thinking" or what Peggy McIntosh refers to as "womanless" thinking (1983, p. 2). The model of the male is the model for humanity. Thus, educational history, philosophy, policy, research, and even school texts reveal the presence of men and the absence of women. Exclusion occurs in two ways: woman is omitted from discussions, and the concept of gender is ignored and the woman educator is cast within the general cultural stereotypes.

The work I cite in this section is corrective scholarship; the authors point out how the existing theory or research exhibits an androcentric bias. They show how females are excluded as subjects in educational research and how women's contributions to education are not preserved in writing. The chapters by van Essen and Brehmer give examples of this exclusionary thinking. Van Essen presents original historical research of women educators from the Netherlands in the nineteenth century who have not been included in texts or research, and Brehmer traces West Germany's educational history back to the fourteenth century. Both have focused on the work performed by women in education in their respective countries.

Several authors have pointed out androcentric thinking in education. Burstyn's analysis of American educational history texts (1983) and Martin's analysis of Western educational philosophy (1982) point out that females are excluded as subjects and objects of study from the standard texts and anthologies in education. In social science research, which is used heavily by educational researchers and practioners, men are the objects and subjects of study. Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984), who describe several leadership studies influencing our views and practices about educational leadership, make the following statement: "Studying male behavior is not in and of itself at issue here. What is at issue is the practice of studying male behavior and then assuming that the results are appropriate for understanding all behavior" (p. 188). They report findings on five important leadership theories in the educational literature and show that women are excluded as subjects of these theories; when they are included, they provide deviations from the extant theories. Thus women, when they are included as subjects, remain eclipsed from the conceptualization of leadership.

We need not draw only from examples of past research and practice to illustrate exclusionary thinking; recent examples of androcentric bias are also available. For instance, in the United States there is currently a strong reform movement in education; a plethora of books and commissioned reports calls for school improvement. Perhaps the most famous of these reports, *The Nation at Risk*, published in 1983

and authored by a prestigious panel of educators appointed by the President of the United States, has no reference to gender. Although different student attributes are mentioned—social class, race handicappedness, and ethnicity—there is no reference to boy students and girl students. This report, as well as others authored by prominent educators calling for reform, simply ignores the concept of gender as relevant for improving schools, despite the last decade of research and action on sex equity in education (Tetreault and Schmuck, 1985).

The second way that women and girls are excluded from educational thinking is by the use of cultural biases to explain away certain gender-related differences. Gender roles are seen as causative rather than problematic. Instead of asking, *why* is this a woman's role or *why* is this a man's role, sex differences are explained by socially constructed gender-based roles. Assumptions about woman's different motivations, life plans, and aspirations are not only heard on policy boards or in the public media, but also in scholarly books and journals about educators. In a corrective vein, Sandra Acker says, "When writers do consider women teachers, they frequently resort to commonsense and unsubstantiated assumptions about their deficiencies" (1983, p. 124). The image of spinster teacher or the married woman who has only a halfhearted interest in teaching has not only prevailed in the public eye; it has also prevailed in the literature about educators. Books which illustrate a cultural bias include Lortie, *School Teacher* (1975) Lieberman, *Education as a Profession* (1956), Wolcott, *The Man in the Principal's Office*(1975), and Etzioni, *The Semi-Professions and Their Organization*(1969); they all raise the subject of females and "explain" gender-related differences in the work force by cultural reasons. They do not explore the concept of gender as a manipulable variable but rather as a cultural given, thereby perpetuating the stereotype of the woman educator.

Examples of omission of culturally biased thinking are not confined to educational studies; examples permeate the social sciences. The classic Hawthorne Studies (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1966) obstensibly taught us about the human dynamics of the workplace: about power relationships between bosses and workers. A focus on gender, however, would have included the fact that bosses were men and workers were women. Acker and Van Houton (1974), in reviewing this work, suggest that if gender had been included as a variable, we would have a different view of power relationships in organizational settings. Power is not only imbued in the legitimate authority of the boss, but is also carried in the male role. In another example, Horner

(1975) questions the psychological studies on achievement motivation because all the samples were based on men; she includes women in the subject pool and thereby creates some new ideas about achievement. Gilligan (1982) addresses the stages of human moral development which were supposedly unvarying and universal. She points out that the data look different when females are included as subjects, and she goes on the revise the theory on human moral development. These are but a few examples of research that have been critized because females have been omitted from the subject pool or because the researchers have treated gender as culturally given rather than problematic.

Stage 2: Compensatory Thinking

In 1985 the United States Congress sanctioned National Women's History Week. The United States also celebrates Black History Month. These are special times for celebrating the successes and notable achievements of women and blacks in our country; we must compensate for these excluded from our thinking and from our history. Black studies courses, ethnic studies courses, and women's studies have become a part of many of our colleges and universities and were born out of such a compensatory motive. It was recognized that women and minorities had been excluded from the traditional curriculum, and so a special curriculum was added. Little did we know that these courses would lead to major criticisms about the existing methods and content of study. Howe has documented the exponential rise of women's studies courses and programs since the 1970s and traced their attempts to transform the traditional college curriculum (1979).

At this stage of thinking, there is a consciousness that women are missing. In education we have tried to find the lost women in our history or to focus on those contemporary women who have rivaled men. Many of the chapters in this book exhibit this kind of thinking; they chronicle women who have been ignored in their respective countries or present data on sex-segregated employment patterns. Gribskov writes about the forgotten Adelaide Pollock, who was a school principal in Seattle and the founder of a woman's professional educational association; Sysiharju, Schmuck, Fenwick, and Sampson present data on the extent of sex segregation in school employment in their respective countries and women's absence from managerial and administrative roles. These examples of compensatory scholar-

ship draw our attention to women who have been an exception among women educators and who have paralleled the accomplishments of men, or they point out the absence of women in stereotypically male-defined roles. "However, males are still perceived as the norm . . . . and theories continue to be developed which are derived from and standarized on . . . . males. There is no consciousness that the existence of women as a group is an anomaly which calls for a broader definition of knowledge"(Tetreault, 1985, p. 367).

In the United States most studies on educational employment have drawn our attention to those few women who have achieved positions in the male-dominated role of school administrator. The focus of research in the 1970s was on the careers and lives of those "exceptional" women who rose through the teaching ranks to become school administrators. This focus is well illustrated by a look at the concentration of doctoral dissertations completed in the 1970s about women in educational administration. Doctoral dissertations are often a good gauge of the contemporary issues in a field, and the 1970s marked a watershed for women doctoral students in this field (Stockard, 1980). One hundred fourteen doctoral dissertations were completed about women in educational administration during 1973–79, whereas previously no work had focused on women in these roles. (Schmuck, 1980; Shakeshaft, 1981). Most of these dissertations were written by women. Although women administrators remain the exception rather than the norm among women educators and administrators, there has been a search for those women who have occupied roles primarily held by men. Indeed, we know more about those few women who are principals and superintendents than we know about the majority of women who populate the ranks of teacher.

Perhaps it is natural that researchers who pay attention to women in education (primarily women researchers) focus their attention on the same roles that have already had a great deal of attention (held primarily by men). Perhaps, however, it reveals a more important fact, what Jesse Bernard (1973) refers to as the "machismo factor" in research. We are guided by our current paradigms—the underlying assumptions about the way we construct the world. The research which focuses on women in educational administration makes the same fundamental assumptions about the relative importance of different educational roles as other research. School administrators are seen as more important than teachers. Thus although compensatory models of thinking have enriched our lives, broadened our understanding about what women have contributed to educational systems, and clarified the particular problems which face