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Institutional Ethnography: How Tenured Academic Women Talk About Success

Martina H. Myers

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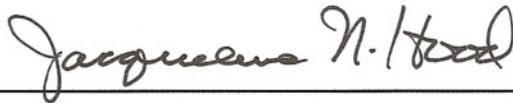
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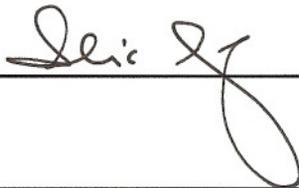
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**INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY:
HOW TENURED ACADEMIC WOMEN TALK ABOUT
SUCCESS**

BY

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B.B.A., Thomas More College, 1999
M.P.A., University of New Mexico, 2003

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Communication & Journalism**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December 2009

DEDICATION

For Mimi, my maternal grandmother: Hildegard Käthe Emma Müller. 1902 – 1981, who taught me how to love women, especially including myself.

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First, this dissertation would not exist without the contributions of the twenty women who graciously shared their time and insights with me by doing in-depth interviews. Their contribution to this effort went far beyond the few words of theirs that I have included here. There have also been many more women and active feminists than those listed or cited here who have contributed to this work and my life over many years. Thanks especially to the women of the UNM Women's Resource Center who helped to re-start my commitment to a feminist path on my academic and intercultural journey.

There have been many families in my life, but the 'original' and those who have continued to love me through all of my varied careers (even this academic one) includes: my mother Christiane H. Myers, who introduced me to 'the movement' and feminism; my father Carl A. Myers, who taught me to be a strong woman; and my brother Rolf who always made it alright to be who I am, even an intellectual and a geek. Next, I want to thank the many diverse anonymous communities who have supported me in living my life out loud and proud, just for today, one day at a time in Berlin and Las Cruces, especially *MLC* and *Las Mujeres*, and many many more friends around the world than I can begin to name here.

Special thanks and call out to my academic/life coach Caitlin Andersen, PhD and to the woman who helped me to find my academic voice and **write with it**: Suzanne Buker, MA. Thanks also to the cheerleaders from Academic Ladder – the PhD writing group! I would not have survived graduate school without the love and guidance of my

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There are not enough words in the world to express all the love and gratitude to my life partner Reverend Bonnie L. Smith, MCS, and her son Ben Smith whose many “moms” and mops made him the feminist that he is today. Bonnie wore more hats than I own in being there every single step of the long path that led to the completion of this work. It was a joint labor of love, “and love is what it is all about.”

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This institutional ethnography on tenured academic women focused on how twenty women talked about success. The purpose of this study was to use the discourse of tenured academic women to illustrate social interactions that constitute and transform the ruling relations. Institutional ethnography, a feminist methodology, inherently explores where communicative text provides insight into the larger structures of the ruling relations that govern, educate, train and inform. The information provided by tenured academic women, through in-depth one-on-one interviews and participant observation illuminated the fluid power dynamics of academic women in the gendered discursive organization of the academy. The women respondents described their attainment of tenure and rank, and how this influenced their social relations both within the university and outside. Using feminist standpoint theory and critical theory, a feminist discourse was used to highlight the collective insights that this group of academics provided into a more thorough examination of higher education.

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Introduction and Theoretical Foundations

It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting – Simone de Beauvoir (Lorde, 1984, p. 113)

Introduction

This dissertation is an institutional ethnography, which is a methodological inquiry of societal organization from the perspective of people's experiential perception of their everyday world of activity. Rather than studying a formalistic discourse or one that is based on studying "facts" or quantitative statistics to reveal certain empirical truths, institutional ethnography posits that the collective experience of those within the institutional system may reveal structures of the system that are often taken for granted or overlooked (D. E. Smith, 1990b). Thus institutional ethnography is intended as a methodology both for studying institutional systems as well as a praxis contributing to new and possibly more holistic ways of understanding the sociological system for purposes of transformation. The purpose of this study was to use the discourse of tenured academic women to illuminate social relations and interactions that constitute and transform societal structures. In conducting this study, much like the founder of institutional ethnography Dorothy E. Smith (D. E. Smith, 1974/2004, 1987, 1990a, 2005), I have employed feminist theory and a feminist Discourse (with a big D). The study of discourse (little d) is "the study of talk and text in social practices", while Discourses (big D) are "general and enduring systems of thought" (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p. 7). The applicability of feminist Discourse will be discussed throughout and in Chapter 2 grounded in the historical context and developments of the women's movement.

Institutional ethnography was derived from the activist and organizational practices of the late twentieth century *second-wave* feminist movement of North America and Western Europe. Second-wave feminism, the second-wave of the contemporary women's movement, is a common framing of the socio-political movement of the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s which called for women's emancipation from conditions widely interpreted as oppressive or discriminatory. More importantly, this socio-political movement had a widespread academic and cultural impact that continues to the present day. Smith (1987; 1990a; 1990b; 1999; 2005; 2006), who began her own sociological work during second-wave feminism, is regarded as the founder and key practitioner of institutional ethnography. She has also been foundational in establishing some of the theoretical concepts that are being used currently in modern feminist organizational communication theory (Allen, 2000; Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Bullis & Stout, 2000; Buzzanell, 1994). The focus of the research in this dissertation is to investigate *how* tenured academic women talk about success. The purpose of this study was to use this discourse to illuminate social relations that constitute and transform social systems, especially those of higher education. The research was conducted as an ethnography using participant observation and interviews with twenty tenured academic women located largely at two southwestern universities. Three of the women interviewed were associated with a large professional academic organization and one was associated with a third university in the Southwest. All of the interviews were conducted with tenured academic women who were working at large public research institutions.

In the organizational discourse of academic women within the system of higher education, success is usually measured by the advancement system of tenure and

promotion (West & Curtis, 2006; Wilson, 2004a). Drawing on professional academic reports and many of the thematic books written by academic women (Caplan, 1993; L. H. Collins, Chrisler, & Quina, 1998; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Martin, 2000; West & Curtis, 2006; Wilson, 2004a), I briefly introduce this system of quantitative measurements of academic women's performance within the system in order to demonstrate how normative, limiting, and negative this discourse becomes for framing success. By framing success simply in terms of numbers, it often disallows thinking of success outside of these narrow constraints.

However, numbers can provide a fundamental baseline where agreement can be found that the institutional system of higher education appears to be gender-biased towards men. The reports consistently, over the last forty years, demonstrate that men are more likely to have better and higher paying jobs within the institutions of higher education. Along with these reports, examining literature women academics have written provides additional insights into how women may frame success differently within existing organizational systems. I begin with an introduction to the common ground shared by thousands of North American academics that follow professional sociological reporting on the status of women (i.e., the academic reports that demonstrate the gender bias within the institutions of higher education).

The Discourse of Higher Education: Professional Standards

Quantitative reports on graduates, professors, tenure and ranking. From Jesse Barnard's revolutionary sociological work titled *Academic Women* (Barnard, 1964), through the 2006 American Association of University Professors' (West & Curtis, 2006) ranking report of American Universities and Harvard's historical naming of its first

woman President in February of 2007 (*Harvard names Drew G. Faust as its 28th president, 2007*), the statistics associated with the presence of women at all levels of the institution are well documented. Most of this quantitatively reported research showed a growing number of academic women entering the field of academia; and, many of the following “facts” about these women are used to examine and frame the leadership, power and success of all academic women:

- At the turn of the present century, 56 percent of students enrolled in both undergraduate and graduate institutions were women and, as a group, women have surpassed men in degree attainment at the associate, bachelor, and master 's levels (Education Development Center, 2004).
- Beginning in 2002, likewise, more women than men overall earned doctoral degrees in accredited institutions in the United States (Smallwood, 2003).

The following condenses the information from the most recent report by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (West & Curtis, 2006) on the status of women in the professorate evaluating issues of equity for women. The quantitative reports remain discouraging. In 2003 although women comprised 43 percent of all faculty, they comprised

- 39 percent of full-time faculty
- 48 percent of part-time faculty
- 24 percent of full professors

The AAUP report (West & Curtis, 2006) was designed to assess issues of “gender equity” within the institution of higher education as a whole, but also to measure the

individual institution's ranking within the factors established for gender equity. The association designated the following indicators as measurements for gender equity:

1. **Employment Status:** Full or part-time entry-level positions. "At the national level, women constituted 39 percent and men 61 percent of full-time faculty in 2005-06" (West & Curtis, 2006, p, 6).
2. **Tenure Status:** "Women occupy the majority of non-tenure track positions, they are still underrepresented among the ranks of tenured faculty" (West & Curtis, 2006, p. 8).
3. **Full Professor Rank:** "When we turn to the most prestigious and highest paid faculty jobs in higher education we find the lowest percentages of women. Among full professors at all institutions nationwide in 2005-06, women held 24 percent of the positions and men held 76 percent" (West & Curtis, 2006, p. 10).
4. **Average Salary:** "In 2005-06, across all ranks and all institutions, the average salary for women faculty was 81 percent of the amount earned by men" (West & Curtis, 2006, p. 11).

This final factor, the average salary, is often the figure that causes the most consternation on all levels of examination. These figures may be calculated and presented in many different ways, but the result is that women are more likely to be hired at institutions that pay less, and they are less likely to have senior rank. Moreover, in the final analysis, the most startling finding is that it has barely changed in the 30 years AAUP has been tracking the data (West & Curtis, 2006).

In addition, the AAUP report (West & Curtis, 2006) touches upon, as does other reported examinations of quantitative indicators, the fact that the prestige of the institutions and/or fields where women are most commonly found is largely at the bottom

of any pyramid of hierarchies. This is why the announcement of Harvard's new female president in 2007 was such a surprise. Not only was she selected for the top administrative post at an Ivy league school, her background was in the arts and humanities as a historian. This is a field where women are often "over-represented" and under-paid, unlike the scientific, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) fields that often pay more but usually have lower rates of female participation at all levels and ranks. It is important to note here that these are representations of the institution of higher education as a whole and the hierarchies they constitute, and therefore they also give a greater understanding of the governing organizational structures associated with the professorate. In order to further understand the social relations and systems of higher education for women, one of the central structures in all reporting is the tenure and promotion ranking, or the advancement system used within the research universities.

In any field and at many different universities and colleges, tenured professors are becoming an increasingly rare commodity as adjunct or contingent faculty become the "majority" (Berry, 2004; Hough, 2003). Hiring increasing numbers of adjunct faculty is increasingly popular in order to facilitate the institutions of higher education adjusting to increasingly business-oriented models of management and the difficult economic times forcing cost-cutting measures (Monks, 2007). This has a strong impact on women, further reinforced by the fact that increasing numbers of women are entering graduate schools and completing PhDs and seeking employment within the academy. The positions that they may attain after graduation are limited by the hiring possibilities and policies of the institutions. Thus, many women are in the ranks of adjunct, contingent, or part-time faculty.

Tenure and promotion. Central to this investigation of higher education and how women perceive their success is the discussion of tenure and promotion. The very discourse of success in academia in a majority of universities is based on securing a tenure-track position and having attained tenure. Attaining tenure and being promoted continues to be seen from both the outside and inside as the chief marker of success. This is why tenure and promotion may be regarded as one of the central defining structures for institutions of higher education and thus part of what constitutes the systemic governing relations of the academy.

Tenure is the contractual right to lifetime appointment and an assurance that faculty members cannot be terminated for any reason without just cause. Both tenure and promotion have been challenged and contested in various cases at different institutions over the last one hundred years, but continue to be central tenets of employment in the professorate. Promotion in rank is the hierarchal process adopted within the university's system of advancement and is usually described with a tenure-track entry position of an assistant professor, proceeding to associate professor after a given amount of time and with evidence of a certain amount of work (this promotion rank is often associated with attaining tenure but is not always a given). Finally, the position of full professor may be awarded after another period of time and with a review of all relevant work. Despite extensive faculty policy handbook sections on the subject and many tenure and promotion (T&P) committees at various levels and across departments, colleges, and institutions, there is no centralized or standardized description of either tenure or promotion that completely explicates the process in all areas at all places.

Although policy and standards for tenure and promotion may differ from university to university or even within a single university's colleges or departments, typically, tenure and promotion are based on three aspects of work associated with the career of a professor: research, teaching, and service. The definition of these three activities, however, is a contentious subject that involves much discussion at all levels of policy and administration. This discussion of T&P becomes even more problematic as some forces within higher education try to make the process less subjective and more accessible to quantitative measurement, causing concern about balance and how to make the process more accessible, transparent and consistent across different fields of study. In any case, standardization of the tenure and promotion requirements is a widespread concern and although desirable, is rarely achievable.

Although tenure and promotion are usually linked together in any discussion of the general perception of advancement and success, these two subjects may actually be separate issues. One can attain tenure without making rank, or one may attain rank without being awarded tenure, as there may be slight policy variations between different universities. The decoupling of tenure and promotion becomes important as professors move between institutions for different jobs. For example, a tenured professor may move to a university that does not automatically grant tenure with hire, but instead does grant rank promotion as a full professor. As such, a professor may go through the tenure process more than once, either in different departments or in different institutions. This discussion of tenure and promotion serves as groundwork for clarifying discussions that follow in how tenured academic women talk about success. In order to achieve a greater theoretical foundation for the research as a whole, it is important to further establish

certain theoretical assumptions and definitions that have helped to guide and orient the research.

How quantitative markers organize the discourse of success. In this study, the focus is on tenured academic women and how the professional organizational structures and social relations constitute perceptions of success. This is addressed largely from the inside of the profession, as perceived by the professor herself within the institutions of higher education. Most of the quantitative studies cited above represent an “outside” macro-level perception of success as defined by the very categories of tenure and promotion themselves. These “facts” are important to the study, but should not be regarded as delimiters to the study or as the basis for the central definition of success. All of these studies were freely available to the participants and widely accepted as the basis for understanding structural discrimination against women. These studies represented a quantitative discourse that was widely accepted, but did not provide the sole foundation for the investigation.

Definitions: Institutional Ethnography, Discursive Organizations, and Associated Terms

Institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography is a sociological mapping of social interactions of rules or governance, a qualitative investigation into social relations that constitute and determine parts of society’s workings. The entire framework of institutional ethnography is carefully built on the ideas of the social construction of reality (Allen, 2005; Berger & Luckman, 1966). An institutional ethnography begins with the notion that there are no assumptions of facts or reality outside of the meanings constructed through people’s common understandings in language and social relations.

As such, the research of an institutional ethnography can be subjected to either Discourse or discourse analysis.

Communication scholars Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) differentiated between different types of discourse analysis which researchers used to explore organizations as discursive constructions. They also made a significant distinction between the terms discourse and Discourse. In comparing these categories and definitions with the terms Smith and her students used in their evolving discussions of institutional ethnography (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; DeVault & McCoy, 2006; Diamond, 2006; Griffith, 2006; D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1999, 2005, 2006; G. W. Smith, Mykhalovskiy, & Weatherbee, 2006; Turner, 2006), it is clear that many of the methods used to do institutional ethnography can be illuminated with an understanding of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis as a theory and method (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002) begins with an understanding of what discourse is, what discourse is not, and how it fits into the broader field of communication.

Institutional ethnography focuses on individual experience while developing critical insights that are applied to macro-level organizational Discourse. “Scholars increasingly assert that organizations are discursive constructions because discourse is the very foundation upon which organizational life is built” (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p. 5). In order to understand discursive constructions, there must be some working understanding of discourse; and, this is a very complex subject and often contested in academic debate. Nearly all scholars who do work with discourse analysis, though, build on Foucault’s construct - discourse (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002; D. E. Smith, 2005), but these scholars also differentiate their own work from Foucault’s to varying degrees.

Foucault adheres to the general social constructionist premise that knowledge is not just a reflection of reality. Truth is a discursive construction and different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false. Foucault's aim is to investigate the structure of different regimes of knowledge – that is, the rules for what can and cannot be said and the rules for what is considered to be true and false. (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 13)

Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) distinguish discourse from communication; for, discourse and communication are not one and the same, nor is discourse subsumed in communication. While discourse is understood as “a medium *for* social interaction,” communication is a “much broader concept” that also encompasses “network analysis, information processing, and message flow” (p. 7). The study of discourse is “the study of talk and text in social practices,” while Discourses (large *D*) are “general and enduring systems of thought” (p. 7). Within this institutional ethnography and investigation of how women *talk* about success, I also address the discursive formation of the institutional systems that constitute and transform how women talk about success. In institutional ethnography these systems that inform our interactions are called the ruling relations (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1999, 2005, 2006).

Ruling relations. Ruling relations, as delineated by Smith (D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1999, 2005, 2006), are those institutional and organizational structures that govern, regulate, reinforce, teach, and train individuals, as well as structures that constitute how society as a whole is organized. The purpose of any institutional ethnography is to illuminate social relations that constitute and transform us. More importantly, this methodology is used to analyze and discover “taken-for-granted,

common sense” discursive constructions (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 21) that are used to analyze or “map, the ruling relations” (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1990b, 1999; Turner, 2006). In daily activities, organizational social actors are socially organized with and through social interactions that constitute everything those social actors are, know, and do. Rarely do participants think about some of these types of interactions, or make the social relations explicit because everyone knows what to do without thinking about it or bringing it into consciousness. Institutional ethnography makes the implicit explicit, and names and brings forward exactly what is transpiring and happening in the social relations that constitute the social world. In this study, interviewing tenured women academics and their discourse of success, these women were asked to explain what makes them a successful tenured professor or administrator.

Furthermore, this study sought to take a group of women and illuminate the ruling relations through their experiences, perceptions, and voices. This ethnography should also provide a perspective on how these women’s account of their lives as they are lived on a day-to-day basis constituted, and possibly transformed, the ruling relations. In developing an understanding of how this happens largely in one area of the United States, by interweaving the voices of women who are working at different universities and then looking at the overall picture, it is my intention to provide another framework for success and understanding of the institution of higher education and the roles tenured academic women play within those institutions. Rather than counting the number of persons that fill different slots within pre-ordained categories and systems of advancement, these women have been asked to describe the ruling relations that govern their lives and what is actually important to them in determining success and achievement. Their descriptions

provide a picture that gives a different perspective from the one that may be gathered looking at the institutional reports of women's advancement within the systems of higher education. To understand and compare the Discourse of higher education with the individual experiences described in the ethnography, it is crucial to understand the role of experience, perceptions, and mapping in an institutional ethnography.

Conscious mapping of the texts. Texts can be understood as “verbal routines inscribed in organizations like performance appraisals or job interviews” (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p. 8). A great deal of what social actors do is habitual and done without conscious awareness. For example, a person knows how to get up from the desk and walk away without having to think about it. In fact, if one were to consciously think about each and every muscle employed, and how to set it in motion and then consciously activate each muscle in order to walk, the person would probably need the greater part of a day just to stand up. Institutional ethnography seeks to *map these texts*; often, subroutines that organize our activities, and thus create a higher level of awareness regarding what are typically ongoing, sometimes habitual, non-conscious social activities and relations. Furthermore, researchers using this approach seek to discover the *texts* that instigate and advance social interactions (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1990b). Texts are those common bits of knowledge that inform and indirectly motivate individuals in regard to what to do, how to behave and how to interact. In other words, texts are those things we do without thinking consciously about the formation or activation of these texts (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1990b, 1999, 2005).

Texts constitute ruling relations. The ruling relations that govern and inform everyday life “are text-mediated and text-based systems of ‘communication,’

‘knowledge,’ ‘information,’ ‘regulation,’ ‘control’ and the like” (D. E. Smith, 1999, p. 99). Socially-based forms and templates (i.e., texts) that help people within social relations know what to do and how to interact with others are everywhere in our social worlds. Individuals use and activate these forms or templates in order to negotiate or map their way through various social processes. Texts are often presented as the navigational call-outs, markers and indicators, that point – “you are here” (D. E. Smith, 2005, p. 226), much as if one were navigating social relations like a road map or orientation to a site location (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). Texts, or forms, often indicate the relationship between individuals in an interaction.

Another example of a mapping of a text through social relations that is much closer to home is the very powerful text that at this moment is being informed through both the reader (you) *and* the writer and researcher (me) in this dissertation. Within the actual written text of the dissertation, the reader and the researcher both have a common form and expectation of what chapters need to be present, a larger text that includes the types of rhetorical information that the chapters should contain, what purpose citations serve, and an expectation of what academic needs are to be fulfilled. These texts and mediated social relations, which also draw on previous experiences such as other readings of dissertations, journal articles, and academic writing, are examples of texts constituting ruling relations because these ruling relations educate and govern processes within higher education. Rarely, though, do academics bring these underlying texts to the forefront of consciousness unless it is necessary for a deeper conscious understanding and mapping of the social relations. At least one whole additional dissertation could be

written on how to write a dissertation if one were to consciously map all of the texts that inform both the reader and writer.

Similarly, in the process of an institutional ethnography the researcher looks for texts or forms that the participants use in their every day communication and that work as guidelines to map or negotiate their positions within the social relations. The key issue is how these texts inform people in the sequences of actions that need to be taken in order to accomplish certain situational analyses or negotiations. Often in situations where the social relations are a regular part of working life – especially every day lived experiences – these texts may be so taken-for-granted that they hardly register on the conscious level. Through the iterative research processes of institutional ethnography both the researcher and research participants together discover the texts that inform the work and, therefore, provide greater understanding of the ruling relations. While texts are important units of analysis, only humans doing something with or through the texts can activate the texts as motivators of communication and other behavior (D. E. Smith, 1990b, 2005). Therefore, in doing institutional ethnographic research it is important to return to the experience of the text through the perception of the humans involved in activating those texts. This also highlights the importance of the conscious awareness of the texts that inform the ruling relations, as well as the awareness of the ruling relations themselves. The experience and consciousness of the participants is central to institutional ethnography.

Women's standpoint. Institutional ethnography is a discourse analysis based on the idea that discourse is a “situated knowledge” (Haraway, 1991/2004) that arises from the experience of the person who perceives the social relations. Institutional ethnography originally developed out of Smith’s observations of women’s behavior, social relations,

and organizational activities in the North American women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as Smith's own lived experience as an academic sociologist (D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1999, 2005, 2006). One of Smith's earliest papers, foundational to both institutional ethnography and second-wave feminism (D. E. Smith, 1974/2004), was grounded in the idea that there were very different social constructions in the practice of sociology based on the different life experiences of either the participants or practitioners. She separated these constructions into the unique experiences of the worldviews of each gender, male and female. Thus, she framed women's standpoint as a separate basis for perception and experience. The current study is based on the idea that gathering women's success stories from their own viewpoint, or standpoint, provides a distinctive understanding of the ruling relations of the institution of higher education, and a better understanding than what served previously to guide the understanding of women in higher education (e.g., numbers of women in certain positions/salary ranges).

In this early paper of Smith's (1974/2004), she laid out an argument for why women's experiences might be significantly different from men's. She developed the term *bifurcated consciousness* to distinguish the unique experiences of women in their everyday lives, as opposed to the sociological discourse based on a world of abstractions that has been used to describe the every day realities as typically reflected in the field of sociology. Women lived in both the private/home and the public/work spheres and thus lived and experienced consciousnesses relevant to each. Furthermore, Smith (D. E. Smith, 1990a) argued that in the "governing conceptual mode" (p. 18) there were oppressive conditions that tended to exclude or suppress women's experiential knowledge as a less-than or less-informed knowledge. Hence the concept of the

bifurcated consciousness further underlined women's unique standpoint. Smith's concept of the bifurcated consciousness became part of the academic foundation of the contemporary second-wave women's movement as well as a significant construct for feminist standpoint theory.

Smith's (1974/2004) article critiquing the discipline of sociology and its academic pursuit as her field of inquiry laid out the idea that knowledge within academia could have a different character for different people, especially dependent on their gender. She demonstrated how 'the Sociologist,' whom she discussed as a 'he,' is required to investigate a field of inquiry that temporarily and spatially removes 'him' from his actual location and the life which supports his academic and mental activities. The explicit and implicit requirement of sociologists, and indeed nearly all academics when studying a body of knowledge, is that they remove themselves from their work: "It establishes two modes of knowing and experiencing and doing, one located in the body and in the space which it occupies and moves into, the other which passes beyond it" (D. E. Smith, 1974/2004, p. 25). Bifurcated knowledge or consciousness is central to understanding gendered organizations and how public and private spheres may be differentiated.

Gender and the Social Construction of Women and Work / Women and Family

One of the general taken-for-granted discourses that became evident in the discussion of the bifurcated consciousness, especially through the focus of various feminists and organizational scholars (Buzzanell, 2000a; D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a; Stambaugh, 1991), was the arbitrary barriers between women and work, and women and family. In discussing life world activities, one rarely discusses men and work in contrast with, or as opposed to, men and their families. Yet, *gendered* assumptions are typically

made in every aspect of these social constructions of individuals and their realm of activities (Tretheway, 2000). Within this discourse it is important to define gender and how it is used, especially within the academic setting of organizational studies.

Gendered organizations and institutions. One of the most contentious debates regarding social constructs is of gender itself (Acker, 1992; Messer-Davidow, 2002; Rubin, 1975/1997; Wittig, 1981/1997). In the mid 1970s feminists started to use the broader construct *gender* rather than reducing all arguments to the use of the biological determinants man/woman or characterizing traits as masculine/feminine in order to move away from essentializing or fixing these associations as constants. This move allowed academics in a variety of fields of study to work with the relationality of gender (Gilligan, 1987; Hartsock, 1983/2004; Rubin, 1975), a more fluid, less pre-determined construction that informs a broader investigation (Butler, 1993, 1999). This was especially important in terms of gender-based roles and issues of power and dominance, especially as they were being explored within the feminist movement (both cultural and academic) of that time period. Academic women in a diverse variety of fields began to incorporate issues of gender within their fields (Messer-Davidow, 2002); simultaneously, a wide variety of academic initiatives called for the study of women, or of gender, as a field onto itself (Messer-Davidow, 2002). This spate of activity, especially within academia, has literally *en-gendered* thousands of studies and reports of gender within a wide variety of fields, as well as in academia as a whole. This time frame of activity is also within the life span of the women academics interviewed in this study. All participants have been touched by the study of women, or how gender has been framed or incorporated in the respective fields of study, whether the participants in this study

identified as feminist or not. The importance of this common framework underlies the assumptions of a collective understanding among tenured women academics of gender-based discrimination as generally evidenced in the professional academic discourse.

Work and family. The study of the family as a social construct in the analysis of organizational modes of society was also instrumental in contemporary feminism for analyzing the discrimination of women in society. Although in some form academic studies have now mainstreamed the idea of a work/family or home/life tension (Powell & Graves, 2003), this idea was radical and revolutionary at its inception. Recognizing this tension led to questioning stereotyped roles of providers and nurturers, as well as explorations of power and dominance that were pervasive throughout Western societies. The idea of the bifurcated consciousness and the work/family split was also instrumental in the idea of looking at gendered roles in a much wider variety of organizational constructs and institutions, especially within the field of education.

Questions were raised in many arenas about what abilities and roles women had in society, and how education and society reflected ruling relations rather than the needs of the individual person regardless of their gender or biological sex determination. This questioning and the resultant studies led to demands for the entry of women into all levels of education, especially in higher education, and has been reflected in the increasing numbers of women in these areas over the last forty years. Women's collective success in entering many levels of academia has been something that is often, but not always, taken-for-granted in the everyday existence within academia. Women's entry into education has also been closely coupled with their civic engagement. Increasingly, as women became

part of the public sphere they also became increasingly involved in emancipatory movements.

Theorizing Resistance: Women's Experience, Voice and Talk

The purpose of this study is to analyze how tenured academic women talk about success, especially in light of the ever-increasing numbers of women entering higher education as a career arena. As a qualitative study, it frames women's experience as the central input from which to gather more conclusive information as to the conditions of a larger system constituted through its ruling relations. The ruling relations are a discursive framing of organizational systems as constitutive of human activities, but social relations and new texts and interactions may also transform the ruling relations. While feminist Discourse largely informs my study, it is important to understand some concepts that *critical theory*, *queer theory*, and *feminism* all have in common when discussing emancipation, *power*, *control* and *resistance*. To begin with, I will attempt to briefly define and introduce the theories and related concepts; then, I will demonstrate their importance in understanding the investigation of how tenured women talk about success.

Theoretical investigations – critical theory, queer theory and feminism(s). In describing the researcher's theoretical orientation to the investigation, it is important to distinguish and highlight ideas from three different theoretical traditions which overlap, often inform each other, but still maintain differences among their insights into sociological understanding: critical theory, queer theory and feminism. "In both the humanities and social sciences, the term critical theory more generally over the past decades has signified the use of critical and theoretical approaches to the subject matter of specific disciplines and more broadly to society" (Kellner, 2008, p. xiv). In this sense,

critical theories rather than critical theory is more descriptive, just as many feminists prefer the term feminism(s) to inform their own work (Ashcraft, 2005). Critical theories and feminisms, specifically feminist standpoint theory, are commonly informed by Marx or marxist interpretations, especially in terms of political economies, historical materialism, and class (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 2004). Similarly, Smith's approach to institutional ethnography and much of her early work was an attempt to reconcile feminism and Marxism (D. E. Smith, 1977). What remains is a focus on women as a class and the historical materialism of women's incorporated experiences (Tretheway, 2000). Critical theories and feminisms are also political by their very nature because they focus on dominant and subordinate groupings in society and the effects of oppressive conditions. Therefore, these theoretical frameworks have usually included a moral call to ethics (Boje, 2008; Kirsch, 1999), as well as some kind of examination of power, control and resistance (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; May & Mumby, 2005).

Through the work of Foucault and a group of theorists that define themselves using the term *queer theory*, scholars have arrived at a more differentiated approach to power, control, and resistance:

Resistance is inseparable from power rather than being opposed to it. And since resistance is not, and cannot be, external to systems of power/knowledge, then an oppositional politics that attempts to replace supposedly false ideologies with non-normative truths is inherently contradictory (Sullivan, 2003, p. 42)

In this vein the current institutional ethnography ethically examines issues of power in how women talk about success but without doing so within a normative framework of

how this exercise of power may be seen by others outside of the women's own standpoints.

Power as authority. Feminisms and critical theories are often conflated (Ashcraft, 2005; Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Buzzanell, 1994, 2000b; Mumby, 1993a, 1993b) because each group of theories tends to have a focus on power, dominant and subordinate groupings, and emancipatory movements. For this research, I use the term *power* in its Weberian association with authority (the German word that the “father of sociology” used for power is *Herrschaft* – literally lordship, *translation mine*) this represents authority as power over. While many organizational scholars associate *authority* with legitimate power, taking action, or the power of enforcement or governance, (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Deetz, 2005; Mumby, 1988), I associate power with authority in its original etymological sense of authority with authorship or the power to give or define rules and law (Harper, 2001). This was especially appropriate for looking at authority within the ruling relations and the authority/authorship of tenured academic women within their own careers and lives. Like many feminists, critical, and queer scholars (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Deetz, 2005; Sullivan, 2003), I disassociate power from the simplistic binary associations of control and resistance, and those moral and judgmental values which are often placed on these terms. For example, control is often considered managerial, while resistance is thought to privilege the subordinate class/group responding to managerial control (Mumby, 2005). In analyzing success all of the tenured academic women who were part of this study had a great deal of authority in their own lives, hence power, and demonstrated agency in choosing to work within a hierarchical system that placed a great deal of emphasis on authorship and pedagogical authority.

Rather than focusing on either the privilege these women share or their potential victimization through discriminatory economic systems, I asked them to share their accomplishment or success from their own perspective.

In analyzing the discourse of tenured academic women's talk in this dissertation, I examined how success might be revealed through an analysis of these women's power within the ruling relations as described in the authoritative accounts of their own lives. I looked as well at how control and resistance was expressed in how women talked about their everyday lived experiences within academia, treating higher education as a special subset of the overall ruling relations. Control and resistance were not framed as binary opposites, but much as Mumby (2005) described a dialectical process where control and resistance were a "mutually constitutive, routine social production of daily life" (p. 2). In other words, while tenured academic women were part of the greater system, constitutive of the ruling relations, their activities might have represented either greater control in their own lives and/or resistance to the ruling relations of academia. Such an investigation of the fluid dynamics of power, especially as constituted by gendered relations, is an excellent subject for an institutional ethnography. The tenured women's own standpoint frames the examination of what is control and what is resistance, and how do they perceive the ruling relations that constitute and govern their lives.

Thesis Statement

Drawing on the methodology of inquiry that sociologist and feminist Dorothy E. Smith developed, this dissertation employed an institutional ethnography. Against the backdrop of quantitative findings and reports that establish a common basis and understanding of gender discrimination, in higher education, this study examined how

tenured women academics talked about their own success and how they perceived this success in light of the many lived experiences of their lives. Such an internally focused perspective based on lived experience is central to the institutional ethnographic approach. Furthermore, this investigation into women's social constructions of success demonstrated how these women reflected on, resisted and, in some cases, transformed the ruling relations within which they lived and worked.

While success has traditionally been framed through the traditional lens of the university advancement systems of tenure and promotion, and the numbers of women attaining rank, I focused on women's *own* descriptions of their everyday experiences and how they *themselves* talked about success and achievement. While the traditional sociological approach helps to provide a common basis for recognizing gender-based patterns of discrimination such as pay-inequity and proportional failure to reach higher levels of attainment, the tenured academic women interviewed provided additional insights into their everyday taken-for-granted experiences which demonstrated that their success was a much broader discourse than that reflected in numerical reports. The assumptions going into the interviews were that the tenured academic women were well informed and aware of the traditional studies, and the rather bleak outlook these numbers had provided in regard to equity, compensation, advancement, and success. My dissertation research then was intended to serve as a transformative communicative process as well as an exploration of agency and power within the ruling relations of academe. The research thus contributes insights into an organizational understanding of gendered institutions of higher education and how these constitute the ruling relations.

Literature Review

Feminist standpoint theory argues that all women do not share the same life experiences, cultural practices, and social relations with the result that no one feminism or group of women can speak for the whole (Buzzanell, 1995, p. 344).

The literature review that grounds the research of this institutional ethnography includes a broad range, as well as various types, of literature that reflect women's varied experiences with education, higher education, and civic success and engagement in the United States. While this reflects a patchwork quilt of women's varied experiences, it is the work of the institutional ethnographer to take a multiplicity of women's observations and to weave these together into one collective research report. Similarly, in what follows, I take several different areas of investigation that are important for understanding the current institutional ethnography on how tenured academic women talk about success and create another weaving to provide a picture of women's scholarship and the underpinnings of this work.

I have chosen four areas to set the foundations of this study. First, I introduce the early developmental process of ensuring access to education especially higher education, of women in the United States. This not only reflects the monumental struggles women have faced in entering the field of education but also demonstrates how closely education has been associated with basic rights of citizenship. By highlighting the heroic quests of some women in pursuing education and ensuring access to intellectual pursuits for all women, I set a framework for some common and basic understandings of success, especially within the field of higher education. Second, I develop this framework of heroic quest and success to look at the biographical and autobiographical lifework of

Dorothy E. Smith, the founder of institutional ethnography. This focus on Smith's work and her contributions to feminist Discourse provides a better understanding of how institutional ethnography was used in this investigation to explore how tenured academic women talk about success. And thus, Smith herself reinforces the purpose of the study in demonstrating how feminist *and* academic discourse constitutes the ruling relations. In the third section, I review the diverse modern literatures regarding academic women and success as well as establish boundaries of this more traditional part of the academic literature review. Finally, I look at some of the specific aspects of second-wave feminism that have informed the research and are important considerations in reflecting on the body of the work. In general, this review follows a chronological order and provides a broad historical and cultural context from which to examine and understand academic women's talk of success.

All of the literature reviewed here was used to help understand both the intercultural and organizational communication character of the research dissertation. While the purpose of the study is to better understand the ruling relations, the emphasis in this chapter is on understanding various organizational practices that ground the research in what is known as *praxis*. Feminist researcher Naples defined praxis as "the interaction of knowledge and experience" (2003, p. 20). In order to understand the basis for this institutional ethnography, it was necessary to investigate both the praxis of women's organizational lives within the academy and how their lives have uniquely framed and transformed academic life, academic communities, and hence the institutional systems of education. In this examination of the talk of success using a feminist Discourse, it was also important to recognize both individual success and collective success.

Conducting an institutional ethnography required an understanding of how knowledge had been acquired, organized, and presented. In their *Primer* on institutional ethnography, Campbell and Gregor (2004), emphasized the importance of the literature review in terms of scholarship, but underlined some of the difficulties inherent in any literature review done for an institutional ethnography: “The issue of knowing emerges as a contested aspect of research – that, in institutional ethnography, is made explicit. . . . The contested terrain of knowing is an enormously important issue . . .” (p. 51).

Women’s collective knowing, knowledge and their access to education has been a very public subject of contention since the early days of the Enlightenment. This struggle over knowing, knowledge, and education continues to the present day. Understanding the different ways of women’s knowing can best be understood in its historical context.

Enlightenment through First-wave Feminism and Beyond

Education and civil rights. From the earliest days of the Enlightenment in Western civilization women have struggled to be included in men’s plans for the development of equity and justice in all areas or spheres of life, especially including the public sphere. As early as 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft, an English philosopher, articulately gave expression to the desire and demand for a quality education and for being considered an intelligent being – if not an intellectual equal:

I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been the result? A profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore, and that women, in

particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion

One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilised women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect. (Wollstonecraft, 1792)

Wollstonecraft was responding to the philosophers and other educated gentlemen of her day whose sole focus was on the rights of men, while hers was a primary directive to create equivalent systems of education for women. While *The vindication of the rights of women* was published in England, it was widely read in the newly formed United States and discussed among the women who supported independence and the revolutionary war efforts (Roberts, 2004). Abigail Adams, wife to a US president and mother to another, frequently debated with her husband, John Adams over his abilities to effect women's opportunities: "I regret the trifling narrow contracted education of females in my own country.... You need not be told how much female education is neglected, nor how fashionable it has been to ridicule female learning" (Roberts, 2004, p. 12). Feminists of all ages have often cited Adams and other eighteenth-century founding mothers in their attempts to broaden coverage of the rights so diligently crafted and developed by their husbands, brothers, and sons (Roberts, 2004; Solomon, 1985).

Despite ongoing resistance, women continued to pursue universal access to education and civil rights for themselves as well as others in society. In the turbulent years of the mid-nineteenth century women were abolitionists, founders of the temperance movement, founders of religious movements, and increasingly active suffragists (Satter, 1999). These organizational activities all emphasized basic educational skills of reading, writing, and, increasingly, public speaking skills. In this same period, women in the United States were also becoming professionals: secretaries, teachers, and nurses – all but completely taking over these professions from men. These professions required higher levels of education and increasingly formalized training. As the education of women continued to expand with access to formalized education for girls and an increasing entry of women into higher education, barriers fell with many “firsts.” Women founded colleges and entered graduate programs to become this country’s first doctors, lawyers, judges and professors (Solomon, 1985).

Different cultures. Wherever women entered the public sphere there was a resistance to having universal access to education and the power that it entailed. Dominant groups (i.e., men) regarded it questionable that all women should be able to read and write *and* enter the public fray by raising their voices in diverse arenas as speakers for equity and justice. Nor was it solely white women of the higher classes who fought these battles. Indeed, there were many challenges in terms of race, ethnicity, and class. For example, Sojourner Truth, a former African-American slave, as part of her renowned “Ain’t I a Woman” speech delivered in 1851 famously declared:

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights

or Negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full? (Truth, 1851)

Both the first- and then the second-wave women's movements at the end of the twentieth century have often been portrayed as elitist or exclusive. This excerpt from Sojourner Truth's demands are a reminder of the central struggles that were often overlooked or unrecorded in a historical context of women's access to public education and citizenship (Haraway, 2004). This access was historically and culturally different for women from different backgrounds: ethnicity, class, race, immigration status, and religion (Ginzberg, 2002). Remnants of these varied stories of access to education have remained in current institutional structures (hooks, 2000).

These few women's stories from the early development of the United States can be portrayed as the heroic quests of but a few. Increasingly, though, those few had come to represent universal demands for access to education and an underlying right and foundation of the civil society of the United States today. Indeed, as the women's colleges were founded in the nineteenth century and many more colleges and universities became co-ed in the twentieth century (Solomon, 1985), increasing numbers of academic women were engaged in the public sphere of American society. Increasingly, too, women's intellectual pursuits and civic engagement also came to the forefront in various forms.

Academic and civil leaders. Once women won the right to vote in various countries (United States in 1920, United Kingdom's universal suffrage in 1928), the battles for equality and recognition were far from over. In the twentieth century, there were many notable women who inspired and contributed to women's access to education

and the public sphere. Margaret Mead and Eleanor Roosevelt were notable for their heroic quests as well as the manner in which they revolutionized access to popular culture and hence inspired many other women to pursue their own quests. Both became role models for women, especially in higher education (Martin, 2000; Newton, 2000; Solomon, 1985).

Margaret Mead traveled the world as a renowned anthropologist, was publicly recognized (if also often condemned), and taught and published prodigiously on her work among women, adolescents, and children in various Southeast Asian cultures. Indeed, Mead even chose to publish in popular US magazines such as *Redbook* and *Family Circle* rather than solely in academic journals, in order that her reflections on other cultures could be accessed by a larger number of Americans, especially women. Mead believed Americans needed to understand other cultures in order to better understand their own. For all of these and other academic transgressions against existing norms for scientific publication, Mead was decried as a “diaperologist” (McDermott, 2001, p. 847).

Eleanor Roosevelt was another woman who demonstrated power and authority for her own life and a resistance to normative control. Roosevelt set new standards for civic engagement as first lady, first during the great Depression and then during wartime. After the war and the death of her husband, she remained engaged, as an active proponent of women’s education and through her promotion of the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Charter for Human Rights. Because Roosevelt had a commitment to women’s education and civic engagement, she ensured that these were also part of the UN’s charter. Roosevelt also specifically addressed her work to women by contributing to various women’s magazines of her age (Solomon, 1985). Her work, on the part of

women, continued to meet resistance in civil society from dominant groups. The issues were similar to those of the earlier contestations of women's access to basic education and the public sphere. Women's access to education and the public sphere continued to be a central part of modernity and civil society throughout the twentieth century. As Barbara Miller Solomon (1985) concluded in her history of women's education in the United States:

Many recognize that they must respect and retain the sense of woman's consciousness and at the same time must not permit society to limit their aspirations as individuals and as womankind. Ultimately the well-being of American women will mean the well-being of the whole society. The means to this end then is the challenge of the next generations of educated women (p. 212).

Modernity and activism. Despite the contested space of women's access to education and the public sphere, US women academics continued to persevere. Jessie Bernard wrote one of the first books of sociological research based on what was at the time considered a novel topic – *Academic Women* (Bernard, 1964). Interestingly, Bernard chose to introduce her book with a nod to Wollstonecraft, but declaimed “I write, finally, as a woman—not, however, as a militant feminist, to vindicate the rights of women” (p. ix). With this statement, Bernard helped us to move beyond a simple understanding of the heroic quest of women's education to look at two strains of academic organizing within the governing ruling relations of the US. These two trends, which came together, informed each other and separated again to critically take each other's measure, could be viewed as the traditional and the activist. These two trends were woven throughout the literature on institutional ethnography and also throughout this investigation of how

women talk about success. These trends toward traditional academic approaches and an activist stance of engagement were most clearly reflected in the work of Dorothy E. Smith, the founder of institutional ethnography.

Lifework of Dorothy E. Smith

Dorothy E. Smith, noted second-wave feminist, is a sociologist who used both her professional and personal life to inform her work in institutional ethnography. It is appropriate to briefly take a look at the biographical and autobiographical information available for Smith. This increases an understanding of Smith's efforts in developing institutional ethnography as a sociology for women, as well as of some of her original contributions to second-wave feminism. This biographical material is important because it provides greater insight into Smith's own standpoint as an activist, feminist author, and academic. She has infused all of these roles in to her published work, so it still remains densely professional and sociological, while also deeply personal. In Smith's work, the author often used her own life experiences to underline her understanding of the bifurcated consciousness of women and the ruling relations. She discussed being a single mother raising two boys while supporting her family through her sociological work. She often provided interviews to students as part of their work in institutional ethnography (Diamond, 2006) reflecting on her own lived every day existence. Her interactions with students were featured in her work and in theirs. Included in this section is also a biographical journal article written by of one of Smith's own best known students of institutional ethnography Marie Campbell (2003). The material from this article has been included to flesh out Smith's own autobiographical account online (D. E. Smith, 2003).

Early life and work. Smith, born in England, received her first degree in social anthropology at the London School of Economics. She attended the University of California Berkeley, receiving a PhD in 1964, where she shared an interest with her sociological thesis adviser Erving Goffman in the everyday workings of social life. Briefly married to William Smith, another graduate student, Smith eventually found herself alone in the US as an immigrant and a single mother responsible for the income of her small family. Smith talks about her first engagements with other women graduate students and adjuncts at a conference on the “potential of women” in the early 1960s. Apparently the speakers at this conference on women were *all men*, but Smith took it upon herself to arrange a separate session where she and other women graduate students and adjuncts were able to discuss the conditions of their own work and lives (D. E. Smith, 2003). Smith also cited the work of the tenured academic sociologist Jesse Bernard (1964) as a grounding for her own interest in women in the academy. Smith continued to work as a lecturer and adjunct, traveled, and attempted to work outside of academia before returning to live in British Columbia, Canada, for her first university appointment.

In 1972, Smith delivered the original paper *Women’s perspective as a radical critique on sociology* (1974/2004) at a women’s conference in Eugene, Oregon. This paper famously addressed and established the description of the bifurcated consciousness of women and the subject of women’s unique standpoint. In retrospect, Smith looked at her work and gave it another kind of importance for her own career when she said:

I had had such difficulty before this paper in writing and completing anything for publication. I think I had difficulty in recognizing my own authority to speak in

the discourse of male-dominated sociology. But this time, it was quite different. I knew I was writing for women, that I'd put forward what I had to say as best I could, and it would become part of an ongoing conversation with women in many places. Before I'd had this image of a panel of judges waiting to pounce on my work. Now they were gone and I was able to see conference papers and publications as a way of "talking" to women rather than as exposing me to judgment. (D. E. Smith, 2003)

These words also demonstrated how important a collective sense of women working with women was to all of Smith's academic work, especially in its practical applicability to women's lives. Campbell (2003) described how this paper was literally passed from hand to hand – among early second-wave feminists until its publication in a scholarly journal in 1974. It was then republished as a foundational piece on standpoint feminism in an anthology on feminist methodology in 1987 (Harding) and was cited in many feminist texts on founding theories of second-wave feminism. Smith's paper and discussion of the bifurcated consciousness and women's standpoint was part of a central debate in feminist standpoint theory (P. H. Collins, 1997/2004; Harding, 1997/2004; Hartsock, 1997/2004; Hekman, 1997/2004a, 1997/2004b). Smith herself participated in the debate, but she distanced herself from the application of her concepts to a universal understanding of feminist standpoint theory (D. E. Smith, 1997/2004). As in much of her later work, Smith's emphasis is on the praxis – "the interaction of knowledge and experience" (Naples, 2003, p. 20) in illuminating the ruling relations. The importance of feminist research has been that it begins with the standpoint of the persons doing the investigation, not with theory.

Sisterhood. In her early academic work, Smith herself continued the praxis of actively engaging with the emerging second-wave women's movement. She worked as both an activist and as an academic, using both of these organizational sites to fuel her own teaching and published work (Messer-Davidow, 2002). She taught some of the first women's studies classes at the University of British Columbia and worked with other women to found a university women's center. It was here that she also reengaged with Marx and delivered a talk that was transcribed and edited as a pamphlet, *Feminism & Marxism: A place to begin, a way to go* (1977). Marxist feminism was one of the many theoretical schools grounding second-wave feminist theory, but this grounding in Marx was a contentious subject, which goes beyond the scope of this review. Campbell (2003) described Smith's commitment to a feminist Marxist integration as less of a call to arms in the Marxist sense and more as a commitment to what she termed *Sisterhood*, a concept often invoked in second-wave feminism:

Sisterhood, as invoked by Smith, was not a sentimental idea but a way of speaking about the method of working she was developing. This method required relocation of the knower--moving from being an outsider in hearing of women's lives and troubles to "locating yourself on their side and in their position" (Smith, 1977, p. 15) and working with women as a class. (Campbell, 2003, p. 7)

This concept of *Sisterhood* moves feminist theory beyond a sense of the individual struggle to a sense of collective struggle (Morgan, 1970) and could actually be understood as another perspective on women's standpoint. This underlying core concept of Smith's development of institutional ethnography was a large part of her contribution to an ongoing feminist discourse that has continued to the current day.

Publications. Autobiographically, and as a tenured academic herself, Smith discussed the importance of building her reputation between UBC and Ontario, one published paper at a time, until she was able to publish her first book, a collection of papers titled: *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology* (1987). In 1990 she published two more collections of papers: *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist Sociology of knowledge* and *Texts, facts, and femininity: Exploring the relations of ruling* (D. E. Smith, 1990a, 1990b). Then in 1999 came *Writing the social: Critique, theory and investigations* (D. E. Smith, 1999). In all of these collections of her essays and journal publications, Smith continued to focus on the praxis and to instruct on how to do institutional ethnography. She developed the discourse on the ruling relations and emphasized its centrality to understanding the world around us that had constituted so much of our common activity. As Smith developed her own insights into the ruling relations, she continued to express and expand on the descriptions of the ruling relations and how they could best be understood. Smith, more thoroughly than any other feminist scholar, explicated the ideas of texts constituting the ruling relations and the discursive nature of organizational behavior.

Originally, Smith framed her own work more in terms of creating a sociology for women, later termed a sociology for people, where there was less separation between researchers and respondents than in traditional sociology (D. E. Smith, 1987, 2005). Her emphasis on an understanding of the everyday nature of lived experience and how this could be used to navigate the ruling relations was vital to her view of research as immediately accessible, practicable, and not solely addressed to academics. In the best scenario, the researcher and informants shared the insights of the work both during the

process and in its results. While Smith's own work was often dense with the traditional sociological crafting of language and certainly more often read or approached by academics (D. E. Smith, 1990b, 1999), she and her students insisted that the results of an institutional ethnography be equally accessible to those with whom the academic works (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1987).

Smith's students. Smith's work included a number of references to her students; she also often highlighted their institutional ethnographies and collaborated with them on various projects. Smith's own work was often conducted in the fields of health and education (D. E. Smith, 1990a, 1999) and her students also worked in these arenas (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Diamond, 2006; Griffith, 2006). Campbell and Gregor's primer is especially based on their own work in the field of education for nursing students, as well as explaining institutional ethnography to these students. In both fields, education and health, the mapping of texts (or forms) to social relations is especially easy to make clear in terms of the everyday experience of bureaucratic forms and work routines that inscribe the organization of work. These fields also represent areas of the ruling relations where the hierarchies and social relations between authorities, employees and clients / patients/ students are usually also very clear and easy to follow. These areas are also areas where women's work and the gendered nature of the organizations is especially prominent. Diamond's perspectives working in long term care (Diamond, 2006) and George Smith's work with the organization of HIV/AIDS clients (G. W. Smith et al., 2006) provided some varied gendered insights into work traditionally associated with women. Two of the most interesting and unusual institutional ethnographies represented city zoning ordinances (Turner, 2006) and the classification of cowboy art

within a museum collection (Rusted, 2006). These latter examples also help to highlight the wide range of text that can be considered and used as data to map social relations.

Moving beyond the data and the mapping of texts to the ruling relations, the findings in all of these studies demonstrated the organizing principles of the lived working experience, which dictated the form of the outcomes. It was in the conscious process of raising awareness around the texts or the forms that the participants, informants and researcher(s) became aware of the ruling relations, which were actually structuring their work. Through this awareness, various routes to agency could be explored for either accepting or transforming the processes and social relations dictated through the ruling relations. It was all of these findings and processes that informed both my methods and this study's mapping of results in how tenured academic women talked about their work processes as these were related to tenure and accomplishing success within the ruling relations.

Smith's success. Smith's academic collections and books have not only been foundational for grounding the researcher's understanding of institutional ethnography but also Smith included her own lived experiences of being an academic in much of her published material (D. E. Smith, 1974/2004, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 2005, 2006). Smith (2005) often used various aspects of her lived working experience as an academic, such as grading, to inform the reader of the actual research involved in conducting an institutional ethnography. She also often used aspects of her own work as an academic to illustrate an engagement with institutional ethnography as a way of raising consciousness within an institution in order to be aware of its workings.

Smith's earlier publications provided the groundwork and many of the reference pieces for doing institutional ethnographies, but her last two books have really brought all of her previous life's work together. In *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people* (2005) Smith provided an insightful overview of the entire methodology, its foundations, its development, and its practical applicability, and called for the implementation of institutional ethnographies in various research fields. The companion volume, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice* (2006), was an edited anthology compiled by Smith, and included work by both Smith and her students, often in interaction with one another. The pieces in the anthology included methods of doing institutional ethnography, such as interviewing and participant observation, and a variety of applications of institutional ethnography in different areas, such as proposal writing as well as research papers.

Smith's autobiographical words online summarize her own sense of success with her life's accomplishments:

I have taken a great deal of pleasure in this quest for a sociology for women. Conceived simply, it is a sociology in and of the same world as that in which it's written and read, and relies on that world to complete the sense it can make. So it looks outward, towards discovering how people are actually putting things together. Its feminism is foundational but not always its topic. Finding out how to do it, how to teach it as a skill to others, and what I can learn by practising it, is a continuing pleasure for me. Being an old women, as I am now, is so far only an opportunity to deploy what I've learned how to do. (D. E. Smith, 2003)

In these words, as in so much of Smith's writing, one hears that there was someone continually and actively engaged in her own life's work, as well as a person who took great pleasure in that work and was not afraid to say so. In many senses, Smith's work has been foundational in many senses in applying institutional ethnography to this dissertation's research on how academic women talk about success. Smith's interweaving of traditional academic work and publishing with her second-wave activism has infused the whole research study with greater engagement and interest for the lifework of all tenured women academics. Rather than strictly focusing on the common difficulties of academic women, as much of the traditional literature does, it has been a pleasure to look at where academic women were sharing their accomplishments and successes with one another.

Modern Works on Academic Women

Scholarship is often pictured as standing on the shoulders of giants. In other words, scholarship has been built on those whose work has preceded one's own. In terms of women's scholarship, though, it has often seemed that remembering and reconstructing the foremothers in scholarship and finding the records of their research and active engagement with their subjects (Messer-Davidow, 2002) has been a creative challenge. Sociologist and institutional ethnographer Smith cited the sociologist Bernard in her book on *Academic Women* (Bernard, 1964) as informing her own scholarship (D. E. Smith, 1987, 1999). Bernard's book was originally published in 1964, but re-released in 1974 in paperback, conceivably because of the growing interest in and of women through the increasing activities of the second-wave women's movement at that time. The growing paperback publishing industry may also have contributed to the access of

many more women to women's books and feminist tracts. Bernard's work has been foundational as the first sociological book to specifically focus on the status of academic women, and in many ways it has set a certain standard for the books that have been published since and their discussions of the status of academic women.

Women's work. In terms of authors writing about academic women, I have yet to discover any work solely authored by a man. This is important in terms of reporting the standpoint of *both* the researchers of studies on academic women and their informants. Discussing the works of women referencing others who have written about academic women creates the space to discuss the importance of citationality in the discursive gendering of academic organizations. This reflects on how academic women are perceived in terms of success since so much of the institutional ruling relations of academia centers around publications. In reporting on the literature results and using the APA style guide, I have found absolutely no guidelines related to reporting the gender of the researcher, unless of course I choose to highlight the work in such a way as to use pronouns or the full name of the researcher. For example, if I choose to talk about Jessie Bernard's work (1964) and what *her* contributions are to the subject of academic women's talk of success, I have insured that my reader realizes I am referencing a woman author. So let me state it clearly: Women have written all of the work cited in this section of the literature review. Many of these women have also positioned themselves as academic women reporting on women's activities and status.

Bernard, while writing the first study on the status of academic women, positioned herself as an academician of forty years who also filled the role of academic wife and who had only become a "full-fledged participant" (1974, p. ix) in academia after

her husband's death. Here, as in much of women's authorship in establishing their position of entry into the public sphere through publication, it is fascinating to note how often women explicated on the personal circumstances that lead them to their work. They obviously felt some need to establish their own women's standpoint in relationship to their academic work, whether in terms of their right or authority to engage in such work or as a form of resistance to dominant masculine scholarship (Allen, 2000; Ashcraft, 2005; Bernard, 1964; Messer-Davidow, 2002; Wollstonecraft, 1792). Thus, in this ongoing literature review, I use Smith's conscious reflective stance on her own work as an academic to highlight how many of the researchers cited in this section can and should be seen both as researchers and as informants of their own work.

Dialectic tensions. Current tensions exist in the literature defining and describing women's success. The literature written by academic women about academic women (and often *for* academic women) thus has presented a kind of framework for my own investigation as one form of discourse of academic women talking about success. Although not exclusively quantitative as were the discussions of tables and major research studies that were included earlier in Chapter 1, the research of these academics has largely been an analysis formed on the hierarchical nature of the institution of the academy itself. The studies have been largely based on tenure and promotion as the measurement of success and as the central text of the ruling relations.

Success has often been defined as a woman's relative placement within the system. The ruling relations were defined by the hierarchies inherent in the constitution of the research university and its systems of so-called academic governance: tenure and promotion. As a collective whole then, according to the quantitative research, women

academics may have been seen as frustrated and stymied in their struggle to rise to higher and/or more prestigious positions within the hierarchy established by the ruling relations. By using and applying institutional ethnography, I became aware not only of the framing nature of the academic discourse, but also of the potential for excluding other markers for success and accomplishments that might be more relevant to women's everyday and every night lived experience (D. E. Smith, 1987).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, thirty years after the *Chronicle of Higher Education* began reporting on women's success and/or barriers to success (Scully, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c, 1970d), considerable academic work emerged that described women's experience within academia and documented some of their difficulties over the preceding decades (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Martin, 2000; Myers, 2002; Valian, 1999). These books were written and/or edited by women academics who had "come of age" within the confines of the very institution they sought to describe. These authors and editors of the prominent academic anthology *Career strategies for women in academe* (L. H. Collins et al., 1998) described themselves as feminists and/or active within diverse women's studies programs as well as within their own elected fields of study. They also problematized the difficulties within the field of women's studies, but certainly did not center women's studies as the only authoritative voice of women within the academy. All of these authors and their published works were integrated with the texts of the ruling relations and explicated these relations for women who wanted to better understand the institutions of higher education.

For the most part, these works focused on the difficulties that women face and continue to face, from being undergraduate students to serving in the highest levels of

university administration. These problems included issues of sexual harassment, sexism, and being overlooked and ignored, especially for positions of leadership — often subsumed in the term “chilly work climate” (Caplan, 1993). For the most part, this work overlooked the actual talk of affected women but rather framed women’s talk as representative, rather than constitutive or reproductive, of culturally oppressive systems. Few, if any, of these authors explicitly took women’s talk as a focus for study but rather pointed to cultural and historical systems of oppression as explanatory devices.

Almost all of these books have taken as their underlying foundation that discrimination has been a real and ever-present challenge to women’s careers. Many of these authors (Caplan, 1993; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Scholnick, 1998) grounded their work through the same types of sociological statistics, tables, and perspectives first introduced by Bernard (1964) and still used today in various reports on women’s status in higher education (*Research data and report out on equity figures at UNM*, 2005; West & Curtis, 2006). From the inaugural work of Bernard (1964) through the most recent entry of Philipsen (2008), differences with men as academicians have been engaged in various ways. While Bernard stated from the beginning that she was not “a militant feminist,” (p. ix), she did title a chapter *Demand: The Theory and Practice of Discrimination* (p. 75) and devoted an entirely different chapter to comparisons between men and women academicians. Philipsen on the other hand, focused much less on discrimination per se, but did make comparisons between men and women, and much more discreetly and indirectly referenced “continuing male privilege” and “gender-bias” (2008, p. 205). Often, women’s work is compared to the baseline, which is that of men. Authors talk

about women's work, not men's work; another example is the discussion of "women academics."

Voice of women academics. In literature that indirectly or specifically addressed academic women's "talk" and/or "voice," several pieces represent the professional discourse of female academics. In these works, it has often been the author's own voice that was privileged in her own descriptions of being an experienced leader or academic representing and/or interviewing her peers (L. H. Collins et al., 1998; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Martin, 2000; Myers, 2002). The authors established their credentials by sharing whom they were as professional women, a form of positioning rarely seen in academic journal articles authored by men. The one notable exception would be Dennis Mumby as he established his credentials as a feminist in his work (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Mumby, 1993a). Aldoory's (1998) piece looked at public relations (PR) professionals, many of whom also worked as academics. In this work, she interviewed a small group of female academics/ professionals regarding their attitudes on leadership and academia. Aldoory examined women's talk for its leadership style, but not necessarily for any measurements of success. In particular, she looked at how specific types of leadership talk might help these women accomplish their leadership goals within work settings.

Although the authors and anthology editors of the books and chapters focusing on women academics have represented a broad range of fields, including philosophy (Glazer-Raymo, 1999) psychology (L. H. Collins et al., 1998; Gilligan, 1987; Valian, 1999) and sociology (Bernard, 1964; Myers, 2002; D. E. Smith, 1974/2004), there have been fewer communication scholars specifically examining women and success in academia. Some notable exceptions include Dewine's (1987) work on the organizational

culture within the academic field of communication and Fine and Buzzanell's refreshing piece (2000) based on daily journals, female friendships, and interactions within academe. Allen, in the same volume, also looks at her own socialization as an African-American academic within the academy (Allen, 2000). These communication scholars questioned and found a much broader range of success markers and the various accomplishments that women might talk about.

Leadership as praxis. Often success has been framed as a discussion of leadership and the ability to rise within the hierarchy of the organization. One of the strongest forms of authorship on the subject of women and leadership has been the discussion women academics presented in the autobiographical form. In the Drucker Foundation's anthology on "The Leader of the Future," (1996), Sara E. Meléndez' portrayed herself as an "outsider," both as a woman and a minority. This piece and its placement in the anthology emphasized the lonely leader, especially as she was a woman and a minority.

A strong presentation of a communicative leader in her own right is Judith Pearson. Her personal background piece was part of her presidential address to the National Communication Association - NCA (2003). Pearson discussed her academic growth and leadership as a communication educator and leader within this national association of communication experts. Pearson used her ascension in the NCA hierarchy to do a full push on women's leadership and its recognition within the organization. NCA created a website on women leaders, including association presidents and journal editors, with biographic information on every woman president harking back to Henrietta Prentiss, 1932 (Taylor). This context of women in communication as leaders also ties back to the first-wave history of women as speakers and teachers. NCA did a

contemporary survey of women's leadership in the field, and Pearson reported out the results as part of her keynote address (Pearson & Trent, 2004). Pearson is the ultimate insider who highlights her own background in leading an organizational drive to focus on women leaders. Like many leaders, she shows how it is done and demonstrates an organizational praxis, as well. She is not alone, either, the keynote was a conversational interaction between Pearson and Trent (2004) on *Communication, women and leadership* published in a leading journal of the field. Much of Pearson's work has components of pedagogy and assistance through personal testimony and praxis.

The literature on women's leadership is quite extensive, and in so many diverse fields that it cannot be exhaustively surveyed here. There is also a great deal of women's leadership literature presented in popular culture literature. Two books that stand out, and which need to be included from a communication perspective are: Jamieson's *Beyond the double bind: Women and leadership* (1995) and an anthology of *Women on power: Leadership redefined* (Freeman, Bourque, & Shelton, 2001). Both books take strong perspectives on leadership and represent the heroic quest of women becoming the leaders of the twenty-first century. The anthology has several strong discussions of women and leadership and also features a variety of case studies of women in different arenas. Women academics are authors and occasionally an academic may be featured for her leadership, but it is not with a sole focus on women academics or how they talk about success. The literature cited here should be interpreted as part of the foundational discourse for women talking about their own success in general, but usually in the hierarchical sense as leaders.

Self-help. Like the work of Caplan (1993), several of the books and quite a number of journal articles in various fields, appear to have been almost written in a tongue-in-cheek academic version of self-help manuals as developed *by* academic women *for* academic women. A collection of articles derived from the Women in Higher Education® newsletter (Wenniger & Conroy, 2001) is almost literally a “How-To manual” for leaders in higher education. A more serious tone and the academic self-help style of serious social scientists was presented through the anthology edited by Collins, Chrisler and Quina (1998). This self-help discourse was most audaciously set forward in Emily Toth’s book *Ms. Mentor’s impeccable advice for women in academia* (2002). Toth’s book is an edited collection of her advice columns, which were printed in the Chronicle for Higher Education starting in 1991. Toth, an emeritus professor of English, claimed for herself “nearly a quarter-century in academia, and having survived all those years as an out-front feminist, often being a feminist when feminism wasn’t cool, . . .” (p, ix). This interweaving of both popular culture, with academic culture and academic discourse with feminist discourse, was common throughout much of this literature. Similarly, this interweaving of various types of discourse also echoed the great women mentioned earlier who at times chose to frame their work within the media of popular culture. The texts included here represented more than a passing nod to their accessibility for women in all stages of academic careers.

Many of the associations of higher education, such as the Association of American Colleges (AAC) also offer literature, such as reports, to support women in higher education. Two exemplars from the AAC are Sandler’s (1992) *Success and strategies for women faculty members* and Nieves-Squires’ (1991) *Hispanic women:*

making their presence on campus less tenuous. It would go beyond the scope of this review to further expound on the various websites and all of their material on academic women, women and leadership, and women and academic leadership. There is a wealth of information for the determined woman seeking to inform herself on these subjects. Obviously, it is a successful discourse.

Therefore, like Smith's work, while these studies of academic women may not be framed directly as feminist studies taken from women's standpoint, nor are these studies specifically targeted at activating women in emancipatory processes, they do still reflect the organizational structures of the second-wave women's emancipatory movement. Finally, there are definitely discussions presented in all of these cited studies that reflect on comparative styles of leadership between women and men, and how different organizational strategies might influence success. Although the literature reflected many different aspects of women and success, none of the studies or literature presented here discussed specifically how academic women themselves talked about success.

Feminism(s), Feminist Ethics and the Researcher's Role

As indicated in other sections, the role of both the researcher and the study's subjects were less traditional and formally structured by ruling hierarchies than may be found within more traditional or formal communication dissertations. These understandings of roles are based more on the concerns and reflections of institutional ethnography (D. E. Smith, 2005), as well as feminist Discourse and ethics (Kirsch, 1999), yet still maintain the texts and understanding of the hierarchical ruling relations. For example, I am a graduate student and an adjunct faculty teaching at a research institution.

This position informed both my choice of a research topic and my interpretations of academic women's talk about their own success.

The personal is political. "The personal is political" was a common saying and slogan of the second-wave women's movement and could have been used at many and various points throughout this dissertation to emphasize much of the underlying praxis involved in doing institutional ethnography. In asking women to describe their backgrounds and current status, I felt constrained by the demands of the research form within the ruling relations of the institution to maintain the individual's anonymity and also the anonymity of other women involved in the study. This was not always easy, and some times the respondents themselves broke their anonymity in various settings in communicating about this research and their participation in it.

Also, in the course of the investigation many of the respondents were or became acquaintances of mine. Several of them assisted me in a professional capacity on the basis of their own skills as academics, providing me with helpful advice at various stages of my investigation. In this ongoing process of scholarship, I continue to reflect on my own role and the power of authorship in framing the findings of the dissertation.

Diversity and debate. One of the notable organizational practices of second-wave feminism was the consciousness-raising group, and indeed Smith frequently based her institutional ethnographic work on her own involvement and observations of this praxis (D. E. Smith, 1974/2004, 1987). These groups collectively named and shared women's common experiences, while ideally not denying any one individual's experience and maintaining a celebration of the diversity of experiences possible. This is a highly idyllic portrayal of what was often brutal, sometimes humorous, but most often an enlightening

praxis. This form of organizational encounter was successfully applied to various areas of women's lives that often were excluded from normative academic studies (Messer-Davidow, 2002). Some of the areas which consciousness-raising groups explored, that have since been recognized in both popular culture and academic discourse, were women's embodied experiences as they related to reproductive rights and freedom, sexuality, and women's victimization through harassment, abuse and violence (Johnston, 1973; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1984; Morgan, 1970). In all of these areas, it was vital to the process that there be no shaming of individual women, either in their lack of knowledge or in their access to the power and agency to change their own situation. Needless to say, power dynamics of both control and resistance continued to flourish in these organizational settings and also emerged as salient in the current study.

The intention of ensuring equality among all women, regardless of their educational, professional or academic status is still a central concern within the feminist Discourse of ethical research investigations (Kirsch, 1999; Messer-Davidow, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). It is, however, often easier to conceive of the moral and ethical dilemmas in research where the informants clearly have less power or status than the researcher; and where their anonymity, voice and status must be protected from the privileged researcher (Kirsch, 1999). In the case of this dissertation, I intentionally set myself up to "interview up" (Kirsch, 1999; Mertens, 2005) and explore the positions of power of women with strong authority within the systems of higher education. Considerations of power and hierarchy were also self-evident in interactions between the respondents, and I discuss this further in the methodology and findings where it is appropriate.

One of the most contentious subjects within feminist standpoint theory is how to address the identity markers of race, class, ethnicity and national origin and the cultural heritage and experiences these markers may represent within the ruling relations. Feminism in both the first and second-wave has classist, racist, and oppressive components, as well as forms of elitism and abuse of privilege. Feminists often operate within the same normative assumptions of “all white” privilege (Supriya, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), as do many of the academic disciplines that are represented by feminists (Messer-Davidow, 2002). The debates that have surrounded these issues have left behind many remnants – and perhaps even battle scars or at least the refusal of some individuals or groups to work within feminist contexts or to work with others who call themselves feminists.

Among academic women themselves there have often been discussions on the relative privilege or lack thereof that academic women as a collective whole have (Lorde, 1984) and how various individual women may relate to universal concepts of emancipation or discrimination based on their own complex identities. Audre Lorde’s famous imperative “the master’s tools will never be used to dismantle the master’s house,” (Lorde, 1984, p. 110) was based on an invitation (at the last minute) to a feminist conference in New York where she was one of only two African-American women in attendance. The question remains, can we use the power of privilege to either dismantle power and privilege, or to make it more accessible to those we would assist in attaining education and the increased opportunities that go along with this education.

While scholars may continue these discussions and debates from many valid and legitimate standpoints including those of post-modern or post-colonialist feminist theory

(Mohanty, 2003; Sandoval, 2000, 2004), it is important to recognize the collective history of feminists in at least, at times, nourishing and celebrating the debates on diversity and discrimination within feminist academic circles, as well as their own academic disciplines, rather than banishing these debates or the women who initiated them (Allen, 2000; Anzaldúa, 1999; P. H. Collins, 1986/2004; hooks, 1984/2000, 2000; Lorde, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1984). Indeed, through the work of any number of women and men, these discussions have become part of the collective in theorizing feminist standpoint theory. In the famous debate among standpoint feminists, first published in 1997 (Harding, 2004) and mentioned earlier, Patricia Collins framed the arguments that broadened the appeal of feminist standpoint theory, and its applicability, to a wider audience:

In contrast to [Hekman's] view that attention to multiplicity fosters incoherence, current attention to the theme of *intersectionality* [emphasis added] situated within assumptions of group-based power relations reveals a growing understanding of the complexity of the processes both of generating groups and accompanying standpoints. Initially examining only one dimension of power relations, namely, that of social class, Marx posited that, however unarticulated and inchoate, oppressed groups possessed a particular standpoint on inequality. In more contemporary versions, inequality has been revised to reflect a greater degree of complexity, especially that of race and gender. What we now have is increasing sophistication about how to discuss group location, not in the singular social class framework of gender, but within constructs of multiplicity residing in social structures themselves and not in individual women. Fluidity does not mean

that groups themselves disappear, to be replaced by an accumulation of decontextualized, unique women whose complexity erases politics. Instead, the fluidity of boundaries operates as a new lens that potentially deepens understanding of how the actual mechanisms of institutional power can change dramatically while continuing to reproduce longstanding inequalities of race, gender, and class that result in group stability. In this sense, group history and location can be seen as points of convergence within hierarchical, multiple, and changing structural power relations. (P. H. Collins, 1997/2004 ,p. 249).

The feminist term *intersectionality* came to replace “identity politics” (Messer-Davidow, 2002) with its focus on the specifics of race, class and gender solely as identity markers rather than social constructs. Collins’ feminist standpoint of great nuanced complexity could not have been developed without the broader collective debate that framed these issues of diversity in both the popular cultural and academic versions of feminist Discourse.

I have chosen to incorporate the discussions of diversity here as one of the successful moves of feminist Discourse in contributing to our understanding of both intercultural and organizational communication. These discussions also assisted in locating my own position (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) in relationship to the research. Part of my identity in this study is as a German-American white woman who cannot speak for others in terms of their identity as minority women of color within the United States. The diversity of the respondents in the dissertation, and their own responses to discussions of diversity has been a key component in broadening the understanding of how academic women talk about success within the ruling relations.

Queering the issues. In feminist Discourse, and discussions of sexuality and gender expression, the issues have been complicated by divisiveness in the popular culture and how this might reflect on academic discourse. Attempts have often been made throughout history to intimidate women through threats of being perceived as having “mannish behavior” (Wollstonecraft, 1792), which persists to this day. While academics may actively question essentialist positions on gender or heteronormative values by asking what is a woman or does everyone have the right to marriage, the question of being *outed*, and the performative process of clearly indicating one’s sexuality as “other” than heterosexual remains a problem (Chirrey, 2003). As long as bashing and open and covert discrimination is a possibility for those who live outside of standard heterosexual paradigms, individuals must make their own private determinations as to how they identify their sexuality. These discussions of sexuality and gender were also reflected in my research on how academic women talked about success and furthered the purpose of the study in illuminating the social relations that transform and constitute the ruling relations.

Methodology

Feminist researchers are neither immune to internalized oppression nor to the hegemonic constructions of research practice that insist on a distanced and objectifying angle of vision (Naples, 2003)

Institutional ethnography, as developed by Dorothy E. Smith (D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1999, 2005, 2006) and her many students (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; DeVault & McCoy, 2002, 2006; Diamond, 2006; Griffith, 2006; G. W. Smith et al., 2006; Turner, 2006), was the methodology used in this dissertation to explore how tenured academic women talked about success. Institutional ethnography is a qualitative and feminist methodology (DeVault, 1999) that has encouraged an exploration of the everyday events in women's lives in order to examine the social relations and texts that assist in mapping the ruling relations which constitute these lives (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990b, 1999, 2005). It is a feminist methodology because it privileges the standpoint and language of the research participants rather than the discourse of the traditionally removed academic observer. In this discussion of how tenured academic women talk about success, the language of the observer and participants was often a shared language of academic discourse, and therefore the discourse of work as an everyday experience may be harder to recognize. The position of the researcher is open and transparent; therefore, the institutional ethnographic methods will usually be explicated in first person narrative.

An institutional ethnography moves from working with the local observations of women (or people) in their every day work settings to a *problematic* to establishing appropriate methods for collecting information and then identifying texts that map out the

ruling relations. Mapping the ruling relations helps us to consciously discern and discuss how we negotiate the texts and interactions of the ruling relations. The problematic is a specific term used in institutional ethnography to focus the research in a manner that is a little different from the traditional thesis statement. Rather than starting with a theory or hypothesis to test, the researcher is asked to reflect on how the lived experiences of the participants could inform a research study and what methods could be used to draw out information mapping the ruling relations. All the steps in the process are seen, as in most qualitative methodologies, as an iterative process where the researcher can circle back and refine the process and the problematic as she goes along, depending on the participants' perceptions regarding central texts and their navigation. The texts such as reports or "routines inscribed in organizations" (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p. 8) of participants' work were reintroduced into any interactions with study participants in order to better understand the chain of events, interactions, and social relations that occurred in the working environment.

Rich descriptions of the social relations in the work setting were provided in a typical ethnographic mode in order to better explicate the ruling relations for all of the research study's participants. Within an institutional ethnographic study the goal is that both the researcher and any participants will reach a better understanding of the ruling relations that informs the workplace. The scholarly expectations in an institutional ethnography are also that feminist ethics guide the research. Therefore, communication is relatively open and transparent between the researcher and all of the informants in the research setting. A somewhat unique context in this dissertation, and a requirement for

institutional ethnography, is that the respondents usually have access to the same or similar research and texts that inform the researcher (Diamond, 2006; D. E. Smith, 2005).

This meant that from the onset, I shared the purpose and goals of this dissertation with the informants, tenured academic women and other participants, as an integral aspect of the research process itself. In examining how tenured academic women talked about success, for instance, I often laid out my own understanding of how quantitative texts and reports framed the status and perspectives of academic women. This served as a basis for establishing a common understanding of the problematic of the research. As Campbell and Gregor have explained, “Identifying a problematic in institutional ethnography requires the researcher to notice and name the relations in the research setting into which she is stepping.” (2004, p. 46). The focus then, was on the agency of *all* of those involved in the research setting as well as the ongoing activity of the investigation and its purpose.

Within the scope of the institutional ethnography, it is important to stay aware of what Smith and her students point to in institutional ethnography as *disjuncture* (Campbell & Gregor, 2004), the places where two different modes of being or consciousness affect the awareness of the processes of the social relations. This term was originally developed from the women’s standpoint of the bifurcated consciousness. Smith and her students further sharpened the identification of disjuncture as a tool for locating points where respondents go between embodied experience to abstract modes of performance, especially in their working activities (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Naples, 2003; D. E. Smith, 2005). In other words, to make clear those moments when participants did something without thinking about it, yet it was something that was highly relevant to

the structure of the work being done. It was easy to make the assumption that the tenure process was hard work, but to ask the respondents to actually describe the process, and who supported them, was intended to bring forward a consciousness of the work involved that did not exist previously. This disjuncture, which involves noticing the points where consciousness does not mesh or calls forth different responses into being, also helps to frame the problematic of the research and informs the institutional ethnography in the entire process.

The Problematic

I began my research with an admiration of those academic women who were actively engaged in questioning the discriminatory practices which were brought to their attention and which they directly experienced in their own employment. Their activities and concern for the many women entering the profession were highly reminiscent of the organizing activities of second-wave feminism of the 1970s and 1980s. Literature on this topic was widely available in the form of professional reports and status updates, and these are frequently cited in academic media: Chronicle for Higher Education (Wilson, 2004a, 2004b), regular emails and reports from the American Association for University Women (AAUW at www.aauw.org), and the American Association for University Professors (AAUP at www.aaup.org) (West & Curtis, 2006).

As a member of two research institutions and several professional associations for academics, I received information that was often further distributed through emails and faculty list-serves. It was relatively easy to cite from a current report, which had been debated on a faculty list serve. Respondents often made me aware of new information that had been released at either the national or local level. Thus, the professional and

sociological literature as described here in the introduction and the literature review structured my initial interactions with various women academics. There was frequently a tacit acknowledgement that the information regarding the gendered nature of the profession of university faculty and administrators was easily and freely available. Furthermore, all of the discussants considered themselves relatively well informed as to what was generally considered the status of women in the academic profession.

Despite the bleak outlook, or “chilly climate” as many of the academic researchers on the status of women have called it (Caplan, 1993), it appeared to me that women continued to enter various disciplines and to become tenured professors, department heads, deans and provosts. The question was, what factors influenced them, and how did they maintain hopefulness, as well as an ability to inspire others in the midst of such dim prognosis for future improvements or advancements? These were the questions that I started to ask various academic and administrative women as I looked around campus and as I attended women’s events where many women were participating and responding to the latest reports on pay equity and the “glass ceilings” in locations around the country. These questions framed the problematic, the underlying tension that served as the basis for developing my research plan. Women academics were doing more than working in, and surviving institutional systems; rather, they even had occasion to celebrate their successes individually and collectively, despite all reports to the contrary. These academic women were holding the space for other women to follow them on academic paths and in pursuit of intellectual achievement. I chose to formally talk to these academic women in order to understand what inspired and motivated them to continue in their day-to-day working environments and career choices.

Material

Institutional ethnography, with its emphasis on the day-to-day lived experience of women's standpoint, allows for a number of qualitative methods. The two methods used most extensively in this research were direct pre-arranged one-on-one interviews and participant observation. It is important to note that many institutional ethnographers have argued that there is no such thing as a "*non-participant* observer" (Diamond, 2006, p. 87; D. E. Smith, 1990b). It was through my own participation, my access to the standard professional literature as reported in both the introduction and literature review, as well as formal and informal interactions with women academicians at different institutions that I was able to create an interview protocol for an early pilot project. While the earlier pilot project focused more on leadership in academia than on academic success specifically, it was the basis of the protocol, which I used for my institutional ethnography (see Appendix A).

The protocol provided a guideline for the interview and was given to each of the participants either before or at the very beginning of the interview. The interview was then semi-structured through the protocol, but the respondents were not required to answer all of the questions or even address each and every subsection of each question. Also, because of the more dialogic informal nature of institutional ethnography, it was more important to follow the lead of the respondent and ask follow-up questions based on her responses, rather than strictly adhering to the protocol. The protocol was also amended, after the first five interviews, and the proposal discussion to include questions on power, as well as the specific location of the institutions. As various themes began to emerge, I also felt free to ask the respondent more in-depth questions about her

background or her career process and progress, as I developed a deeper understanding and overview.

The interview protocol began with a standard section on basic demographics. This section served various purposes: as a conversation opener, a means for discussing diversity, discussions regarding omission of some important identity markers, and other preparatory purposes. I usually gave the interview protocol to the respondents before the interview. Therefore, many of them had taken the opportunity to fill out the demographic section, answer some of the questions, or even evaluate the protocol before the actual interview. The protocol was divided into three sections: 1) **demographics**; 2) **background** of the respondent and 3) her **current** status. In each of these sections, various subjects or themes were taken into account, such as support mechanisms, gender diversity in upbringing, education or working environments, and the respondents experience with the developmental status of women as a group within higher education. Most of the questions in these sections were extremely open-ended with multiple options for further depth or development of a topic. The final questions also reflected multiple opportunities for the respondents to insert information or material that I might not have covered in earlier questions and follow-ups. I finalized the interviews by asking for the names of other potential informants. As such, I used a network process for some of my sampling procedures. This final question usually led to additionally useful discussions, not only for the names that were provided, but also the information on social networking and associations as well as personal insights into other women's academic lives.

The interviews were all conducted over three years. This extended time frame allowed for a number of current and local events to be considered in this research. From

the beginning, there were status reports on women where individual academic institutions were specifically pointed out due to their low levels of pay equity or the lower levels of attainment women reached in various fields. This initiated local press reports, extensive emails, as well as campus-wide meetings and feminist studies to further discuss the local status of women in the academy. In addition to these events occurring at the research sites, there were also various advancement processes where women were considered for positions as department chairs/heads, college deans, provosts and even University presidents. All of these situations provided excellent opportunities to meet tenured women academics and administrators, and to discuss women's advancement or potential for advancement with a number of respondents. On some occasions negative findings or events initiated discussions, but often positive advancement processes such as the nomination to higher-level interim positions of provosts or departmental advancement preceded various interviews. Due to a focus on these promotions or advancements, the discussion with tenured women academics would shift from limitation or lack of equity, to actual attainment and other forms of success.

Sample

Interviews were conducted with twenty tenured academic women who worked at six different research institutions. The tenured women that were interviewed were all chosen on the basis of my familiarity with the professor/administrator or my familiarity with the respondent's actual academic work either through workshops, classrooms, discussions, recommendation of others or her publications. All of the informants worked within research universities in a wide variety of fields and all of them had attained tenure on the basis of their teaching, service, and research. Five of the research institutions

where the respondents worked were located west of the Mississippi, with one in the Midwest. All of the women interviewed had diverse geographic backgrounds, having attended various undergraduate and graduate institutions, and/or grown up in diverse national and even international settings. These geographic locations or travels were often part of our initial conversations, and served as material for comparison of various locales and attitudes towards women at different levels of education and professional advancement. Several women had been born or raised outside of the continental United States, namely India, Mexico and Puerto Rico. Thus, many of the women had international experience either through their origins, their diverse educational and career experiences, or through their professional advancement.

In terms of racial and/or ethnic backgrounds, the majority (fourteen of the twenty) was white, and largely described themselves as having European-American ancestry. This included one woman who also self-identified as being Jewish and a child of holocaust survivors. Two women identified as indigenous, and participated in a variety of Native American communities and settings, such as a campus pow-wow, which was also a significant part of their scholarship in academic and professional training as well as outreach. Three women identified as either exclusively Hispanic or cross-identified as Mestiza (Mexican and indigenous), and two women were of self-acknowledged African-American descent. One woman was born in India and continued her research in a trans-national setting while she held an endowed chair in a southwestern University. All of the women interviewed were conscious of the relevance of a wide range of diversity in an academic institution doing research and encouraged it in this research. The respondents often did this by promoting other women with similar or different backgrounds as

potential respondents. Three of the Southwestern institutions were minority-serving universities with an institutional focus on appealing to a broad diversity of students, especially local Hispanic populations. Additionally, these institutions had also taken various steps (more or less successfully) towards broadening the diversity of their faculty populations, and many of the women interviewed had taken part in some of these efforts and pointed this out with apparent pride. This was not to indicate that there were no tensions around the subject of diversity, but the tension was usually addressed during the interview in some form.

A large majority (fifteen out of twenty) of the interviewees self-identified as feminists. In some instances I assumed that the interviewee had some kind of feminist identity, either because she did feminist research or teaching, had published feminist work, or participated in women's studies programs or feminist studies divisions of organizations. Only two women clearly stated that they did not consider themselves feminists, but they still supported women or women's issues in the academy. With the remaining three other women, it was not clear one way or the other as to how they identified themselves in terms of feminism, but they were aware that the research study was informed by a feminist methodology.

This communicative distancing from feminist research or themes did not come as a surprise as it is reflected in both contemporary popular culture (Traister, 2005) and the classroom. As frequently happens in anecdotal conversations, even at feminist events, women have distanced themselves from normative or exclusive definitions of feminism. They have stated that it was clearly too difficult to define feminism and therefore chose not to associate with this term. The continuing use of the term feminist was often

problematized in other settings during the time of my research, especially in various conferences and meetings. Rather than speaking against an underlying feminist standpoint theory, whether modernist or post-modernist, this actually underlined a need for a greater understanding and implementation of standpoint theory, especially with a more critical and differentiated understanding of power.

Two of the respondents, while associate professors in the arts and sciences college, were actually acting as women's studies directors at the time of the interviews, and one professor in yet another discipline had previously been a women's studies director. In addition, a majority of the professors and administrators were, or had been, active in the women's studies programs, women's studies steering committees, or feminist divisions of their own professional associations. These discussions around feminism would clearly indicate that in all of the findings it is important to discuss feminism (i.e., multiple feminist perspectives, rather than any single feminist standpoint that it is assumed all of the women represented).

At the beginning of the interviews, in the demographics section of the protocol, and later during the discussions about where the interviewed women received their everyday support or expended their energies, there were extended conversations about the state of women's relationships and/or how they described or regarded their families. Five women were single at the time of the interview, and three of these women clearly identified as heterosexual while one of them identified as a lesbian. Fifteen women were either married or lived in some kind of partnered relationships. There were at least twenty children specifically mentioned in the demographics and a multitude of pets that were included in discussions of familial relations. Discussion around children often included

adopted, stepchildren, grandchildren living at home, or children that had grown up and already left home. One woman stated that she had chosen as part of her career to neither be in relationship nor to have children. Most of the women also identified their sexual orientation as either heterosexual or lesbian. Three women lived in committed partnerships with women, and one of the women identified as a single lesbian at the time of the interview. Of the four lesbians interviewed, two of these women stated that they were lesbians and that this was part of their own conception of diversity and something that they represented in their professional work. These two women who openly identified as lesbians, were out about their sexual identity in a variety of ways, including while teaching, in their publications, and within their professional associations and divisions.

Professionally, the women represented almost all colleges available within their home institutions including Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Education, and Engineering. Some also had joint appointments, taught in other colleges, or had significant administrative responsibilities within or across colleges. Another example of representation across colleges included a variety of deans and two provosts. While a little more than half of the interviewed women were in colleges of arts and sciences, strongly represented by the field of communication, there were also professors of anthropology, English, criminal justice, literature, sociology, political science and women's studies. In education, three areas were represented: administration, curriculum and instruction, and art education. In agriculture, there was an agricultural economist, as well as a professor of plant and environmental sciences. There was one engineer who worked in the field of engineering technology but who also had additional departmental and college-wide responsibilities. I met three of my respondents through a large international professional

organization, and their professional writing also informed my work in feminist, intercultural, mediated, organizational and developmental communication. So, in addition to the respondents' Curriculum Vitae as requested (or as was easily downloadable from websites), articles and books – which frequently included autobiographical materials – were also available from a large number of the respondents. In interviews, these publications were often helpful in framing questions of attitudes in regards to subjects such as feminism, diversity, or their work and private spheres.

A large majority of the women held important positions as described by the texts of the ruling relations that were partially or completely administrative. This included department heads/chairs, program directors, deans and provosts. All of the women were also engaged in various service activities, committees or were in engaged in areas of faculty governance. Also, a number of the women advanced in rank or changed direction during the course of the research, making it possible to follow career trajectories and different forms of progress and attainment. I met some of these women while they were in one position and then interviewed them after their advancement ,or after they had moved out of certain positions as directors or department heads. For example, one woman was interviewed twice - once as a dean and then again as a provost. All of the women had attained the rank of associate professor, but several had already either advanced to full professor or attained that rank during the period of this research. Previous career moves, or hoped-for advancement, was often what initiated contact or what served as a central subject within an interview.

I not only interviewed the tenured academic women described here, but I was also able to observe many of these women in their work settings. Participant observation

occurred in a number of open and public academic settings such as conferences, women's studies committee meetings, feminist studies divisions, organizational settings, and promotional information and presentation meetings such as open interviews and question-and-answer during the hiring process for positions as deans or provosts. Observations also took place at smaller informal gatherings, such as fundraisers, celebrations and dinners. Observations of additional social networking were made possible when I was specifically invited to attend several informal women's gatherings in order to inform my research.

While there were more events and gatherings than can individually be listed here, the extent and variety of these settings enabled me to meet many, many other women who were interested in, or affected by, the research of this dissertation. Many, if not most of the settings included in this research were geared towards both formal and informal networking for women, where I was able to approach several tenured academics or administrators to invite them to be interviewed, or possibly talk later "off the record." It should be noted that in my very early research I attempted to take up contact with some prominent women academics outside my home university who were very reluctant to be interviewed due to feared negative consequences. They encouraged me to continue with my research, none-the-less. Informal conversations often helped the researcher check different aspects of the process and progress of the institutional ethnography in mapping ruling relations. These informal conversations, much like work with my advisers, helped to set up interviews, focus more on different aspects of the interview protocol or gradually create some new approaches and themes in the research overall. Almost every woman who was approached was interested in the research and its possible relevance for

all women in the institution and academic community as a whole. In addition to the tenured interviewees, there were also many women who were not in tenured positions, such as graduate students, lecturers, adjuncts and non-tenure track college professors, as well as staff who expressed an interest in the topic and the results of the research.

This extended interaction and widespread interest in the research topic reinforced my sense of the relevance of the problematic to the current situation of *all* women in organizational settings of the ruling relations of higher education. It certainly provided a great deal of insight into women's everyday lived social relations. There were several other specific settings that were especially informative of the research, which need to be mentioned here. Prior to the initial pilot study, there was a conference at one of the southwestern universities where the research occurred. This conference was initiated as a response to two concurrent events: 1) a national report on the status of women in academia highlighting that university's low levels of attainment for women and 2) major administrative decisions that had displaced senior women administrators in the university. Participating in the conference as both a presenter and graduate student, I gained a great deal of insight into the hierarchical structures of that university, a profile which is mirrored by many other academic institutions across the country. The translocal nature of these discriminatory power dynamics was further confirmed by contacts within professional associations and a related feminist studies division of a large organization.

A second setting, which needs a specific reference, includes various women's studies steering committees that helped to inform the research. The impact of the gendered nature of the ruling relations in various disciplines, including women's studies itself, was especially evident through the exchanges presented here. One of the steering

committees provided an introduction to a smaller working committee responsible for “Milestone” events. These events were specifically designed to address the varied successes of women, as well as men, within the academic community. These events specifically helped to reframe the problematic of the research toward the talk of success. The researcher discovered that while women were celebrating their successes, this was an area where it seemed there was very little research on the status of women.

Finally, it was within the same large academic professional organization mentioned above where I was able to participate in a feminist studies division that served as a remarkable sounding board over several years for my research and an introduction to many accomplished women within the field. It was through this organization that the local observations could often be translated into trans-local information. In other words, questions, which were particular to any given research setting, could be examined against the more universal engagement of gendered interactions in higher education as a whole. This served the purpose of helping to map the local social relations into the larger system of the ruling relations across the nation.

Procedure

In institutional ethnography, as in almost any qualitative research, participant observation and interviews would seem to be relatively self-explanatory, but there are specific issues that need to be detailed in this section such as the political nature of the subject matter, ethics, the iterative-informative nature of the research, and finally the equal standing of all women participants. Feminist ethics is central to any investigation of institutional ethnography for many reasons. First and foremost the ethnographer strives not to ‘objectify’ or to create alienated abstract depersonalized ‘subjects’ for research.

Feminism and critical organizational theory assert that all activity and social relations are political. I agree with this. Some of my research was especially political because many of the women I interviewed were also engaged with others in multiple negotiations of career paths. Maintaining the anonymity of certain participants was especially problematic and crucial, especially when respondents were prominent public figures whose leadership was considered either exemplary, or questionable, in the organizations where I did my study. Fortunately, even among the twenty participants there was a sufficient variety, and enough material in common, that an informative narrative could be maintained without stripping out all identifiers that could reveal the participants identities.

The research setting of the actual interviews themselves were all pre-arranged and usually face-to-face in my office, the respondent's office, or a mutually agreed upon café or restaurant. The latter was often the most informal setting, but often produced poor sound quality that made it difficult to hear the recorded interview afterwards. All of the respondents agreed to have the interviews recorded, and I frequently employed a back-up recorder available as well. The respondents often offered to help either by filling in parts of the demographic data themselves, or considering some of the questions and their answers in advance of the actual interview. We usually went through the demographic data together because I found that it helped to get a sense of the interview, discuss the research process involved, and otherwise find conversation openers to the women's lives that were more informal and less rigidly professional. The respondents were also eager and anxious to be helpful and the early parts of interview helped to establish the rapport for these exchanges.

In the literature on institutional ethnography, the interview is portrayed as a much more dialogic and informal process than in some other methodologies that might employ interviews (DeVault & McCoy, 2002; Diamond, 2006). Many of the informants reported enjoying the process of being able to discuss their process of becoming tenured professors as well as the accomplishments and achievements that had gone along with this process. Attention was paid to hardships or any difficulties that there may have been along the way, but the focus was often on what factors they believed had helped to determine their success. This also included factors that might not be considered in other questions of diversity, but that were often present in academic settings such as working class origins or first-in-family to graduate with a degree from an institution of higher education. In all of the interviews, there was a strong awareness of the hierarchy and socialization processes (or sometimes lack thereof) of higher education processes. All of the respondents were or had been researchers, so all of them were well aware of my research process and interested in its success.

In addition to recording interviews, I usually took hand-written notes during and after the interviews. All of the recordings were played back after the interview for their quality and in preparation for transcription. The recordings were transcribed with different degrees of depth, which was often determined by the quality of the acoustics and the background noise of the setting. The transcription quality was usually word for word, but different notations were used for pauses and filler words. All of the recordings were maintained and backed-up for future reference and possible upgrading of the transcriptions at some point in the future. There were damaged recordings and tapes that could not be replayed due to technical difficulties. Unfortunately, this happened once

when the respondent was only available at a conference. I was able to recreate much of the interview through my field notes. As a method, institutional ethnography allows for the flexibility of a broader sense-making rather than the word for word capture of each part of an interaction. All of the typed transcriptions were reread for accuracy and compared again with the interviews for overall consistency and quality. I began to recognize common themes even before all of the data had been collected. This was part of the process of the institutional ethnography and allowed me to include potential themes from earlier interviews in later ones. In the last year of research, the transcriptions were all entered into Nvivo qualitative data analysis software for coding. Again, recordings were played back to restore the atmosphere of the overall interview.

Each of the interviews lasted anywhere from thirty or forty minutes up to two hours, and this provided very extensive transcription material. Two interviewees also made themselves available for follow-up recordings. As noted, a few recordings suffered technical damage that could not be repaired and were not completely available for transcription. However, other material from these interviews was still available such as my notes and some of my commentary, so these interviews have been included in the overall assessment here. In the process of coding both the transcription records and field notes from various events, sub-themes emerged which I brought into subsequent interviews. Some of these sub-themes were reinforced, while others proved less informative or were outliers in the long run.

Treatment: Mapping the ruling relations and establishing themes

From the earliest point of research, the power of the institutional system of higher education as a whole was one of the central framing mechanisms for the entire

dissertation. Institutional ethnography provided the tools for approaching an investigation of this system from within by talking to tenured academic women about their success. The interviewed women's voices, as well as their agency and authority in their own lives, were crucial to the investigation as a whole. In the final analysis, the purpose of the institutional ethnography was to establish what was revealed about the ruling relations, exploring how the women's accounts of their lived experiences explicate the texts which constituted the ruling relations, and how the ruling relations were formed and transformed by the social relations and interactions that the women describe.

The text that emerges from the literature, that was inscribed into the organization, and that was built into the iterative process of the institutional ethnography, was the advancement system of tenure and promotion itself. The tenure and promotion system served as the scaffolding upon which a map of the ruling relations began to emerge. This mapping was accomplished together with the tenured academic women who understood the processes that they had gone through to attain tenure. Together we continued to explicate the text or organizational form of tenure and promotion around which the other themes emerged. While all of the women spoke with unique voices and each represented her own individual standpoint, tenure and promotion was the universal subject that brought all of the discussions together. Much as the quantitative literature was fixed on this subject so the attainment system of the university was built around this central edifice. In asking each of the women to describe her tenure and promotion process and what preceded or came after, the respondents shared their everyday working processes and constraints.

Within the research, this data was not analyzed to create any persuasive arguments for or against retaining tenure and promotion systems. I also did not consider how tenure figured in to discussions of faculty governance and administration. This was a reflection of my own ignorance and the questions that I had not yet learned to ask. It is only now at this stage in the research that I can look back and see yet another iterative mapping that I would use to make clearer.

Data Analysis

In going back and looking at the very broad array of data collected, including the academic discourse of the literature, the field events that have been described, and finally the twenty interviews, a number of broad themes did emerge. With the quantity and quality of the data much more may be derived from this data over time, but for now in addressing the problematic and the question of *how* tenured women talk about success, the following analysis serves to inform the results and implications of the dissertation as a whole. The themes that I will explicate in the results emerged through different examinations. In addition to working with standard pattern analysis of frequency, I also looked at the intensity of the discussion or the affect – a powerful or emotional language or type of exchange that was being applied in the discussion. I also want to reflect here on the settings of the interview. While I attempted to keep the interviews a little more informal in order to avoid a very strict traditional or professional academic discourse of success, the setting still often resembled a work setting in that it was often pedagogical. Many of the respondents talked to me in a manner that reflected how they would like to inform or socialize someone who is aspiring to follow a similar path to their own. This is also reflected in the analysis of the data.

In both critical theory and feminist theory, reflexivity is required, and it is one of the most powerful tools in the methodological toolbox of institutional ethnography (DeVault, 1999; Naples, 2003). Reflexivity in critical and feminist scholarship is required in order to ensure that one is not re-creating the same power structures that one is investigating, i.e. exercising power over the “subjects” of research. This institutional ethnography was designed to ensure that the tenured academic women maintained and were aware of their own power and authority in the process of the interview. They were engaged in a career process that I had not yet entered – having a tenured position and having secured tenure. They were actually describing how they had achieved a position recognized as having power within the system that I did not have, but did aspire to. Therefore, the power positions were practically reversed. In this process, though, the participants and I shared in a taken-for-granted discourse of success, that tenure represented a significant attainment and this was a marker of success. This was central in helping to establish tenure and promotion as one of the dominant themes of the research.

As described in previous sections, data analysis and reflexivity are woven all throughout the institutional ethnographic process in the iterative manner of qualitative analysis. In this sense, tenure was a guiding text of the research from the first pilot project through the final interviews. That being stated, it should be noted that it was not always a conscious part of the process. Even though a decision had been made at the very beginning of the process to only interview tenured women, not all of the ramifications of this were conscious. It was only in reflecting on all of the transcripts and then in coding that I recognized many, and perhaps not all of the inherent assumptions of tenure as a marker of success. While it was clear that tenure was the category of the quantitative

studies often used as a baseline reference, it was not always consciously present in the qualitative processes. Thinking about how the women participants talked about success, though, pointed very clearly toward different types of talk, or intensity as described by their emotional affect.

Listening to the interviews and gauging the intensity or the different affects of the respondents, one of the things that stood out in retrospect was how flat the discussions around tenure were in various interviews. They were rarely informed by a high-spirited sense of success or accomplishment. These discussions more often reflected something that had to be taken into account or were part of what brought us together. As it was part of the interview protocol, each and every interview had references to the informant attaining tenure. Primarily, though, there were two strains that were reflected in the tenure discussions. One had more to do with the “how to” processes that are also demonstrated in the women’s academic literature around and for academic women. This is what *you* (or anyone who is mentored such as graduate students or junior faculty) need to do if you want to work at a research university or in a department similar to that of the interviewee. This was also where game-like metaphors were used such as “jumping through hoops.” This type of talk represented the power of socialization, and was often present in the coding of various sections of different interviews. The other form was a simple recounting of the “facts” of tenure, the steps that were taken and how the interviewee had moved from one station to the next or gotten tenure within different departments or different universities. Facts are often used as representations for text (D. E. Smith, 1990b, 2005) which then can be used to map ruling relations. Tenure and promotion discussions were much more strategical or tactical, while they demonstrated a

high degree of reflectivity on the part of the interviewee in terms of how they were done, the talk seemed a little more mechanistic.

Tenure was a text that actually represented several things in different contexts. Initially, it represented a category that was a quantitative placeholder for success within the university system as measured by the professional reports and recognized by faculty and administrators, including those whom I interviewed. In the interviews, it further represented two different developmental stages or locations: 1) the tenure-track position that one needed in order to begin the tenure process, and then 2) the tenure process that actually led to attainment of tenure. Both of these were the working processes that were described in the interviews of the institutional ethnography and reported in the findings.

As the aural recordings and written transcripts were analyzed, in addition to T&P, I was surprised to find the bifurcation of career and family starkly noted throughout many of the interviews. The tone used to discuss these two different work and life spheres was strongly differentiated by variance in tone and affect. This was reflected in both frequency and intensity of how the tenured women talked about success. It often began at the very beginning of the interview, in the discussion of demographics. It was in this section of demographics, as discussed above, that respondents often shared intimate information either about their families of origin or their current families and how these families had come to be or developed together with their careers. These discussions were much more joyful or thoughtful in a completely different sense. They were never as strategical or tactical as the tenure and promotion narratives. They represented something “other” than the discussion about career and brought in a sense of the personal and informal that would often be present from the beginning to the end of the interview.

Family and relationships was an area that many of the respondents returned to in other sections of the interview, such as when prompted to discuss support or other aspects of their career development, as they developed responses, or during their narratives at a particular point in their own story of success. In the coding of transcripts, I recognized both the frequency and intensity in regard to the overarching theme of family and intimate relationships. It was then possible to gather this data through the software process and identify various sub themes. Working with the sub themes and key words, it was possible to go back to earlier interviews and code them more thoroughly on the basis of these family and relationship themes as they were developed. This was also an area that brought out further discussions about diversity and cultural heritage, which are also featured in exemplars from the findings.

Although many of these discussions of cultural diversity were political they were rarely solely based on success as marked by tenure and promotion, they were far too personal. Tenure and promotion played a role in the timing of some events or in interactions, but it was not central to many of these discussions. This reinforced the idea that family and relationships was another sphere of success within the ruling relations, not often considered when the sole focus of women's success is denoted by tenure and promotion.

As mentioned above, the discussions around family and intimate relationships were much more animated and somewhat emotional at times. Much like the discussions of the 1970s, it seemed that women still had a bifurcated consciousness of career and family life, but it was in a very different manner than what was described in Smith's recounting of early second-wave feminism. Rather than descriptions of family or intimate

relationships as a burden or another working area to be carried by the respondent alone, the interviewees brought these discussions in more as a kind of relief or counterpoint to the considerations of career attainment. Family and intimate relationships were framed much more as the joyous accomplishments or potential for joyous accomplishments of “having a life.”

Following tenure and promotion, family and intimate relationships, the third area that evolved as a theme for a more in-depth analysis was the idea of responsiveness and responsibility within the institution in terms of the transformative aspects of women’s presence within academia. Again, this theme may have been initiated or present from the beginning without a conscious awareness of having searched for this aspect of women’s success. It is reflected in the problematic of the institutional ethnography in terms of women who were actively engaged in questioning discriminatory practices or working environments. In the preliminary events and discussions that led up to the institutional ethnography it was clear that there was an indirect question posed through the problematic of the research in regards to women’s power or agency to change their own working environment and career tracks. This idea was a determinant in selecting respondents who were likely to be reflective about their own career processes and social relations. Also, due to the feminist discourse against the backdrop of the quantitative reports there was a major question as to women’s agency within the ruling relations.

The theme of speaking to power as a reflection of the central ruling relations did not fully emerge until later interviews where women more directly addressed their own power and sense of power within the system. It was in the process of moving from discussions of leadership to more direct discussions of actions taken and power, that the

activity of women's voice was more directly revealed. It was as women actively stepped forward to report on and claim the power and authority of this voice that it became a central thread for this institutional ethnography. Even when women demurred and indicated that they did not have power, this was an indicator of the very fluid dynamics of control and resistance that are inherent in the positions of authority that all of these women hold.

Once the third theme emerged, it was possible to go back through earlier interviews and identify this marker of success in earlier respondents' accounts. The coding of this theme was a little more traditional in that it involved career markers such as whether the respondent was more or less active in a professorial or administrative role. The willingness or activity of speaking to power indirectly reflected some career ambitions, or lack thereof, in terms of desires or intentions to attain higher levels of position within the hierarchy. It is important again to reflect, and state, that there is no right and wrong indicated with the levels of ambition or attainment that the women indicated for themselves. This is where a much more differentiated discussion of power and agency can be recognized as a marker of success.

In a qualitative analysis such as institutional ethnography, it will always be a question as to whether one has set out to find that for which one was looking. In institutional ethnography the analytic discovery is to identify the themes of the research in terms of the respondents insights into their own working processes. In this sense the analysis of events and interviews provided texts that could then be mapped to the ruling relations. In reflecting on the process, another weaving emerged which represented a kind of dialectic between the three themes. First, there was the given thesis of tenure and

promotion as an agreed upon success marker, then family and relationship success (or difficulties) was posited as having a life outside of the career in which the respondent was engaged. Finally, the third theme brought the respondent's reflections on, and responsibility to, the power they had gained back to a focus on their career, and their position as women within academia. This process resulted in mapping three central ruling relations instantiated or evident in tenured academic women's talk about success: tenure and promotion, family and relationships, and speaking to power. In what follows I describe each of these, provide illustrative exemplars, and offer an analysis of these frames for talk about success.

Findings

So I need to make sure that I have a motivating factor to come back to work day after day, week after week. And for me, it is not me. I come back because I think that today I can make a difference in someone else's world or life (Dr. Delgado - pseudonym)

Tenure and Promotion (T&P)

Tenure and promotion was a central theme in how academic women talked about their success. In this study, tenure and promotion were not categories referred to as they commonly are defined in the larger discourse of the academy. The current interview study examined the internal framing of T&P from the perspective of women who had attained tenure and were located somewhere in relation to the promotion process. Additionally, it sought understanding about how tenured women perceived T&P and the associated processes of attaining tenure, rank, or both. All of the women interviewed defined themselves and their success in relation to this system of advancement and for the most part were acutely conscious of its role in their professional academic lives. For many, it was simply the existing reality and part of how they achieved their position; others treated it as a process that represented a kind of finality or finish line. Some spoke of it very bitterly as a constraining mechanism. One group of women, although promoted within the system and tenured, filled administrative positions and thus found themselves on the other side of the tenure and promotion system. That is, they were no longer bound within the T&P framework but were responsible for its implementation. As deans and provosts they functioned as arbiters of the decision-making processes for the professorate in the advancement process. Although they were central to determining this measure of

success for others, for these women, there was the least discussion of tenure and promotion. Department chairs and heads who were interviewed were still part of the tenure track and rank promotion system themselves, but like administrators, also had greater input and affect on the advancement of others.

Some of the women interviewed gave very detailed insight into their decision-making processes in regard to choosing tenure-track positions and why they had decided this was the type of job they wanted in academia. Others, even if they had recently gone through the arduous tenure process, barely gave it a passing mention as if it was hardly more than a speed bump along the trajectory of their career. In discussion and preparation for these interviews, many women mentioned a number of other colleagues I should actually be interviewing because, as they put it, “they *really* had a tenure story” or “she’s got a whopper of a story.” Interestingly, even those with strongly negative stories regarding tenure were concerned that these negative experiences not overshadow their interview or reflect on the very real successes they had accomplished in their career as a whole. A few were still bitter about the impact of the tenure process and openly expressed it, even though they had attained a tenured position long before the interview. Yet, they still did not want the tenure story to overshadow the interview and sought to place it carefully in the context of a larger career track record of success. Given this range of experiences, for women in academia tenure and promotion was a central text.

From smoothly taking the hurdle, to ambivalence, to bitterness, the interviews ran the gamut of how women regarded the T&P process and their successful negotiation of it. After predictable discussions about the “old boys’ club,” there were surprising results when some discussions led to the role that some women played in blocking T&P

processes for other women. In the final analysis, T&P was the central text on which the rest of the findings were built. When women talked about success, the advancement system of tenure and promotion was central to all of the findings. Tenure and promotion was the text that represented the central mapping of the ruling relations. The following illustrates the various ways tenured women framed this process in relation to their success.

Part of the system. Many metaphors were used anecdotally, and appeared in specific interviews in order to describe the attainment of tenure and how women reflected on their success within the ruling relations. These included T&P being seen as a game or a track event which included racing and running hurdles and a circus involving jumping through hoops. For some respondents, T&P was simply part of the process or movement to success, and they apparently accepted it without any questions, in a very matter-of-fact manner. These women simply looked at where they measured up according to the linear checklist laid out by their department or college, and where their progress put them on its trajectory. As Dr. Groves (all names are pseudonyms) explained,

I'm an associate professor; I just got that with tenure. I've only been at [this institution], didn't want to be anywhere else, so it's been a really smooth ride for me. I've been here six years and then I just got promoted.

For this professor, tenure was simply part of the system, part of the rules laid out at her hire. The process was simple and straightforward. Although later in the interview we discussed the difficulty of tenure for another colleague, someone who was very much involved with the tenure and promotion process at the university, tenure just was not an issue for Dr. Groves. She recognized attaining tenure and rank as a personal

accomplishment that was more difficult for some other women; however, she did not problematize the advancement system as a whole.

Ambivalence. There was a question for some women as to what attaining tenure represented in terms of being a success-oriented finish line of sorts. Attainment appeared to be a place some could rest on their laurels after the struggle. But the discussion of T&P still brought up questions as to how success could be measured or demonstrated after the attainment of tenure. Dr. Kennedy described her process in the following manner:

I discovered that I'm only willing to jump through those academic hoops as long as I have to. Some people might think that I'm deadwood, but I'm not, you know. But, yeah, I definitely slacked off on my research, but I think that's because that's not what I really like best about it [the job]. But it was also sort of a political thing.... I think the research aspect, at least in my area ... [is] much more oriented towards men and male values and things of that nature, you know.... I think it is ridiculous to value a publication that seven people read ... and not value teaching, which is a thousand times more valuable.

Dr. Kennedy seemed quite ambivalent about what was accomplished or attained through tenure in her descriptions of what came after the tenure process. She questioned the text of tenure and promotion which emphasized research, while placing teaching in a less important role within the advancement system. She seemed to highly value teaching. Her reference to male values was interesting, as she did not identify as a feminist and actually distanced herself from the term during the interview. Her comments demonstrated the complexity and ambivalence of tenure shared by many women as a measurement of success within the ruling relations. First, for many women there was ambivalence about

the process and then there were questions about what had actually been measured for its award.

Dr. Mosley, highly critical of her institution's recognition of her successes, told a story about how her portfolio was being reviewed and evaluated while she was going up for full professor within the institution's rank promotion system:

I don't feel like [this institution] recognizes one's accomplishments, one's professional accomplishments. I don't think [this institution] recognizes one's stature within the national community in one's field. It almost feels like it doesn't matter. I feel like I was much more respected, much more well respected at [my previous university] than I am here. [A high level administrator] decided to review my dossier. I'm going for full now. And she said "I want to tell you that I was very surprised. You didn't stop." She said, "you could have just coasted, you can just coast. You've got tenure now twice, associate professor twice. But you didn't coast." She said "you're a good role model." And I couldn't believe she was telling me this. 'Cause a lot of people would just come here and [coast], but I can't do that. That's just not who I am.

Dr. Mosley's and others' comments indicated that attaining tenure was often associated with a break from further progress or achievement, a kind of finish line at the end of the race rather than the beginning or mid-point of a career. These comments demonstrated that the process and structures of the ruling relations laid out as a measurement of success might have been counterproductive to the stated intent within the texts of T&P policies. If tenure had become a finish line for professors in order to rest with safety and security, it may not have contributed to further accomplishments or to those that would be

considered part of their ongoing successes. Or in the perceptions of the women, other accomplishments following tenure may not be valued as significantly. Clearly, tenure was seen either as a resting place or simply one milestone of success.

The dark side of tenure and promotion. In other interviews, some women were quite bitter about the advancement processes that they had gone through. For example Dr. Finkel reported:

It's not been transparent the measures that are used to determine if someone has made the grade to get tenure, so it leaves all the power in the hands of the T&P committee and the department head to pretty much decide on whether a person is valuable or not. And it's based on who they like so that it's much of the time arbitrary. They really have developed a dislike for [my colleague] and for me in some levels because we always were interested in creating a community and try to have some justice and transparency and inclusiveness and democracy, and nobody wanted any of that, except perhaps for some younger faculty who were too cowed to talk up or something. But the senior folks were threatened by it. They were all such super individuals that they just did not want to even meet.

Her colleague corroborated this story. Both of these women were initially actively engaged in a department that they felt did not want to see them attain tenure or promotion. This colleague transferred to another department in the same university where she easily achieved tenure. Dr. Finkel earned tenure the second time that she went up in the same department, but then she was denied the rank of associate professor for one year. This process has lingered with both of them and soured their relationships with the department and the people who were originally involved in the denial of promotion.

When women did not achieve tenure, the question was often why and what is next? Did it truly reflect on their work and/or was it a true measurement of success? There were larger questions of how these processes affected the relationships within departments and within the larger organizations – colleges or the whole university. This was especially true for relationships between the professorate and administration. The administration was often seen as not subject to the process, but responsible for its implementation. The measures for success did not feel as if they are transparent, but very subjective, especially in the cases of failure to attain tenure. Whether women achieved tenure and promotion or not, both examples cited above cemented the validity of the T&P process as the determining factor of women’s success within the ruling relations.

Old boys’ network? Often, it may be easier to see the struggle to achieve tenure or rank promotion within the ruling relations as involving an actively oppressive dominant structure. So much of the larger discourse around tenure and promotion was often seen as further evidence of the “glass ceiling” for women in the ruling relations of the academy. It was often framed as if those who would oppose women’s rise to higher levels of higher education were denying women’s overall success. As Dr. Barrymore described it:

We’re working extremely hard to get more women. I am mentoring two junior faculty that are tenure track and you know, they’re [male faculty] not making it easy for them. And, as they shouldn’t, but at the same time ... you better make darn sure if they’re good you try to retain them and not run them out of there—because of your good old boy club mentality of how to do things.

While Dr. Barrymore focused on a patriarchal mentality, she also clearly supported a system that was challenging – it shouldn’t be “easy for them.” As in the earlier statement

about ‘men’s values’, it was interesting to note that this woman was in a predominantly male field and did not identify as a feminist, yet still made this reference to the “old boys’ system.”

Across the spectrum throughout various disciplines and universities though, all too often it was other women in power who may have actively blocked the advancement through tenure and promotion for other women. This was an especially bitter outcome for women committed to solidarity with women, as many of the professors interviewed here were avowed feminists. It was brought up often, and was more than anecdotal. Dr. Atwell, who was also denied tenure through an antagonistic department, commented, “It’s important to recognize that when I experienced a very painful and really unfair tenure process, it was women who headed up that process.” Therefore, here it is important to note the discourse and perceptions of power while discussing tenure and promotion. In talking about success as a gendered process, it was important to recognize that the ruling relations being studied were not easily sorted by clear-cut discriminatory behavior of men against women. As a very outspoken senior full professor, Dr. Nelson, stated:

They all want it to be a merit, they all want it to be objective, they don’t want any of this sort of special case scenario thing. They don’t understand there’s not a level playing field. They don’t understand that there is constant, persistent, and you’re lucky if it’s overt, discrimination You know? You’re ahead if it’s at least overt You can, you can do, you get the ‘wok wok!’ [siren sound] But when it’s covert, you can’t do a goddamn thing . . . because so much of it is based at this point on subjective decision, and there is nothing about a subjective decision you can call in legal process.

To these women professors the rank and promotion system as a measure of success was a very imperfect organizing system for achievement within the academy. There was a great deal of discourse at all levels of the academy as to how it could be changed or whether it should even be kept. Despite its imperfections, many women still held on to the security and achievement that tenure represented. It was still central to the perceptions of success both within and outside the system, and thus very important as the central text in mapping the ruling relations. The advancement system was also the framework that was foundational for the next two success themes of family and relationships, and the ability to speak to power.

Family and Relationships

The second theme centered on how tenured academic women talked about their family and intimate relationships when talking about their ideas of success. A vital element of many of these women's narratives regarding their own success included the presence and quality of their most intimate interpersonal relationships—their lives beyond their career in the academy. Their reflections on partnerships, parenting, or relationships with their family of origin came up at many and various places in most of the interviews, and focused on the issue of the importance and value of these relationships in the overall picture of their lives.

Maintaining families from a feminist standpoint. The discussion about these important relationships was interwoven throughout almost every interview and included the current status of the interviewee's relationship, partnership, or family interactions. Many of the women were in long-term stable relationships, and many had children or had thoroughly considered the role of children and family in their lives. This held true across

all ethnicities and sexual orientations. The types of relationships were also a central concern when women were dissatisfied or concerned about *not* having them, as if their success was not complete in some way without such relationships. “What role does a woman’s relational status and family play in her own perceptions of success?,” became another central theme for understanding the ruling relations that constituted many of these women’s lives and in their own constitution of their careers. Therefore, a key system of meaning was a woman’s successful ability to incorporate family and work in her life and to do so in a manner that enriched both without having to sacrifice either. These thoughts on the bifurcated consciousness of women and their family lives have certainly evolved over time. Dr. Armour summed it up by saying:

The ability to say I love my work, and this is what I'm choosing to do right now and sometimes my work supersedes family in terms of my priorities at this point in time and other times family supersedes it in terms of what one needs to do. So, you know, we just - we need to make sure that women, in particular, can say no, my work is the most meaningful thing in my life right now.

Dr. Armour emphasized the progress of women in being able to make choices, having agency, between their priorities in achieving success, especially in terms of their own individual and personal perceptions of what was important. Dr. Armour’s standpoint was that she did not have to make a choice of one sphere of her life at the expense of the other.

In a discussion about whether professors were able to have a life outside of work, Dr. Groves talked at great length about how she encouraged students and colleagues to incorporate family into their lives and avoid having to “make a choice” between the two.

According to Dr. Groves, “I was more efficient with my time and I purposely picked a university, I picked this department, everyone in this department was happily married - who was married, was happily married.” She went on to say,

So to me, those people were the kind of people I want to be around because they respected family, they respected the way I am in my relationship and a lot of my friends went to other universities and that was not the case. They *did* (emphasis added) have to give up their lives, but I think it’s a choice and I think you don’t have to make the choice.

For Dr. Groves, her family and the orientation to her non-work relationships structured her decisions regarding where she wanted to work and how she defined her personal success. She deduced, or at least discerned, that the people in the department she chose to work in valued family relationships, and this was something that resonated with her. As such, family and intimate relationships not only structured Dr. Groves’ perceptions of success but also structured her career in a very real way.

Despite the importance placed on personal relationships as a key discourse of success, when concerns surfaced regarding their own career ambitions several women reflected on their spouse’s success. One of the often-mentioned problems of being married or partnered arose if the woman’s spouse or partner was unable to be as successful where she had chosen to work. As Dr. Klein noted:

In terms of personal success and balancing my life with my husband’s life, not so good. We’re happy together, but there’s always going to be that imbalance. And, that makes me sad because I would like for him to have the same thing [success].

A few women brought up the discontent of their partners which framed a sub-theme of sacrifice, discussed below. These were either the sacrifices that partners and family members needed to make for the women's careers, or the sacrifice women themselves made in not attending to partnerships or family. It was clear, throughout these conversations that the theme of family and intimate relationships was important to how women regarded their own success within the ruling relations.

Sacrifice. A small, but significant number of women felt they had either voluntarily or inadvertently been forced to trade their career success for some sacrifices in their intimate or personal family life. When I questioned Dr. Loke more specifically about her choices to be single and without children, she clearly stated:

So if you'll be precise, I can tell you. So if you're asking in terms of quality of life, would I have wished that I had had a partner and children, I would say yes if it was somebody who's supportive of who I am and who would do 50% of the work in the home.

Dr. Loke went on to discuss the status of women in her native country and how this was also a major factor in her clear cut, conscious decision to remain single and without children.

Dr. Kennedy discussed how being single was a factor in preventing her from being closer with colleagues:

I'm not actually very close with any of my colleagues. And a lot of that has more to do with the fact that I'm single than anything else, you know. Everybody else is married and havin' babies and that's just not really - I mean, even if they're gay or

lesbian, they're still - getting married and having babies, you know. So I don't have a lot of commonality really outside of my job with them.

Later in the interview Dr. Kennedy went on to explain her position with the following analysis of roles:

And, of course, one thing I was gonna add when I was talking about being single and married. I don't meet very many single men in academics because I think they get married early, so they have a support system when they go through grad school. I don't. And I meet single women, who are in academics, but I don't meet very many single men, and that could go back to, I do believe that women can do things by themselves, I don't believe that men can, which is interesting. It's because women can - the men can't do the shit work, that's why they ultimately are - that's their weakness. Women can do both. I didn't need anybody to do my laundry, but for some reason I think a lotta men did.

While these last comments could be directly incorporated into the second-wave literature on bifurcated consciousness, I believe both of the excerpts above highlighted the fact that women were still more likely to believe that they had to sacrifice intimate relationships or family in order to attain career success. The circumstances in both of these respondent's lives have reinforced this for them. And thus far they have adapted to this and accepted it as the conditions of their existence as successful academics.

Another subject that was closely related to sacrifice was the discussion of making time for elderly parents. Dr. Finkel shared her difficulties in making time for a parent who had had a stroke. She was also disappointed that she was not able to spend more time with the remaining parent on the basis of her career. Dr. Valley too felt that it was

her responsibility within her cultural framework to spend more time with her parents and she was committed to doing this. She was very clear about her boundaries between career and family. More than almost any other woman I interviewed, she discussed ordering her life in such a way that she was able to spend her summers and free time at home with her native family. She had made significant sacrifices for her career prior to tenure and was now committed to having more control over her life and career. Her commitment to family was clearly a form of resistance to the ruling relations of the academy.

Whether in its centrality to their lives or in its absence, the discussion of intimate relationships and family was present throughout the discussions of success and careers for all of the academic women. The poignancy of its importance became even clearer when the discussion moved to sacrifices or deficits in being able to spend time with those one loved. In all of the varied situations described, it was clear that the women measured success in their ability to integrate a personal life with their academic life.

Lesbians and family. Same sex sexual orientation, that is, relationships that might not be recognized as heterosexual marriage in terms of the ruling relations, also emerged as vital for some women, especially in the area of partner benefits. Both of the major universities that served as the significant backdrop for the interviews provide domestic partner benefits and these benefits were cited as a reason for the choice of working at the university. For example, Dr. Mosley pointed out that she had decided to accept the position at her institution because her partner would be able to attain her terminal degree through the tuition reimbursement program for spouses and domestic partners.

Thus, family relations, namely being able to provide support and care for loved ones was important in structuring career decisions. Indeed, like Dr. Groves who

explained she worked where she did because professors in the department “respected family,” some women interviewed sought universities that respected expanded definitions of family. This is also an area of investigation that is much underreported. The identification of lesbian participants was especially problematic because of the complex position of lesbians within the ruling relations. Like many of the respondents with complex identities in terms of their intersectionality with possible obstacles to their careers within the ruling relations, some of the out lesbians questioned whether being open about their sexuality affected their success. Those who were less open in their identification as lesbians were potentially still affected by the stigma of being seen or possibly perceived as lesbians or single women without traditional intimate relationships. This highlighted the importance of gendered identification and that universally women were most likely to be defined and identified through their relationships with others. Thus, by definition of the ruling relations, any woman was concerned with how her success was viewed in terms of the intimate social relationships she maintained, whether she was heterosexual or a lesbian. Perceptions of gender and potential partnerships were almost as important as actual family relationships.

Family of origin. Many, but not all, of the women interviewed were the first-in-family to have graduated with an advanced degree. Several cited their mothers as one of the most distinct reasons for their having accomplished what they did. Dr. Andrews said:

My mother I think always saw education as the avenue and was very clear to us from – my two sisters and I – from a very young age that the expectation is we'd go to college, . . . She never was able to finish college herself. She wanted to go to University of Virginia but they only accepted men. She wanted to study

architecture but that was a male-only program. . . . she was a girl from the hills, you know, and so, . . . so, but I think the fact that it was always beyond her reach made it even doubly important.

Dr. Andrews talked about accomplishing what her mother had not been able to accomplish in her own lifetime and identified this as key to her own success. But even in a situation where one or both parents had a degree, family history constituted success in specific ways. Dr. Loke for example had witnessed to her mother's withdrawal from a more intellectual life:

My mother is a physician and my father is an engineer. She gave up medicine as soon as I was born and stayed home and brought up children for two sets of reasons. Culturally, it was not acceptable for a woman to work outside the house, not even as a physician, because her husband made enough money. There was no reason to leave the children to maids and housekeepers if your – so the only reason a woman was allowed to work in the Indian context was if she – if the family would starve without the income she brought in.... And the cost of doing this was very high intellectually and emotionally on her. She's a brilliant woman, much smarter than my father, and she made sure all of her children got second and third degrees. So even though she wouldn't tell us what's the point of going and getting your Ph.D. or getting an M.D. or some such thing and at the same time her life experience that we saw indicated that staying at home and bringing up children was not intellectually satisfying.

These stories poignantly bring forward the idea that integrating a career and a family life was often a very large component in how this generation of women still

viewed success. There was a generational succession that was often especially acute between women and their mothers. Women bore direct witness to the possibilities of women across the years and between different cultures. Several of the women also mentioned their responsibilities in terms of being available to aged parents or being present at the death of a parent. This may be an area where we can continue to investigate how women regard their success as they look at family over different generations and in light of different work cultures.

While continuing to look at women's intimate and personal relationships within the ruling relations, it is interesting to speculate how this emphasis on social relations as part of success also shifted women's perspectives on care and responsibility for others. One woman mentioned her commitment to teaching, while others discussed their mentoring of junior faculty in terms of tenure and promotion. Women, as a whole, began their most recent large-scale entry into the professorate under the conditions of the call for greater social justice and equality for all women. The question was whether these factors continued to play a role in their careers. I explore this subject in the next area where I address how women responded to power within the ruling relations of the academy.

Speaking to Power

A key instance of the ruling relations instantiated through professors' talk about success was their capability to speak up and address social injustice in various situations. A tool of the ruling relations was professional voice and accountability as well as a shared responsibility for the power of the ruling relations. Many of the women, although not all, spoke of their backgrounds with a strong awareness of, or active engagement in,

social justice movements such as civil rights, feminism, or Chicano/Chicana and indigenous rights organizations. Some were still active and engaged in these causes on and off campus.

In addition to social activism, all of the women's talk about success included a conscious thread regarding where and how they gave voice to concerns for social justice in the academy—what I call *speaking to power*. Because speaking to (i.e., talking back) to power was such a central part of many stories, their own power in the form of addressing injustice was often a crucial aspect of defining their success. The types of speaking to power involved four aspects of voice. First, there was using a professional voice to address community injustice and then there was also a professorial voice to address the wrongs within the university itself. Speaking to power also included the third type, which was an administrative voice within the university, expressed with a much more differentiated sense of power and authority. Finally, one woman stood alone and called out truth in an unfair and unjust situation by involving the legal system and university governance. In all of these cases, power was expressed through the dynamics of both authoritative control and resistance to others power.

Activist and service voice. The women interviewed were very conscious of their relationship with the ruling relations both inside and outside of the academy. In this arena, women related success not only to professional attainment within the university, but also to the responsibility associated with the university's relationship with the community. Dr. Jimenez, from a southwestern university said, "The power that's important to me is the power that allows me to make connections between the university and the community. And to challenge the university about its relationship with the

community.” Thus, success was framed within a much broader discourse within the ruling relations, but its context is still connected with the power or the authority of the academic career that is involved. Dr. Jimenez realized the power of her position within her academic career, but reveled in the dynamic of the interaction with the larger community where the university was directly a part.

The work of most of the respondents is connected with communities outside of the university in one form or another. These women find purpose in giving voice to those who are not privileged or advantaged by the ruling relations. Dr. Atwell reported:

Yeah, my work, my research, service, and teaching work have always been integrated since I've been here. Most of my research has come out of my service work in the community. And, when I said that – I told my dissertation chair that I probably wasn't going to publish my work, it was because my biggest concern was providing information for the subjects of my research than it was for providing information for the public at large, so that's always been my approach to academe.

Clearly Dr. Atwell's commitment to social justice was a central theme of her life. Her success and work within the ruling relations was completely integrated with the ideas of empowering those who are disadvantaged. She worked with the tools of the ruling relations in order to be able to reach and empower those who are outside of the academy.

Voice within the academy. Another example of speaking to power involved the discourse around academic freedom. The fear of promotion loss, or failure to attain tenure often silences women and this fear seemed to be inculcated through a variety of socializing messages. These socializing, sometimes disciplining, messages are most

salient during the tenure or promotional process. But these silencing effects are not limited solely to tenure and promotion. Aftereffects are felt in a variety of other ways. The following illustrates how everyday communication instantiated this socialization and silenced women, or strictly limited where and how they could speak (i.e., where speaking to power might be harmful to one's career).

While sitting in a women's studies steering committee meeting, two prominent associate professors brought in a faculty letter involving a petition of support for the university staff in the act of unionizing. Both women had signed the petition and expressed strong support for the staff unionizing and encouraged other faculty to consider signing the letter in support. The professors went on, however, to point out the risks involved with offering support. Each associate professor joked about how she considered supporting the staff's unionizing efforts, while pointing out that this was the academic year in which she was seeking promotion to full professor.

Although supporting the unionizing efforts was consistent with these women's overall careers and political ideologies, both professors expressed concern about the potential effect voicing support could have on the administration's evaluation of their promotion case. Their talk about providing support underscored a balance in terms of what they deemed success. They sought a balance between their activist stances by speaking to power, while also moving in a forward career trajectory. Joking about the subject drew attention to what they believed were the political ramifications of speaking to power. It also drew attention to a subtler split between professorial and administrative roles within the university.

Subsequent conversations with a number of other well-established associate professors around the country revealed similar forms of ambivalence regarding speaking to power, especially when talking back could negatively impact one's career. Indeed, this pattern was quite common and widespread. Just as attaining tenure had been a barrier to speaking out, for older women the idea of whether or not they were going to make full professor before retiring seemed fraught with tension and insecurities. It seemed as if there was no position in which tenured women ever felt completely free to speak to power without serious consideration of career-damaging consequences. Despite apprehension and ambivalence, women in this study often noted that feeling successful was speaking to power regardless of the risk. For women who identified as feminists and activists, this was an especially strong component of what they regarded as both part of their responsibility, as well as their success, that is to speak up for themselves, but also for other women. Dr. Gordon, a former director of women's studies said:

I think I'm just that sort of person who has always sort of felt like I was on the periphery or on the outside and was never gonna have this power, and that you have to speak to power, honestly. From the position of the "oppressed" I guess.

This exemplar directly addresses how some women see their success as part of an oppressed group that makes it imperative for them to claim space for themselves and others within the ruling relations. These women have often come of age within the second-wave feminist movement and are directly informed by their political ideology.

Dr. Valley framed this type of direct and forthright communication as part of her Native American background, as well as her being a woman who identifies with other women from this cultural heritage.

I think that's one thing about a lot of Native women is some folks don't know how to deal with us because we talk and it sounds like an angry tone.

When we do a critique and that's how it comes across. I think some male administrators, I make them fidget a little bit, but that's just how we are. There's just work to get done and you just get it done. We don't need to sugar coat anything. . . . So I notice that those women are like that, too. They speak like I do. That's what I also meant by communication.

This is a strong example of a woman discussing how important for her success it is to be true to herself in speaking as she would speak both naturally and from a critical position. She recognized herself as both outside and part of the system of the ruling relations. Her position gave her responsibility for addressing the system.

Finally, Dr. Armour who works in the discipline of communication addressed the socialization of women professors as it pertains to their speaking out:

And that is that it's - a lot of it's women, but I don't know that it's all women, but when you're a new professor in different systems you don't feel as powerful, you don't feel as though you can talk as much, you know, express your opinion as much. And maybe you've even just been told that across the board, just don't - I know people who've been told, just don't say anything much until you're tenured and promoted.

I look at it and I think it's such a waste to do that. In the systems that I was in prior to the time I became promoted and tenured, I never thought to do that. I was just so surprised when I heard somebody say my advisor told me I should do this. And it's a waste because the place that you're at doesn't get the benefit of your

intellect but it's also a waste because you've learned to just sit there and hear what other people have said and haven't contributed. And yes, you do want to listen.

But, you know, it's of concern that you might not want to contribute.

It was clear, though, from both the literature and interviews that a great deal of care and consideration must be given to this balance, both strategically and tactically. This was especially true when the discussion was about influencing or socializing junior faculty, graduate students and adjunct faculty. This discussion has also highlighted the agency and choice that was involved with speaking to power. All of the women framed their success with their consideration of what they were capable of doing, their responsibility for doing it, and passing it on to and for others.

Administrative voice. In many ways, there was often tension between faculty roles and administrative roles, especially when it came to decision-making and governance. Women in senior administrative positions, however, often linked their success to how they used their power within the system for others. Dr. Espinoza in a senior level administrative position addressed power in the following:

Well it's interesting that you would say that because I've never considered it as a position of power. I consider it as a position to be able to work collaboratively with people to make things happen and it's an opportunity to provide that leadership, you know. And so, that's how I see it and it has proven to be that.

It's wonderful working with the deans on things that we know need to get done, working with the different departments' faculty across campus. It's an exciting time. I enjoy working in faculty senate and I've never, I've always seen faculty as the key to moving and working with difficult issues. So, I'm enjoying that. I've

enjoyed the collaboration and the interaction with people from this format, from this, at this, in this position.

Dr. Espinoza, like many of the women interviewed, was apparently not completely comfortable with power individually for herself or simply for her own advancement. She needed to make it clear that the power served a greater purpose, and that she actively worked to weave together different groups to come up with harmonious relations. While the professors often saw their success in terms of questioning or challenging the administration, the administrators needed to relate their success not to simply being powerful, having control or authority, but working with different forms of resistance to the administration.

As in this exemplar, many others similarly demurred to having power when directly asked. They seemed far more comfortable talking about power in the service of some greater good, especially for the administrators who rose from the tenured ranks of faculty. They typically framed their success as service leadership. Service through their positional power, whether as a tool to enhance work with faculty, students, and staff or to address potentially oppressive power within the greater ruling relations worked to augment their sense of responsibility in using their authority.

Voice for truth and justice. A final example represented not a larger overarching pattern in professors' talk about success as in the previous examples, but a unique and especially challenging experience of one professor's experience of speaking to power. Dr. Nelson was a university researcher who described an extensive legal battle with people working on a major grant. She was challenged to step down from the grant and turn it over to another group that was involved, but who were not the PI's. They wanted

to take over her work on the grant and leave her out of it. As she presented it, the university administration had not supported her in this challenge at all. They had refused to provide legal counsel, so she retained her own. Rather than backing down and abandoning the grant to the others, she had gone ahead and fought a legal battle to defend her rights as PI, to her intellectual property, and contributions to the grant. Other respondents had recommended that I speak to Dr. Nelson on the basis of this story because for them she exemplified the successful use of power. Regardless of the outcome of the legal battle, she had taken it upon herself to speak up and defend her interests, while maintaining her position on campus despite a lack of administrative and legal support. Dr. Nelson also saw herself as one of the most powerful women on campus because of her work in consistently speaking truth to power. She explained,

[W]hen it became significant, they didn't do anything, and I, even after we were finished, I had a meeting with the president, the vice-president, the provost, and every goddamn academic dean, and they sat in the room, and [I] said to them, "You know if it happened again? I'd do exactly the same thing, because I did the right thing.... I just want you guys to understand. I didn't, you know, this is what should have been done.... You guys should have stood behind your faculty." And they didn't. They're all gone now though, most of them. And I think a number of the ones that aren't, worry whenever I raise my hand in a presidential forum, and I stand up and I challenge them.

Dr. Nelson learned from a major and significant challenge that her power came through fighting for the things she believed in, even at great risk and through a multi-million dollar legal battle. Having initiated and then prevailed in a lawsuit without

university legal counsel or administrative support, she framed this victory beyond the legal victory, extending it to underscore her leadership role and its concurrent responsibility to continue fighting systemic injustices.

Speaking to power, in all of its forms, may be seen as one of the most authoritative measures of success because it highlights the dialectic of security, risk, and responsibility that goes along with women's power within the ruling relations. It highlights the responsibility that goes along with the success they have accomplished through the advancement system of tenure and promotion. Many of the women had a joyous attitude that gave credence to the idea that accomplishment within the system could lead to the power that would enable reform and transformation of the ruling relations. They were willing to take the risks of their position and power to continue to question, challenge and reform the ruling relations. They were also willing to encourage others, at various stages in their own careers, to do the same.

Regardless of the powerful stories, one does not escape the hegemony of the ruling relations in any of these instances. At most, some of the women who were interviewed have found the outer most edges and see where they can change and reform the system from within. Within the hegemony of the ruling relations there is certainly still room for honesty and integrity, and continuing one's work. These women are certainly inspiring others as well as mentoring and socializing students, staff, and peers to work within the ruling relations. These voices demonstrated that there *is* power within the system. It still remains to be seen how women as department heads and chairs, deans and provosts, as well as presidents will ultimately shape and constitute the universities both

within their present configurations, as well as in their larger changing roles within the greater ruling relations of legal, financial and political governance.

Conclusion: Discussion and Implications

. . . I am concerned with certain kinds of communication: communication between parents and children, between associates of the same status, between members of different societies and, through the mediation of various kinds of coding—tools, art, script, formulas, film—between cultures distant from each other in time and place – Margaret Mead (1964/1999)

Overall Implications

The findings from the institutional ethnography indicated that women's constitution and transformation of the ruling relations is an ongoing process that continues to shift and evolve. It evolves both for the individual women but also in processes of collective awareness and consciousness of change. This hearkens back to the purpose of this study in using the micro-level or individual results from how tenured women talk about success to illuminate the larger social systems or structures which iteratively frame them and their experiences as a whole. The tenured academic women might be able to affect greater resistance or transformation within the ruling relations at higher levels within the hierarchy, but it is important that the emphasis is not only on the quantitative evidence (i.e., numbers of women, positions, salaries) that appear to indicate little change is taking place within the ruling relations. It is important to acknowledge that these numbers reflect the gendered institution, but the women indicated that the numbers are not the only valid measurement of success. The ability of tenured academic women to balance their lives inside and outside the institution were often as important for them as their career accomplishments. Celebrating the integration of academic communities with social communities was also another way to acknowledge that success

is much greater than the academic career markers transmitted in larger sociological findings.

As stated throughout, a focus on the numbers eliminates the conception of possibilities outside of the traditional success markers. Organizational communication scholar Buzzanell (1994) reported that a reframing of such concepts as the “glass ceiling” would be helpful in refocusing women’s collective efforts on opportunities for agency and transformation within and outside the ruling relations of academia. Looking at opportunities for campus women or academicians to come together to inaugurate and plan more diverse celebrations might be one way to discover what is important and help reframe success markers. Whether they were officially afforded the opportunities, many women created accessibility to both informal and formal social and networking events. Therefore, actively supporting these activities and networks from the top down, using campus resources to invite women and support the events, might help to reduce the isolation some women feel in managing and balancing work responsibilities with greater life concerns. This would also represent both the implementation and realization of feminist standpoint theory that a multiplicity of views and experiences are welcomed and encouraged within the greater academic community.

Issues of pay equity are going to continue to capture the concerns of large professional organizations such as the AAUP and the AAUW, as well as individual women at various stages of their career. I would argue that it is important to acknowledge the discriminatory, ongoing gendered aspects of the ruling relations, but by reframing and asking questions from women’s standpoint rather than system standpoint we can conceivably develop new strategies for transformation. Women were actively taking part

in all levels of administration and leadership at the institutions that I investigated. If these women and all administrators were to officially acknowledge these reports and call for collective forms of addressing these implications new strategies could be developed. The ruling relations are constantly evolving and new systems and structures are constantly being created and re-created. New strategies have been developed by some women already, and with a collective commitment to working together with all stakeholders, could be implemented if such strategies were prioritized. For example, one of the campuses was actively moving towards addressing pay equity as a whole by inviting an outside audit and then moving forward on the recommendations. Pay equity is not solely an economic concern; actually, it is bad for all qualitative measures of appreciation and loyalty to the institution. It directly affects morale and working climates, as was evidenced by the tenor of many of the discussions at these institutions.

In continuing to frame the professional discourse around texts dictated through the ruling relations, we are precluding “discussions and social action that could create transformational change” (Buzzanell, 1994, p. 327). At one of the campuses I attended, the women’s studies steering committee sponsored “Milestone” events that welcomed new faculty, celebrated their families, and at the end of the semester celebrated a much wider variety of successes such as births and artistic events, as well as research publications and promotions. The event was inaugurated with the support of a Dean and women from different departments in one college, but invitations were sent out across colleges to include everyone from graduate students through staff and faculty. They were also family friendly events, where on occasion even children were invited and included. Eventually, the President and his wife were among the top supporters of these events,

contributing resources, and they always making an appearance. The Milestone events, which celebrated a multi-variant concept of success, were evidence of the potential for transformation of the ruling relations through a refocusing on academic community and local consciousness and awareness.

As local networks and events may provide entirely new insights into the reframing of success within local communities, national, transnational or cybernetworks may provide entirely different seeds for success, which have yet to be conceptualized. Encouraging women to network and supporting such networks is also a way to harness larger transformational efforts that may be necessary as we all shift toward larger national and global concerns such as the current economic downturn and sustainability. Furthermore, as larger subsystems of the ruling relations continue to be transformed through technology, organizations such as social networks and publishing systems, it is difficult to predetermine what markers of success may be required from future generations of academic women and how gender will impact and organize these new cyber social relations.

Many of the women interviewed were interested, and invested, in helping the universities and communities become greater participants in citizenship concerns. These women were also interested in contributing their career skills and abilities towards helping these transformations take place both on the local and global level. They were more than committed to doing their part, they were eager to reach out to others on campus, especially graduate students and junior faculty and to help them make the adjustments necessary in order to be successful on their own terms. Thus, the constitution of the ruling relations and their transformation goes beyond the subsystems of higher

education and extends into the much broader reach of the professions and social and civic engagement that the universities actively promote.

Unfortunately, recent research indicates that graduate students might actually be developing a greater reluctance to enter the professorate for various reasons (Mason, Goulden, & Frasch, 2009). Events that encourage the integration of successful faculty sharing both their family and their career strategies and skills might help lift some of the burden from those considering or just entering the professorate. Realistically, time and economics will continue to be factors for all participants. The tenured academic women respondents had already demonstrated great organizational skills in managing work and family life and were willing to share these with others. The focus, though, of top down administration will continue to guide what is prioritized and what is considered valuable within the academic community.

The women interviewed demonstrated that they were more than capable of being successful according to the guidelines of the ruling relations. They were also committed to sharing the information of their successes and helping others to similar accomplishments. These tenured academic women were often concerned for and protective of junior faculty that they not have to go through the same hoops or hazing. In general, though, these were women who were amenable to the system and the hierarchy. It did work for them and I do not foresee them individually or collectively becoming greater advocates for change than they already are. Yes, these women were advocates for fairness and equity, but they had also learned to get by very well within the ruling relations.

In any case, tenured academic women will continue to study the texts, social relations, and subsystems of the ruling relations in order to better map their own individual and collective activities in the overall processes of their careers. This institutional ethnography has affirmed the reflexivity and willing consciousness of tenured academic women. They are actively engaged in their own lives and willing to consider how these lives effect and have an impact on others. Many of the respondents maintained a consciousness of the potential impact of their voices in various forms of transformation of the ruling relations. It is not clear, though, how or where there might be commonality in working towards transformation. I will continue to explore this subject as I look at the implications of the findings in each of the following central themes that emerged from the study.

Tenure and Promotion

Tenure and promotion were central to my findings because so much of the discourse within academia has been built around the tenant of advancement systems and how they represent self-governance. Tenure and promotion were central texts that delineated the social relations within the ruling relations of academia. As stated throughout, this institutional ethnography was based on women looking at tenure and promotion as a marker for success from the inside of the process, and describing the effect or the impact of this text on their own lives. Almost all of the women were reflective of the tenure and promotion process, both in how it had already played a role in their lives, and for many how it continued to play a role in terms of their completed or potential promotion to full professor. Even for those women who did not consider themselves ambitious the potential for promotion to full professor was significant

because of the difference it could make in their income at retirement. Therefore, all of the women interviewed in tenure track positions were still framed within the system defined by tenure and promotion.

Another form of advancement for women outside of T&P was to enter university administration. As stated previously, the women respondents in these positions had all been tenured professors before they entered the administrative ranks and could conceivably return to the professorate if they so chose. Furthermore, the administrators interviewed were all in positions where they still were decision-makers when it came to the advancement of others and also in policy decisions around tenure and promotion.

Women who choose tenure track positions and continued to be a part of the hierarchies of the ruling relations certainly constituted that system, whether they perceived it as supportive, oppressive, unfair, or simply a fact of life. For those who regarded it simply as a milestone of their career, there was still a level of reflectivity about the meaning of the process and how it constituted academia that went far deeper than the simple sociological marker of success. For those respondents who had been held up by the T&P process by failing to attain tenure at one point in their career, there was bitterness at how the process was central to the system but at times quite arbitrary. There was occasionally even bitterness among those who had gone through the processes of T&P successfully. Despite this wide spectrum of varied experiences there was a shared experience with tenure and the advancement system that bound these women together in a manner that they continued to share and reflect upon. This was true beyond the local level and shared broadly at the national level as discussed through professional associations and other events. Often the respondents' reflections on T&P, which truly

seemed to predate the interview process, were used to consider tactics or strategies that other women and minorities would be able to follow in entering the tenured ranks.

This reflective process described above is its own two-edged sword in terms of how it reflects back on the tenured women. As women consider the flaws in the advancement system and where it did not serve them, they may act with some resistance towards the ruling relations. When these women take the experience of their own (and others') tenure processes and turn around to use these experiences to socialize and mentor others they are certainly re-constituting the system based on advancement, but they were also trying to transform the process to make it more manageable. On the one hand, considering socialization and mentoring processes demonstrated a kind of solidarity and willingness to extend one's hand to others coming up from below in the ranks, something these women may or may not have experienced themselves. On the other hand, the women interviewed had earned a kind of cache as winners or survivors of the process and clearly wanted to use the security, control and power that they had gained to instruct others in how to do the same things. It was a clear marker of success and authority, and women used it in this manner, as well. Tenure represents security, but it also constituted a kind of exclusivity. For many of the respondents, it was clear that they used their experiences in their roles as mentors as well as in networking efforts with others.

Since all of the women were thoughtful about T&P processes, and none of them expressed a delight in the system, so they were far more likely to be reticent or ambivalent about T&P as a success marker. In the experience of the interviewed women, tenure and promotion was also rarely connected directly with a gendered experience of discrimination. There was only one clear reference to an "old boys' system," while there

were several diverse references to the role women had played in blocking other women's tenure or promotion. In retrospect, though, very few of the women discussed their own role in other academics T&P processes (outside of mentoring junior faculty). This is an area that deserves far more attention in future research so as to better understand how this text constitutes the ruling relations and how the ruling relations could be transformed. Women are now thoroughly incorporated in the ruling relations. In discussing the results, T&P may be perceived by many of the participants as a very solitary process, but actually it involves others in many ways. None of the women reflected on their own involvement in the T&P process of other women on campus.

In looking at tenure and promotion as central to the discourse of success at the university, there are many more questions that still need to be asked on a much broader scale: If tenure is an acknowledged marker of success, what does it measure? Who are the people who are denying women entry into the higher levels of the system and why might this occur? Those who take part in denying others' tenure cannot simply be described as antagonists of any one gender or stereotypic disposition. For instance, even though there has been a great deal of focus on the quantitative reports indicating strong gender based discrimination in the advancement system based on numbers of women by position, institution, and salary, examining the constitution of that entire advancement system is critical. Both men and women constitute the ruling relations although evidence of gender discrimination continues to exist. Only a few of the women interviewed talked about changing or reforming the system of advancement, while several of the departments, colleges and universities where these women were located were actively engaged in processes of reviewing their tenure and promotion policies. Most of the discussions at the

departmental or university-wide level were framed in a gender-neutral manner and involved standardization of processes across levels rather than looking at specific discriminatory effects or possible remedies. Transformation of processes and policies is often regarded tactically and strategically. To specifically address the possibilities of relief for the systemic discrimination of women or minorities is often regarded as inviting sexist or racist opposition. Many institutions recognize the benefits of diversity, while continuing to struggle with the methods of change, especially as it may be applied at an individual level.

There continues to also be a much wider discussion about tenure and promotion in the professional academic discourse as evidenced by articles and reports in the professional networks and associations such as American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU at www.aacu.org), American Association of University Professors (AAUP at www.aaup.org), American Association of University Women (AAUW at www.aauw.org), as well as the professional media represented by the Chronicle for Higher Education (CHE). A search at CHE in any given month will reveal thousands of past articles from every segment of the chronicle from news to self-help and opinion pieces. These articles will also cover many different aspects and angles of the subject. While few professors may have the time to scour these sites, it is important to get an overview of the discourse in order to better understand the overall structure nationally. The subject may be contentious on an individual, departmental or local level, but there are thousands of variations all over the country. This is where the institutional ethnography assists in moving from the micro – local level to the national – trans-local level.

Tenure and promotion represented security and control for almost all of the women interviewed. It was clear that even in a deeply flawed system, these women would want to retain what little security was available, especially where economics and outside forces would continue to have negative impacts on the academic environment as a whole. Regardless, tenure still provided a relatively secure platform where women could question the ruling relations and raise their voices with less fear of job sanctions than others within the ruling relations of academia. The power and exclusivity of tenure established a kind of pressure or expectation of taking part in more and greater transformative processes.

As universities continue to move towards what are considered managerial or business models, many more women will be hired outside of the tenure track. This was indicated in many of the quantitative studies that focused on contingent faculty (Berry, 2004; Hough, 2003; Monks, 2007). I want to point out, though, that it will be both women and men who are doing this hiring. Many of the women interviewed here will be part of these decision-making processes. The women (and men) hired will continue to have far less pay and fewer, if any, benefits. The internal pressures that this will continue to create are hard to predict. This was a subject touched upon in many of the interviews, reinforced by my own acknowledged position of having been both a graduate assistant, as well as adjunct faculty during the research. The subject is largely avoided in discourse, unless it is specifically brought to the table. It is unclear how long that it can continue to be avoided because its effects are expected to grow just as the numbers at the bottom continue to rise. This is also an arena where organizational transformation may percolate if sufficient discontent caused greater awareness and mobilization among contingent

faculty. In terms of feminist Discourse, it would be interesting to see what levels of solidarity might be brought forward and put in to action.

Tenure and promotion will remain a contentious subject even as it remains a central marker of success within the ruling relations and for those who have attained tenure. It is clear that having attained tenure one would want to maintain the power and privileges associated with it. Any discussions may be seen as attempts to take away power, control and authority in situations where these already seem to be threatened. It is beyond the scope of this research to delve more deeply into this subject, and there is already a vast literature that can help to fuel future discussions. I would recommend though, that in any discussion or research with tenured academics that the subject of tenure and promotion should remain on the table. It should be discussed for what it provides and how it is used. Openly acknowledging the benefits and drawbacks of tenure and promotion as the central text of the ruling relations might make it easier to move along with the evolution of the ruling relations.

Family and Intimate Relationships

I did not expect intimate relationships and family to play as large a role in women's talk about their success as they did. Extended discussions around this theme often seemed to be offered as a counterbalance to other career topics such as advancement within the tenure and promotion system. In the professional literature (e.g. Philipsen, 2008; Scully, 1970c) and the discussions, the clearest connections between tenure, promotion, and the family involved the timing of various processes within the advancement text. The best example of this was in discussions about adding children into the family mix. Whether by adoption or pregnancy, women have many choices to make

about where and how they can afford to make the time for children in their career, while on the other hand, not all children were planned or expected.

Discussions of tenure and promotion, while central to the ruling relations, were not all the focus of the interviews. In discussions of family and intimate relationships, the respondents often offered these areas as outside subjects or *other* considerations outside of their careers and working lives. Yet, family and intimate relationships were most often presented as central and important to a woman's concept of success. The frequency with which this topic appeared, and the emotional affect, clearly demonstrated that the bifurcated consciousness was alive and well within women's everyday experiences. The importance and meaning of the bifurcated consciousness had shifted a great deal, which was further evidence of the evolution of the ruling relations. Now, unlike the complaints of the second-wave feminists, this was where women "had *a life*," as they termed it, where they had agency to choose their life's priorities, its paths, and their own balance between the public and private sphere. Ironically, despite the dire predictions evident in popular culture and the cultural wars that feminists or career women and those who choose a life of the mind would be likely to leave behind their families and family values, the opposite seemed to be the case. Family and intimate relationships were often regarded as one the most valuable aspects of their lives that was worth fighting to keep in balance with their career ambitions.

Indeed, many of the discussions with the respondents centered around whether or not there had to be an either-or choice, or if women could choose both career and family, and consider themselves successful, thus not leaving anything behind. Discussions concerning intimate relationships and family were offered as discourse outside of the

system of the ruling relations, but in various discussions it was clear that the ruling relations governed the relationships constituted outside of the women's academic careers, as well. Family and intimate relationships were posited as a counterbalance to career demands, and it was clear that women had to work hard to find appropriate balances within the ruling relations for all of the parties concerned, including themselves. There were no clearly defined texts as to how families were constituted by the ruling relations. Some women were able to balance the different demands of the public and private sphere amazingly well, while others chose not to have such relationships, or regretted the relationships that they were not able to maintain as well as they would have liked. There was no one central Feminist discourse that could encompass the wide variety of family constellations presented here.

As is evident in much of modern feminist theory, intimate relationships and family continue to remain an under investigated area of importance in the ruling relations. Work and family relations often cannot be easily separated into distinct spheres of activity with clear lines of demarcation. Most of the women indicated a centrality of these relationships in the framing of their success within the larger picture of their lives. Looking at the poignant stories several of the women told in regard to their mothers and how their mothers related to their success, it is important to recognize that women often see and represent generational values within their family structures. The capacity for birth and the care-giving functions for family members who are weaker (both younger and older) represent part of the developmental processes that encouraged many women to enter higher education in the first place. This was often demonstrated by their attitudes toward teaching, socialization and working with junior faculty. The care-taking role

would also surface in so-called feminine leadership styles, such as service leadership or what others call an ethics of care (Hamington, 2004). It is important to recognize the ambivalent power associated with care taking, as it represents both control and resistance within the ruling relations.

In exploring this theme of family and intimate relations, another contradictory and ambivalent pattern in terms of the ruling relations and feminism, involved same-sex relationships. In the early advancement of second-wave feminism, it was widely considered that lesbians would be the most radical of rebels both within and outside of the system in terms of feminine standards and norms (Johnston, 1973; Wittig, 1981/1997). Anyone who has witnessed the “lesbian baby boom,” which included many heterosexual and lesbian respondents, might be surprised to note what ardent family supporters lesbians are. Lesbians have often been among those who insisted on the possibilities of having it all – career and family, including children. Far from stepping outside the constraints of the ruling relations where they are considered deviant, lesbians have been some of the most militant supporters of becoming mothers within the professorate. It is important to note that many lesbians had children before they engaged in intimate or long-term relationships with women. Therefore, as mentioned above, not all thoughts of children were based on career activities and timing.

Intimate relationships and family would seem like a place of security rather than risk, but this is where many professional women have taken the risk of expanding their definitions of success to include much more than career advancement. This theme was also expressed as a success marker when it was demonstrably an area of sacrifice or loss. This was the case when women talked about how they sacrificed having intimate

partnerships, or greater family responsibilities for their career, or when they discussed how family members had given up their own advancement in order for the woman to place her career in a primary position and location. It was clear that without being essentialized, women still had a central care-giving component as part of their own definitions of success. Women's positions and obligations within a multi-generational framework of family also highlighted the ideas of passing on, or bearing witness to, the progressive development of opportunities for succeeding generations. Clearly, women were both constitutive and transforming of the ruling relations of academia in this area. This was where women clearly expressed power in their choices and abilities to determine their own life paths.

Speaking to Power

As the exemplars illustrate, many tenured professors did not seem to speak to power with complete comfort at any point in their tenured career, although all of them had attained the initial security of freedom of speech that tenure provided. The general political and administrative concerns in terms of colleagues, departments and department heads, as well as senior administrators continued to play significant roles in expressed comfort levels and interactions within the ruling relations. Despite these realistic concerns, the women's ability to speak to power was a crucial aspect of their own measures of success for themselves. Speaking to power was also discussed as part of what success and authority allowed them to do in their respective professional settings. This is where the far more differentiated notion of power representing both control and resistance (Mumby, 2005) especially comes into play.

Several of the women interviewed felt constrained in their desires to support social justice issues, especially within the university itself, more constrained than they wished to feel or had originally intended to act when they embarked on their career. On the other hand, several women actively championed efforts to break through feelings of constraint and speak to power despite any negative ramifications that it might have had for their career—this was a strong thread in several of these success stories. It also indicated how many of the women were still far more motivated by feminist Discourse or feminist standpoint theory than may generally be expected. For many women, being able to use the power of their position and professional rank to address those injustices that hindered others in their developmental process of education, justice, or civil rights, was central to remaining in integrity with the values with which they had entered their careers, whether this represented an overt feminist commitment to transformation or not.

It was in the area of speaking to power where many of the women experienced or demonstrated the most success in their narratives. Much like the theme of family, these discussions often generated greater emotional affect and intensity than in other conversational areas. During these parts of the interviews they could highlight their accomplishments, or what they were capable of accomplishing, with the power of their status. Here too, women demonstrated solidarity with each other and/or with others both inside and outside of the ruling relations of academia. Several women indicated their solidarity with women outside of the ranks of tenured academic faculty. Many indicated solidarity with women outside of the university. In addition, when talking about speaking to power women indicated whether they had become risk-averse and products of a

normative system that seeks confirmation of its ruling relations, or whether they had maintained some agency to work for issues of change.

Speaking to power was also where the subject of power and authority was most clearly recognized and directly addressed. Each of the women had a unique standpoint regarding power from her authoritative position within the system of the ruling relations. Each women's experiences were unique, as were the context of the colleagues, supervisors, department, college or university within which she operated. Her abilities or constraints could most clearly be identified with her own reflective processes. While the interviews were not specifically or consciously directed toward the concepts of transforming the ruling relation, the theme emerged from the general developmental or transformative processes of education and social justice. This was most clearly evoked and demonstrated by the administrators, and finally by the scientist who challenged the ruling relations, or rather stood up and defended herself against the system invoking the ruling relations of the legal system.

Speaking to power was where one most clearly saw the day-by-day results of the ruling relations and how they constituted the wearing down and shaping of each individual respondent. Those women who had adopted fearful postures towards speaking up were most likely to be those who did not speak up, and discouraged others, especially in the respondents' socialization efforts, from speaking or taking action against or within the system. When examining the fear around tenure and rank promotion this research comes full circle, especially where it held for some women *after* the attainment of tenure. This is not presented as a moral consideration; indeed it is a reality that women should consider the consequences of not attaining full rank and how this would then be reflected

in retirement income. At the same time, the active presence of these considerations demonstrated the power and control of the ruling relations in continuing to constitute the woman academic and her notion of success despite the attainment of tenure.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of constraint and limitation in changing the collective nature of the ruling relations, many of the women did have a joyous attitude that gave credence to the idea that accomplishment within the system could lead to power that would enable reform or transformation of the ruling relations. Likewise, they were willing to take the risks of their position and power to continue to question, challenge and reform the system, and they were also willing to encourage other women and men, at various stages in their own careers, to do the same. Some of the respondents demonstrated a strong willingness to work in social networks, and others chose to stand alone, following a more individualistic path. Whether or not they were acknowledged and committed feminists, all of them had a strong notion of working with and for women, and toward a women's sense of accomplishment, achievement and success in her own life.

Limitations of the Research and Possibilities for Future Research

There are a few caveats in this final analysis that are not immediately evident from the voices of the respondent women or in the initial presentations of the findings. My research did not include the voices of the very highest levels of administration: presidents, regents or board members, state legislators, and administrators of higher education at the state and national levels. These people all exercise various forms of power in determining aspects of the texts of the ruling relations, such as higher-level hiring, approval of policies, and determination of salary ranges and increases, investments, and costs. More importantly, higher education and the research universities

are only one part of the much broader consideration of the ruling relations that is part of the financial, legal, and governance systems of the state and nation as a whole. There was evidence that many of the decisions made at the university were directed by the highest levels of state government, and this included appointment and retention decisions involving regents, presidents, and administrative vice-presidents. All of these decisions were likely to have great impact on the larger structures and ruling relations of the individual institutions, and greatly impacted decisions on hiring, cost, and salary structures as well as the future direction and policies of these institutions. These decisions also influenced retention and the long-term prospects of tenured academic women and administrators remaining with these institutions of higher education. It was beyond the scope of this research to truly explore these larger questions of the constraints, control and power of the ruling relations, but it is vital to report that in the course of the research many of the participants were increasingly aware of higher levels of power and control than had been previously considered in initial cursory examinations of salary scales and institutional discrimination against women.

In addition to the boundaries of the research in terms of the larger ruling relations of governance and how those ruling relations impact the subsystems of higher education, there were other limitations on the scope of this institutional ethnography. Twenty interviews and a substantial amount of time spent in participant observation were more than sufficient to establish the overarching themes as described within this dissertation. This research could be extended, though, in several directions, in order to further develop additional sub-themes of success and to continue to focus on the problematic of transformation within the ruling relations. In addition, the iterative processes of the

institutional ethnography could have been continued and taken in different directions.

Taking the results presented here and exploring them further with the same respondents or additional tenured academic women would provide more depth in our understanding of how women discuss and experience success within academia.

The most important recommendation that I would make for future research along these lines would be to include focus groups. This would both reflect the organizational praxis and power of consciousness raising processes of second-wave feminism, as well as the collective processes of mentoring and social networking that already exist on campus. Several of the respondents suggested this themselves, and added that it would help in the process of looking for new ideas for success markers and how success is framed in an academic career. Including focus groups would also further reinforce the transformative processes of institutional ethnography by increasing the involvement of the respondents with the results of the research. Furthermore, positive ideas for change and transformation could be constructively put forward and tested for ideas of implementation.

When considering focus groups and social networks, it is important to consider exploring the boundaries that exist between administration and professorate. Having tenured women with different roles and responsibilities share their everyday realities would contribute both to greater understanding, and tearing down, some of the false boundaries that are built around certain decision-making processes. Hierarchies may serve processes of work accomplishment, but they need to be better understood by all participants in order to function effectively. Where they are regarded as subjective or

arbitrary they deny the power and agency that tenured academic women already have within the system.

As a researcher, I would also have welcomed including other groups of women beyond tenured academic women, yet it was clearly beyond the scope of this investigation and would have confused issues. Future research of a broader spectrum of women on campus would substantially change the nature of the exploration of power and the dynamics of control and resistance, in relation to how these dynamics were made evident here in the ruling relations. Similarly, studies exploring the dynamics of control and resistance within other groupings such as staff members, graduate students, adjuncts, and other non-tenure track faculty could provide additional insights into both the status of all women on campus as well as the interacting texts and social relations among these varied groups of women. One high-level woman administrator actually recommended that I interview her staff in terms of the impact a woman could make in the position that she held. In this research, by accepting the boundaries created by tenure, it was possible to more clearly investigate power as authority with a potential power to transform the ruling relations. This reflects a modernist feminist Discourse that still subscribes to developmental change, even within the ruling relations

Research that focused on different groups of women would help to address the dynamics that are being created as more women are hired in part-time positions, as adjuncts, and in other non-tenure track positions. Evidence of this increased hiring of women at non-tenured levels continues to mount across the board and in all states at various levels from junior colleges, through colleges and teaching institutions, and into the research universities. It is important to also recognize how agency and power among

one group of women can be employed on behalf of others. I do want to emphasize here how vital it is to recognize the power of institutional ethnography in addressing problems within the system instead of authoritative and normative prescriptions of what should or could be done for “others.” Furthermore, I want to emphasize how this research with tenured academic women demonstrated how these women’s agency and authority has been employed to speak to power. The transformative nature of access to power and authority was further exemplified in discussions of unionization efforts or discussions around the importance of benefits, such as tuition reimbursement and healthcare for family members. Any expanded research, whether it focuses on other groups of women or different institutions, would help to fill in gaps or create other paradigms of success and transformation within the ruling relations.

In addition to the regular publishing of results that is recommended with the dissertation process, it would be excellent to network with other researchers at other universities performing similar research. While there are many many venues for academic research within various fields and disciplines, academic organizing as a whole is often discounted or dismissed outside of the area of education itself. Studying academic organizing as a subset of the ruling relations more easily allows comparisons to be made between business, government, non-profit *and* educational institutions. The interlocking systems and networks are truly under investigated in this sense.

The professional association included in this study was actively engaged in these processes of collecting information from different site locations or institutions of higher education globally. The sharing of interview protocols, coding, the development of similar or new research themes and varied results could be compiled into larger reports

that would demonstrate the validity of transposing local investigations on to trans-local understandings of the ruling relations. In other words, it would be possible to look at national texts of tenure and promotion (or other markers of success and gendered organizations), and better describe local differences or universal similarities in advancing or transforming ruling relations. Such comparisons could serve to highlight new avenues for transformation. Studies across broader regions would provide many more possibilities for transformation within the ruling relations, with broader discussions of support mechanisms for women's success, such as socialization methods as well as formal and informal mentoring and social networks.

The research done on a broader scale and the resultant discussions could also be used to inform other administrative processes at universities looking to support the academics' commitment to local communities or, could be used in questions of hiring, diversity, retention and retirement. These are central questions about the importance of the university within its local environment, an environment that is based on the embodied experiences of all of the participants in the complex organizing processes that constitute both an academic community and a local community integrated within its environment. Taking into account the requirements that these women expressed as part of their overarching concerns with their own lived experiences could help to create more sustainable working and living arrangements in diverse communities.

In calling for more livable career environments that are more closely integrated with sustainable communities, I am aware of my own activist bias and prioritization of transformative change within the ruling relations. This study also sidestepped what, for many women, are very realistic socio-economic concerns that affect their everyday lives

and their ability to support themselves and their families. It was not the intention of the author to be ignorant of these considerations, but to refuse to foreground these concerns. These considerations are highlighted and often addressed by the studies and reports that have been done elsewhere. Campus discussions often focus on *only* these concerns, while refusing to address issues of quality of life for a broad range of participants. These materialistic concerns continue to develop and shift within the ruling relations as both the local, national and trans-national economies go through tremendous transformational processes.

Discussions of material realities were part of the institutional ethnography and addressed in issues of family support and caring for elders. Another area where the materialistic concerns were central was in the developing discussions and concerns various tenured academic women had about their own retirement. These discussions reflect another direction for future study that I would strongly consider, that of ageing and intergenerational communication as part of both intercultural and organizational studies of communication. This is already widely covered in popular media and economic development, but could be more clearly investigated as a major component in developing a research plan within the field of communication. Institutional ethnography and the unique aspects of feminist discourse and ethics should be vital to the development of this research.

Conclusion

This dissertation research was intended to serve as a transformative communicative process, as well as an exploration of agency and power within the ruling relations of the institutions of higher education. The purpose of this study was to use the

discourse of tenured academic women to illuminate social relations and interactions that constitute and transform the ruling relations. By employing an institutional ethnography to investigate how tenured academic women talked about success, I accomplished my objectives incorporating a feminist Discourse and further ethical considerations of the participants' lives as they themselves experienced these lives and shared them in the research. In analyzing the data, there were three overarching concerns or themes that these women addressed with both frequency and an intensity of emotional affect: tenure and promotion, family and intimate relationships, and speaking to power. In discussing and analyzing these three themes an interesting dialectic is woven that demonstrated how women are within the ruling relations, exerting control and authority, but also engaging in resistance that transforms the ruling relations. In addition to highly accomplished careers, most of these women worked to maintain successful relationships outside of the academy as shown in their commitment to family lives. Finally, many of the respondents recognized the responsibility to others that both their work and authority represented, and expressed this in using their academic voices to speak to power.

In focusing on and addressing only the standard normative reports of women's success in the professional media, it is easy to become cynical about the future or hopeless about the prospects for transformation of the ruling relations. Using institutional ethnography, and exploring the interactions and social relations of the ruling relations with the insights developed by these tenured academic women and administrators, helped to frame a much more complete picture of possibilities. A modernist feminist Discourse incorporating the intersectionality of the diversity of women's voices helped to focus on possibilities for transformation within the ruling relations. In addressing the power of the

ruling relations, it is vital to uncover agency and purpose both on an individual level and in a collective sense. By addressing a subject such as success, *without* defining success in a normative sense, it helped to bring out a much more complex sense of power than is usually presented in the standard literature. Also, by turning around standard practices of interviewing and questioning those whose status is perceived to give them power, it was possible to do a feminist investigation of authority and the complex dynamic of control and resistance this authority represents.

In continuing to do feminist research, I would recommend that more focus be applied to questions of authority, agency and power, as well as topics that help to reframe discussions such as success. In looking at current women's accomplishments and revisiting the organizational praxis of second-wave feminism, we are able to create bridges in both intercultural and organizational communication. Examining contentious subjects and accepting that there may be previous experiences and a multitude of potential solutions, we may better frame the debates and discussions of the future. Rather than valuing and evaluating practical and theoretical approaches differently, we may create greater access to resources for all participants by trying different methods as indicated in varied situations, for rarely are we in life situations where one size fits all. As educators, we have significant roles to play in access to research and education that transform lives, and by understanding how we do this in our own lives we can lead consciously and by example. Studying complex social relations and networks from the inside we may make these social relations and networks more accessible to people at very different standpoints within the ruling relations.

In the final analysis, we all live within the framework of the ruling relations, we constitute and transform them as these relations continue to evolve. In doing institutional ethnography, we may develop greater skills in identifying the ruling relations and how they constitute our own lives. If we are willing to examine the social construction of truth and reality, then we need to be willing to examine how gendered and discursive organizations can be transformed to better represent the very best ideals and values that originally called them into being. Education and civic engagement are two of the most important ideals in the lifesphere; since we are given powerful opportunities to engage with these ideals, let us ensure that our voices are authentic and authoritative. Therefore, the research presented here contributes unique insights into an organizational understanding of gendered institutions of higher education and how these constitute the ruling relations. The purpose of this study was to use the discourse of tenured academic women to illustrate social interactions that constitute and transform the ruling relations. I believe this purpose has been accomplished and furthermore, has been a living process that helped to transform the informants, the researcher and the institution of higher education.

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APPENDIX A

**Interview Protocol
Women in Academia**

Name:

Contact Information:

Phone:

email:

Demographics:

Age: (optional)

Married/Partnership (optional):

Children:

Citizenship / race / ethnicity:

Other pertinent information: (eg. Disabilities, etc):

Background:

Undergraduate degree(s):

Graduate degree(s):

Relevant work experience:

Non-traditional experience (growing up / family, etc):

When / how / why did you decide to enter a career in academia?:

Did you have any role models / mentors?

Were there other influences that encouraged you (feminism, civil rights, etc)?:

Current:

Where do you work today?

Describe your position and how you attained it?

Can you describe the general status of women on your campus?

How do you think this compares with other campuses or nationally?

How would you describe the changes in the position of women on college campuses since you got your undergraduate degree?

How would you describe the trajectory toward the future on the basis of what you have mentioned so far?

How would you describe your relationship with other women on campus?

Academics?

Administrative?

Graduate Students?

Undergraduate?

Other?

Do you work more extensively with women or more with men in any of the following areas. Do you experience a difference in this work on the basis of gender?

Your job according to a description of the position

Classroom

Academic / Administrative meetings

Committees

Service work

Other

What kinds of professional and personal relationships do you have with other women on campus?

Have you had mentor(s) over the course of your academic/administrative career?

Are you a mentor? If so, explain . . .

Where do you think you have gotten most of your support for your career? (women, men, family, friends, other groups)? Why ?

Which women on campus represent leadership for you? What are their positions? How do they demonstrate this leadership?

How would you describe having power in the academy? Do you think this differs for women and men (attaining it or exercising it)? Other differences/issues around power (race, class, age, position)?

Why did you decide to take this position at this institution in [state]; was there anything that especially attracted you or caused you to pause in working here.

If there were anything that you could do over or change in your career thus far, what would it be?

For women just entering academia today, is there any thing that you would especially recommend to them? Anything that you would especially like them to learn from your experience?

Who do you consider to be friends on campus? Do you believe that support networks exist on campus? Can you describe them? Are they mostly individual/interpersonal or are there any that are more institutionalized?

Who would you recommend that I interview and why?

Do you have any questions you think I should be asking?

Anything else that I might have missed?