Educational Leadership Theory 1
Series Editors: Scott Eacott · Richard Niesche

Scott Eacott

Beyond Leadership

A Relational Approach to Organizational Theory in Education

Springer

Educational Leadership Theory

The Educational Leadership Theory book series provides a forum for internationally renowned and emerging scholars whose ongoing scholarship is seriously and consequentially engaged in theoretical and methodological developments in educational leadership, management and administration. Its primary aim is to deliver an innovative and provocative dialogue whose coherence comes not from the adoption of a single paradigmatic lens but rather in an engagement with the theoretical and methodological preliminaries of scholarship. Importantly, Educational Leadership Theory is not a critique of the field—something that is already too frequent—instead, attention is devoted to sketching possible alternatives for advancing scholarship. The choice of the plural 'alternatives' is deliberate, and its use is to evoke the message that there is more than one way to advance knowledge. The books published in Educational Leadership Theory come from scholars working at the forefront of contemporary thought and analysis in educational leadership, management and administration. In doing so, the contributions stimulate dialogue and debate in the interest of advancing scholarship.

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Scott Eacott
University of New South Wales
Sydney
Australia

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For Amy, Daniel and Madelyn

Series Editors' Foreword

Discussions of educational leadership research are always discussions about theory. Sometimes matters of ontology, epistemological, and axiology are made explicit, other times they are not, but we cannot undertake, dialogue, and debate research without theory. What counts as theory and/or quality research in educational leadership has changed over time. From the influence of sociology and behavioral science in the establishment of university departments of educational administration (as it was known then) through to the rise of the Theory Movement in the mid-twentieth century and subsequent interventions such as Thomas Barr Greenfield's humanistic science, the Critical Theory of Richard Bates and William Foster, and Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's naturalistic coherentism, tensions in educational leadership theory have shaped what work is conducted, legitimized, published, and ultimately advanced. This is all set in a field of inquiry where questions of relevance and/or practical significance remain dominant and enduring. The desire for immediacy and direct translation of research into practice, especially for the improvement of outcomes, means that matters of theory are often seen as peripheral at best and more often marginalized or silenced. Theory, that which can unsettle assumptions, ask questions of the status quo, recast our ways of thinking, seeing and doing, is perceived as getting in the way of instrumentalist and/or functional prescriptions of how things ought to be.

The *Educational Leadership Theory* book series is explicitly designed to address what we see happening in educational leadership scholarship. That is, an aversion to rigorous, robust and most importantly, enduring dialogue and debate on matters of theoretical and methodological advancement. To that end, this series provides a forum for internationally renowned and emerging scholars whose ongoing scholarship is seriously and consequentially engaged in theoretical and methodological developments in educational leadership, management, and administration. Its primary aim is to deliver an innovative and provocative dialogue whose coherence comes not from the adoption of a single paradigmatic lens but rather in an engagement with the theoretical and methodological preliminaries of

scholarship. Importantly, *Educational Leadership Theory* is not simply a critique of the field—something that is already too frequent—instead, attention is devoted to sketching possible alternatives for advancing scholarship. The choice of the plural "alternatives" is deliberate, and its use is to evoke the message that there is more than one way to advance knowledge. The books published in *Educational Leadership Theory* come from scholars working at the forefront of contemporary thought and analysis in educational leadership, management, and administration. In doing so, the contributions stimulate dialogue and debate in the interest of advancing scholarship. Specifically, we aim to:

- Foreground the theoretical/methodological preliminaries of educational leadership research; and
- Sketch areas of relevance and possible theoretical/methodological developments that serve to extend current debates on leadership in education.

We interpret these aims widely, consistent with our goal of promoting dialogue and debate in the field. Importantly, we ask our contributors to respond to the following guiding questions:

1. What are the theoretical/methodological problems from which educational leadership is based and/or have implications for educational leadership?; and
2. How can we engage them?

These questions, we believe, are vital as the field of educational leadership faces increasing questions of its relevance and status within education research, and as education research itself faces increasing challenges from beyond in the audit culture of the contemporary academy. Our goal is not to bring a series of like-minded contributors together to outline the virtues of a particular research tradition. Such an undertaking would do little more than providing legitimation of existing theorizations and negating theoretical pluralism. Instead, we seek to bring a diverse group of scholars together to engage in rigorous dialogue and debate around important matters for educational leadership research and practice. This is a significant move, as instead of surrendering our thoughts to a singular, stable and standardized knowledge base we explicitly seek to interrogate the dynamism of contradictions, multiplicities, and antinomies of a vibrant field of theories and practices.

Most importantly we want the *Educational Leadership Theory* book series to stimulate dialogue and debate. We are broad in our meaning of the label "theory." The analytical dualism of explanation and description is a poor and weak distinction between what is and is not theory. We too are not against the absence of practical application. However, what we seek are contributions that take matters of theory and methodology (as in theory as method) serious. In short, we are more inclusive than exclusive. This also goes for what is meant by "educational leadership." We do not limit our interpretation to schools or higher education but are instead opens to work discussing education in its broadest possible sense. A focus on theory travels well across geographic and disciplinary boundaries. In taking matters of theory

serious, we see the *Educational Leadership Theory* book series as a key outlet for stimulating dialogue and debate by recognizing the problems and possibilities of existing knowledge in the field and pushing that further. This is an undertaking that we hope you will join us on—be that as a contributor, reader, or critique—all in the interests of advancing knowledge.

Scott Eacott
Richard Niesche

Preface

This book is a follow-up to *Educational leadership relationally* (2015, Sense) where I sought to articulate and defend a relational approach to scholarship in educational leadership, management and administration. Why the need for a follow-up book? This is a fair question. To respond, I want to take this as an opportunity to discuss the nature of academic/scholarly work and the need to engage with others for the purpose of advancing a distinctive brand of scholarship. That is, to move beyond the parallel monologues that dominate the field (where alternate approaches are rarely acknowledged, infrequently engaged with, and more often ignored or dismissed outright).

While reading for my doctorate three things particularly caught my attention in the educational administration, and broader education, literature. First was the dialogue and debate between Peter Gronn, Ross Thomas, and Don Willower over the (theoretical and methodological) worth of observational studies, primarily taking place in the pages of *Educational Administration Quarterly* (but also including the *Australian Journal of Education*). While the content of the exchanges was interesting it was the back and forth of ideas and the means of critique and justification that sparked my interest. Second, Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's *Knowing educational administration* and the subsequent book in the trilogy, *Exploring educational administration*. In explicitly outlining what they saw as the flaws in the positions of others while articulating their own perspective, Evers and Lakomski then directly engaged with those they critiqued, essentially providing the right of reply, and then refining/advancing their work further. Third was the regular responses and rejoinders in the pages of the American Educational Research Association's *Educational Researcher*. Again, it was the exchanging, challenging, and justification of ideas, rather than the ideas themselves that caught my attention. What struck me as significant in these three examples was a commitment to the logic of academic work—argument and refutation—and how that transpires through scholars articulating a position and justifying that position in the face of critique. Note the specific choice of "justify" rather than "defend." For me, this distinction matters. Justifying is more concerned with the ontological and epistemological preliminaries of scholarship and the strength of knowledge claims.

Defense, at least for me, is more concerned with unwavering belief in one's position. This defense rarely goes beyond othering alternatives and sustaining differences through denial or ignorance of other positions. Therefore, defense does not necessarily overcome the parallel monologues of orthodox educational administration and leadership literature.

Consistent with the above favoring of a social epistemology, based on the engagement with my work in a 2016 Special Issue of *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations* (Vol. 25 Iss. 2) and the collation of this book (particularly Part III), I have strengthened my *relational* position. Those under-developed or flawed matters, quite rightly identified by contributions, I have dropped, or at best refined, others I have held on to in the face of critique, but tightened my argument to make my justification stronger. In short, those that I can continue to justify in the face of critique, I have kept, and those I cannot, I have discarded.

At risk of being too normative, the need for rigorous and robust scholarship in educational administration and leadership (I reluctantly use this latter label, for reasons that will become clear as you progress through the book) has never been greater. The last generation of scholars seriously trained as multi-disciplinary educational administration researchers who have been retiring and replaced by a group of technicists or at best instrumental functionalists. I am aware this is a broad sweeping statement but I cannot stress the point enough. The rich history of epistemological and ontological dialogue and debate in educational administration and leadership literature is being lost in the contemporary push for ahistorical translation of research on "best practice" and "impact." The notion of theory has become watered down and/or othered as something exotic and self-indulgent undertaken by out-of-touch academics working in ivory towers. Rather than simply resign to this reality or critique it, I subscribe to the belief that the only way to change the world is to generate new ways of seeing, being and doing it.

To that end, my aims for this book are dual. First, I seek to articulate and justify a serious piece of scholarly insight into educational administration. The primary aim of the book and my central focus both here and elsewhere, is the advancement of a theoretical and methodological (seeing theory as method) position for coming to understand the organizing of educational institutions relationally. The second and equally important even if more peripheral aim is to demonstrate an approach to scholarship that I feel has been lost in the field. The logic of academic work—argument and refutation—has been sidelined in contemporary dialogue and debate courtesy of the well-rehearsed neglect educational administration researchers show those with whom we disagree. If, however we seek to advance understanding, then engaging with one another—not necessarily agreeing—is required. Our ideas can only be understood in relation to those of others. They have a history, a trajectory or story so far, their novelty or originality comes in the distinctions from others. In short, to advance one's position requires seriously engaging with those of differing positions.

An interesting by-product of advancing a position that is beyond the orthodox literature of educational administration has been an opening of scholarly networks.

Since the publication of *Educational leadership relationally* I have been able to establish links—some initiated by me, some by others—with multidisciplinary groups from near and far. Significantly, these have led to ties with groups built upon relational sociology based in Canada (the Canadian network of relational sociology convened by François Dépelteau) and continental Europe (convened by Pierpaolo Donati), most significantly, an invitation to contribute to the *Handbook of relational sociology* (Palgrave, edited by François Dépelteau). Within educational administration, broadening international networks was core to the establishment of the *Educational Leadership Theory* book series (Springer) that I co-edit with Richard Niesche. I firmly believe that these connections have been made possible by having a defined, and identifiable, research program. That is, while contemporary managerialist university administration might preference external research income and the latest metrics for outputs, the intellectual power of a rigorous and robust research program—even if emerging—remains central to building academic careers.

Many of the central features of the *relational* research program I advance in this book have been debated at conferences, in the literature, supervision meetings and graduate classes. This dialogue and debate have helped to shape my thinking ranging from encouraging greater clarity through to forcing substantial revision or extension of the work. The final two sections of this book are given over to critical responses to my previous book and my responses to them. The inclusion of these exchanges is significant. It speaks to my critique of parallel monologues in educational administration scholarship and also to the constant negotiation of research. That is, my goal is that this book models the form of scholarship that I believe the *relational* approach aspires to be: a generative and contested space that productively informs contemporary dialogue and debate.

The selection of commentators was not random, nor was it simply a case of reaching out to my academic friends or sympathetic readers. In reaching out to scholars from major centers of educational administration research—Canada, England, Israel and the USA—I satisfied the publisher's goal of international reach (and potential marketability) but my aim was to reach particular types of scholars. Helen Gunter (*Manchester*) and Izhar Oplatka (*Tel Aviv*) are arguably the leading figures in the field for mapping intellectual/epistemological traditions. It was, therefore, of considerable importance to secure their thoughts, insights, and reactions to *Educational leadership relationally*. Tony Bush (*Nottingham*) is the longtime editor of *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, one of the big three journals in the field (*Educational Administration Quarterly* and *Journal of Educational Administration* being the other two), and has written extensively on the state of the field (best captured in his textbooks for SAGE). He brings an authoritative position on the orthodoxy of the field. Fenwick English's (*North Carolina—Chapel Hill*) work sits outside the orthodoxy of the field and his commentaries draw on a breadth and depth of scholarship that is uncommon. Building on his lengthy career in the field and the intellectual diversity of his work, Fenwick's contribution was always going to push my thinking and where necessary take me to task. The most positive reception to *Educational leadership relationally*

(except for immediate family, although even that is debatable) arguably came from Canadian colleagues. To that end, it was important to reach out for responses. Through Paul Newton (*Saskatchewan*), who I met at a Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management conference in 2010, I engaged Augusto (Gus) Riveros (*Western University*), and Dawn Wallin (*Saskatchewan*). Gus had read my book over the summer, used it in his teaching (e.g., doctoral seminar), and was a sympathetic reader. However, as with the logic of academic work, his engagement while sympathetic was not without critique. Similarly, Dawn balanced a general alignment with a pressing concern for the silence of gender in the book. Both Gus and Dawn brought valued contributions for advancing the *relational* program. Megan Crawford (*Plymouth*) is a well-recognized figure from the UK, particularly through her work with the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS). Having a strong applied, or at least translation, focus meant that Megan would represent those in the field concerned with how research impacted on the daily work of educational leaders. There are arguably many more names that could have commented on the work but decisions have to be made. That said, the contributors to this book bring a breadth of intellectual resources and scholastic background to the task and offer robust critique of the *relational* program shared in a generative and productive manner.

Projects such as these are never solo endeavors, even if the bulk of the work is undertaken individually. To that end, I would like to acknowledge those who contributed to the book, namely Tony Bush, Megan Crawford, Fenwick English, Helen Gunter, Izhar Oplatka, Gus Riveros, and Dawn Wallin, whose close reading and careful critique of my position has helped me refine and justify what I believe to be a rigorous and robust approach to the study of organizing activity. To the many individuals who read earlier drafts of chapters, namely François Dépelteau, Fenwick English, Richard Niesche, Colin Evers, Gabriele Lakomski, James Ladwig, Eugenie Samier, but also including the students taking my Organizational Theory course and participants in Richard Niesche's Critical Perspectives in Educational Leadership course who engaged with my work during a guest seminar, your contributions to dialoguing and debating ideas is much appreciated. My doctoral and honors students, especially Gladys Asuga, Kimbalee Hodges, Scarlett Stemler, and Xi Luan, who mobilized the relational approach in their studies, and your contribution has not gone unnoticed. Finally, I need to acknowledge the love and support of my wife Amy and our two children Daniel and Madelyn. Despite my increasing stress and claims to never want to write another single authored book again, you continue to support my ambitions and crazy workloads.

Newcastle, Australia Scott Eacott
June 2017

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Part I
The Relational Turn in Contemporary Thought and Analysis

Chapter 1
From "Leading" to "Organizing"

Issues of relations have been an enduring project for studies of social groups since their inception. Organization, administration, management, and leadership sciences all maintain some concern for relations. With an intellectual heritage dating back to at least the Hawthorne studies of Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger (e.g., Mayo, 1933), and the Human Relations Movement, traces of relations and relationships are ubiquitous in administration and organizational research. Early texts in educational administration include Yauch's (1949) *Improving human relations in school administration* and Griffiths' (1959) *Human relations in school administration*. In the second edition of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) sponsored *Handbook of research on educational administration* (Murphy & Louis, 1999), Leithwood and Duke (1999) articulate a form of "relational" leadership. Given the enduring attention to relations, this book begins by challenging the contemporary focus of educational administration studies—leadership (e.g., Bush, 2004; Opltaka, 2010)—as an avenue to argue for the centrality of relations to the scholastic enterprise. An ongoing project of the social sciences is the construction and maintenance of the social world. Questions such as "what is the social?" attract attention in sociology (e.g., Adkins & Lury, 2009), yet receive very little attention in the professions, or applied fields, such as educational administration. Despite this lack of attention, contemporary studies in educational leadership have sought to distance themselves from previous labels such as educational administration and educational management, and matters of organization and organizing are left for the sociology of education. What is to be made of this distinction? What are the methodological implications of any shift and how best can we come to understand the work of schools—whether that be administration, management, leadership, or organization?

Building on a rich history of robust multidisciplinary methodological critique of leadership (e.g., Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Calder, 1977; Eacott, 2013, 2015; Lakomski, 2005; Lakomski, Eacott, & Evers, 2017; Meindl, Ehrich, & Dukerich, 1985; Pfeffer, 1977), in this book, I argue that leadership is a methodological artifact—a by-product of methodological choices. In particular, I demonstrate how

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attention to the underlying generative principles of leadership and scholarship raises some rather pressing questions for educational administration as a domain of inquiry. My choice of educational administration as a label—as opposed to the contemporarily popular educational leadership—is deliberate. Despite an intellectual shift from administration to management and now leadership, I am less convinced that the social focus (usually thoughts of as the “unit of analysis” but I prefer “focus of inquiry”) has changed even if the labels have. And if it has changed, which contemporarily popular terms (e.g., distributed leadership and teacher leadership) may lead us to believe, I argue that the methodological resources have not sufficiently altered to capture this change. This situation is made worse given the relative absence of methodological debate in the majority of journals, books, conferences, and theses. The underlying problem being that the adequacy of knowledge claims is rarely called into question.

The explicit pursuit of an objective science of educational administration, most notably the US-centric (but spread internationally through the large number of candidates undertaking doctoral programs in US universities) Theory Movement of the mid-1900s, has well passed. Names such as Andrew Halpin, Daniel Griffiths, and Jack Culbertson rarely feature in contemporary reference lists. Nor the historical figures they drew heavily from such as Herbert Feigl and the Vienna Circle (see Evers & Lakomski, 1991). It would be fair to ask whether the contemporary doctoral graduate in educational leadership—at least in Australia, but arguably worldwide—even knows of Halpin, Griffiths, Culbertson, or key Australian figures such as William (Bill) Walker and the University of New England alumni, associated with the Theory Movement or the epistemological debate it stimulated.

The subjectivist intervention of Greenfield (1973, 1974) shifted epistemological attention and gave rise to description over explanatory arguments (mindful that this analytical dualism is not necessarily productive). This shift was timely given the concurrent rise of leadership in the discourses of organizations. However, what is frequently overlooked in the shift to the descriptive is that description is a methodological work, not just the reporting of subjective experiences as though they reflect an objective fact. Reducing these substantive epistemological debates to a simplistic objectivist vs subjectivist (or even quantitative and qualitative) disagreement as is often done in contemporary research training programs overlooks what is at stake in such debates. The very nature of the research object is at stake and to not engage in this space, and in doing so ignoring enduring dialogue and debate on the nature of reality and ways of knowing it, grants epistemic equivalence to claims that do not necessarily warrant such status.

My question in this chapter is whether leadership as a construct holds up to rigorous and robust critique at the methodological level. This is an important question given the privileging of the empirical rather than theoretical problem in educational administration. Theoretically, the shift to leadership is arguably an attempt to overcome the individualist and structuralist accounts of administration and management. However, the current means of engaging with the social do not resolve these issues at the methodological level. To overcome these matters,

building on my previous book *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015) and critique/commentaries on it, I offer a *relational* approach for thinking through the organizing of education. This relatively new approach to scholarship in educational administration offers a means of overcoming limitations in the explanatory value of contemporary terms and the need for theoretical resources to engage with organizing activity.

“Leadership” Preliminaries

In the literature of educational administration rarely do the underlying generative principles of thought and analysis get illuminated. The ontological and epistemological preliminaries go unrecognized. To begin with, there is the notion of what is an organization. Apart from Greenfield, and the infrequent questioning of what is the school in the contemporary condition (e.g., Eacott, 2015), rarely does this initial question attract scholarly dialogue and debate. To that end, I propose that:

(1) A group (i.e. $n = \geq 2$) requires some form of organizing.

The point of origin for a social group (to which organizations are a form of) requires some form of organizing. Without such, it is really nothing more than a random collection of individuals. On this basis, I claim that the criterion for a group is organization, or more specifically, organizing activity. Therefore, if there is some form of organizing, we can label a collection of individuals a group. This group, however, is neither the simple aggregation of individuals nor a coherent whole. Similarly, the organizing activity does not necessarily create structures limiting the possibilities of practice nor allow for absolute agency to do as one chooses. The binary thinking of individual/whole and structure/agency is not productive in thinking through social groups. Organizational and administrative sciences have a question of analytical adequacy that requires attention here in the pursuit of understanding group activity.

According to Gronn (2010), leadership is part of the equation because above a certain numerical threshold the self-organization by small collaborating groups/individuals proves to be difficult. The claim is therefore that social groups exhibit some organizational or at least organizing properties, and leadership has a role in it. This brings into play some structural features, hierarchies, and power, among others. The history of organizing is taken up by Weber (1978[1922]) in his classic *Economy and society*, and in particular his articulation of the rise of the bureaucracy and its ideal type as the means of administering over a large group. This raises an issue of conflating labels. Distinctions, beyond individual preference, between leadership, management, and administration have no definitive resolution or analytical criteria. Despite this, the specialization to which I pledge allegiance—educational administration—has undergone a series of title changes since its establishment in US universities in the early 1900s. With origins in

educational administration, the labels have shifted through to educational management and now the contemporarily popular educational leadership.

Introductory textbooks and university classrooms spend considerable time attempting to separate the labels as though they reflect an external knowable reality. A much-used quote comes from Bennis and Nanus (1985), although frequently attributed to Peter Drucker, “[m]anagers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing” (p. 21). This distinction comes down to a pursuit of effectiveness (leaders) or efficiency (managers). It is the pursuit of efficiency that was central to Callahan’s (1962) critique of educational administration during the first half of the 20th century in the US public education system.

As a point of genesis for the distinction (if there is one) is a perceived organizing need that goes beyond the analytical reach of previously popular labels of administration and/or management. Unlike previous labels, leadership brings about something more, it adds to the group. This raises some interesting questions. Take for example the logic that:

(2) If there is leadership there is group change.

This is not an uncommon claim. Caldwell (2007) claims that “leadership must result in change. If no change occurred then either leadership failed or leadership was not needed” (p. 225). He goes on to state that there should be no doubt that both leadership and management are disciplines in their own right, calling upon Gardner (2006) as support. Significantly, the requirement of change means that leadership is not solely about the highest performing organizations. This goes part of the way to explaining attention to value-added measures rather than raw performance data in evaluating schools. In addition, it means that leadership is not limited to a particular stratum of organization, but is instead concerned with positive organizational outcomes and therefore having some connections to the “positive organizational scholarship” (e.g., Cameron & Spreitzer, 2011) movement. However, such logic is far from unproblematic. Based on (2), change is a requirement of leadership. We can infer, correctly based on this logic, if there is “leadership” there will be some measure of “change” for the group/organization. In other words, as Caldwell noted, if there is no change there is no leadership. Following this logic, “change” is an essential property of “leadership”. However, we cannot infer that if there is “change” there must be “leadership”, as the latter is not necessarily a requirement of the former. Based on literature discussing/problematizing the attribution of leadership (e.g., Calder, 1977; Eacott, 2013) and alternate explanations of organizational functioning (e.g., Lakomski, 2005), we cannot claim that organizational change can be solely attributed to “leadership”. Therefore, “change” is a criterion for “leadership” but not the reverse.

On what then is leadership based? I argue that educational administration research, for the most part, is based on the social a priori of rationalism. Grounded in the social sciences, namely sociology, rather than philosophy (distinguishing it from Kant’s a priori, for example), rationalist scholarship is less concerned with how is knowledge possible (a Kantian perspective) and more centered on how is society

possible. This is a position to which positivist and phenomenological/hermeneutic approaches may align and therefore cannot be dismissed on the simplistic objective/subjective binary. The social a priori starts with self-evident truths and then proceeds analytically without reference to the actual lived experiences of actors. In the case of leadership studies, these truths include the very existence of leadership (and leaders) and its causal effect on organizational performance. Such causative mechanistic assumptions are germinal of systems approaches and the interventionalist models of the effectiveness, improvement, and successful literature—once the domain of school reform literature, but increasingly central to educational administration.

The centrality of rationalism in educational administration discourses should not be surprising given the dominance of a systems approach, with roots in Parsons (1937) via Getzels and Guba (1957) and core to Hoy and Miskel's (1978) much used textbook. Rationalism seeks to bring order to the social world based on a pre-existing normative orientation. Following Parsons, this is brought into being through social control, roles, and order. Again, this is not a surprising position given the central focus of administrative and management sciences is frequently social structures. Structuralist arguments provide explanatory descriptions of the various means in which social actors engage with structures (often in deterministic ways). To some extent, leadership discourses seek to offer an overcoming of structural constraints and a form of disruption to structural (re)production through agency. However, such binary thinking is not particularly useful in theorizing organizing activity as the extremes of the structure/agency binary do little to reflect the lived experiences of actors. Adopting binary thinking, which also includes individualist/holist and particular/universal thinking, does not provide the resources to move beyond the pre-existing normative orientation of the researcher and traps arguments within a circular logic of empirical examples confirming the social a priori. Confirmatory evidence becomes cases of "good", "effective", "successful" leadership and counterexamples are classified as non-leadership, further confirming the original orientation of the observer.

Is it possible for educational administration, and specifically leadership, studies to break from its normative question? Can we study leadership without assuming it exists and has causal effect on organizations? My response is yes. But this is only made possible with attention to, and a shift in, the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of scholarship. Rationalism is a mode of reasoning leading to judgement based on argument (Lash, 2009), however, the social world does not stand still long enough to enable the construction of what Durkheim (1982[1895]) labeled "social facts". At the same time, empiricism—that which is often pitched in opposition to rationalism due to its grounding in the a posteriori—with its reliance on the sensual impressions cannot capture the complexity of leadership. As I have argued elsewhere, leadership is beyond the senses and is somewhat unexperienced, an act of cognition (Eacott, 2017), in other words, a priori. There is nothing out there in organizations that correspond with leadership, it lacks any concrete referent (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). Therefore, justification of the research object is a

major methodological issue requiring attention and articulation from anyone claiming to say something meaningful about leadership.

Returning to the genesis of leadership in the perceived organizational need that goes beyond administration and/or management, there are at least two forms of this potential distinction. Initially:

(3) “Leadership” involves “administration” and/or “management” but offers something “more”.

In this case, “leadership” is something more, a variant or mutation representing “administration plus”, or “management plus”. Conceptually, “leadership” embodies the previous label/s but does something more. It is not a separate entity, but simply something more. This poses challenges for coming to know “leadership” as the line of demarcation lacks clarity and any criterion used to establish the “more” is subjective. This subjective is for the most part, the pre-existing normative orientation, or social a priori, of the observer.

Alternatively, there is the claim that:

(4) “Leadership”, “management” and “administration” are three distinct, even if related, analytical categories.

Here, “leadership” is constructed as a distinct and different concept to administration and/or management. Expressed differently, taking “L” to be “leadership”, L = non(nonL). This has proven problematic overtime as establishing the distinctions requires increasing artificial partitioning of practice for classificatory purposes more than anything else. The outcome is frequently limited to role statements (hence the conflation of “leader” with “principal” in many studies) even though “leadership” is frequently conceived as something beyond roles. This even plays out with the notion of “middle leadership”, which is frequently equated to roles and the emerging stream of “teacher leadership” still requires role demarcation.

Both positions have consequences for the identification of “leadership”, and equally important “non-leadership”. Irrespective of the position, a common assumption is the link between leadership and performance—particularly that in relation to the performance of others.

From an analytical standpoint, the above argument has raised a series of points that require attention in the interests of advancing rigorous and robust scholarship concerning educational administration. First, the ontological complicity with the world as it is, the axioms or self-evidence truths need to be articulated and engaged with if one is to overcome, or at least make explicit, any pre-existing normative orientation. In doing so, the ordinary language of the everyday (e.g., leadership, management and administration) is problematized and points of distinction can serve as the basis for research opening up the prospect of crafting theoretically charged descriptions located in spatio-temporal conditions. This is beyond contextualization as it is frequently mobilized in the educational administration literature and delivers a form of social theory. To take matters of temporality and socio-spatial space serious means a shift from an entity/substantialist approach to a more relational account of the social. Thinking relationally breaks down binaries (e.g., structure/agency,

individualism/holism, and particular/universal) and provides for the possibility of productive theorizing. Research objects that lack any concrete referent but are based on a form of organizing activity, such as leadership, are best understood through theories of organizing. Theorizing built on the social a priori of rationalism can only take our understanding of organizing as far as our pre-existing orientations, the *relational* approach I offer is a more productive way of advancing scholarship.

From Rationalist to Relational

Emirbayer's (1997) germinal paper, *Manifesto for a relational sociology*, declares that "social thinkers from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, national traditions, and analytic and empirical points of view are fast converging upon this [a relational] frame of reference" (p. 311). As part of an increasing global (social) scientific community, the end of the Cold War, colonialism shifting from physical occupation to the epistemic production of territories, and the need to understand and communicate with non-Western societies, relational approaches offer a productive direction for scholarship (Prandini, 2015). The catalyst for these approaches—the plural is deliberate, as it is not a homogenous space—is the critique of the substantialist, or entity-based, epistemologies that have come to dominate contemporary social thought and analysis. Key thinkers in contemporary relational sociology include: Crossley (2011), Dépelteau and Powell (2013), Powell and Dépelteau (2013), Donati (2011), Fuhse (2015), and Mische (2011). While originally very much centered in New York (notably Harrison White at Harvard University and Charles Tilly at Harvard then Columbia, and what Mische labels the "New York School of Relational Sociology"), Italian Donati has been developing his position for over 30 years (1983, 1991, 2011, 2015), Fuhse hosted an international symposium at Humboldt University in Berlin in 2008, and there is a strong Canadian network—primarily advanced through a research cluster within the Canadian Sociological Association (La Société Canadienne de Sociologie). Prandini (2015) reminds us that while major methodological advances occurred in the USA, relational sociology has strong roots and seeds in the European tradition, owing to the work of Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Gabriel Tarde, Norbert Elias, Niklas Luhmann, Pierre Bourdieu, and Bruno Latour, just to name a few. As Emirbayer notes, interest in relational scholarship is beyond national boundaries.

A similar shift, although far less diverse, is taking place in the broader management/leadership sciences. Covering perspectives such as social exchange, leader–member exchange, vertical dyadic linkage, among others, and well captured in Uhl-Bien and Ospina's (2012) *Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives*, relational approaches now feature prominently in key journals (Dinh et al., 2014), and are perceived to be at the cutting edge of contemporary thought and analysis (Hunt & Dodge, 2000). However, the mobilization of relational approaches remains problematic. Sociologists argue the distinction between substantialist and relational accounts, whereas in the leadership literature both

entity-based (substantialist) and relational approaches are grouped together under the label of relational (e.g., Uhl-Bien, 2006). To further highlight some of the tensions of language across fields, Emirbayer uses "transactional" (somewhat synonymously with relational) as a label, yet in the leadership literature it has a very different history in opposition to transformational leadership. What remains however is a shift from role-, or person-, centric accounts to the recognition of practice being co-constructed by actors, something that to be understood requires attention to relations.

If the social world is relational, to which there is at scale multi-disciplinary support, then it cannot be understood from an individualist point of view or a holist perspective. After all, both the individualist and holist assume stability of the object—a scalable equivalence. It is however difficult to define, once and for all, relations. Donati (2015) contends that society does not have relations but *is* relations. Therefore, relations are the very stuff of what we call "the social" and the basic unit of analysis/focus of inquiry for the social sciences. But in moving beyond the substantialist or entity-based approaches, relations need to be thought of as not a thing. They are at once, the product of, and constitutive of, activity. This requires conceiving of the object of scholarship in new ways. Privileged within such a perspective is the abstract systems of distance played out in action and the unfolding description of practice. But as Savage (2009) argues, this form of description is not about a linear or mechanistic causality, rather the relating of actions to other actions. The task of the scholar is not to define "fields" in any universal terms (as is often done with the appropriation of Bourdieu), but to describe actions as they are, with all their complexity and diversity. This requires the mobilization of methodological resources facilitating the inscription of actions in particular spatio-temporal conditions. The inscribing of action is fundamental to avoid the errors of essentialism, substantialism, and/or reductionism.

In *Educational leadership relationally,* I articulate a particular form of *relational* approach. Built upon a very Bourdieusian craft of scholarship (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]), but without any great loyalty or reverence, I name five *relational* extensions:

- The centrality of "organizing" in the social world creates an ontological complicity in researchers (and others) that makes it difficult to epistemologically break from ordinary language;
- Rigorous social scientific inquiry calls into question the very foundations of popular labels such as "leadership," "management," and "administration";
- The contemporary condition is constantly shaping, and shaped by, the image of organizing;
- Foregrounding relations enables the overcoming of the contemporary, and arguably enduring, tensions of individualism/holism, universalism/particularism, and structure/agency; and
- In doing so, there is a productive—rather than merely critical—space to theorize organizing activity.

Dépelteau (2015) contends that relational approaches are only useful if they can propose new solutions to fundamental issues when compared with existing theorizations. I want to take this further to argue that if relational approaches do not generate the type of intellectual turmoil that Griffiths (1979) argued for, or later Samier (2013) sought in educational administration, namely by problematizing some of the canons of contemporary scholarship, then they offer little more than noise.

The type of analysis made possible by the *relational* approach I am advancing offers a means of composing theoretically inscribed descriptions of situated action. It directly engages with the relations between the researcher and the researched, the uncritical adoption of everyday language in scholarship, the role of spatio-temporal conditions in shaping and understanding, the limitations of binary thinking, and seeks to productively theorize—not just critique. As an approach, it does not definitively resolve the epistemological issues of educational administration, but it does engage with them. In doing so, it offers the potential to bring about new ways of understanding more so than simply mapping the intellectual terrain with novel ideas and vocabularies.

Relational Extensions

To deliver on the above claims, mindful that later I devote an individual chapter to each one (see Part II), the current analysis extends the *relational* approach to consider the importance of the extensions for understanding and advancing contemporary thought and analysis in educational administration.

Ontological Complicity

The separation of the researcher and researched has been central to the proliferation of popular scientific rhetoric. When the notion of a detached, objective, observer first emerged in the West during the fifteenth century, it was a breakthrough in thought that laid the foundations for modern science and industrialized societies (Berman, 1981) by giving credibility to empirical research and breaking with the dominant theocratic ideology of the Middles Ages (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). From the *relational* perspective, two matters warrant attention here: first, the separation of the observer from the observed; and second, the blurring of scientific and ordinary language.

Greenfield, among others, denies that there is a clear distinction between theory and observation. For him, there are no observational data—as evidence to justify theories—independent of the theoretical lens through which data is generated and analyzed. Specifically, he argues that our theories create the facts that are relevant to them, and we can, therefore, only explore truth within a framework that defines

what it is (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). This argument destabilizes the rationalist and empiricist agendas that continue to dominate educational administration scholarship. Relational approaches break with the Cartesian approaches in which administration and organizational scholars presume themselves separate from their organizational subjects, and that organizations, can be conceived of separately from the humans who are constructing them (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; McKelvey, 1997). In the case of schools, this is not to denounce the materiality of buildings, fences, playgrounds, or actors (e.g., students, teachers), but to problematize at what point the notion of “school” is possible. After all, the role of actors within a school can only be understood in relation to other actors, and these actions are defined as much by their relations to other actions and social groups—those which give meaning to the actions. To understand, even partially, actions, one has to engage in the unfolding description of practice. This remains a key methodological problem however due to the complicity that researchers bring to understanding the social world as it is—or more specifically, the uncritical acceptance of the well-rehearsed narrative of entities (social institutions, such as schools, governance, but also nation-states, and so on) that constitute the orthodoxy of the social world.

Administration, or at least organizing, has been a central element in the trajectory of human society (Gronn, 2010). Organizing is intimately connected to our understanding of the social world. We are at once, embedded and embodying, of this worldview and it shapes the intellectual gaze, and by virtue, (social) scientific inquiry. The challenge for the scholar is to cast doubt on the orthodoxy, or in other words, to make the familiar strange. An important move this requires of research is attention to the construction of the research object/focus of inquiry as an embodied actor opposed to the empirical confirmation or disconfirmation or the enquirer’s model of reality. In short, something they have helped generate.

The somewhat singular relationship, our histories, with the orthodoxy orients our thoughts and both legitimize and sustain it. Following the work of Bachelard (1984 [1934]), with reference to Althusser (1969[1965]) and Bourdieu et al. (1991[1968]), the concern for scholarship (e.g., scientific inquiry) is to break with the ordinary language of the everyday and create a distinction. To not do so is to be complicit with the orthodoxy of the social world and potentially limit any contribution to the mapping or overlaying of the social with an alternate narrative that offers little to nothing for thinking anew.

In the case of administration, the complicity of the researcher is often based on a general belief that the social world is at stake. Administration functions only so far as it produces a belief in the value of its product (e.g., policy, security, and order) and means of production (e.g., governance). In addition, educational administration primarily owes its existence to the currency of public concern over particular social issues. If thinking with Gronn’s claim earlier on the establishment of social hierarchies, then it is of little surprise that power-based stratification of social groups is an orthodox means of conceptualizing, understanding, and experiencing the social world. To think otherwise is to not only challenge the canon but also the self. As scholars, it is impossible to withdraw from the social in order to construct a (partial) re-presentation of it. What I am calling for here is not the abandonment of the

intellectual project that is educational administration, rather, to ask questions that for the most part, educational administration researchers, irrespective of the voluminous and fast expanding literature, do not ask themselves. To overcome these matters, and following Bachelard (1984[1934]), requires the denial of certainty for a definitive heritage of educational administration and the perpetual calling into question the very principles of one's own constructs. Familiarity with the social world is a central, and enduring, epistemological obstacle for educational administration scholarship. It continuously generates conceptualizations (e.g., leadership) and simultaneously the conditions to legitimize and sustain them. Getting beyond the ordinary language of the everyday, illuminating our own complicity with the social world, is an inexhaustible project of the social scientist—and one in which a *relational* approach explicitly engages.

Problematizing Foundations

Klaus Weber challenged management scholars to study fads and fashions rather than chase them (see: Birkinshaw et al., 2014). His argument has utility and poses significant questions, for educational administration. Who is it to say, and on what grounds, that leadership, for example, is any more than the latest fad? Is it not possible that the very foundations of educational leadership are nothing more than a fad? Callahan's (1962) classic describes how school administration reformers looked to Taylor (1911) in their efforts to reshape schools, specifically how the infusion, dissemination, and legitimation of business ideals (e.g. efficiency), took hold of education. More recently, Peck and Reitzug (2012) provided an explanatory conceptual model for how business management concepts become school leadership fashions. This argument is not limited to the contemporary title of leadership either. The establishment of departments of educational administration in US universities during the early 1900s was based on an assumption that matters of educational administration were separate to education (Bates, 2010). Stimulus for such was the currency and large-scale interest in the administration of educational organizations—an enduring project. This brings temporality into the argument, something that I will return to, but for now, it is mindful to consider Samier's (2006) call for educational administration as a historical discipline, and a focus on the study of educational administration under different historical conditions. I believe this notion of history to be not just a chronological account or mapping of past events leading to the present, but the locating in spatio-temporal conditions. This argument is equally relevant for the field of knowledge production as it is the field of practice.

In order to move away from these problems, or more precisely, to explicitly engage with them, requires going beyond the notion of using pre-existing concepts (the social a priori) as the starting point of analysis. There is a need to define the object of research in different ways. Calling into question the ontological complicity

with the social world makes the act of operationally defining concepts—that which is a canon of the logical empiricist—inappropriate. The assumption of stability and equivalence of the research object (e.g., Durkheim's social facts) across time and space simply cannot be defended. Rather than looking for absolutes like the "school," "leadership," "administration," "policy," and so on, it might be more fruitful to respect the diversity of the social world and observe specific occurrences of organizing. Such a position recognizes the empirical example as just that, a particular manifestation of the larger theoretical problem in the social (empirical) world. This is not to legitimize the binary of the theoretical and empirical, or to deny the possibility of an at scale coherence or stability, but to call into question the assumption that there is stability, scale and equivalence of socially constructed content. The rationality and order which the logical empiricist requires are built upon the artificial partitioning and exclusionary practice of scientific reduction that is used to construct the discrete and knowable entity (e.g., school, leader, and leadership). Shifting the research object to the dynamic notion of relations negates the need for operational definitions and instead has the researcher engaged in the ongoing (co-)construction of the object. This is not to grant permission for an anything goes approach, rather an openness to the messiness of the social and not imposing a pre-defined narrative on the empirical. Objects are at once present and emergent of the social.

Opening up scholarship blurs, if not breaks down, disciplinary boundaries. While locating work within an understanding of the history of the field remains, particularly from a publication standpoint, there is merit in recognizing that a field is not the sole possessor of knowledge on a particular phenomenon. Imperialist claims that educational administration is the only legitimate body of knowledge for itself and overlooking, or ignoring, contributions from other areas of education (e.g., teaching and learning; child development), humanities, social sciences (e.g., sociology; psychology; philosophy; economics), and the professions (e.g., business and management), is problematic for the advancement of knowledge and the possibility of going beyond the orthodoxy.

With the contemporary focus of thought and analysis on leadership, there is a concern with a fairly narrow phenomenon (especially when it is uncritically accepted), in an almost exclusively perceived universal environment (namely formal educational organizations/institutions—particularly the school), with a privileging of currency (over history), usually limited to developed economies of Western democratic societies. To problematize the canons calls into question, without necessarily refuting, such claims. If anything is defeated by such a position it is the possibility of work claiming to articulate "best practice." While I strongly defend the development of theory, our understanding of educational administration will never be complete. As participants and scholars of the social world, we engage with a constantly renegotiated target. With the goal of generating rigorous and robust scholarship, the problematizing of foundations means going beyond the perspectives of pre-defined concepts as though they are independent of the enquirer and locating our accounts in particular spatio-temporal conditions.

Spatio-Temporal Grounding

Crossley (2015) argues that:

> … our lives, thoughts, feelings, and actions are always interwoven with those of others such that they cannot be understood atomistically: we affect others, they affect us, and breaking that circle by reducing the social world to discrete atomic entities renders both that world and the actions within it unintelligible. (p. 67)

As noted earlier, operational definitions and that uncritical acceptance of labels as though they represent external, stable, and equivalent entities is highly problematic from a *relational* standpoint. The artificial partitioning of the social world for the purpose of classification and categorization is an act by the social scientist. This is evident in the mobilization of context in educational administration literature. Context is recognized as important, if not most important, in almost all accounts of education, but what is meant by context is of interest here.

So far, at least in this section, I have used context as synonymous with spatio-temporal conditions. This has been a deliberate move to ease the transition for the reader, but at the same time, is fundamentally flawed. Context, as it is commonly used in educational administration, is constructed as another variable within a systems thinking approach to scholarship. In the partitioning of the social world, context—or what is sometimes referred to as the "environment" or "environmental factors"—is just another variable that can be manipulated (and my use of manipulation is not intended as necessarily a negative here) in a malleable external world. The interplay of context and practice is not seen as deterministic, as might be the case in some appropriations of Bourdieu's theorization of reproduction, rather as possible of being overcome. As an example, Gurr (2014) argues:

While successful school leaders are culturally sensitive, they seem to be less constrained by context than would be expected, or as seen in less successful leaders. Fundamentally, they seem to show an ability to work with contexts and cultures to ensure success (p. 75).

And again

> … for successful principals they seem to be able to adapt, use and influence context to foster success (p. 85).

In many ways, this is not surprising given that for some researchers the very purpose of educational administration as a field of knowledge production is to generate understanding that can provide universally applicable insights. Yet the limitations of such a substantialist and decontextualized approach are well recognized, including by the same author, who elsewhere notes "… it does not explain why these interventions work in some circumstances and not in others" (Gurr, Drysdale, & Goode, 2010, p. 124). For a more extended critique of the International Successful School Principal Project, see Chap. 6 in *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015). The limitations in what Gurr (and Drysdale), and others adopting similar approaches, can say about action could have been overcome with attention to locating the scholarly narratives in the particular spatio-temporal

conditions. In conceiving of context as just another variable, it is granted a transactional status with other variables. To think here with Abbott (1988), this approach assumes that variables have "only one causal meaning at a time" and that "this causal meaning does not depend on other attributes, on the past sequence of attributes, or on the context of other entities" (p. 181). In other words, a conceptualization of context that is beyond context.

From a *relational* standpoint, actions are not the outcome of interactions with social structures. To do so would require the reduction to a substantialist (entity-based) approach mobilizing relationships as a measurement construct and structures as somewhat immovable objective entities. The rise of leadership is very much caught up in a rhetoric of agency and interaction with social structures, and this results in a central thread of causal vocabulary in educational administration literature. What is overlooked in this approach is the reciprocity of the social world. In other words, the ways in which the social is simultaneously shaping of, and shaped by, action. As Fuhse (2015) contends, "social relations are themselves definitions of the situations that are tentatively established and continuously renegotiated" (p. 27). These social conditions are not necessarily layered, as may be the case with macro- (global), meso-, and micro-level analytical frames. In contrast, relational approaches see the social world as flat (Prandini, 2015). Actions can only be understood in relation (and with reference) to other actions. While this may read as a causal logic, it is not mobilized in the same way that a logical empiricist would use it. The argument is actually that understanding is achieved through describing the unfolding actions of the social world in spatio-temporal conditions. This is not to go as far as Greenfield's subjectivism, but it is to argue that educational administration can only be understood in relation to contemporary social conditions. The generation of action is the interplay of trajectories, both observable and abstract, that create systems of distance in the social. To that end, the action does not take place in context rather it is enacted in context conditions. An analysis that separates action from spatio-temporal conditions destroys that which it sought to understand.

Beyond Analytical Dualisms

Grounding scholarly description in spatio-temporal conditions challenges analytical dualisms frequently mobilized in educational administration literature. The enduring tensions of individualism/holism and structure/agency have been central to the explanatory power of knowledge in the field for over a century. Substantive theoretical and methodological interventions have yet to overcome them. Greenfield arguably under-estimated the role of social structures in shaping action and the critical (both "C" and "c") arguably overplay structures. In the latter, social structures operate in a very deterministic manner, while in the former, the somewhat denial of structures is equally problematic. However, as noted earlier, the causal power of social structures is canonical in educational administration literature. The

starting point of analysis, educational administration, does specific work here. Attention to administration has a tendency of privileging structural accounts through the complicity of the observer with the object and subsequent analytics. Similarly, a focus on leadership and its effect frequently plays the role of agency in action. Logically, there exists a flaw in attempting to understand action at either end, yet the privileging of structure or agency remains.

A question this raises is whether the educational administration can overcome the underlying generative principles of such binaries. Following Bourdieu (2005 [2000]), I stress that in what is frequently perceived as heavily administered societies, much like a gravitational field, even the person considered to have absolute power—or decision-making authority—is him/herself held within the constraints of spatio-temporal conditions. It is impossible to know definitively who is/are the subject of the final decision and the location of that decision is both everywhere and nowhere. Likewise, accounts stressing the ability of any individual to overcome obstacles and achieve if they work hard enough or even simply want it bad enough overlooks the spatio-temporal conditions that generate such opportunities. In breaking from our ontological complicity with the world as it is and problematizing the foundations of educational administration, there is quite plausibly the opportunity to provide an alternate to the binary thinking that is orthodoxy.

Parallel monologues have become commonplace in the literature of the field. This is not only evident in the absence of responses to papers in journals (which potentially has many reasons, including the delay between submission and publication), but also the engagement with other works. As noted by Donmoyer (2001) and then more forcefully by Thrupp and Willmott (2003), there is a state of tacit agreement in an educational administration where those with whom we disagree, we treat with benign neglect. I argue that binary thinking is a significant factor in this phenomenon. The explanatory power of accounts built upon analytical dualisms are read sympathetically by supporters and refuted—if not quickly dismissed—by alternative positions. In and of itself, this is not a problem as the logic of academic work (argument and refutation) requires such. However, when combined with the uncritical acceptance of the everyday, the production of knowledge rarely gets beyond the pre-existing normative orientation of the observer. The prospect of generating a common understanding, a basis from which dialogue and debate can occur across intellectual traditions, is negated and results in researchers talking past rather than to one another.

The relational turn is a response to individualist and holist ontologies that have come to dominate contemporary thought and analysis. In shifting the focus of inquiry to the ongoing relations that define the social, there are the theoretical resources to overcome the tensions of structure/agency and individualist/holist by denying their existence in the first place. This poses a very significant challenge to leadership literature—those which rely on an initial distinction between leader and follow (e.g., Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Rather than undertaking the scientific reductionism that is required to partition the individual from the whole, or adopting the absolutes of structure or agency, the *relational* does not seek to bring order and rationality to its logic. Without legitimizing binary thinking, I

contend that a more defensible position is that neither end of the continuum is productive. Instead, if the social world is messy then scholarship should embrace such messiness rather than seek to bring artificial order to it.

Productive Theorizing

With the scale and scope of the managerialist project ever expanding, intellectual work has been discredited as exotic, indulgent, and not in the public interest (Gunter, 2013). Alternatively, as Colin Evers and I have previously argued in relation to more overtly theoretical work, it is not popular and even more so, "seen as illegitimate in a disciplinary space that is prone to faddism, privileges a conservative, rational, and somewhat atheoretical, set of discourses that seek to maintain a highly applied nature" (Eacott & Evers, 2015, p. 310). While this line of argument reflects a professionalization, or instrumentalist account, of knowledge and knowledge production, it also highlights an underlying issue with scholarship, namely that which has an overt theoretical edge—particularly the social critical. The critical project is, by its very nature, critical. This is not to say that the theoretical resources mobilized or the significance of its narrative is not quality scholarship, rather to say that it frequently offers little beyond illuminating the ways in which actors are oppressed or constrained. As Jansen (2008) argues:

> … show me a theoretical framework particularly in the critical tradition that begins to grapple with this imperfect practice. There is none, for what critical theory does is to stand self-righteously at the other end of the struggle and declare the impossible ideals that real practising teachers and principals—the ordinary ones—must but simply cannot attain without working through the ruins of a troubled past, a testing present, and a future from which the lifeblood of hope is drained by the burden of the everyday. (p. 155)

While I do not align with the argument that all scholarship needs to be directly transferrable into practice, as there are many audiences and purposes for scholarship, there is an argument to be made here. What is the worth of theory? How is its utility measured? This is not necessarily about impact—at least how it is being operationalized within many research assessment exercises. More so, it is about how we ascertain the contribution of theory to be a resource for understanding the social world.

Throughout this chapter. I have argued for a descriptive approach. But how can one describe yet offer something beyond the particular? This is where the power of spatio-temporal locating and problematizing of the foundations is important. The locating in particular spatio-temporal conditions is useful for facilitating dialogue and debate with other accounts. In addition, it is the attention to the construction of the research object that enables a touchstone between studies. Rather than focusing on difference based on methodological accounts, we can have a conversation around the content.

Conclusion

What is perhaps most striking and troubling in contemporary thought and analysis in educational administration is the absence of theoretical crisis. This is not to say there is a dearth of critique, as such scholarship continues to thrive (although this is at the margins), rather that it is difficult to point out any signs that there are deep ruptures or confusions in academic dialogue and debate. Nor, I might add, is there any reason to suspect a looming crisis in the near future. Yet, there is widespread disquiet about the advancing managerialist project, the role of context, and fundamental problems of individual/holism and structure/agency remain unresolved. The *relational* approach that I advance does more than problematize the hegemony of educational administration. It illuminates theoretical and methodological issues with origins in the orthodoxy of contemporary thought and analysis, and, more importantly, the pre-existing normative assumptions of researchers. Specifically, my intervention is to disrupt the dominant epistemologies and methodologies of educational administration by challenging them not at the level of content but the underlying generative principles of scholarship.

Early scholarship in educational administration mainly concerned developing techniques for understanding administrative phenomena and as a result, the field was slow to develop sophistication (Park, 2001). The underdeveloped theoretical/methodological preliminaries have been an enduring issue for the study for the study of educational administration. Quite simply, the most commonly mobilized theoretical resources cannot contend with the embodied and embedded nature of the researcher and the uncritical adoption of the dominant ideologies of the time. Similarly, the appropriation of great thinkers (e.g., Foucault, Bourdieu, Lyotard, Arendt, Butler) to map the terrain does little more than to bring novelty as the received terms remain intact.

Relational approaches, and the version in this book in particular, are a critique not only of methodological individualism and holism but also of the failures of dominant theoretical resources in educational administration. These failures are not new. They have been pointed out by many before me, namely Greenfield, Bates, Evers and Lakomski. The *relational* approach I advance is characterized by its attempt to deepen understanding of the fabric that constitutes educational organizations. The fundamental thesis presented here is that understanding the social world can only be done relationally. Scholarship that achieves this is less concerned with extensive articulation of methods and analysis (see, for example, the extended descriptions of methods in many of the fields journals—namely *Educational Administration Quarterly*) and more concerned with underlying generative principles of such scholarship. This is difficult work but as English (2006) reminds us, intellectual work "is never efficient, perhaps not even cost effective, but then, true discovery and significant intellectual and practical breakthroughs rarely are" (p. 470).

My intention is not to disregard all that has gone before. That said, the proposal I offer is characterized by a dissatisfaction and restlessness with contemporary

thought and analysis. If the scholarship is intended to be pedagogical, then I believe that for the most part, the educational administration has yet to deliver on its promise. Despite voluminous, and rapidly proliferating, literature we know relatively little beyond the commonsense logic of the everyday. To this end, Rapp (2002) suggests, we must commit to looking beyond the current perceived elites and loudest voices in the field that situate themselves and a somewhat narrow narrative of what educational administration is. In a 2010 paper, I argued that:

> … an influential theoretical contribution, one which commands widespread intellectual attention, will make visible much of the underlying assumptions of actions. Lesser educational leadership scholarship operates with naïve, taken-for-granted conceptions, or with old theories that have passed into common discourse, such as that involving people in decisions that directly affect them will lead to better outcomes for all. Educational leadership scholars at their best have been constructing social theory, although they have not always discussed it as such. (p. 63)

While I am now a little more guarded in my accounts of “lesser” and “best,” the theorizing of educational administration socially I stand by. The *relational* approach that I am arguing for in this book and elsewhere is my attempt to engage in this space and provide theoretical resources that may hold potential for overcoming some enduring issues in the scholarship of the field. As a generative research program, this book is far from the final word. In the interests of advancing the agenda, I encourage others to think with, through and against it. Use it, refute it, modify it, but most of all, engage with me about it.

To articulate my approach to building my argument, the next two chapters locate the *relational* research program in the broader literature (Chap. 2) and educational administration specifically (Chap. 3). Chapters 4–8 provide nuanced accounts of the five *relational* extensions. The next six Chaps. (9–15) are responses from an invited collection of commentators. Their contributions are based on readings of *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015) and provide insights into the strengths and more importantly, weaker areas or unresolved questions, in the program. The final two chapters of the text include my response to the commentators (Chap. 16) and a conclusion. As noted above, this approach to structuring the book is unorthodox but central to advancing the social epistemology that is imperative to relational knowledge production.

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Chapter 2
The Relational Turn in Social Sciences

Recent times have witnessed relational sociology, as arguably the major form of relational scholarship, gain considerable scholarly momentum. There is a forthcoming major handbook (Dépelteau, 2018), significant edited collections such as *Conceptualizing relational sociology* (Powell & Dépelteau, 2013), *Applying relational sociology* (Dépelteau & Powell, 2013), and in the broader leadership literatures *Advancing relational leadership research* (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). In addition, there have been key texts from Crossley (2011), the work of Donati (1983, 1991, 2011) has become more accessible in English (to which he thanks Margaret Archer for, stating she "greatly encouraged and assisted me in presenting my theory to an international audience (Donati, 2011, p. xvii)), and—although less engaged with by English-speaking audiences—Bajoit's (1992) *Pour une sociologie relationnelle*. The Canadian Sociological Association has established a research cluster for relational sociology, with regular symposia, meetings, and events. Significantly, in 2015 the *International Review of Sociology/ Revue Internationale de Sociolgie* published a special section on relational sociology. Edited by Prandini (2015) and with contributions from Crossley (2015), Dépelteau (2015), Donati (2015), and Fuhse (2015), this special section sought to ascertain whether an original and international sociological paradigm entitled "relational sociology" could be identified. Prandini (2015) argues:

> A new and original social paradigm is recognizable only if it accedes to the world stage of the global scientific system constituted and structured by networks of scientific scholars, scientific contributions published in scientific journals, books, internet sites, etc., fueled by a vast array of international meetings, seminars, conferences, and so on. It is only at this global level that we can decide if a new paradigm is gaining a global stage or not. Put in other words: are we really witnessing a new and emergent sociological 'school', or are we observing only a sort of 'esprit du temp' which is able to catalyse similar intuitions and sociological insights? (pp. 1–2)

At the end of his paper, Prandini (2015) contends that there is less a paradigm (in its precise Kuhnian meaning) and instead it is better to speak of a "relational turn" in sociology. Built on a strong and clear convergence toward a common critique of classic sociological theories, it is possibly the early stages of an emerging paradigm but such a label is currently premature. The real breakthrough of this turn is in

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forcing social scientists to specify "accurately the ontology of society and social relation and to discover new methods and research techniques well suited to study it" (Prandini, 2015, p. 13).

Relational theory is, as Emirbayer (1997) declares, beyond any one disciplinary background, national tradition, or analytic and empirical point of view. Outside of the major centers of Europe and the USA, Yanjie Bian hosted the *International Conference on Relational Sociology* at the Institute for Empirical Social Science of Xi'an Jiaotong University, and Jan Fuhse hosted the international symposium *Relational Sociology: Transatlantic Impulses for the Social Sciences* at Humboldt University of Berlin. Donati (2011) claims that interest in social relations can be found in philosophy (from the metaphysical point of view), psychology (from the psychic point of view), economics (from the resource perspective), law (control by rule), and even biology (bioethics). The interest is also not limited to the social sciences, with Bradbury and Lichtenstein (2000) noting:

> The interdependent, interrelated nature of the world has also been discovered by physicists in their study of quantum reality. In their quest to identify the basic building blocks of the natural world, quantum physicists found that atomic particles appeared more as relations than as discrete objects (Capra 1975; Wolf 1980), and that space itself is not empty but is filled with potential (Bohm 1988). Heisenberg's discovery early this century that every observation irrevocably changes the object being observed, further fueled the recognition that human consciousness plays an irreversible role in our understanding of reality (Bachelard, 1934/1984; Wilber 1982; Jahn & Dunne 1987). (p. 552)

Apart from its widespread contemporary appeal, relational thinking has a long history. The North American stream arguably finds its roots in the New York School, European scholars such as Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Gabriel Tarde, Norbert Elias, Niklas Luhmann, Pierre Bourdieu, Bruno Latour, among others, have long argued for various relational approaches (even if not using that label), and Emirbayer traces the tradition of privileging relations rather than substances to pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus. What is consistently germane across these various scholars is a critique of substantialism in classic sociological accounts. This also arguably speaks to the proliferation of relational scholarship in the past few decades as globalized forces are causing a rethink of spatio-temporal conditions (e.g., the nation state and geographic borders). In breaking down the substantialist approaches, and their underlying analytical dualisms, relational scholarship asks questions of the ontological and epistemological as much as the empirical.

Contemporary thought and analysis in social theory is overrun with "turns." In this chapter, rather than be seduced by contemporary attention to a relational turn in the social sciences, I seek to highlight some major events, trajectories, or streams of relational thought. In doing so, I am critically aware of the difficulty of arguing for relational understanding and then constructing significant events as though they are entities in and of their own right. Within the confines of a single chapter, and mindful of the role that this chapter is playing the book (e.g., setting some context/trajectory for developing my argument), my goal is to cite key developments and how they relate to one another and my argument. Given my particular

interest in organizing activity, my focus is on the Human Relations Movement of the early twentieth century, the New York School of relational sociology, and then contemporary developments in sociology, leadership, and to a lesser extent, the natural sciences. While I concede that there is increasing interest in what has come to be known as "relational sociology" (see also the following chapter), relational scholarship has a long and diverse intellectual history. Importantly though, as Powell and Dépelteau (2013) note, relational sociology is not a heterogeneous label and as a collection of scholars, is still quite some way from achieving any form of consensus. Whether consensus is required, or even desirable, for relational scholarship is questionable. The diversity of ontological and methodological starting points allows scholars to investigate a wide range of phenomena. This diversity, complexity, depth, and vitality enable dialogue and debate without requiring consensus. What binds them together is their scholarly focus on relations rather than alignment with a specific empirical object and/or method of inquiry.

The Human Relations Movement

Relationships have been influential in management and leadership research since the early 1900s. As a counter narrative to the dominance of Taylor's (1911) *Principles of scientific management* (and also the work of Henri Fayol and Lyndall Urwick) and its attention to structure and supervisory oversight, Follett (1927, 1949) argued that hierarchical position-based (e.g., bureaucratic) conceptualizations were not appropriate and that it is the "relationship" of the leader and followers that is essential to organizational success. Recognizing the role of relationships within structures is arguably why Weber (1978[1922]), whose contribution to educational administration is often reduced to articulating the bureaucracy, discussed the influence of "charisma." Recently, and demonstrating an enduring interdisciplinary legacy of the argument, Daly (2010) claimed that the social ties among teachers and leaders were more potent than strategic plans to facilitate or impede education reform. In *Creative experience* (1924), Follett argues that the fundamental problem of any enterprise is the building and maintenance of dynamic, yet harmonious, human relationships—with great emphasis on coordination. Making a normative argument however is not enough to advance theoretical understanding. It generates some potentially insightful lines of inquiry but requires further refinement and development.

Unfortunately, but perhaps unsurprising (see Wallin, 2016), Follett's work is often overlooked or rarely discussed in any depth in many texts outlining the Human Relations Movement in administration/management literatures. Instead, most of the attention goes to the work of Mayo (1933) and what is commonly labeled the "Hawthorne Studies." It should however be noted that while Mayo gets the attention for the work, the bulk of the experiments were conducted by Roethlisberger (a graduate student of Mayo) and Dickson (Head of the Department of Employee Relations at Western Electric). Built on a series of experiments (e.g.,

the rates of employee productivity based on manipulating length of rest/break periods, lighting, and piecemeal payment plans) undertaken at the Hawthorne Works, a large factory complex of the Western Electric Company in Cicero Illinois, Mayo argued that productivity was partly dependent on the informal social interactions within work groups. This was a very different insight into that of Taylor who stressed the role of effective supervision for improving performance and provided an alternate focus for interventions hoping to leverage organizational actors for greater performance. Although it is to be noted, despite outlining a different focus to Taylor (although there are connections with some of Taylor's claims around "soldiering"), that Sheppard (1950) labeled Mayo's work as "managerial sociology," a body of work that serves the desires of management (see also Muldoon, 2017), and in that sense, it is not too dissimilar to critiques raised against Taylor. Conceptually though, Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) note:

> Many of the actually existing patterns of human interaction have no representation in the formal organization at all, and others are inadequately represented by the formal organization. … Too often it is assumed that the organization of a company corresponds to a blueprint plan or organizational chart. Actually, it never does. (p. 559)

The work of both Follett and Mayo and colleagues explicitly sought to bring the human back into the study of organizations. Relationships, and particularly interpersonal relations, were of central focus in the attempt to move beyond strict structural accounts of organizations. As part of this broad Human Relations Movement, scholarly attention shifted from studying the organization as a rational model that emphasized how it ought to behave through to a new natural (social) system emphasizing how is the organization functioning (Hanson, 2003). A concurrent, but equally important shift was in seeing the organization not as a series of smaller parts but as a whole. This did not however go so far as to denounce substantialist accounts of organizations and for the most part shifted from individualism to collectivism without resolving the underlying theoretical issues.

Significantly influenced by the work of the early Human Relations scholars (particularly Mayo), Barnard's (1938) classic *The functions of the executive* continues the emphasis on informal organizations and the complexity of human motivation (particularly the limitations of financial incentives). This informal organization is also central to Mintzberg's (1973) *Nature of managerial work* (which was incidentally the basis for a stream of observational studies in educational administration in the 1980s). Some specific tasks of the executive as articulated by Barnard are to continuously obtain coalitions within the workplace and to maintain a system of communication. Once again, the normative orientation of the work led to a rational empiricism (particularly behavioral science) and his attention to matters such as motivation led to a privileging of psychological approaches for understanding organizational activity. The trajectory of this argument is often reported to be followed/extended through the work of McGregor (1960) on Theory X and Y, Ouchi's (1981) Theory Z, and Likert's (1967) systems four model. While sometimes (arguably mistakenly) referred to as one of the first sociologies of organizations (e.g., Wolf, 1995), Barnard's work has more in common with

psychological experimentation than sociology. As a system thinker (and friend of Talcott Parsons), this affiliation with psychology goes part of the way to explaining its influence on Simon's (1945) *Administrative behavior* (see Wolf, 1995)—a canon of the Theory Movement in educational administration.

The genesis of the Human Relations Movement was a recognition that relationships matter as much, if not more so than, organizational structures and official titles. This was not to denounce the influence of structures on human behavior, but to some extent it recognized that such structures are nevertheless the product of human actions. As this tradition of scholarship advanced, this original logic was substituted with the logic of system thinking and psychological studies. Theoretically, organizations remain the collection of individuals working together on a common task or for a common purpose (and this belief remains in many contemporary definitions of "leadership"). Methodologically, this is significant as the relationships between organizational actors are reduced to a measurement between analytical categories such as trust, autonomy, fit, and the like. These categories become variables within system approaches to organizations and open to manipulation in the pursuit of higher performance (with this manipulation being frequently conceived of as "leadership"). Therefore, despite recognizing the importance of relationships to organizing activity, the Human Relations Movement never fulfilled its potential for a relational approach as it could not overcome a focus on categories. To overcome this substantialist approach requires the analytical resources to explicitly engage with the relations. One such approach, at least in its intent, is social network analysis.

The New York School

Following the germinal work of Barnes (1954) and Bott (1971), sociological studies mobilizing network analysis have appeared with increasing frequency (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). Theoretical precursors for contemporary network analysis include Émile Durkheim and Georg Simmel, but network analysis is rather diverse with many versions. It was during the 1990s that social network analysis emerged as a serious intellectual trend with handbooks, software packages and substantive grow in professional associations. However, as Mische (2011) notes, much of the work was technical and somewhat inaccessible to those without a strong mathematic background. In addition, there was a perception that social network analysis was a positivist exercise as relationships were reduced to measurement constructs (e.g., a series of 1s and 0s) and devoid of any sense of context/culture. This was taking place at the same time as cultural studies, or cultural sociology, at least in the USA, was shifting its attention from artistic production to a much broader view of cultural practice.

The arrival of Harrison White at Columbia (via Harvard and Arizona) in 1988 to take on the directorship of the Paul F. Lazarsfeld Center for the Social Sciences (later renamed the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy—ISERP)

marked a significant moment in the development of relational sociology (of the US-based network analysis kind). Under the leadership of White, the Center sponsored a number of interdisciplinary workshops, mini-conferences, ran seminars, and interacted with key graduate faculty from the New School for Social Research (e.g., Charles Tilly). Researchers from other universities nearby such as NYU, Princeton, Yale, CUNY, SUNY, Rutgers, Penn, among others contributed to the various ongoing conversations and developments. Beyond this group, Chicago, Toronto, Stony Brook, Arizona, UC Irvine, Michigan, Berkeley, UNC Chapel Hill, and Stanford have been important centers for relational sociology. The spatio-temporal conditions are significant here. As Mullins (1973) argues, local or regional concentrations are important for new intellectual movements to emerge. Mische (2011) notes:

> the effervescent "New York Moment" described above was one formative conversational hub in a recent movement that returns sociology to its relational and pragmatist roots, while suggesting a new agenda for studying the dynamic interplay of networks and culture. (p. 91)

White's work predates his time at Columbia. It was arguably first laid out in an under-graduate course at Harvard in the mid-1960s (Fuhse, 2015). A memo from the course (e.g., Santoro, 2008; Schwartz, 2008; White, 2008[1965]) was circulated among students and others in the area that introduced White's account of social structure and key concepts such as "catnet" ("cat" from category and "net" from network), structural equivalence (following up catnet, and sometimes called "regular equivalence," the basic idea is that relations in a network are ordered by categories that make for observable—though not necessarily connected—structural equivalence) and blockmodel analysis (an inductive method to identify structurally equivalent actors in a network). Scott (2000) labeled the development of blockmodel analysis as the "Harvard breakthrough" in the history of social network analysis.

In short, White was pre-occupied with the lack of theoretical understanding of ties as the basic measurement unit in orthodox sociological network analysis (Mische, 2011). Describing White's theory of social structures Fuhse (2015) notes:

> As in the theories of Parsons and Luhmann, White views all interaction as driven by uncertainty (1992, p. 3 ff.). Due to this uncertainty, identities attempt to establish "footing" and to gain "control" in social contexts. These control attempts leave a trace in social space in the form of "stories". Stories are told about identities, thus defining both the identities and their relations to each other. Since story-telling is itself a social activity, stories remain subject to competing control projects. (p. 18)

The distinction from Parsons (and others) is that White saw—and was comfortable with—chaos and turbulence. This is in contrast to the neatness and stability of Parsons. As ties are multiple, fluid and narratively constructed (and re-constructed), White argues that the challenge for network analysis is to understand the link between temporality, language, and social relations.

Working with graduate students, he carried out an intensive reading of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and theories of linguistic change. What emerged

was a perspective that straddled positivist and interpretivist positions, stressing the mutual constitution of networks and discourse, the communicative nature of social ties, and the interplay between multiple relations in social action (Mische, 2011). The idea of trace is not a phenomenological inquiry of subjective meaning but in meanings that circulate through communication (Fuhse, 2015). This is a key distinction from Nick Crossley's work on social networks and culture as he (Crossley) grants far greater importance to the subjective meanings of actors. Network theory, particularly of the White tradition, builds its explanations from patterns of relations. It is "anti-categorical" (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). As Boorman and White (1976) argue, network analysts

> take serious what Durkheim saw but most of his followers did not: that the organic solidarity of a social system rests not on the cognition of men, but rather on the interlock and interaction of objectively definable social relationships. (p. 1415)

It is to be noted that many network analysis, including White (e.g., White, Boorman & Breiger, 1976), retain functionalist notions such as "roles." However, the New York School of relational sociology did not conceive of individuals as the essential building block of the social. They did not attribute actions and their consequences to individuals or their internal dispositions (as is often done with elementary Bourdieusian analysis). It sought to capture causal matters without granting attribution to actors temporally located in particular social positions (Burt, 1986). The significant intellectual shift offered by White and those working around him was that social networks could/should be studied in conjunction with culture and not abstracted from it.

Identity, agency, and culture came together in networks within the New York School and in doing so, some of the methodological flaws, blind spots, or holes in strict mathematical accounts of social relationships were engaged with, even if not overcome. This arguably brought Homans (1986) to describe network analysis as one of the most encouraging new developments in sociology. This is important for the ongoing trajectory of the work. Rather than falling victim to its own goals, the New York School focused on addressing what it saw as the problem theoretically, and resulting methodologically. In shifting representations beyond categories, network approaches opened up relational and positional analysis, including the role of history in accounts of social structure. Contemporaries (especially those that studied with White or Tilly at Columbia) such as Ann Mische and Jan Fuhse, among others, continue to advance the trajectory of the work.

Contemporary Relational Sociology

While the New York School was/is US-centric, evidenced by the inability of descriptions of the movement to recognize work from outside of the USA such as network analysis coming out of Manchester in the Mitchell Center for Social Network Analysis (formerly the Manchester Social Network Group), relational

sociology is an international movement. There is a strong relational thread in the social theory of Georg Wilhelm, Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Ernst Cassier, Norbert Elias, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Gabriel Tarde, Niklas Luhmann, Seyla Benhabib, Bruno Latour, Nancy Chodorow, among others.

In addition to the forthcoming handbook (Dépelteau, 2018), *Conceptualizing relational sociology* (Powell & Dépelteau, 2013) and *Applying relational sociology* (Dépelteau & Powell, 2013) are the two most ambitious attempts to capture the state of play in contemporary relational sociology. However, these texts are not without critique. Donati and Archer (2015) argue that the texts read like:

> frenzied rhetoric for "radical relationality", without coherence or consistency. The rhetoric behind this theoretical jihad simply corrals any past contributions—from Barnes and Bloors' "strong programme", Marx, Foucault, Bourdieu, Garfinkle, Dorothy Smith, and Latour—that might increase the decibels of the clarion call. This is more like "product placement" than serious theorizing; most of the above have been strenuously critiqued by those they have opposed, but theirs is a book of assertions rather than arguments. (p. 23)

Apart from misspelling "Garfinkel," they raise a point that is not missed on the editors. Dépelteau and Powell (2013) note that relational sociology is somewhat of a patchwork of knowledge about social relations. What it has done as a turn/aspiring paradigm/collection of scholars is revisit some of the basic ontological assumptions of the social sciences. But this is both the greatest potential and constraint on the advancement of relational sociology. There is a danger that in engaging with but not necessarily overcoming enduring debates (e.g., determinism, conflationism), relational sociology might simply be reworking old tensions with new concepts/vocabularies. To get at this issue, some insights are offered through the ontological. Archer (2000) contends:

> Every social theorist or investigator has a social ontology. This may be quite implicit but it is also unavoidable because we can say nothing without making some assumptions about the nature of social reality examined. (p. 464)

No great congruence at the ontological level is found in the major contributors to contemporary relational sociology. Neither, as Prandini (2015) observes, is there a clear methodological toolbox. The critical realism of Donati, pragmatism of Dépelteau, constructivism of Fuhse, and Wittgenstein inspired lifeworlds of Crossley, among others, reflect considerable diversity—as Dépelteau and Powell (2013) noted, a patchwork. There is a clear belief in the importance and centrality of relations, but beyond that there is no consensus or coherent research program. What is evidenced is a struggle for an ontology of relations. Durkheim's pursuit of social facts and his desire to treat them as "things" sought to construct a distinct object of investigation and grant sociology a place among the (natural) sciences. This substantialism came at the cost of the relational. It is also why numerous relational scholars (e.g., Donati, Powell) have reworked Durkheim's first rule to argue that the core focus of sociology is not social facts but social relations. As Donati and Archer (2015) contend, it is "difficult to see how there could be a sociological theory not concerned with relations in some sense of the term" (p. 3).

In his synthesis of the special section of *International Review of Sociology/Revue Internationale de Sociologie,* Prandini (2015) notes that even some of the identified scholars "seem not to be so interested in belonging to or participating in a unique history" (p. 2) of relational sociology. To that end, it is not surprising that there is an absence of coherence in the broader research agenda. Yet, the distinctions among the various perspectives of relational sociology facilitate ongoing dialogue and debate of the theoretical, methodological, and empirical principles of work, but only if perspectives are located relationally. As I have stated elsewhere in this book, relational scholarship is not a theory to be applied or a method to be used; it is a way of doing research. Dépelteau and Powell (2013) note:

> Relational analysis is always "conceptual" since it involves a re-casting of the basic terms of our perception, and always "applied" since it invites us to use different modes of perception and orientation in this world. (p. xvi)

An enduring trend, and potentially significant limitation, of contemporary relational sociology is the appropriation of great thinkers. To some extent, this was captured in Donati and Archer's (2015) critique of the two Dépelteau and Powell texts—and a similar critique can be raised against a substantive section of the forthcoming handbook. The appropriation of great thinkers can simply be to add greater weight to the relational turn, as suggested by Donati and Archer. This curating of history is not uncommon when trying to demonstrate a (potentially increasing) volume of work in an area. It is however more problematic than that. Bringing a voice from the past (e.g., Pierre Bourdieu) into conversation with issues of the present makes a number of assumptions about the spatio-temporal nature of their contribution. If we take serious the idea that knowledge is relational, then authors are writing under particular spatio-temporal conditions that cannot necessarily be assumed to be similar (or even the same) as contemporary ones. This is particularly the case given that many past social theorists were writing in a pre-globalized world. While there is potentially some merit in appropriation, namely for students and those new to the area, the actual contribution of such for advancing knowledge is questionable at best. Direct appropriation that which simply maps the existing conditions with a voice from the past does not achieve the type of relational understanding that relational theorizing demands.

When discussing the position of relational sociology within contemporary dialogue and debate in social theory, Emirbayer (2013) notes that it:

> began by swimming against the current (recall Marx's relational critiques of classical political economy) and most likely will continue swimming against it for all the foreseeable future—all in the name of getting social inquiry right. Substantialist assumptions are incorporated deepling into our everyday and scholarly discourses alike (going back to Aristotle), and in the present day enjoy clout both inside and outside the academy; it is difficult to imagine their being supplanted anytime soon. (p. 210)

Although relational theorists claim that all social theory has a relational focus on some level, the substantialist position remained hegemonic. The diversity of contemporary relational sociology is both a strength—leading to a potentially increasing volume of work—and a limitation—due to the lack of a clear consensus

or core beyond the somewhat abstract belief in "relations." As is often the case in the social sciences, exciting work takes places on the periphery while the center changes little (Ladwig, 1998). With increased interest and scholarly activity seeking to legitimize the relational turn in contemporary sociology, or at the least advance a version of sociology under the label of "relational sociology", it has gained sufficient traction that it needs to be located (relationally) with other perspectives and there is a trajectory of key contemporary authors who could potentially serve as a canon.

Contemporary Relational Leadership

Relational scholarship in leadership studies is an emerging literature. Best captured in Uhl-Bien and Ospina's (2012) *Advancing relational leadership research*—a collection of 18 chapters designed to encourage dialogue and debate among perspectives. Whereas relational sociology emerged as a critique of, and alternative to, substantialism, in relational leadership studies there is significant time and space spent debating and/or classifying work as entitative (substantialist) or constructionist. The former group includes the likes of David Day, John Antonakis, Boas Shamir and the latter Bill Drath, Gail Fairhurst, Dian Marie Hosking, and Sonia Ospina. As these groups of scholars inhabit different paradigmatic spaces, rarely do they come into contact or engage with one another. Interestingly, arguably the most recognizable relational scholar in leadership studies is Mary Uhl-Bien (e.g., Uhl-Bien, 2006), an entitative trained researcher, who locates herself between the realist (entitative) and constructionist (post-structuralist) perspectives (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p. xxxiii).

Throughout *Advancing relational leadership research,* many chapters advocate for "relational leadership"—which is not surprising given the title of the text. The mobilization of the adjective is important. It is not as much relational scholarship, but a normative argument for a form of relational leadership. This is why entity-based approaches, what would be dismissed as substantialist and contrary to relational approaches in sociology, can still be considered relational. This relationalism is instead based on a belief in the importance of relations. In doing so, the approach applies or maps relations onto organizational events. Relations become a formal way of describing the current state of affairs within organizations. Such methods leave the received terms (e.g., leadership, organization) of those events entirely intact. As a key distinction from contemporary relational sociology, relational leadership research devotes far more attention to matter of epistemology than ontology. Specifying the ontology of organizing and social relations is rarely, if ever, engaged with, yet Prandini (2015) saw the specification of an ontology of society and social relations as the significant breakthrough of the relational turn.

A telling example is Shamir's (2012) chapter in *Advancing relational leadership research* (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012), where he is critical of critics of leadership (particularly the post-structuralist kind) for their inability to offer a viable alternative

to leadership. Apart from highlighting the normative embedded in his position, it also stresses the immovable object "leadership" and that what is relational is how we come to understand it, or even more pragmatically, how it is enacted. The possibility that leadership is a social construction, an epistemic rather than empirical (e.g., Eacott, 2013), is not entertained by Shamir. The defaulting to an adjective is not uncommon in leadership, management, and administration studies (see the following chapter). But it does raise questions about the nature of relational leadership studies. This holds for dominant researchers from both the entitative and constructionist traditions.

Even for the constructionist among the leadership studies group, the relations between the researcher and researched are rarely called into question. An underlying structuralism prevails with leadership unquestioned. As I have argued previously (Eacott, 2015), and again in Chap. 4, the complicity of the embedded and embodied scholar warrants attention. Although hegemonic relational leadership research does not engage with such matters, there is work that does. Hosking (e.g., Hosking & Morley, 1988; Hosking, 1988, 1991) has consistently argued that rather than studying leadership within the physicality of organizational structures, we need to pay attention to the social construction of organizing. Cuncliffe and Eriksen (2011, p. 1433) go further, locating their work within "a social constructionist ontology, which posits that we exist in a mutual relationship with others and our surroundings and that we both shape, and are shaped by, our social experience in everyday interactions and conversations" (see also Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1999).

Relational leadership research has retained a strong normative position despite the increased volume of scholarship identifying as relational. A strong, and unwavering, belief in leadership remains in such work, and this goes part of the way to explaining why the focus is often limited to the quality of relationships (e.g., Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). Dominant approaches still do not get at the nature of relations and/or a relational understanding of organizing. Despite the best attempts of germinal texts such as *Advancing relational leadership research*, there is no consensus or clear trajectory apart from an argument that relations are important. More significantly, there is, and this is consistent with relational sociology, no emergent or sustained dialogue and debate across perspectives.

The importance of relations for understanding leadership and organizing activity is commonly accepted within relational leadership research. It remains however a contested disciplinary space, and the work of this chapter (and the next) is to provide a means of contributing to these ongoing debates by constructing a framing that enables the reader to understand the different streams relationally. What the relational leadership research demonstrates is the identification of a potentially fruitful line of inquiry (relations) but as yet not been able to engage with matters of ontology, and to some extent epistemology, at scale to bring about substantive intellectual shift focused on relations rather than distinctions of normative positions. The momentum is building however and if sustained holds considerable potential.

Relational Theory and the Physical Sciences

Although attention to relational matters, particularly those engaging with the subjectivity of the observer, appears at odds with orthodoxy in the physical sciences, this does not negate its potential value. It has been long recognized that social and physical reality is both mediated by its social context and in need of active interpretation (Bartunek et al., 1997; Bradbury & Litchenstein, 2000). Rather than focus on discrete, external, knowable entities (a substantial position), relationality orientates inquiry to what Buber (1981[1923]) terms the "space between." Relational reasoning becomes of greater importance in understanding the physical world than what at first may be thought. A useful example here is in the understanding of time, or more specifically temporal periods. As Resnick, Davatzes, Newcombe, and Shipley (2017) argue, while novices can typically place events and phenomena in a correct sequential order, they fail to understand the magnitude in-between. Complex temporal relations are often conflated with mathematical categories. In many cases, scales are based on temporal duration (e.g., units of the clock), whereas time in geologic scales is based on the occurrence of important events, what is often called event time (e.g., the Mesozoic = age of reptiles; the Cenozoic = the age of mammals). Due to the mathematic hegemony of understanding temporality as an external entity—a thing—there is a tendency to assume that these time periods are equally spaced or captured through a base concept (e.g., unit of the clock). Resnick et al. (2017) elaborate:

> … a common analogy when explaining the geologic time scale is to map geologic time onto a 24-hour clock. The geologic time scale is a system of chronological measurement of Earth's history. Divisions of time are hierarchically organized based on major geologic events. The geologic time scale conventionally depicted as a spatial representation, with Earth's formation (4.6 billion years ago) located at the bottom of a column(s) and present day located at the top. However, there are a number of salient differences between the geologic time scale and a clock. One salient difference is the temporally equal divisions of the clock (60 s = 1 min; 60 min = 1 h), which may lead novices to erroneously believe that the periods of Earth's history are also evenly spaced (which they are not). In this example, students are focusing on making an analogy between the distribution of divisions of time, and, thus failing to make an analogy between the relative magnitudes of time between events (e.g., to understand humans appeared relatively recently). (p. 5)

Relative understanding is difficult, if not impossible to achieve, from a substantialist position. After all, relational approaches find their origins in a critique of substantialism. However, to introduce, or more importantly re-orientate, relations call into question the distance between the observer and observed. The distance or separation that has come to legitimize knowledge claims in the physical sciences (primarily through logical empiricism) is destabilized. Returning to Bradbury and Litchenstein (2000):

> Over the past three decades systems thinkers have described an emerging worldview that is relational and systemic at its core (Ashmos & Huber, 1987; von Bertalanffy, 1968; Churchman, 1979; Fuller, 1969; Miller, 1972). Although some have critiqued systems models for being overly objectivist and positivistic (e.g., Lyotard, 1984), relational, systems

> thinking allows researchers to study "not just observed systems but also the observing system, the context from which knowledge emerges" (Montuori & Purser, 1996, p. 185). In this way a relational approach can focus on the integration of the observer into the process of knowing (Keeney, 1983), on the plurality of perspectives that constitute organizational experience (Bartunek et al., 1997), and on understanding the extensive interdependencies within and between organizations and the environments in which they are embedded (Shrivastava, 1995; Dyer & Singh, 1998). (p. 552)

Relational reasoning therefore calls into question objectivity and possibility of identifying external discrete knowable entities. The space between—which incidentally does not actually remove the separate entities merely shifts focus of inquiry/analysis—becomes of increased significance. Rovelli (1996) takes up the challenge of relational thinking in quantum mechanics, arguing that a relational quantum mechanics is an interpretation of quantum theory which discards the notions of absolute state of a system, absolute value of its physical quantities, or absolute events. Teller (1986) adds, non-relational properties are internal to a thing (entity) and are independent of the existence or state of other objects. In contrast, relational properties are more outward looking and blur the boundaries of what were previously conceived as entities. For hegemonic scientific thinking, the relational is challenging as the absence of a base concept (e.g., units of the clock) makes it difficult to identify an explicit structure and therefore almost impossible to establish connections between entities. That is, mapping an existing terrain using a relational approach is insufficient. To enact a relational approach involves a different set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological resources. These are not incompatible with the physical sciences, but little more than peripheral. What is arguably more common is the relational charting of the contribution of different scientific fields (e.g., Glänzel, Schubert, & Braun, 2002).

Although this section may appear to have simply stated the peripheral location of relational thinking in the physical sciences, my point is that they are not impossible. There has been attention to, even if limited, introducing relational approaches to thinking through a variety of matters of the physical world. This is an important issue to have engaged with as often alternate lens are dismissed as only of use in the "social" sciences rather than of greater value to the scientific community. In raising the possibilities of relational approaches to the physical sciences, my goal has been to demonstrate a broad interdisciplinary interest in relations.

Conclusion

While I believe it is important to be cautious about labeling "turns" in the social sciences, there has been sufficient trajectory and tradition in multiple areas to claim that relations have been evident for some time. Without a doubt, there is momentum building in relational sociology and relational leadership research. The interdisciplinarity of social scientific research, or at least that dealing with complex social problems, requires intellectual resources that embrace the complex rather than seek

to bring an artificial order to it. Is it therefore surprising that a scholarly area that embraces complexity and messiness would then also be complex and messy?

The absence of a distinctive unified position however means that relational scholarship arguably gives the appearance of being messy. Various versions call upon different canons. In taking serious a call for relational scholarship, it is appropriate to seek to impose a conceptualization of it seeking to identify core features of it as though it is an entity. To do so would arguably destroy that which relational approaches seek to achieve. What we have seen throughout this chapter however is that relational scholarship, in all its forms, offers a potentially rich stream for illuminating the problems and possibilities of the social world. This is arguably why there has been sustained interest in relations across the social sciences. Whether one locates work in the stream dating back to pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus, or Georg Simmel's *Wechselwirkung*, or any other trajectory, there is interdisciplinary momentum relational theory. Donati (1991) takes this even further by engaging with Durkheim's first rule that the subject matter of sociology is "social facts" offering the corrective that "social facts" are "social relations." The result being that the subject matter of sociology (or the study of the social world) is social relations.

All of this said, arguably the attention to relations is less of a turn and more of an enduring project by a set of scholars working at the margins of their respective fields or subdisciplines. But, as noted on a number of occasions throughout this chapter, while the center of a field may change little, the most exciting work often takes place on the periphery. This book, as with the work of interdisciplinary networks of scholars on a global scale, holds the potential to shift relational scholarship from the margins to a more prominent position in the social sciences. Achieving such contribution will be dependent on engaging with other positions, and relational scholarship provides the intellectual resources to facilitate dialogue and debate across positions and be a productive offering for advancing knowledge claims.

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Chapter 3
Toward Relations in Educational Administration Theory

Orthodox approaches to understanding organization and organizing are built on an underlying generative principle of structure. However, since the work of Follett (1927, 1949), the Hawthorne Studies of Elton Mayo and colleagues (e.g., Mayo, 1933), and the subsequent Human Relations Movement, the significance of relations to organizing activity is a well-rehearsed argument. Even Weber (1978[1922]) who is attributed to articulating "the bureaucracy"—a hegemonic structuralist account of organizing—recognized the role of "charisma" and its influence on practice and structural arrangements.

This chapter surveys contemporary debate and research in educational administration on approaches that have been grouped together under the convenient label of "relational." At the outset, it is important to be clear what this chapter is, and more importantly is not. It is important to be clear that this chapter cannot, nor will it attempt to, provide a comprehensive survey of all research that mentions relations, relationships, or claims relationality in any sense. The potential set of research is literally infinite (especially given the lack of precision in what are relations). However, in order to provide some synthesis of past research efforts and trajectory, in what follows, I identify some of the central tensions that are confronted by an analysis of, and advocacy for, relational approaches to understanding organizing activity.

I will argue that contemporary calls for relational approaches face somewhat of an enduring struggle. Few, if any, would disagree that relations are central to social activity but to hold such a position has implications for scholarship and practice. To privilege relations, one has to confront the hegemonic structuralism—with its inherent determinism—of "the organization." At the same time, can one advocate for a relational approach to organizing activity without doing the same in their scholarship? Advancing a relational approach is more than a theoretical resource and instead a methodological framing—a way of being a scholar. To ground this discussion, after some initial analytical and historical framing of the academic tradition, I present four examples of research with claims to being relational (e.g.,

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6568-2_3

adjectival, conflationism, co-determinism, and relational) and comment on the current state of affairs in each.

On the Tradition of Relational Approaches in Organizing

The importance and significance of social relations for organizing activity have a rich history of research and in many ways developed as a counternarrative to the dominance of Taylor's (1911) work on the *Principles of scientific management*. Taylorism is more concerned with structural arrangements (e.g., supervision, performance management) and efficiencies than interpersonal relations. Contemporary thought and analysis on educational organizations, particularly those stressing "leadership," are an extension of long-standing debate on the nature of organizing activity. However, attempts to balance structural determinism and agency to capture the essence of organizing—an ontological and epistemological question—have proven incredibly difficult.

Most organizational analyses assume, or grant ontological status to, organizations, constituting them as a "social fact"—to think with Durkheim (1982[1895])—and then proceed from there as a starting point. It is not surprising that organizational studies assume the realness of organizations. To think otherwise would be to question the value and legitimacy of the self (Eacott, 2015a, b). Embodying key markers of modernity (e.g., essential referents such as "the individual," "the institution"), classic organizational approaches reduce relations to determinant functions between entities. The challenge that is present here is that in the construction of entities, these works are mobilizing substantialist ontologies. Therefore, while well-rehearsed arguments stress that organizing (including leadership, management, and administration) is relational (e.g., Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012), that relational perspectives are at the forefront of emerging and established leadership scholarship (e.g., Dinh et al., 2014; Hunt & Dodge, 2000), and more relevant to practice (e.g., Bradbury & Lichenstein, 2000), any attempt to advance a relational theory of organizing requires a generative theory of relations.

As noted earlier, key early texts in educational administration seeking to illuminate relations include Yauch's (1949) *Improving human relations in school administration* and Griffiths' (1959) *Human relations in school administration*. Leithwood and Duke's (1999) chapter in the second edition of the *Handbook of research on educational administration* (Murphy & Louis, 1999) devotes an entire section to articulating a relational approach to educational administration and leadership. Although they remain within a Parsonian-inspired systems approach, Leithwood and Duke raise a key theoretical question when noting that "the distinction between management and leadership contributes little or nothing to an understanding of leadership conceived as a set of relationships" (p. 67). This relationalism (e.g., a focus on relationships rather than relations) is arguably the orthodoxy of relational approaches to understanding organizing activity in education.

Parsonian-based system thinking has been central to educational administration (e.g., Getzels & Guba, 1957; Hoy & Miskel, 1978). However, as Donati (2011) argues, Parsons attempted to provide a general theory (as does much of the educational administration literatures) unifying action and structure without a theory of relations. Theoretical and/or methodological arguments in educational administration, even those claiming to be relational, if grounded in systems thinking cannot actually conceive of relations as their central focus. At best, they are measurement constructs but more likely, what remains is a collection of somewhat loosely coupled conceptual resources seeking to define social facts from different perspectives—even if with similar labels. In addition, this research, for the most part, continues without any serious explorations of the relations it holds with other relational approaches and/or fit within the broader domain of inquiry leading to a series of parallel monologues (Eacott, 2017).

Why does this matter? As an initial point, the genesis of any sense of a "relational turn" in the social sciences was the pursuit of a counternarrative to dominant substantialist ontologies (Prandini, 2015). Any conceptualization that conceives of relations performing functional determinants between entities (e.g., substances) reduces relations to mere functionaries. This is a limitation of scholarship drawing on classic sociological canons such as Durkheim. Similarly, Donati (2011) argues that (structural) Marxist scholarship, with attention to ties and historical materialism, and Weberian work seeking to understand rather than explain relations, prevents the generation of analytical apparatus capable of exploring relations and/or going beyond the analysis of a select set of relations. Rather than taking all work claiming to be relational at face value, what is required is an analytical engagement with the work to nuance the similarities, but more importantly the distinctions between approaches: in short, a relational account of relational scholarship.

While there is an emerging, or re-emerging, sociological stream of educational administration and leadership studies (Eacott, 2015a, b; Gunter, 2010), rarely are canonical sources such as Durkheim, Marx, and Weber mobilized (the exception being Eugenie Samier and her enduring work with Weber). The most commonly cited sociologist in contemporary works is Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., Thomson, 2017). This is not surprising given his substantive monographs on education, namely *The Inheritors French students and their relation to culture* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979 [1964]), *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]), *Homo academicus* (Bourdieu, 1988[1984]), and *The state nobility* (Bourdieu, 1996[1989]). Bourdieu is explicitly linked to relational sociology (e.g., Papilloud & Schultze, 2018), and despite the common ransacking of his theoretical resources, he explicitly developed a relational gaze (e.g., Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]). The mobilization of Bourdieu in educational administration is however sparse and primarily limited to major centers of the Commonwealth such as Australia and the UK and rarely, if ever, in the USA (the exception being Fenwick English, see English, 2012).

Of increasing popularity and in particular in the US-based scholarship of educational administration is social network analysis. Building on a long history of relational scholarship that mobilizes mathematical structures, social network

analysis is increasingly common in the exploration of educational change (e.g., Daly, 2010; Liou, Daly, Brown, & del Fresno, 2015) and ongoing attempts at mapping the field of educational administration knowledge production (e.g., Wang & Bowers, 2016; Wang, Bowers, & Fikis, 2017). With its privileging of mathematics, in doing so an appeal to positivism and those who conceive of science through an exhibitionism of data and procedure, such analysis is primarily concerned with relationships between entities (or nodes) and therefore somewhat devoid of underlying relational principles.

To build on this (albeit too brief) historical framing, a search of core educational administration and leadership journals and book publishers was undertaken. The data generated from this search provides some evidence for a trend or at least an increase in affiliation to relations or relational approaches in the literatures. On that basis, I argue that there is an ongoing, if not increasing, recognition that the ideas of relations matter for organizing activity in educational administration. However, the minimal attention to theoretical and/or methodological resources to think through what are, or can be, relations is problematic. The contribution of this chapter is not simply in the provision of an historical description of relational approaches to organizational theory in educational administration but instead relating alternate approaches to one another and in doing so providing a relational analysis of relational approaches—as noted earlier, relational scholarship is a way of being rather than simply a theoretical resource.

A Systematic Search

While there remain multiple manifestations of relational studies in educational administration, for this analysis the review of the literature encompassed research that included self-descriptive terms *relational*, *relations*, *relationships*, or close derivatives. Informed by the previous studies (e.g., Cherkowski, Currie, & Hilton, 2012; Eacott, 2009, 2014; Mayo, Zirkel, & Finger, 2006; Richardson & McLeod, 2009), this search was undertaken in seven key international journals: *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *International Journal of Educational Management*, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *Journal of Educational Administration*, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, and *School Leadership and Management*. This does overlook journals such as *Journal of School Leadership* which is often considered a leading journal in the field (e.g., Richardson & McLeod, 2009), but it is unavailable online, and outside the USA does not have a wide readership (evidenced in its absence from the European Reference Index for the Humanities, SCImago, and low status in the former Excellence for Research in Australia list). Similarly, *International Studies in Educational Administration*, the journal of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM), was excluded. It too is no-longer available in print and with changing publishers is now little more than a journal for CCEAM members than an

international outlet for scholarship. Broader journals such as *Leadership and Policy in Schools* and *Journal of Educational Change* were not focused sufficiently on educational administration, and despite an attempt to remain loyal to my field locally, *Leading & Managing*, the journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders was excluded primarily as it too is only really a journal for members now rather than an emerging international scholarly outlet.

To the above, the book and the chapters published by prominent publishing houses relevant to the field were searched. Key identified publishers included: Routledge, Springer, SAGE, and Emerald. Other publishers such as Cambridge University Press, Sense, Peter Lang, and Jossey-Bass were also checked. Unlike journals, the search strategy was less systematic and relied upon titles, descriptions, and, where possible, checks of reference lists and indices. As noted earlier, the goal was not to identify everything written about relations in educational administration. Such a task is arguably neither possible nor desirable.

To strengthen the quality of the data generated, two members of the research program undertook the same search strategy, with the dates of publication only limited to the establishment of the outlet through until the end of 2016. All abstracts for papers identified in the keyword search (relations, relational, relationships, etc.) were read until 10 consecutive papers were not linked to relational studies. This task was done independently by the two coders to allow for inter-rater reliability and inter-rater agreement scores to be calculated. Team members met numerous times to clarify meaning prior to coding to maximize consistency in its application. Subsequently, the raters came together to reach a consensus rating which was used in further analysis.

The initial round of searching identified 258 publications with a 92% level of agreement. It was considered important to establish some data beyond raw agreement, and as it was a dichotomous categorical rating system (e.g., relational or not), Cohen's (1960, 1988) unweighted kappa (κ) for inter-rater reliability was considered the most appropriate. The two raters operated with a κ of 0.837046, with standard error of 0.03253, and 95% confidence intervals at the upper 0.900804 and lower 0.773289. This level of agreement fits within Cohen's suggested "substantial" to "almost perfect" agreement making it scientifically publishable. Most significantly though, at least for advancing the argument of this chapter, the eventual sample of agreed publications is 243, with *Educational Administration Quarterly* ($n = 57$) and *Journal of Educational Administration* ($n = 51$) being the most represented, books ($n = 9$) being the least and a relatively even spread across *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* ($n = 40$), *International Journal of Leadership in Education* ($n = 33$), *School Leadership and Management* ($n = 27$), *International Journal of Educational Management* ($n = 21$), and *Journal of Educational Administration and History* ($n = 20$).

While the quantity is arguably interesting, the content or nature of the literatures is of far greater significance to advancing knowledge claims. To that end, the analysis of content and the underlying generative principles of arguments is the contribution of this chapter.

Four Cases of the Structure of Logic in the Advocacy of Relational Approaches

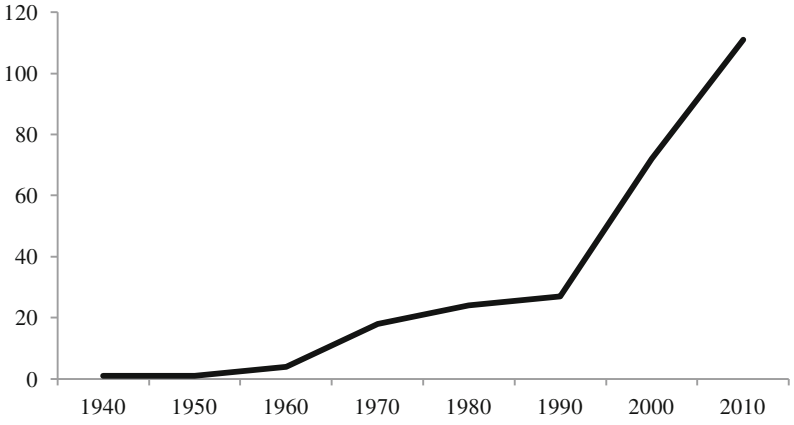
Well-rehearsed arguments in organizational theory have stressed the significance of relations and relationships. The earlier section sought to demonstrate some distinctions in the ways in which relational approaches have been mobilized in the educational administration literatures over time. In this section, I take up the challenge of further nuancing these distinctions through a systematic analysis of the identified published literatures. There is, based on the identified literatures, a positive trajectory of scholarship making reference to relations. Beginning with a modest single publication in the 1940s, the rate of publications linking to relations has grown rapidly since 2000—particularly given the current set is only 2010–2016 (Table 3.1).

As my assumption of sustained—if not growing—attention is correct, it is then defensible to claim a critical mass of the literatures with some form of affiliation with relational approaches. Consistent with interest in the broader social sciences and management literatures, we can expect some diversity in approaches.

To make sense of this sample of the literature, building on the work of Dépelteau (2008), Donati (2011), and Prandini (2015), a four-category frame is mobilized to classify the usage of the label "relational":

- The addition of the adjective "relational" to describe the desirable form of organizing activity (e.g., relational leadership);
- The application of relationships to describe the co-determinism of social activities;

Table 3.1 Publications overtime (1940–2016)



- The use of relations to conflate two previously separate concepts/constructs/entities; and
- Those focused primarily on relations.

These four categories represent three distinct versions of relational scholarship (see Fig. 3.1). The first, adjectival, is consistent with frequent approach to educational administration scholarship which instead of defining "leadership" (or "management" or "administration") simply adds an adjective reflecting the normative orientation of the researcher. The second and third approaches, which Donati (2011) labels "relationalism," concern co-determinism (as is often seen in systems approaches) or conflationism (e.g., conflating analytical dualisms such as structure and agency, individualism and holism, universalism and particularism). While relational in a sense, this work fails to adequately overcome their substantialist ontologies (those to which relational approaches are said to have developed as a counter to) in building knowledge claims. The final category, relational, is reflectively, theoretically, methodologically, and empirically of relationality. This is the closest to an ideal or pure relational scholarship, but it is rare.

While presented here in an order of integration of relations into the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological framing of scholarship, each offers insights into our understanding of organizing activity in education. This is not to say that all approaches are equal value, nor that I am neutral in my assessment of their worth,

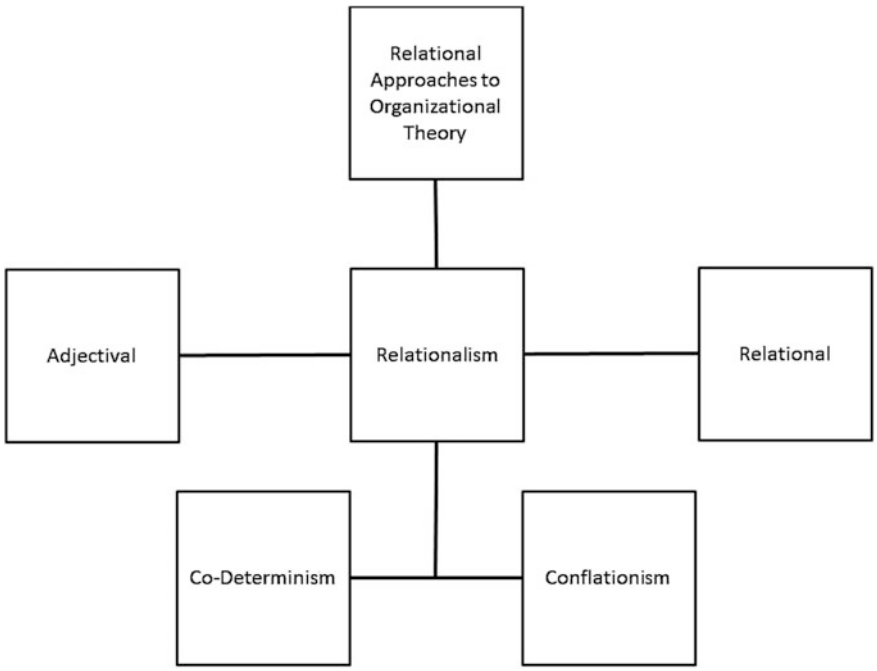


Fig. 3.1 Relational approaches to organizational theory

but in the interests of providing a useful synoptic perspective on relational approaches to organizational theory in education below I focus on the contribution, critique, and trajectory of each category of study. It is important to remind the reader that such categories are far from definitive and there remains considerable gray between them. At the same time, they do reflect major approaches and the challenge of maintaining fidelity between espoused approach and scholarship.

Adjectival Relational Leadership

The use of "relational" as an adjective in educational administration literatures frequently reflects the underlying normative orientation of the observer. This particular approach uses the adjective to advance a particular position and create a distinction from other adjectival approaches (e.g., Bell et al., 2016; Giles, Bell, Halsey, & Palmer, 2012; Regan & Brooks, 1995). Educational administration has a long history of advocacy for adjectival approaches and promoting fads and fashions (Peck & Reitzug, 2012). Popular texts and meta-commentaries frequently recite the chronologically dominate perspectives as though they reflect historical moments (e.g., Bush, 2011). Relational leadership as an adjectival approach enables the author/s to articulate the importance of relationships (e.g., Helstad & Møller, 2013), developing relational trust (e.g., Browning, 2014) or sensibilities (e.g., Giles et al., 2015), building positive relationships (e.g., Cardno, 2012), and managing external relations (e.g., Lumby & Foskett, 2001), among others. These lines of inquiry contribute to the trajectory of arguments stressing the importance of social relations for organizing activity, such as Follett and Mayo.

There is widespread, if not universal, acceptance of the relational aspects of social activity. Despite this appeal, the contribution of these adjectival relational approaches is limited as the articulation remains grounded in the normative orientation of the observer. The adjective is used as a cover to argue for a specific approach to leadership, one believed to be superior to all other forms. However, the argument is fundamentally flawed as the criteria used to judge "good" ("effective," "desirable," etc.) leadership—that which conforms to the observer's position—is that which is consistent with the description of the adjective "relational." The approach confirms itself by generating data that is consistent with its worldview.

Apart from the explicit adjectival leadership, there is some, although limited, examples of articles claiming to mobilize a "relational" form of analysis (e.g., Branson, Franken, & Penney, 2016). The difficulties of mobilizing a relational analytical approach in a field well recognized for defaulting to adjectival models become clear quickly as can be seen below in an example from Branson and colleagues:

> The focus on leadership as first and foremost relational provides a frame for critically examining the nature and complexities inherent in the lived reality of middle leadership. Relational leadership is conceptualized as encompassing four inter-related

> dimensions. These are derived from data and respectively centre on structure and power; trust and credibility; learning; and discursive relations. (Branson et al., 2016, p. 128)

Branson and colleagues (2016) conflate an analytical approach with a normative position. "Middle leadership" that used to demarcate individuals holding specific positions with an organizational structure becomes synonymous with "relational leadership." For the authors, this is based on Burns' (1978) claim that the authority of any leader comes not from structural arrangements but is instead generated through relationships. An underlying substantialism built on objective structures means that Branson and colleagues are really arguing for, at best, a "relational bureaucracy" (Gittell & Douglass, 2012), but arguably just for their version of what "good" leadership is (particularly given their own roles during the research). Although there are appeals for relations between roles within the structure, the negating of power in such relations and/or reducing it to a simple thesis that having "positive" relations is a good thing, barely raises such claims beyond common-sense. What is missing from this approach—both conceptual and analytical—is a theory of relations.

The major critique of adjectival approaches to leadership (or anything) is that they tell us little about the focus of analysis. The mobilization of relational is vacuous. It tells us little about leadership (or whatever other focus is taken) and at the same time simply uses relational as synonymous for a particular version of it (e.g., trust, sensibilities, positive work environment). It just becomes a language wheeled out to express a sense of importance and an attempt to "bring people back in" (Louis, 2015) compared to more structural-based accounts. In doing so, adjectival approaches do illuminate a particular version of educational administration. As for contributing to advancing knowledge of relations, the contribution is small at best.

Co-determinism

In what has been described as "an era of relationships" (Daly, 2015), the most common form of relational approach in educational administration literatures (84%, $n = 205$) can best be described as co-determinism. This is where the outcome of a particular activity is explained through the relationship of two (or more) entities. As Abbott (1965) notes, building on the work of Jacob Getzel and Egon Guba (but without reference to Talcott Parsons), "the current tendency in the study of organizational behavior is to identify the structural characteristics of the organization and the personal characteristics of the individual, and to analyze the relationships of structure, personality, and behavior" (p. 1). Given the orthodoxy of (Parsonian) systems thinking, co-determinism conforms to hegemonic approaches to scholarship in the field. Therefore, it is common to find research that links principals' social interactions with teachers and student engagement (e.g., Price, 2015); vision, teacher motivation, and relationships (e.g., Barnett & McCormick, 2003); or linking

leadership, student citizenship, and outcomes (e.g., Savvides & Pashiardis, 2016). As an example:

> The main purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between novices' perceptions of their organizational context, particularly related to elements of their work largely influenced by the actions of school administrators, and the content and frequency of their interactions with their mentors. The impact that school administrators have on novice teacher mentoring is conceptualized to be both direct (e.g., selection/assignment of mentors, training, and program oversight) and indirect. (Pogodzinski, 2015, p. 53)

It also explains why it is possible to see multiple papers from the same researcher/s that substitute variables. For example, De Nobile and McCormick discuss organizational communication and job satisfaction (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008), organizational communication and occupational stress (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008), biographic differences with job satisfaction (De Nobile et al., 2008), and occupational stress (De Nobile & McCormick, 2010). This conceptualization of relations is also found in research on school effectiveness and school improvement, where it is not uncommon to find sophisticated statistical approaches used to establish and argue for interventions over malleable (or manageable/manipulation of) variables. In an era of evidence-informed policy making and an orthodox approach to science that privileges exhibitionism of data and procedure, statistical modeling of relationships gives work a greater sense of legitimacy and chance of generating impact. It is not however without limitations.

Relations in a co-determinism approach are reduced to relationships. These relationships are constituted through measurement. With the privileging of mathematical models (e.g., correlation matrices, structured equation modeling, and social network analysis), relationships are what White (1992) labels a "measurement construct"—social constructions generated by observers to explain interactions between two (or more) entities. They can be measured for strength and direction but do little to explain what constitutes, sustains, or negates, among others, the relations. As an example of co-determinist social network theory, Wang and Bowers (2016) state:

> Social network theory holds that the actors are not independent of one another, but interdependent through ties serving as the conduit for resource exchange (Burt, 1982; Degenne & Forse, 1999; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). By this view, the presence or absence of ties and the strength of ties exert influence on resource flow in the network and thereby hinder or enhance individual actor performance and collective performance of the network as a whole (Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Burt, 1982). By performing social network analysis, each actor's structural position in the network can be quantified by analyzing the patterns of ties in order to measure to what extent resources flow to and from each actor (Borgatti & Everett, 1992; Burt, 1976, 1980). (p. 246)

Despite the increasing sophistication of statistical analytical tools, as with the adjectival, the absence of an underlying generative theory of relations means that co-determinism remains somewhat vacuous outside of the entities.

This does not necessarily have to be the case and should not be interpreted as a disregarding of statistical-based approaches. In the broader social sciences, Crossley (2011, 2015) has consistently used social network analysis in his work and

it retains a relational dynamism by avoiding essentialism and substantialism. Significantly, with a cultural sociology edge, Crossley sees matters such as gender, ethnicity, and occupational status as positions in a social scape rather than individual attributes. Tastes and preferences are acquired through interactions in social networks rather than essentialized.

This is a very different approach to the implied causal structuralism of a substantialist argument. The distinction, to think with Bourdieu, is the underlying generative assumptions regarding relations. Unfortunately, co-determinist approaches in educational administration literatures continue to mobilize relationships as a measurement construct rather than building upon a theory of relations. Entities are constructed, and the focus is on the relationship between those entities rather than the relations themselves. Overlooking the "space between" (Buber, 1981[1923]) means that research is in danger of destroying that which it seeks to understand (e.g., relations) in the search for quantification.

Co-determinism is however not limited to quantitative analysis. An underlying generative principle of structuralism can exist in more qualitative-based studies (mindful that the quantitative and qualitative binary is not particularly productive). This is primarily the product of epistemology and ontology. Outside of this sample, the International Successful Schools Principals Project (e.g., Day & Gurr, 2014) sought to go beyond the quantification of schools in the school effectiveness and school improvement tradition; despite using different data generation methods, the underlying systems thinking remains and shapes their argument. Returning to the focus sample of this chapter, as an example, Michalinos Zembylas and Sotiroula Iasonos (2010) use semi-structured interviews to build an argument relating multicultural schools and leadership styles. The absence of a mathematic structure to build the argument does not exclude a theoretical position that still relies on different variables that interact to determine an outcome. Beginning to blur the boundaries of determinism and conflationsim, Cusick (1981) provides an ethnographic inspired study of networks among staff in secondary school via a combination of interviews and participant observation. This comes close to providing an alternative beyond co-determinism, but then he cannot take his argument beyond a foundational belief in the substantialist conceptualization of the teacher–student relationships and, more importantly, the analytical dualism of individual/holism. Once again, the space in-between remains elusive and simply explained away as relationships. Despite this stream having a very long history in systems thinking, Daly (2015) argues:

> Placing interactions and important outcomes from those interactions front and central I believe reflects a promising next generation of education research. The question facing us all as researchers/practitioners is not whether or not relational capacity and the climates in which people do their work is important, but rather how we should create, nurture, and sustain these networks in support of equity and excellence for all shareholders.

Apart from falling back upon a normative stance at the end, this idea that relational approaches offer a new generation or alternative to existing approaches is arguably foundational to the next two forms of relational scholarship.

Conflationism

Some conceptualizations of the relational engage with, if not overcome, the space between. The work of Greenfield (1973, 1974; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) explicitly challenged the orthodoxy of logical empiricism in educational administration. However, his work is more than just advocacy for the subjective (as his intervention is frequently reduced to, if at all acknowledged) and instead opened the subject–object relation and the role of social constructivism and constructionism. Social practices, including organizing, are interactional and situationally emergent. In other words, organizations are generated through actions and only exist in those actions and our memories. Greenfield sought not to conflate the subject and object but to overcome the binary thinking by denying its very existence. In attempting to take this challenge serious, but without paying attention to the underlying generative resources, educational administration researchers often engage in a form of conflationism.

Unlike the atomistic approach of co-determinism, where entities are conceived as discrete and knowable, conflationism seeks to grant a single identity to what have traditionally been seen as separate entities or even analytical dualisms. As an example, Gray (1981) claims "Managers and organizations are inseparable; like love and marriage they go together" (p. 157). Without significant attention to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of claims, conflationism more often blurs rather than overcomes the underlying separate entities. As Gray (1981) continues, "You cannot manage unless you have an organization to manage but you can have an organization that is completely unmanageable" (p. 157). Although Gray was unable to advance his claims without immediately defaulting back to separate constructs (one where management was dependent on organizations but not the reverse—therefore an error of logic for the conflation argument), conflationism is one way that educational administration researchers have sought to engage with the relational.

Globalization is one issue frequently claimed to have recast spatial relations and relationships in educational administration. Conflationism offers an approach which appeals to attempts to blend the global (universal) with the local (particular). In educational administration, there have been several attempts to overcome this layering of the social world—a somewhat Bronfenbrenner (1979) inspired conceptualization—such as the rather awkward "glocal" perspective (e.g., Brooks & Normore, 2010). Any sense of relational thinking based on layers is caught within relationships between distinct entities (e.g., levels). Insufficient attention to ontology and epistemology means that such approaches rarely overcome the dualisms and merely conflate them. The layered conceptualization relies on a form of scalable infrastructure or external social structures.

Grounded in classic sociology and the centrality of the nation-state, globalization is limited to a form of causal structuralism and a transactional model of exchanges between the local and the global. Therefore, despite appearing as a theoretical necessity for understanding contemporary spatio-temporal conditions, conflationism

of global–local relations meets neither the empirical virtues of the classic empiricist through fuzzy categories nor the theoretical sophistication of the social theorist. To overcome the layered conceptualization of the world would require a flat ontology. This is something that is well beyond existing accounts of educational administration.

In another example of, or attempt at conflationism, Helstad and Møller (2013) address leadership as relational work. In particular, they set out to explore how participants position themselves and others through negotiations in meetings arguing that relational work affects the every-changing status of the division of authority (arguably what Branson and colleagues were seeking to illuminate). There is an explicit attempt in this work to see leadership as a relational activity (as was hinted at by Leithwood and Duke many years earlier and central to my argument in Chap. 1). However, as with the globalization example, overcoming substantialist orthodoxy remains problematic.

> A relational perspective views leadership as a process of social construction with a focus on participating in interaction (Edwards, 2005; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Hence, leadership exists in relation to other positions, and therefore, is interactive and culturally sensitive. Further, dialogical processes are central aspects of leadership, and these processes distribute leadership and unfold in collective interactions within the organization (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2006). However, while recognizing that multiple leaders concerned with leadership practices exist in school, the principal, as the formal head, still holds a central position (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008)
>
> (Helstad & Møller, 2013, p. 246)

Traces of two key separations remain in the above example despite an attempt at conflationism. First, there is still a distance between "leaders" and "leadership practices," meaning that leaders enact leadership practices. This is a subtle but important move as it is symbolic of an underlying substantialist ontology where "leadership practices" are only a subset of the practice of "leaders" and therefore a set of practices which could potentially be enacted by others (including non-leaders), rendering a separation between "leaders" and "leadership practice." Second, despite an interest in leadership as relational work, this paper relies on the bureaucratic division of roles as key markers of leadership activity—mobilizing a causal structuralism. This is not uncommon, and I have used this one paper as an example, but it does highlight some significant limitations of conflationism as an approach to advancing relational theorizing in educational administration.

Relational

Recently, but building on a range of the literatures, there has been a specific articulation of a relational approach that recognizes the relations of subject—object and the relation as the basic unit of analysis/focus of inquiry. My own work, best articulated in *Educational leadership relationally* (2015) and this volume, has been

debated by a number of scholars including, but not exclusively, Bush (2017, Chap. 10), Crawford (2016, Chap. 15), English (Chap. 11), Gunter (Chap. 9), Oplatka (2016, Chap. 11), Riveros (2016, Chap. 12), and Wallin (2016, Chap. 13). Built on a very Bourdieusian craft of scholarship (e.g., Bourdieu et al., 1991[1968]; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]), but without any great loyalty or reverence, my work is based on five *relational* extensions:

- The centrality of "organizing" in the social world creates an ontological complicity in researchers (and others) that makes it difficult to epistemologically break from ordinary language;
- Rigorous social scientific inquiry calls into question the very foundations of popular labels such as "leadership," "management," and "administration";
- The contemporary condition is constantly shaping, and shaped by, the image of organizing;
- Foregrounding social relations enables the overcoming of the contemporary, and arguably enduring, tensions of individualism/holism, universalism/particularism, and structure/agency; and
- In doing so, there is a productive—rather than merely critical—space to theorize educational administration.

In shifting the focus from entities/substances to relations the approach moves beyond the application of an adjective, does not limit the conceptualization of relations to measurable relationships, nor seek to conflate analytical dualisms. Instead, the approach offers a means of composing theoretically inscribed descriptions of situated action. It directly engages with the relations between the researcher and the researched, the uncritical adoption of everyday language in scholarship, the role of spatio-temporal conditions in shaping understanding, the limitations of binary thinking, and seeks to productively theorize—not just critique. As an approach, it does not definitively resolve the epistemological issues of educational administration, but it does engage with them. In doing so, it offers the potential to bring about new ways of understanding more so than simply mapping the intellectual terrain with novel ideas and vocabularies.

My approach is not without critique (a substantial amount of which is included later in this volume), ranging from the difficulties of thinking through context relationally rather than layered (e.g., Oplatka, 2016), its value in an applied field (Crawford, 2016), and whether it offers anything "new" compared to existing theorizations (e.g., Bush, Chap. 10, Wallin, 2016). Wallin (2016), in particular, is critical as to whether feminist (and arguably post-structuralist) approaches have provided relational theorizations of educational administration in the past but have been marginalized until legitimized by male (usually white) scholars. This is a fair critique, as examples in the sampled literature from the likes of Blackmore (2013), Fuller (2010), and Coleman (2003) have mobilized feminist, post-structuralist, and gendered positions to offer relational arguments. But in relation to my own research program, Wallin (2016) notes:

> Eacott's developing work is of interest because it attempts to deal with the messiness and complexity of social organizations and its legitimation. Feminists the world over have attempted to address these same concerns. The advocacy for openness to multiplicity in perspective, attention to temporality and sociospatiality, and the dangers of hegemonic discourse provide fruitful and exciting avenues for scholarly theorizing and research in educational administration. The tensions inherent in the work are both empirical and theoretical tensions that cannot be untangled without creating new paradoxes but they are worthy of dialogue in the interests of rigorous scholarship. (p. 38)

There is some momentum in the trajectory of the *relational* research program in educational administration (although I am clearly biased on this matter). A growing number of papers, chapters, theses, and full book-length treatments (such as this very volume) are being generated and building a key corpus. The primary distinction between this work and others adopting adjectival, co-determinist, or conflationist relational approaches is the shift to relations as the central focus. Rather than seeking to illuminate relationships within or beyond organizations or advocating for a particular type or set of relations, the *relational* approach I am advancing arguably confronts orthodox thinking regarding organizations and organizing activity.

When Relational Approaches Confront the Logic of Organizing

Organizations, and by virtue organizational studies, have traditionally employed an underlying generative principle of substantialism. To study organizations requires a belief in the idea of external objective structures—namely organizations—and the interplay of actors/agents. Relational approaches, at least those taking relations as their focus, explicitly challenge the core assumptions of organizations. To move beyond the orthodox usage of relations, relational, and relationships in educational administration literatures, a key question raised is: Can organizational studies, and specifically educational administration, survive a relational turn? This is more than a rhetorical question. Relations challenge many of the underlying generative principles of organizational studies. For example, how can one study organizations if they do not exist? Who or what is the focus of inquiry? Does a relational approach destroy the notion of the organization?

The main problem for advocates of relational approaches is that we do not have a convincing theory of relations. This is arguably the product of a diverse set of scholars and approaches identifying as relational. Excluding the adjectival and its normative basis for claims, interest in relational approaches emerged from a dissatisfaction with substantialist accounts of the social world. To this end, relational scholarship in educational administration is about seeing and understanding the world. Co-determinist and conflational approaches are problematic in this purpose. The demarcation of what is a relationship (e.g., a measurement construct) and the measurement of that connection for direction and strength do not address the

concern regarding substantialist approaches. Instead, it reinforces the substantialist ontology through data points. Similarly, conflating what was once considered to be discrete entities does not resolve substantialist critiques unless the theoretical recasting of the entities negates the original separation (which most do not).

All this being said, simply asking "what is a relation?" is somewhat contrary to a relational approach. The requirement for explicit parameters and operational definitions is unnecessary for thinking relationally. To make a universal statement as to what is and by virtue is not, a relation would be to outline a static and immovable object. To argue for relational scholarship is an open call. This is why the focus is on relations and not relationships. As a consequence, scholarship becomes a little fuzzy. Given my trajectory in Bourdieusian social theory, I am drawn to the opening passage of Ladwig's (1996) *Academic distinctions*:

> In the midst of a very academic lecture and debate which took place in the Social Science Building on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, Madison on 4 April 1989, Pierre Bourdieu was questioned about the degree to which his sociology provides a fuzzy picture of the social world. The questioner clearly did not see this fuzziness as a virtue. But in response, Bourdieu explained that while he generally declines from making universal proclamations about how sociology ought to be conducted (forevermore), there was one tenet he himself tried to follow. In Bourdieu's words, when constructing his sociological accounts, the one rule he has tried to follow has been, "Do not be more clear than reality." (p. 1)

For the purpose of this chapter, and for educational administration as a domain of inquiry, the question "what is a relation?" arguably still remains. A key insight here is provided by Donati (2015) when he contends that society does not have relations but is relations. Following Donati, a relational approach to educational administration (or any field of inquiry) arguably needs to conceive of relations as emergent (this emergence can also be found in the works of Max Weber and Émile Durkheim). From this point of view, a relational approach is a way of seeing (ontological) and knowing (epistemological) the world. It is not a conceptual framework to be applied but a methodological lens for scholarship.

To this end, it is not possible to articulate in advance what is, and is not, a relation. To do so would be to construct the relation as an entity, an approach that would fall into the measurement construct critique, and be contrary to the initial stimulus for relational scholarship. Instead, a relational approach uses relations to understand. The research object is located relationally in time and space. Even the construction of the research object is related to the observer. A relational approach mobilizes relations throughout the entire scholastic enterprise. There is no stepping outside of relations.

Our lack of understanding of relations in educational administration needs to be understood in the trajectory of systems thinking and bureaucracy. The orthodoxy of structural arrangements and substantialist approaches goes relatively unrecognized. However, a relational approach to educational administration must break free of the ambition of grounding in (rational) reason, the arbitrary division of the social world (e.g., leaders, organizations), and instead take for its object, rather than getting itself caught up in, the struggle for the monopoly of the legitimate representation of the

social world. A shift from substances to relations focuses inquiry on organizing activity rather than on organizations. This also asks some questions regarding how activity takes place. Rather than interacting with external objective structures, there is a need to rethink the nature of these relations. Core categories of time and space are potentially recast through relational approaches. The external measure of clock time and the idea of practice taking place on context reflect substantialist thinking more so than relational.

Despite relations being recognized as important, if not essential, for organizing activity, educational administration has proceeded without a productive theoretical or methodological lens. Scholars working and identifying with relational approaches—in all its many forms—remain on the margins. Although at the periphery, as a methodological lens, relational approaches can productively engage with both the theoretical and empirical questions of educational administration.

Well-rehearsed arguments of leadership stress it is relational (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). Twenty years ago, Emirbayer (1997) argued that thinkers from many disciplinary positions were converging upon relational approaches. Educational administration has a lengthy history of relational approaches in the field's literatures. The challenge that remains is to what extent scholars in the field are willing to engage with the frontiers of these knowledge claims and in pushing them further. There is a real opportunity for educational administration scholars to engage with the "relational turn" (Prandini, 2015) of contemporary social thought and analysis. Given that schooling is a modern institution, relational approaches can be significant in generating new understandings through illuminating the ontological and epistemological preliminaries of scholarship and theorizing relations in ways that open new problems and possibilities.

Conclusion

Mone and McKinley (1993) argue that "organizational scientists should attempt to make unique contributions to their discipline" (p. 284). Although novelty or uniqueness is often a major component of what is regarded as a contribution, and by virtue making into print (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997), editors and reviewers are to some extent the custodians of a field's traditions and challenging prevailing views and trends is difficult (Natriello, 1996). The generative logic of scholarly work—argument and refutation—requires locating new theorizations and empirical examples in relation to the existing body of knowledge. Fragmentation of scholarship, or the absence of meaningful dialogue and debate across research traditions, is a major impediment for advancing knowledge. The parallel monologues (Eacott, 2017) that have come to dominate educational administration literatures sustain themselves without necessarily contributing to increasingly sophisticated understandings of the social world.

Hallinger (2013) argues that reviews of research are the "under-appreciated workhorses of academic publication" (p. 127), and Bush (1999) contends that the

"prize for a successful review could be a new beginning and continued growth" (p. 249). Orthodox reviews of educational administration research have focused on content (e.g., Eacott, 2008; Hallinger & Chen, 2015), method (e.g., Byrd, 2007; Byrd & Eddy, 2009), geographic location (e.g., Eyal & Rom, 2015; Hallinger & Bryant, 2016), or a combination in the form of descriptive analysis of contributions (e.g., Bush & Crawford, 2012; Murphy, Vriesenga, & Storey, 2007). These approaches rely upon a substantialist-based ontology that separates the social world into various entities capable of being identified and measured. What I have sought to offer is a commentary on contemporary educational administration literatures—primarily journals—with particular attention to the underlying generative principles of scholarship claiming some affiliation with relations. Foregrounding relations has enabled me to move beyond the positivist ideal, concerned with the accumulation and linear progression of knowledge—the next big thing, or breakthrough being the incremental development of all that has gone before.

Engaging with issues of knowledge production is a demanding task (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002; Oplatka, 2009), and whether what I have offered qualifies as a "successful review" cannot be known in advance (not to mention as to whether such a thing can even exist). Unlike sociology, educational administration does not have a clearly defined stream of relational scholarship. In this chapter, I have sought to survey contemporary debate and developments in researched grouped loosely under the label of relational. Building on existing categorizations (e.g., Dépelteau, Donati, Prandini), four main approaches were identified: adjectival, co-determinism, conflationism, and relational. As educational administration is centrally concerned with the workings (in all its forms) of organizations, relational approaches pose a significant challenge for the field. In shifting attention to relations rather than structures, what is the value of educational administration?

A, if not the, key argument of this chapter is that relational approaches offer a methodological rather than conceptual framework for the study of educational administration. Attention to relations throughout the research endeavor means engaging with ontological and epistemological assumptions as well as empirical data. It is unclear at this point as to whether relational approaches will continue to gather attention and traction within educational administration. Currently, the bulk of relational scholarship is co-determinist with some conflationary and adjectival work. As momentum builds in sociology, of which the *Palgrave handbook of relational sociology* (Dépelteau, 2018) is a major milestone, it will be interesting to see whether relational approaches become of greater appeal in educational administration. In the contemporary academy, the distance between disciplines is currently being recast through calls for interdisciplinary work to engage with complex problems yet balanced against discipline ranking structures. Relational approaches offer educational administration the means to theorize how it is perceived, understood, and enacted within the contemporary spatio-temporal conditions. Significantly, as relations are always in motion, relational approaches provide a set of theoretical resources for understanding the ways in which organizing is achieved, and because of the dynamic and contradictory nature of the social world, this is an ongoing and inexhaustible intellectual project.

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Part II
Relational Extensions

Chapter 4
Embedded and Embodied *Auctors*

Previous chapters have provided a survey of contemporary, and historical, relational scholarship across a number of different fields (e.g., sociology, management, and leadership studies, the physical sciences, and educational administration). In this chapter, and section, I more explicitly develop the relational extensions that constitute the *relational* approach to scholarship that I am advancing. As noted elsewhere, by themselves these extensions are not new. However, when taken together, they offer a systematic methodological approach that is relatively new to the study of educational administration. More than just a theoretical resource to call upon during the research enterprise, or worst still to overlay on empirical data, the *relational* approach I am advancing is a way of being a scholar and doing scholarly work. It provides a viable alternative to hegemonic approaches (e.g., logical empiricism) and recognizes the embedded and embodied nature of the social world. As I have argued previously, "what remains rarely, if ever, addressed, at least in educational administration discourses, is the extent to which being embedded, and embodying, this worldview shapes the intellectual gaze and by virtue scientific inquiry" (Eacott, 2015, p. 312). This is why, following Donati (2015), I mobilize the label *auctor*—meaning s/he who generates. Orthodox labels such as "agent", with its assumed agency, and "actor", she/he who acts upon, fail to adequately weave *spatio-temporal conditions* and *organizing activity* relationally as they are built upon substantialist foundations. The *relational* program I am advancing works with the notions of *organizing activity, spatio-temporal conditions*, and *auctor*. As I continue to develop my argument, these ideas are italicized to distinguish these terms from their everyday use and remind the reader that there is a sophisticated social theory in play when they are mobilized.

The specific argument of this chapter is that the centrality of organizing in the social world creates an ontological complicity in researchers (and others) that makes it difficult to epistemologically break from ordinary language. In making this argument, I draw on an intellectual tradition that includes Alexandre Koyré, Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, Louis Althusser, and Pierre Bourdieu. Two aspects involved in developing this argument are the constructedness of knowledge and the construction of a specific scientific focus of inquiry. The former explicitly

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illuminates the underlying generative principles of scholarship, namely ontology and epistemology, while the latter challenges the ontological status of the rationalist a priori categories of orthodox educational administration studies (e.g., the organization, leadership, and leaders). As Greenfield (e.g., Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) notes:

> In common parlance we speak of organizations as if they were real. Neither scholar nor layman finds difficulty with talk in which organizations 'serve functions', 'adapt to their environment', 'clarify their goals' or 'act to implement policy'. What it is that serves, adapts, clarifies or acts seldom comes into question. Underlying widely accepted notions about organizations, therefore, stands the apparent assumption that organizations are not only real but also distinct from the actions, feelings and purposes of people. (p. 1)

Both the construction of knowledge and the specific construction of the scientific focus of inquiry highlight the need for analysis which shows—constructs—the relations of contemporary *spatio-temporal conditions* and our understanding of *organizing activity*. The Greenfield quote above demonstrates how orthodox approaches to understanding organizations are built upon substantialist assumptions —notably the separation of entities in the social. Taking stimulus from Garfinkel (1967), to produce accounts of the social world, *auctors* draw on socially provided resources such as (substantialist) categories and correlate and coordinate their accounts with the accounts of others in an ongoing reciprocal process. This further legitimizes substantialism and constantly reproduces it. As Powell (2013) reminds us, "one can never know objects independently of the relations through which one encounters them" (p. 203). To illuminate these relations is of central importance for advancing relational scholarship and specifically for the argument of this book, the *relational* research program.

The location of this chapter is significant. While it is common to see a statement or section on reflexivity—or some appropriation—to locate the researcher in the research, rarely does this extend beyond a superficial comment on the perceived ethics of the argument (e.g., conflict of interests or bias). In placing this argument up-front, as with the numerous scholars mentioned earlier, it is possible to subject inquiry in process—not just planned or worst still, complete—to rigorous and robust scrutiny. In doing so, this is not about addressing such matters once and for all, or some token attempt at distance and objectivity, rather a sustained vigilance. Recognizing that *organizing activity* is generated, constituted, realized, modified, and transformed among others through the activity of *auctors*, a *relational* approach must take serious the origins of and enduring legitimacy of questions, concepts, and constructs. Too little attention is granted to the construction, or origin of the object of inquiry and the problems and possibilities of language. In other words, "the process of validating scientific generated knowledge extends far back into the context of discovery and cannot be separated from it" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968], p. vii). Calling on Bachelard, a fruitful exercise is using the logic of error, such as the misrecognition of the object that only comes into being through cognition as though it is "real" (see the Greenfield quote above), to construct the logic of discovery. My position is that knowledge of educational

administration is limited by a poor grasp, or understanding, of the conditions of error (e.g., distinguishing between the epistemic and the empirical). To do so requires analysis that illuminates our relations to the representations, questions, and problem formulations of commonsense understanding and ordinary language. Taken up in this chapter and the next, the uncritical adoption of the ordinary language of the everyday is a major limitation in the construction of knowledge. This chapter does not, however, lay the foundations for developing complex technical terminologies—as these are not necessarily helpful either—but to acknowledge and engage with the relations we have with the perceived objects of our inquiry.

Complicity with the Orthodoxy

Bachelard (1984[1934]) denies science the certainties of a definitive heritage and reminds us that it (science) can only progress by perpetually calling into question the very principles of its own constructs. The relations that the scholar has with the research object means that it is impossible to craft a scholarly narrative that is separate to the *spatio-temporal conditions* that brought it into being. To even think of "the researcher" and "the researched" is somewhat flawed in this sense. Neglecting to subject ordinary experience, the primary instrument in the ongoing (re)construction of objects in the social world to rigorous and robust ontological and epistemological critique runs the risk of mistaking these constructions for data (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]). As Bourdieu and colleagues (1999[1993]) note:

> The positivists dream of an epistemological state of perfect innocence papers over the fact that the crucial difference is not between a science that effects construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of the work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce. (p. 608)

This brings me to the ontological complicity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992 [1992]) or embedded and embodied nature of the educational administration scholar (Eacott, 2015). As noted previously, following Donati, I am making the shift from using "agent" or "actor" to *auctor*. This is more than a superficial change. It speaks to the underlying generative principle of my claims, and those of many relational scholars, that relations are emergent from, and simultaneously constitutive of, activity. To appropriate Donati, activity does not have relations but is relations. It cannot therefore be forgotten that any attempts to identify a research problem are not isolated as the phenomena are emergent from a particular *spatio-temporal condition*, is immersed in relations, and the very attempt at identifying/naming/categorizing makes a new *spatio-temporal condition*. There is some connection here to Heraclitus' observation that "no man ever steps in the same river twice, for

it's not the same river and he's not the same man" (although the exact line of Heraclitus is debated, e.g., Kirk, 1954; Marcovich, 1967; Reinhardt, 1916). Building from Heraclitus, the social world is active and any attempt to understand it, even partially, needs to engage with this activity. To that end, while any sense of a relational ontology has, so to speak, an empirical foundation that can be known, in part, experientially, in calling into question the genesis of our worldview it challenges the comfort, that which seems to feel natural and make sense, with the experiential and the granting of ontological status to the epistemic. Failing to put our thinking about the social world under constant scrutiny completes our ontological complicity with, and our understanding of, the social world as it is. As a case in point, previously (Eacott, 2015) I argued:

> A central issue in the scholarship of educational administration is that administrators are, as are all social agents, *spontaneous sociologists* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992], p. 66). This is particularly so in the professions, such as education, but also in law, business, architecture, engineering and medicine. In the case of educational administration, most, if not all, academics are former administrators at school and/or systemic levels (a quick scan of recruitment advertisements will attest to the privileging of this). Further to that, many hold administrative positions in the academy, further blurring the boundary between the native (naïve) perception of the spontaneous sociology and the research objects constructed through the "scientific" method of the scientist. (p. 317)

To get to know something, not just uncritically accept the categories and constructs of the ordinary language of the everyday, one has to "unfold what is inscribed in the various relations of implication in which the thinker and his thought are caught up, that is, the presuppositions he engages and the inclusions and exclusions he unwittingly performs" (Bourdieu, 2000[1997], p. 99). For educational administration, this is a difficult task (although arguably no more than any other domain of inquiry) as it [educational administration] functions only insofar as it produces a belief in the value of its product (e.g., policy, security, and order) and means of production (e.g., governance). To grant ontological status to educational administration, or leadership as is contemporarily done, overlooks the relations in which the observer is embedded and embodied. That said, Riveros and Newton (2016) contend that "from its very beginnings, educational administration, as a field of study, has been concerned with questions about 'being,' particularly regarding the nature and constitution of 'reality' in educational organizations" (p. 1). This was something that was explicitly taken up in the work of Greenfield (1973, 1974; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) and his pursuit of a humane science. One reason to engage with this constructedness of the social world is that while labels, categories and the like have potential explanatory value, they also serve as a lens for seeing the social world. For example, while discussing the nature of leadership studies, Kelly (2008) argues that debates around the definition of leadership (a matter I take up in the next chapter) are futile as they are the product of a design problem. The constructedness of our knowledge generation cannot be overlooked. If the social does not have relations but is relations, then this includes the generation of knowledge and the supports we use to legitimatize our claims. Relations are the very stuff of what we call the social and the basic focal point for knowledge claims.

This argument is not about denouncing any version of the world that mobilizes labels such as "leadership", "the organization" and the like. Rather, it is about asking how such a vision of the social world is possible. Our experiences and knowledge of the social world are the enactment, or living out, of our ontological and epistemological position. For the most part, it is reinforced through experience which legitimizes our preexisting position and in doing so, reproduces it. Bourdieu's notion of habitus does work around this and the way in which it can serve as a structuring structure. To avoid inquiry becoming little more than the advancement of the status quo nothing can be assumed a priori. The social world is inexhaustible, something that objective science struggles to grasp and engage with, and theory is not something that the researcher applies to the empirical; rather, it is a way of working through the social.

The positionality here need not be a liability and instead a resource (e.g., Powell, 2013). In directly engaging with this positionality, one is able to subject to interrogation the construction and maintenance of the research object. Orthodox approaches such as articulating an operational definition prior to conduct research, that which establishes the existence of a construction as a stable external—and arguably enduring—entity, are counter to the *relational* program. In seeking to understand the social world and recognizing its inexhaustible nature, the *relational* program is methodological and not simply a method. Our complicity with *organizing activity* requires a constant vigilance and the uncritical acceptance of the ordinary language of the everyday. This ensures attention to the logic of error as much as the logic of discovery is mobilized in scholarship.

A Contested Terrain

To challenge the underlying generative principles of our scholarship brings with it questions of language. Language has long been recognized as having a significant influence on the development of scientific thought (e.g., Cassirer, 1942), and in many ways, relational scholarship, particularly of the meta-commentary kind, concerns the study of different forms and sources of knowledge and illuminating how they relate and co-construct emergent knowledge claims. Ernst Cassirer gives the example of Socrates' dialogues of Plato, citing "Socrates always begins with distinctions that at first sight seem to be nothing else than verbal discriminations. He can not explain his thought and his concepts without referring to the common usage of words" (p. 311). He goes on to add that this form of analysis is "the art of determining and fixing the fluctuating meaning of words" (p. 311). Attempts at bringing language to a standstill, a static, and forevermore version, are highly problematic, if not impossible. Gottfried Leibniz' work also sought to perfect language, or at least bring it to a state of logical perfection, by making it free from the defects, ambiguities, and obscurities found in common speech. The key argument here, however, is not so much the need to bring language to a level of analytical precision (although it is to provide a description as to how it is used in a

particular *spatio-temporal conditions*) and instead the need to subject the ordinary language of the everyday to critique.

Bacon (1605) denounced language as one of the most dangerous sources of deception arguing that it contains the illusions and prejudices of people. He went on to claim that we cannot divorce ourselves from these fallacies and false appearances but that to exercise caution in working with language was important. Similarly, Galileo Galilei warned that the ordinary language of the everyday serves well the simple survey and classification of objects built upon sense-data, but it fails on higher analytical tasks and was therefore insufficient for rigorous and robust knowledge construction (e.g., science). Breaking with the ordinary language of the everyday is an inexhaustible project as there are many apparatus, including our own ontological complicity that serves to legitimize and sustain it. In the absence of robust justification and critique, names, or labels are given to things (social facts), usually presumed to be separate to the self, and used to co-ordinate and correlate with the experiences of others to construct an image of the social world. To that end, language and in particular words have not only a verbal but an ontological meaning. Language creates initial distinctions (e.g., "leadership", "management", and "administration" as demonstrated in Chap. 1), and the social world is perceived as the result of the internalization of the organizing framing constructed through language in the cognitive schemata through which they apprehend the social world. In other words, the social world exists in the body as much as the body exists in the social world. This highlights the importance of *spatio-temporal conditions* which I focus on in Chap. 6. What is arguably required here is a distrust of a general scheme of thought imposed by language. Every scholastic use of language requires a critique of the ordinary language of the everyday and our complicity with it and its version of the social world. While orthodoxy serves as a preliminary character, it is insufficient to construct knowledge claims that stretch beyond commonsense. As Bourdieu and colleagues note (1991[1968]), neglecting to subject ordinary language, the primary instrument in the ongoing (re)construction of objects in the social world, to a rigorous and robust epistemological and ontological critique runs the risk of mistaking objects pre-constructed in and by ordinary language for data.

Our experience of the social is an ensemble of categories from the everyday. With the orthodoxy of substantialist thinking in contemporary society, it is quite possible that language poses a major limitation to the advancement of relational research, and in particular, the *relational* research program. Even the common grammatical structure (e.g., subject-verb-object) reinforces substantialist orthodoxy and legitimizes a priori entities. However, as noted above, a key distinction I seek to make is between the pre-scientific language of the everyday and the scientific language of the scholar. I am mindful that constructing such an analytical dualism is not only unhelpful, but somewhat contradictory to a relational approach however, the notion of a distinction (which is not necessarily a dualism) is important. Without paying attention to the use of language as an organizing feature of the social world, it is possible to overlook the charlatanism of language games that serve to formalize and sustain ideological interventions. Analysis of such language and ideology has

become a mainstay of the post-structuralist critique of educational administration and the influence of discourse.

Many have asked questions of, or problematized, the role of everyday language in research. To do so, explicitly invokes the logic of error by calling into question the logic of discovery—that which is frequently limited to the mere confirmation of the pre-constructed belief. From the occupation of a particular position in the social, and the trajectory that got them there, *auctors* are frequently, if not always, immersed in a form of in situ scholarship. One's social history with organizing, and specifically organizing institutions (e.g., education, the state), and the history of the singular relationship with these organizations, significantly, often in spite of ourselves, orients our thoughts. This blurs the boundaries of the empirical and the epistemic, with "organizing" as the research object being the institutionalization of a point of view grounded in a pre-reflexive belief in the undisputed value of the object itself.

Organizing owes its existence to the currency of public concern over particular social issues (e.g., governance, order). Such inquiry rarely achieves scientific credibility while it remains within the confines of the ordinary language of the everyday and what is often labeled "common-sense". The solutions (e.g., leadership) are little more than extensions of the hegemonic substantialist worldview. Remaining in the prescientific, that of public concern or technocratic management, inquiry concerns the measurement and articulation of the orthodoxy and in doing so, not only sustains, but legitimizes and reproduces it. The quasi-scientification of the substantialist orthodoxy, as was evidenced during the mid-twentieth-century Theory Movement in US-based educational administration research, was really the rationalization of the pre-scientific rather than a theoretical advancement for the field. Through the privileging of method and technique, scholars became blinded to the idea that we as inquirers are at stake in our research and that our constructs serve our purposes as much as anything else.

The intellectual resources of educational administration rarely provide the necessary tools to meaningfully break from the ordinary language of the everyday. To even have the debate is unusual. The canonical thrusts of the field are rarely called into question and the social facts that form its conceptual core remain unchallenged. However, increasingly sophisticated techniques and procedures cannot completely overcome the embedded and embodied nature of the educational administration scholar. As an *auctor*, there is no pursuit of pure truth (if such a thing is possible) and it is inappropriate to craft a scholarly narrative as though it exists separate to the *spatio-temporal conditions* in which it was brought into being.

The absence of a direct empirical referent in the social world means that social scientific research primarily—if not exclusively—deals with the epistemic. This is not to say there are not empirical problems, but concepts, categories, labels, and the like are the product of thought and analysis. As Bourdieu (1988[1984]) notes, there is a need to get "increasingly closer to the originary of the ordinary" (pp. xi-xii). We must never forget or try to deny that the origins of everyday concepts as the ratification of orthodoxy and subject to scrutiny the uncritical acceptance of the social world as it is. In doing so, one takes serious the construction of the pre-constructed object through recognition of the constructedness of knowledge. As

Emirbayer (1997) notes, "relational theorists reject the notion that one can posit discrete, pre-given units such as the individual or society as ultimate starting points of sociological analysis" (p. 287). The contested terrain that is the construction of knowledge warrants constant scholarly attention.

The Case of Educational Leadership

The argument so far in this chapter is more than stressing a critical engagement with the limits of thought but also the conditions in which that thought is exercised. Gronn (2010) claimed that "leadership" is a key ingredient in understanding the enduring problem of the social world—coordination—because of a "genetic human pre-disposition to establish hierarchies and also because above a certain numerical threshold self-organization by small collaborating groups proves to be difficult" (p. 407). He sees coordination as a problem that has remained from hunter gatherer times through to the contemporary globalized world and centered on contestation concerning what people are trying to coordinate their actions for, and of course, how best to go about doing the co-ordination. Gronn's argument is both interesting and insightful. While he focuses on a genealogy, in doing so he highlights the orthodoxy, and complicity, with which we have with coordinating or what I would label organizing. In addition, the struggles over what for and how illuminate the role of the normative in shaping dialogue and debate about the social world.

As noted a few pages back, in the case of educational administration, most, if not all, academics are former administrators at school and/or systemic levels (a quick scan of recruitment advertisements will attest to the privileging of this). Further to that, many hold administrative positions in the academy (often because of their track records in administration), further blurring the boundaries between the native (naïve) perception of the spontaneous sociologist and the research objects constructed through the "scientific" method of the researcher. It is this epistemic unconsciousness, that which is historical relations and rather opaque, that shapes the scholastic enterprise. The research frequently credits the research object with his/her vision of things as a result of a preexisting conditioning to do so. Educational administration as a field of study, and by virtue scholars, does not exist except for the normative of schooling. Without an at scale belief in the value of its activity, educational administration would simply not survive. This is an important point that cannot be stressed enough. It is the fundamental reason why literatures of educational administration for the most part cannot and will not engage in a serious questioning of its meaning and the observers' role in its advancement and sustainment. To some extent I take up this argument further in the next chapter, but for now it is significant to remember that the educational administration scholar is at stake in their work. As I have argued previously:

> To challenge the value, or worth, of educational administration would be to not only question the very core of the domain, but to question the value of the self and one's role in

> the social fabric. The researcher, who is therefore implicated in the world, is unable to withdraw from the world in order to construct a re-creation of it through a manuscript or lecture. (Eacott, 2015, p. 318)

The educational administration researcher does not stand outside of the social world they analyze, nor do they look down on it from above. Rather, they themselves are *auctors*, and the pre-constructed notions of educational administration (e.g., the management of systems, teachers, students, and buildings) derive their self-evidence and their legitimacy from the activity of *auctors*. What educational administration scholarship deals with is simultaneously emergent and constitutive of their activity. The inquirer who studies educational administration has a "use" for educational organizations, a preexisting normative orientation and one that may have little in common with parents who seek to find a "good" school for their child or the system/government looking to leverage performance on some measure of success/value.

What this highlights is the significant role that positionality plays in establishing the credibility of scholarly work. Through the ontological complicity with the social world and the embedded and embodied nature of language, this positionality is not necessarily a limitation or deficit for knowledge claims—as it would be argued by positivists—but at the very core of rigorous and robust knowledge. Familiarity with the social world, the ongoing struggle with the spontaneous understanding of the everyday, is the central epistemological obstacle for educational administration as it continuously produces conceptualizations and at the same time, the conditions which serve to legitimize and sustain them. As a result, the inexhaustible intellectual project of getting beyond the everyday is never finally won.

Positionality and Non-positionality

As the Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron (1991[1968]) quote earlier in this chapter argued, the difference is not between a science that effects construction and one that does not, rather one that does this without acknowledging it and one that directly engages with this construction. It is important to not confuse this construction with subjectivism. This is not about a form of relativism nor is it antithetical with objectivism. Rather, in recognizing the construction of knowledge and the construction of the specific object of inquiry, one is able to locate their work in broader dialogue and debates, move beyond the ordinary language of the everyday, and the role of the researcher in the exercise. With the ontological complicity of the *auctor*, the nuancing of scientific language from the ordinary language of the everyday, and the embedded and embodied nature of the *auctors* in particular *spatio-temporal conditions* it is not surprising that engaging with positionality is central to relational scholarship.

Powell (2013) takes this argument further to claim that reflexivity (as a form of positionality), rather than objectivity, should be the standard for validity for scientific knowledge. Specifically, he argues:

> Reflexivity makes positionality a resource rather than a liability, as it is by the standard of objective knowledge; the local and contingent conditions of epistemic practice appear as something integral to the production of knowledge, rather than pollutants. One can still have warranted beliefs: Only the standards by which one validates this warrantedness have shifted. Reflexivity gives a theoretical justification for the provisionality of all scientific knowledge: Our knowledge must change as our relations change, and relations may change as a result of the knowledge we have produced as well as by the intervention of factors unaccounted for in our existing knowledge. This is more satisfying than endlessly aspiring to a standard of disembodied, universal knowledge that can never be reached. (p. 205)

Positionality challenges many of pillars of logical empiricism. Significantly, as Powell argues above, this positionality is not a liability or pollutant of scholarship as it would be judged within orthodox empiricist standards. The belief in an external, knowable, and reality where theories can be confirmed through empirical examples—thereby verifying a theoretical position through sensory experience—is shifted when taking positionality into account. The former commits an error of logic in attributing causal relations to matters which may not indeed be present. Such relations are embedded in the preexisting theoretical orientation of the observer and this can be seen in arguments from David Hume, W.V.O. Quine, and Karl Popper regarding inductive reasoning. Sophisticated statistical tests cannot overcome this error of logic as they themselves are built upon a series of underlying generative assumptions based on preexisting theorizations of how it ought to work.

To craft defensible claims requires an articulation of the positionality of the scholar. This brings to the level of discourse the *spatio-temporal conditions* in which scholarship is undertaken and its relations to knowledge claims. As noted elsewhere in this chapter, this is not an argument for relativism, instead, as a possible resolution to any sense of relativism, making explicit one's positionality to generate a defensible position leaves the assessment of worth to those competent to judge—fellow scholars. If claims are defensible then one should be able to engage in the logic of academic work, argument and refutation. Assessment, however, is not against adherence to the rules of a particular form of science but instead coherence with the positionality. This is not to say that all matters related to a particular claim can be captured in a single text (e.g., article, book, and lecture), but an awareness of them rather than ignorance is important. Ultimately, in making explicit the positionality of the scholar the resulting argument has greater trustworthiness in its knowledge claims.

If our arguments concern social constructions, to which there is a large agreement that the social sciences do, they are epistemic. They become known through social analysis. As such, there is a need to make to make clear our location in *spatio-temporal conditions* and our role in advancing them as *auctors*. It is somewhat irresponsible to make claims without doing so. This means that the prospect of "atheoretical" work is impossible. Highly problematic for work, particularly graduate theses, claiming to use grounded theory and other forms of bottom-up theory development is that they overlook the theory-ladeness of inquiry. Our experiences of the social world are not passive. Our complicity invokes our

contribution to the ongoing generation of that experience. This serves to highlight the theoretical value of *auctor*.

Importantly, the positionality opens up the prospect of inter-tradition dialogue and debate. Rather than parallel monologues (Eacott, 2017), we have the *spatio-temporal conditions* from which to construct a grammar for discussion. Although it does not construct the neutral empirical ground from which we can compare arguments from different research traditions, it does enable discussion of ontology, epistemology, normative/ethic assumptions, axiology, theory of subject, and the like, rather than getting caught up in a methods and concepts argument. As Garrison (1986) notes, "research traditions may as easily talk past each other using methodological concepts as theoretical concepts" (p. 16). Through a focus on positionality, it is possible to overcome the linguistics of theoretical positions. Breaking with the ordinary language of the everyday, such as the simplistic rejection of administration in favor of leadership, provides the resources necessary to engage in a methodological conversation about the strength of knowledge claims without defaulting to a position of epistemic relativism.

The construction of knowledge argument is often framed as an analytical dualism between objectivity and subjectivity. However, as the Bourdieu and colleagues quote earlier in this chapter reminds us, it is not a case of a science that does recognize its own construction and one that does not, but recognition of this construction that is the distinction. Positionality, that which has traditionally been seen as a weakness or limitation, if not fatal flaw, in research is actually, if acknowledged, a significant strength. To make explicit one's relations enables an informed reading of work, and what I would argue is greater rigor and robustness of knowledge claims. As Powell (2013) argues, positionality, rather than objectivity, is the benchmark of (social) science.

Enduring Productively

The goal of this chapter, as with earlier versions of this argument (Eacott, 2015), is not to merely write a piece on the scholarship of educational administration, but to make a much more fundamental point about social scientific inquiry. A social scientific approach, as advocated for in this book, must break free of the ambition of grounding in (rational) reason, the arbitrary division of the social world (e.g., leaders and non-leaders) and instead, take for its object, rather than getting itself caught up in, the struggle for the monopoly of the legitimate representation of the social world. In the absence of a distinctive canon (this is why it is far more acceptable to speak of a "field" rather than "discipline" of educational administration—with thanks to Helen Gunter for this point) hegemonic approaches grant credibility to research. Esteem, such as publications, grants/fellowships, editorships, promotion, and tenure, is gained through adherence to the hegemony. A quick preview of "field leading" journals such as *Educational Administration Quarterly* and *Journal of Educational Administration* (the two oldest and frequently most

highly ranked outlets, e.g., Cherkowski, Currie & Hilton, 2012) confirms a tendency to publish work aligning with a particular form of research, a scientism, an idealized version of scientific inquiry concerned with an exhibitionism of data and procedure closely aligned with logical empiricism—a legacy of the Theory Movement. Lost in this approach are the conditions in which such research (and related thought) is undertaken. As noted earlier in this chapter, it cannot be forgotten that any attempt to identify a research problem is not isolated as the very category or focus is emergent and constitutive of particular *spatio-temporal conditions*, is immersed in relations, and the very attempt at identifying/naming/categorizing it makes a new *spatio-temporal condition*.

The argument of this chapter has stressed the need to make visible the underlying generative principles of scholarship. Specifically, I have raised the importance of making explicit the relations of much-used categories of the researcher and the researched. In recognizing the "theory-ladenness" (Hanson, 1958) of observation questions are asked of the entire substantialist agenda. Rather than getting caught up in the pursuit of categorizing and measuring increasingly insignificant entities, scholarship, or social analysis takes on a different meaning. As Metcalfe and Game (2015) contend:

> … the etymology of analysis does not point to a process of breaking and splitting, but to a process of loosening. To loosen is to find the room for play, to open up, to reduce pressure and density, to enhance fluency and possibility. Etymologically, to loosen is also to lose. Analysis, then, can be understood as a process of losing our certainties about what we know so that we can rediscover the potential that is found in the relations upon which things rely. Analyzes do not conclusively categorise the phenomena they study; rather, they are a way of testing possibilities in those phenomena. (p. 34)

In an education specific example, Erickson and Gutierrez (2002) note, "real science is not about certainty but about uncertainty" (p. 22). The challenge that theory-ladenness raise is the possibility that there is no neutral empirical ground on which to judge between competing theories. But this is a limitation of a particular way of thinking. Something that relational scholarship can engage.

As a field of knowledge production, educational administration scholars do a substantial amount of talking past one another. These parallel monologues (Eacott, 2017) are a major issue for the advancement of knowledge. Original contributions can only be made relationally. That is, the innovation or significance of scholarship is an act of (social) scientific distinction. This means purposely engaging with different approaches. Any position cannot be known, or argued for, in isolation. Fragmentation or siloed scholarship is an issue in educational administration, and other areas of educational research (Apple, 2017). Without a means of engaging with the underlying generation principles of scholarship alternate positions are often quickly dismissed, or simply neglected/ignored, as they do not conform to preexisting normative orientations. The logic of academic work—argument and refutation—is overlooked. Making explicit our ontological complicity through epistemological vigilance generates the conditions through which dialogue and debate can occur across positions. Arguments can be raised and where necessary refuted, based on their claims and defensibility rather than alignment with ideology. Diversity of

thought and analysis in a field is not a fatal flaw and the solution is not a form of knowledge centrism. Rather, the relational intervention is a social epistemology.

The importance of this relational locating is amplified if we return to the work of Cassirer (1942). He argues that the historical development of scientific thought is faced with a paradoxical fact.

> Very great progress made in scientific thought seems to give us a feeling that is of a very ambiguous nature. What we feel is a strange mixture of pride and modesty, of a nearly unlimited hope and of a certain resignation. The first and the most natural reaction is to regard the new step as a new proof of the power of human reason. We are convinced that there are no definite limits set to this power; it may extend indefinitely. But we may just as much approach the question from quite a different angle and we may interpret it not from an optimistic but from a pessimistic point of view. If the truth of yesterday proves to be an error according to the standards of our present knowledge, what guaranty do we possess that our truth, the truth of today, will not be and must not indeed be the error of tomorrow? (p. 321)

Shifts in language such as "administration" to "management" and now "leadership" means that research is often discarded based on language choice rather than contribution to understanding *organizing activity*. Intellectual resources are lost if researchers simply align with the latest language. What this teaches us is that many of the contemporary solutions to empirical problems are actually dependent on particular *spatio-temporal conditions*. Berliner (2002) notes, "solid scientific findings in one decade end up of little use in another decade because of changes in the social environment that invalidate the research or render it irrelevant" (p. 20). He adds, "it was not bad science that caused findings to become irrelevant. Changes in the social, cultural, and intellectual environments negated the scientific work in these areas" (p. 20). Productive scholarship is therefore not necessarily about the linear accumulation of knowledge but making explicit the conditions in which it was undertaken. These conditions are not static, as the Heraclitus example earlier sought to demonstrate. Research is both emergent from and constitutive of the conditions in which it is undertaken. The ongoing generation of *spatio-temporal conditions* means that productively contributing to scholarship is dependent on making explicit the conditions in which knowledge claims are generated. This is a task that is always in flux but most importantly, creates the conditions in which arguments and refutation can take place based on the underlying generative principles of scholarship and not simply whether one likes the argument or not.

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Chapter 5
Beyond "Leadership"

Having established the ontological complicity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]) of the embodied and embedded educational administration scholar (Eacott, 2015), I now turn my attention to the contemporary focus of thought and analysis in educational administration: "leadership." Specifically, my argument is that rigorous and robust social scientific inquiry of *organizing activity* calls into question the very foundations of popular labels such as "leadership," "management," and "administration." This matters because it is the primary means through which the parallel monologues that plague educational administration as a field of study can be broken down. By making explicit what is meant by key terms in any particular piece of work it is possible to compare, contrast, or what I would argue, relate, positions. Thinking relationally about the underlying generative principles of research opens the lines of communication (building further relational understandings) between positions that otherwise may have been conceived as incommensurate. The particular case I pay attention to in this chapter, "leadership," it is the most common focus of inquiry in contemporary educational administration literature. Stylistically, for this chapter, I have opted to include it within quotation marks. This is to explicitly make it clear that we are problematizing the very idea of "leadership" and that it cannot be taken for granted but rather, subjected to scrutiny. It also serves as a physical reminder as to how often a term can be used in a text and we continue reading without questioning.

It was almost 60 years ago that McGregor (1958) argued that the eagerness with which new ideas in organizational theory are received and the extent to which many of them become fads are indications of the dissatisfaction with the status quo. Despite some glaring flaws in the conceptualization of "leadership", its popularity, expansion and desirability have arguably never been greater. As a self-sustaining ideology (e.g., Samier, 2016), when questions are raised regarding its utility as a theoretical and/or practical resource, such as those challenging the possibility of an individualistic notion to engage with the scope and scale of more collective forms of *organizing activity*, it has expanded its reach through a proliferation of adjectives

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—each apparently demarcating a new space or form for this flexible, dynamic, and inexhaustible construct.

"Leadership" also exhibits an exclusionary or elitist principle despite any perceived inclusivity in the "everyone is a leader" rhetoric. A "leader," one who enacts "leadership," is positioned as distinct from the follower, that passive soul who submits to others and slaves away within the structures of society. The follower is one of a collective, an underclass of society, a critical mass of social actors whose labor is constrained and who lack the agentic freedoms of the "leader." This "leadership" is however enacted, and it is a personal choice to take it up. It is available to everyone, irrespective of any biological, political, cultural, or socioeconomic marker. If an individual actor, or collection of actors, fails to take up the opportunity then this is a personal failure—such is the logic of the "leadership" ideology.

Notwithstanding the recent proliferation of adjectives expressing more collective notions (including relational), "leadership" is an individualized and distinction creating ideology. There cannot be too many "leaders" otherwise the idea loses it rarity. "Leaders" are an elite upper echelon of society. To expand its membership is to dilute the value of "leadership." It remains a class-based system for the social structure, embraced by business schools yet shied away from by educational administration departments.

Since the turn of the century, if not earlier, the "leadership" line of inquiry has been widely adopted in educational administration (Bush, 2004; Oplatka, 2010). I argue that claims to its explanatory importance and robustness as a construct go too far. Too many theoretical and methodological matters (beginning with those flagged in the previous chapter) remain unresolved by simply accepting "leadership" at face value. Epistemological dialogue and debate was vast during the Theory Movement, Greenfield revolution, and numerous other interventions such as Richard Bates' critical theory of educational administration and Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's naturalistic coherentism. Recently, the absence of methodological debate in educational administration has allowed for an underdeveloped act of human cognition to assume not only ascendency but dominance. This is not to say that "leadership" has advanced without critique in the broader organizational sciences (e.g., Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Calder, 1977; Miner, 1975; Pfeffer, 1977) and educational administration (e.g., Eacott, 2013, 2015; Gronn, 2003; Lakomski, 2005; Lakomski, Eacott, & Evers, 2017), but this has been infrequent and not sustained at scale. These alternate stances remain peripheral to the field, which at its core changes little despite their presence.

In this chapter. I seek to honor the rich epistemological literature of educational administration and the many scholars working in the space, with the sort of rigorous analysis that is encouraged in the scholarly exercise embodied by thinkers such as Andrew Halpin, Daniel Griffiths, Thomas Barr Greenfield, Richard Bates, Don Willower, Christopher Hodgkinson, Jack Culbertson and contemporaries such as Evers, Lakomski, Fenwick English, Helen Gunter, and Eugenie Samier. Working *relationally*, and building on the argument of the previous chapter, I seek to not only problematize "leadership" but to understand it through new terms. These terms

unsettle many of the normative assumptions regarding "leadership" and its explanatory value. And in the face of the recasting of our ways of thinking about *organizing activity* outlined in this book, it may well be that the work of educational administration scholars will increasingly involve such recasting procedures, making the everyday experiences of organizational life strange.

Leadership Is …

Over fifty years ago, Bennis (1959) stated that the concept of "leadership" continues to elude us and turn up in different forms to taunt us with its slipperiness and complexity. After a comprehensive review of the literature, Stogdill (1974) claims there are almost as many definitions of "leadership" as there are definers. In a much used definition, Yukl (1981) outlines "leadership" as influence, linking that with performance and collective tasks. If this is so, then "leadership" is redundant. What does it offer that influence does not? Similarly, Caldwell (2007) argues that "leadership" is change. Once again, "leadership" is rendered useless by its very own definition. It is a mere proxy for another term. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) argue that the variation in definitions of "leadership" indicates the non-correspondence between it and something out there in organizations and other social settings. The origins of "leadership" as an empirical phenomenon are the result of subjects being subordinate to the expressions of the observer's assumptions and methodologies. It is the preexisting—that is, unconscious—orientation of the observer that is the most common experience of "leadership." This experience embodies a circular logic built upon an ontological complicity with the dominant ideology of the contemporary social condition. In other words, a "leadership" worldview is confirmed in experiencing and thinking through events using a "leadership" worldview. Failure to live up to the expectations of this worldview is perceived as a deficit in individual actors or organizations rather than the value of "leadership" being brought into question.

Every body of "leadership" literature includes a degree of advocacy—as it cannot escape its normative generation. Even calls to radicalize "leadership" (e.g., Bogotch et al., 2008) are frequently replacing one meta-narrative with another. Despite this voluminous literature and regular usage in the ordinary language of the everyday, "leadership" does not offer itself to the senses. It passes largely unnoticed. This makes "leadership" somewhat unexperienced. When "leadership" is described or articulated, it is almost always through past events (the mapping of historical accounts with the lexicon of "leadership", such as with contests and the glorification of victors and influential figures) and/or a projection into the forthcoming (a romanticized "by design" agenda built on sequential steps and perpetual manipulation of materials in pursuit of an idealized future state). This mapping or projection ensures that "leadership" as a construct is essentially devoid of grounding in time and space. It is beyond context—something I will return to in Chap. 6. For now, suffice it to say that "leadership" language is reflective of an

ideological position on organizational life. Notions of "leadership" serve as symbols for representing personal causation of social events (Pfeffer, 1977). Therefore, it is the innate human desire to matter, to be significant, which gives meaning to actions that is embodied in the language of "leadership."

Calder (1977) argues that there is no unique content to the construct of "leadership" that is not subsumed under other, more general models of behavior. This is arguably why at a certain point in the analysis the boundaries between "leadership," "management," and "administration" blur until all that is left are the preexisting normative assumptions of the researcher. Yet surprisingly, considerable, and far too much, intellectual space in journals, books, theses, at conferences, seminars, and graduate school classes is taken up trying to construct and sustain the distinctions. It is possible to characterize the hegemonic logic of educational "leadership" research in a series of steps:

(i) A perceived normative organizational need that goes beyond administration and/or management;
(ii) The development of a tentative ("leadership") theory for that normative requirement;
(iii) Overlaying organizing activity with the normative requirement; and
(iv) Transporting the normative beyond the organization.

This logic raises a series of questions concerning the relations between the observer and the observed and our ways of knowing. The unquestioned belief in "leadership" and the embodied and embedded nature of the observer was taken up in Chap. 4. Failure to attend to the ontological complicity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]) or intellectual gaze of the educational administration scholar (Eacott, 2015) leads to the projection and misrecognition of the objects of human cognition as though they are external and knowable. The unconscious orientation of how the researcher believes organizations ought to behave is used as a lens to evaluate how they are currently acting. Any distinctions created between "leaders" and others (e.g., "non-leaders," or followers), or "leadership" and "non-leadership" (e.g., administration and management) are the manifestation of the preexisting normative orientation of the researcher.

The explanatory power of "leadership" theory is based on its perceived correspondence with organizational behavior. I want to propose an alternative here that directly engages with the rejection of objective or positivist science and the lack of correspondence. My argument, as will become clear, is based on the belief that "leadership" is not an external knowable entity, but the product of social construction. Attempts to get to this point have yet to take effect at scale, or their intents have been misappropriated. For example, Greenfield has been used to legitimize the choice, and subsequent explosion, of qualitative works in educational administration. Yet the depth of his epistemological critique is diluted, if not confused, when taken to be synonymous with qualitative methods and the legitimation of what are essentially relativist accounts of organizations. The conflation of theory (e.g., post-modern) with method (e.g., qualitative) is too frequent in the literature of

educational administration. The *relational* approach has the potential to attend to the epistemological and content matters raised in the critique of "leadership" while also offering new ways of thinking through the organizing of education.

The Rise of "Leadership"

There is a stream of scholarship arguing that changes in economic conditions bring about parallel changes in administrative rhetoric and this relationship is most observable during periods of economic expansion and contraction (Hartley, 2010; O'Connor, 1973). The rise of "leadership" is no exception. It was during the 1960s that organizational theorists thought of "leadership" as worthy of serious study (Podolny, Khurana & Besharov, 2010), but as Kellerman (2013) argues, the "leadership" industry gained significant momentum during the 1970s when corporate America was fearful of competition from abroad (notably Japan). It came to prominence as a response to the dehumanizing effects of bureaucracy and Tayloristic management, those which were perceived to limit agency and creativity. An obsession with change, adaption, flexibility, improvement, and vision left a significant impression on the psyche of the general population. Becoming a "leader" is presumed to "be a path to power and money; a medium for achievement; and a mechanism for creating change, sometimes, though hardly always, for the common good" (Kellerman, 2013, p. 136). "Leadership" has reached a point of not only dominance, but came to be the field once known as educational administration. This is well recognized and sustained as an increasing number of candidates pass through the academy in preparation (e.g., master's and Ed.D.) and research (e.g., Ph.D.) programs. The "leadership" worldview has influenced the ways in which problems are constituted but surprisingly been decoupled from broader sociological and organizational analysis. The relationship between broader *spatio-temporal conditions* and educational administration remains somewhat underdeveloped.

The late 1960s and 1970s was a period of large-scale social distrust, reduced confidence, and arguably rejection of restrictive social structures—notably the bureaucracy. Although as Angus (1989) notes, it is a little ironic that calls for "leadership" came at a time when many commentators were displaying a lack of confidence in public and private institutions and their "leadership." With an increasingly global economy, organizations, and particularly social institutions such as education were no longer confined to national boundaries. With the advent of Post-Fordist models of management globalization shifted the scale of the industrialized world and the factory floor. "Leadership" was argued for as the difference between average (or below) and above average performance. Unlike conservative capitalist accounts which rely heavily on subordination, alienation, and exploitation of a proletariat by an elite class, "leadership" offers the aspiration of availability, accessible to those who strive hard enough, all the while hiding the subtlety that makes the achievement of that unlikely. To think with Karl Marx, people

(followers) work hard to avoid the negative consequences (remaining a follower), even if that labor advances the advantage already held by the elites.

Social structures are central to "leadership," management, and administration discourses. Parsons (1956), among others, argues that the very existence of organizations is a consequence of a division of labor in society. These organizations are sustained through the production of specialized outputs that are either consumed or utilized in further production. For the most part, and based on our internalization of this orthodoxy, organizations are thought of as having a class of actors (e.g., "leaders," management, administration) that bear responsibility for a certain type of organizational affairs (e.g., strategy, policy making, decision making). "Leadership," through the provision of direction and vision for a better future—particularly if accompanied with an incremental plan for perpetual improvement—appeals to the rational, yet simultaneously calls upon the charisma and motivation required to reach the social and emotional needs of other social actors. That is, "leadership" is a hybrid (or mutant) management rhetoric. This also makes "leadership" an ontological and/or epistemological rather than empirical problem. Let's consider two major assumptions embedded in the "leadership" literature:

(i) "leadership" is *the* difference between organizational outcomes; therefore,
(ii) "leadership" is *present* in organizations achieving above norm outcomes.

Neither assumption calls into question the origin/s or self-sustaining nature of the ideology. The assumptions reflect a preexisting belief in the existence of "leadership." Given my argument that "leadership" is a social construction rather than material object, this acceptance of its existence is based on an epistemically objective truth rather than an ontologically objective truth. The second assumption completes the circular logic of the epistemically objective truth. If performance is the result of "leadership," then "leadership" is present where there is above average performance. I want to call, ever so briefly, on Searle's (1995) work on institutional facts to make this point around the complicity of "leadership." Searle's argument is based on the notion that "X counts as Y in context C." Here, the expression "counts as" indicates the imposition of a status that people collectively attach to a function. In bringing this into conversation with my argument, organizations are "C," performance "X" and "Y" is "leadership." Alternatively, "performance" counts as "leadership" in the context of "organizations." If we agree that performance counts as "leadership" in organizations as I contend is the dominant ideological argument then individuals and collectives are in a position to determine if the statement "A is a high-performing (effective/successful, etc.) 'leader' in education" is an epistemically objective truth. With such status functions, researchers, as with ordinary people, are able to make true claims in an epistemically objective sense, and construct internally consistent collections (e.g., theories) of these claims about objects in the world that have genuine, and somewhat defensible, explanatory power.

My argument being that "leadership" is a social construction. It is not external to the self and does not exist without social construction. The at-scale acceptance of

"leadership" as the distinction between organizations is grounded in a time when there was heightened anxiety surrounding the performance of domestic institutions in an increasingly global economy. This is what enabled Deming's (1982) *Out of the crisis* to bring Tayloristic thinking into a new time, however, to move beyond Fordist managerial structures and engage with the "new" problems of the time required something more. Enter "leadership" (which incidentally was one of Deming's 14 principles). It offers the integration of the human, the subjective, and an aspiration of the human spirit to overcome adversity that appeals to the social and emotional needs of the masses. The popularity of "leadership" is built on its tapping into the human desire to matter, to make a difference.

It was during the 1970s that scholarship in educational administration was experiencing its first major ontological and epistemological debate since the rise of the Theory Movement some 20 years earlier. In this case, Thomas Barr Greenfield's challenge to logical empiricism and calls for a "humane science" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) changed the nature of dialogue and debate. How then did "leadership" assume the ascendency? How did a new label emerge and come to dominate the language? I contend that it is because the debate between the Theory Movement and the humanist alternative was frequently limited to epistemological tensions (e.g., Willower & Forsyth, 1999) rather than the ontological conditions which give rise to our understandings. As a result, "leadership" research became somewhat of a vehicle for making epistemological claims rather than interrogating the ontological foundations of knowledge claims about "leadership." The intellectual divisions—primarily sustained through parallel research traditions—of educational administration, which continue today, are more concerned with how one comes to know "leadership" rather than what makes it possible in the first place. Our complicity with the projection and ongoing maintenance of "leadership" remains, for the most part, untouched.

Epistemic Imperialism

Harvey (2005) argues that European and American capitalism has a tendency toward expansionism and the continued production of space. Unlike earlier forms of expansion that relied on the establishment of colonial outposts, contemporary capitalist ideologies do not require physical infrastructure, instead calling on symbolic infrastructure achieved through the legitimation of key constructs—in this case "leadership." With the incorporation of the former Eastern-Bloc into the global economy in 1989, and arguably increasing with emerging and developing economies, Anglophone rhetoric has been, to use Carney (2008), "deterritorialized." It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to locate *the* leader and/or the origins of "leadership" as an ideology. There is however little doubt that "leadership" serves to sustain existing power structures despite any aspirational overtones. This domination theme does not however descend from the elite as it would in a bureaucratic administration but is instead a projection giving the appearance of being removed

from any individual or class of social actors (mindful that such a separation of actors and context is highly problematic—an argument I take up in the following chapter). "Leadership" has become externalized but this externalization is an illusion. As a creation of human cognition, once projected, it serves as a means of domination, even over those whose cognition it is a product. "Leadership" is at once a product and producer of the contemporary social condition. This is not to suggest that "leadership" is not embodied in some material realities, such as those generated through various performative regimes, but that this imperialism is constructed rather than material.

Administrative buzzwords are easily co-opted in both scholarly and everyday language yet usually wind up in a lightweight or negative connotation or fade into obscurity (Ettore, 1997). The colonization of language external to educational administration into orthodoxy is not new. Callahan's (1962) classic *Education and the cult of efficiency* describe how school administration reformers looked to Tayloristic practices in their efforts to reshape the organization of schooling. More recently, Peck and Reitzug (2012) provided an explanatory conceptual model for how business management concepts become school leadership fashions, albeit with a time lag. The apparent utility of "leadership" across time and space obscures its underlying generative logic. "Leadership" serves to normalize a performative or enterprising culture. It legitimizes relative performance, at scale, as the orthodox marker of "leadership." This circular logic is insatiable, constantly expanding, and producing new space through comparators and adjectives all the while deflecting questions of the core.

To think through this expansion and production of space I want to call upon Imre Lakatos' (1999) classification of progressive and regressive research programs. A research program is progressive if its theoretical growth anticipates its empirical growth—that is, while it continues to predict new acts with some degree of success. In contrast is a regressive program, where theoretical growth is behind empirical growth, offering post hoc explanations of practice. Well-rehearsed accounts of "leadership" focus on cutting-edge, ground-breaking, ahead of their time, and visionary. With the acceptance of "leadership" as an institutional fact, to think with Searle, research on "leadership" is primarily concerned with describing (recently) past practice. In attempting to keep up with the field of practice, "leadership" studies are a regressive program. The identification of "leadership" remains post-event. Scholarship is descriptive rather than predictive. This allows for historical events to be described using the language of "leadership" even though this was not a word necessarily used at the time. As a case in point, Grint (2011) argues:

> The beginning for leadership scholars is the beginning of record history, not the beginning of homo sapiens. As far as it is possible to tell, all organizations and societies of any significant size and longevity have had some form of leadership, often, but not always, embodied in one person, usually—but not always—a man. This does not necessarily mean that leadership has always been, and will always be, critical or essential but it does imply that we have always had leaders. (p. 3)

He goes on to cite examples such as Sargon of Akkad in the Middle East, Ramesses II in Egypt and many other historical figures—usually linked with war and histories constructed around victory. The subtle move here is that "leadership" as an ideology has made itself relevant to the past—overlaying or mapping the past using its lexicon. At the same time, "leadership" is important for the forthcoming, in securing the type of future we aspire to. The result is the elevation in significance of "leadership" for the here and now. In an almost unnoticed expansion, "leadership" has created an image of itself that is beyond mainstream notions of temporality (notably clock time) making itself timeless yet forever more, important. "Leadership" can therefore be applied to describe any practice that satisfies the classifiers criteria across history and projected into the forthcoming. It is both without time but within time.

The spread of the epistemically objective truth does not offer itself to be felt or sensed and passes largely unnoticed. It is, for the most part, unexperienced. It is not separate to, or overlaid upon, but plays out in action. The inscription of this epistemic imperialism is not simply given of practice, but rather the constitution of the individual actors' complicity with the logics of the dominant ideology—making it an ontological problem. As an ideology "leadership" only became viable once its logics were embedded and embodied in social actors, becoming unconscious and brining a sense of coherence to the world. To think with Weber (1946), there is a "belief in the everyday routine as an inviolable norm of conduct … (and as) piety for what actually, allegedly, or presumably has always existed" (p. 296). As an immediate given, "leadership" sustains its own status as an epistemically objective truth. This makes it possible to endlessly adapt to partial modification in the social world through the latest adjectival "leadership." Its desirability comes from its illusiveness, its rarity, its importance, all of which sustains the class-based structural arrangements of the contemporary capitalist condition. It provides a scaling up on the individual desire to matter and makes a difference by creating new units of analysis (e.g., national systems) within a global economy. A scaling up that crosses socio-geographic space. The proliferation of metrics of economic and social conditions makes it possible to compare against the self and others at different points of time. The representation, usually in tables and charts, across a range of different performance indicators enables the (post-event) identification of "leaders" linked to perceived empirical claims (which are really social constructions) and then the deconstruction of what those "leaders" did in the quest for "what works." Various technologies, namely digital devices, have facilitated the expansion and reach of "leadership" to global proportions and provided a language to serve as a touchstone between cultural spaces. As a perceived universal claim, "leadership" reinforces hierarchical structures while mobilizing the rhetoric of agency and socioeconomic freedoms. Much like the relationship with temporality, "leadership" is notable for its absence of any socio-geographic marker, yet its appeal of utility. The status, achieved as an epistemically objective truth and with a circular logic, enables the (self-serving) argument of "leadership" to overrule or circumvent local traditions as part of its imperialist expansion. It is beyond context. Traversing across territories without boundaries and if anything, constantly creating new spaces.

Beyond Critique

The critique of "leadership," in its various forms, is struggling to grapple with the temporality and dislocation from *socio-spatial conditions* of the discourse. While it is common to interrogate specific forms of "leadership," commonly adjectives, such analysis is frequently limited to constituting descriptors of the adjective rather than the ontological and epistemological foundations of "leadership" itself. Questions of contextualization and the need to ground "leadership" in time and space do not attend to the underlying question of whether "leadership" is appropriate, or even exists, in the space in the first place. If anything, questions around locating "leadership" in context facilitate its expansion and production of space. The trend for "leadership" to be beyond any single role, or actor, within an organization has fueled the production of new spaces such as teacher "leadership," student "leadership," and community "leadership." Middle management is now middle level "leadership." Apart from reinforcing organizational hierarchies—which seem lost on many researchers who actually claim to be arguing against such—it is possible to claim that "leadership" ideology negates critique by expanding into new spaces. The adjective serves to overcome the lack of work in locating "leadership" in time and space or masks the preexisting normative orientation of the researcher and how they believe "leadership" ought to be. Although it appears as though "leadership" is simply being overlaid or mapped onto new terrains, as the expansion and production of new spaces may suggest, it is actually evidence of the ontological and epistemological shift achieved through ideology. Due to the orthodoxy of the "leadership"-based worldview, few if any questions are raised about "leadership" and in doing so, complicity leads to increased reach. The world comes to be known through a "leadership" based lens. I contend that this is the result of "leadership" becoming empiricized.

As noted earlier, "leadership" rose to prominence during a period of social and economic uncertainty, offering a path to something better. Coinciding with the shift in rhetoric of corporate America, the School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) movement was gaining traction in educational administration. Filling an intellectual space between educational administration, public (later education) policy, and curriculum studies, SESI (often synonymous with school reform) provided a means of achieving higher levels of performance through "scientific" inquiry and "evidence." The default mode of inquiry was based on logical empiricism, with the inertia of systems thinking (and its entity-based ontology enabling demarcated variables to be identified) from the Theory Movement is attractive to policy makers, funding agencies, systemic authorities, and practitioners looking for "what works." Much like the science-into-service model in the health sciences, SESI brought credibility to claims through, at times, sophisticated mathematical equations and using the universal language of numbers, graphs, and tables for the purpose of comparison. At the same time, building—but very loosely—from Greenfield's critique of logical empiricism in educational administration, spawned a counter tradition of qualitative/interpretivist (usually small-scale) case

studies seeking to bring a more humanistic approach to knowledge production. Arguably in recognition of the unproductive nature of the quantitative and qualitative binary, and/or the potential of the third space, mixed methods, many contemporary SESI researchers, particularly those who pledge allegiance to educational administration (as opposed to curriculum studies or sociology of education) have re-labeled their work as "successful schooling" rather than "effective" and embraced a wider scope of methods. Despite the semantics of changing titles, the underlying generative logic of the work to produce evidence of what works based on a belief in concepts such as "leadership" remains the same.

Irrespective of the research tradition in which one locates, or aligns with, the widespread acceptance of "leadership" as an empirical project legitimizes it as the orthodoxy of educational administration. "Leadership" is no longer an ideal, it is an empirical object that could be studied, described, and measured. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstron (2004) widely cited claim that "leadership" is second to classroom teaching for school-based factors in the improvement of student outcomes solidifies the rise of "leadership" and establishes it as the dominant ideology of educational administration. As with any changing of ideology, the canonization of "leadership" comes with the demonization of previous labels such as management and administration. The ontological subjectivity is described away to the point that engagement with it could be dismissed entirely or at best carves out an existence at the periphery of the field.

Changes in department names and job titles further legitimize "leadership." Outside of North America—although this too is fast changing—there are very few, if any, Professor of Educational Administration positions advertised. Departments names are more likely to be "Leadership" and Policy studies, arguably reflecting the marriage (however forced) between improving institutional performance and key actors. Journals launched since the 1990s explicitly use "leadership", such as *International Journal of Leadership in Education* (est. 1998), *Leadership and Policy in Schools* (est. 2002), or rebranded themselves such as *School Organization* to *School Leadership and Management* (in 1997). While two of the foundational journals of the field, *Educational Administration Quarterly* (est. 1965) and *Journal of Educational Administration* (est. 1963), have remain as established, the UK-based journal has shifted from *Educational Administration* (est. 1972) to *Educational Management and Administration* (in 1982) and to the current, *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* (in 2004) to keep pace with the field. It is to be noted that the next eldest journal, *Journal of Educational Administration and History* (est. 1968) has not changed or added to its title. Long gone are the Centers for the Study of Educational Administration sponsored by the likes of the Kellogg Foundation having been replaced with Educational "Leadership" Centers. To use other labels, such as educational administration or the somewhat forgotten educational management, is to be out of touch with the field. This makes it difficult to get past editors, reviewers and make it into print. I myself have had to revise my language (e.g., replace educational administration with educational "leadership") as a condition of being published to ensure I reflect contemporary language and increasing marketability of the work. Despite all of

this, at a certain point in the analysis, the boundaries between educational "leadership," management and administration blur until all that is left is the preexisting normative orientation of the researcher. The failure to problematize the intellectual gaze, or to take serious the ontological and epistemological foundations of leadership in combination with the commonsense appeal of the label in the ordinary language of the everyday has created a situation where the epistemic label is beyond critique. As Hills (1965) notes, subscription to the beliefs in question is a condition of admission to and continuation of, membership, but the "individual who accepts the beliefs of his group is not a liar; he simply believes his own propaganda. … it is the exception rather than the rule when an individual questions the ideology of his associates" (p. 26).

Theorizing "Leadership"

Willower (1979) argues that ideologies fit the times. As a potential line of inquiry, locating ideologies in a sense of temporality and socio-spatial conditions has the potential to illuminate insights that exist in the blind spots of mainstream research. In their classic text *Educational administration and the social sciences*, Baron and Taylor (1969) note that educational administration was once the province of the history of education—a retelling of the past. This historicizing of educational administration has been lost in the contemporary shift to "leadership"—that which is more concerned with the forthcoming. Yet as Hills (1965) reminds us, each social situation we find ourselves in is defined for us not only by the groups to which we presently belong, but also our predecessors. More recently, Samier (2006) argues:

> Many administrative phenomena are really historical topics rather than strictly managerial problems. First, those involving forces external to organizations that influence decisions and actions, which are regarded simplistically as 'environmental factors' in systems theory, would be more fruitfully pursued as the study of administration under different, historical conditions, such as colonization and decolonization, social unrest, revolt, revolution and the introduction of new political and social values like equality and equity, all of which have had a significant influence on education systems. (pp. 131–132)

If "leadership" is a problem of organization as it origins stress, mindful of Lieberson and O'Connor's (1972) claim that "leaders" matter little to organizational performance, then a productive space for scholastic engagement centers on the conditions in which certain problems come to be conceived. To an extent, this is what Boltanski and Chiapello (2005[1999]) did in their analysis of management literature for *The new spirit of capitalism*. It is also consistent with the Marxist move of ideology and its ontological roots toward a deeper analysis of the very nature of thought and the contexts in which that thought took place. How then did "leadership" come to be front and center in the discourse of educational administration?

Drawing more from charisma (Weber) than the clipboard (Taylor), "leadership" sought to breakdown the social alienation of the bureaucratic division of labor in

organizations. The class-based nature of organizational labor that is central to administration and management I contend remains with "leadership." In a subtle move however and arguably a result of its temporal origins, "leadership" research has remarkably and surprisingly decoupled itself from the messiness of the social world, and replaced fuzziness with rationality. Perpetual improvement, consensus, and incremental adjustments in the pursuit of a desired future state are the principles of "leadership." These are encased in the charismatic "leader" who inspires others by displaying attributes such as a sense of morality that is desired by the masses and for which they will subjectify themselves. The contradiction of the alternate to bureaucratic structures re-establishing a social order is masked through a belief in the "leadership" based worldview. Imposing a particular ontology on observation means that knowledge claims hold true if the observer believes them to be true—confirmatory of the preexisting normative orientation. This is not about bias. If we subscribe, as most social scientists do, that all observations are bias (e.g., the absence of pure objectivity), then it is redundant. The stronger claim is that all observations are theory-laden, and this holds up while interrogating the expansion and proliferation of the dominant ideology. Searle's (1995) distinction between epistemic and ontological sense of subjectivity and objectivity makes it possible to demonstrate that claims of educational administration can be true in the sense of expressing epistemically objective facts while the domain of educational administration as a whole is ontologically subjective.

The study of "leadership" is however not a pointless endeavor. As English (2006) argues, "advancing a field means engaging in deep criticism of it, philosophically, logically, and empirically" (p. 468). My argument is that our focal point of analysis needs to change. The shift is from studying "leadership" as it plays out empirically to interrogating the conditions that make a concept like "leadership" desirable, or even possible, in the first place. Not a comparative exercise, but a shift to relations. "Leadership" is an historical event. It is beyond the senses and therefore unexperienced, constructed in the representation of the past and projected into the forthcoming. Establishing the realness of "leadership" and the implications of its ontological and epistemological foundations is a critical step in scholarship. The proliferation of "leadership" as an epistemological objective fact hides its ontological subjectivities. Sustained through the ontological complicity of the researcher the validity of "leadership" is infrequently called into question. Assumed links between "leadership" and organizational outcomes, which are central to the worldview, establishes a circular and self-sustaining logic that is difficult to refute. Belief in the utility of "leadership" across populations, settings, procedures, and times facilitates its empiricism. If "leadership" is real then it can be observed, verified, and serve as the proper basis for developing explanations of phenomena. The cause and effect of "leadership" sustains its circular logic.

To break from the expansion of "leadership" requires a disruption in its production of space. This is not a separation, as that assumes one can stand outside of the social world and manipulate pieces as one would on a board game. I am calling for serious scholastic attention to the rise and maintenance of "leadership" as the dominant ideology of educational administration. This requires careful attention to

the very construction of the label in the first place. What was it about the specific temporal and socio-geographic conditions that gave rise to "leadership"? How was "leadership" different to management and administration? This sensitivity to temporality and spatial conditions is not about destroying "leadership" but enhancing our understanding of the human condition. Whereas the rise of "leadership" has narrowed educational administration to the rhetoric of—and highly performative focus on—improvement, the embedding and embodying of temporality and socio-geographic conditions accepts the messiness of the social world through description rather than rationalizing for the purpose of intervention. This is not to say that such work is apolitical, as this is neither desirable nor possible. It is also not about contextualization, that which embodies an entity-based ontology and is more concerned with the influence of (external) contextual factors on practice than grounding practice in time and place. To ground "leadership" is to break down the perceived binaries of individual and holism, universalism and particularism, and structure and agency. No organization is entirely free to do as it pleases, yet neither is it constrained completely by others. The work of organizations is defined moment-to-moment in the relations that it holds with other social organizations. Similarly, no individual has absolute freedom or constraint. This is a challenging proposition for "leadership." To embrace the relational is to accept that no one person or institution has final decision-making authority. Instead, following Bourdieu (2005[2000]), much like a gravitational field, even the person perceived to have absolute power is him/herself held within the network of relations that constitute the social world. It is impossible to find the final decision maker or "leader." Does this call into question the very notion of "leadership"? For me, it does. It explicitly exposes the mythology from which "leadership" is built and opens scholastic avenues to interrogate the ideological position that has taken hold of educational administration as a field of practice and knowledge production.

Conclusion

Everhart (1991) contends that when a mythical schema—to which I include "leadership"—is connected to a specific interpretation of history (or the present), corresponding with a particular worldview, mythology transforms into ideology. Given the apparent failure on the part of educational administration scholarship to confront the specificity of "leadership," it is perhaps of little surprise that the theoretical resources of the discipline have not been put to use to engage with questions of its scholarly value. This is even less surprising if we consider that as a field of practice and knowledge production, "leadership" is constituted as a source of *new* methods of institutional performance and social transformation. However, "leadership" discourses are not composed only of functional tips for improving organizational outcomes, they have a highly normative tone stating what ought to be, not what is. But it is not entirely about the duping of social actors and particularly a specific class of organizational labor. "Leadership" rose during a period of

specific temporal and socio-geographic conditions. As a counter narrative to the dehumanizing and alienating effects of bureaucracy it gave the illusion of agency, both individually and collectively. Significantly, it has come to be a means of describing differences in performance and recasting historical events. What remains intriguing is that while robust social scientific inquiry can illuminate the construction of "leadership," it continues to expand and solidify its place of dominance in the field. Its representation of reality and historical revision has created an impression that it has always been not only present but important. Overlaying upon different historical periods has been combined with a concurrent projecting into the forthcoming as a means of securing success. This mapping and projecting has not been confined to socio-geographic bounds.

The mythology of "leadership," the agentic narrative concerning individuals or collectives making a difference at scale (however small, but larger than the self) has secured widespread appeal. There is little doubt that "leadership" has achieved reach into almost all aspects of the social world. When critiques are raised it is often aimed at an individual or group of people than it is at the very notion of "leadership." It has become one of the most influential labels of the contemporary world. Embodying its own rhetoric, the elasticity of "leadership" enables it to constantly morph to become whatever the classifier wants it to be. Herein lays my argument. "Leadership" is a product of human cognition. Its empirical enactment is dependent upon the normative orientation of the observer. It is therefore a methodological rather than empirical problem. If the rise of "leadership" has shown us anything, it is that ideology as an ontology shifting enterprise plays a key role in our ongoing understanding of the social world. Throughout this chapter, by mobilizing the *relational* approach I have exposed and sought to explain some important misconceptions about how the social construction of "leadership" relates to the possibility of making true statements about the world. Significantly, in asking questions of "leadership," I have provided an alternate program that gets beyond the circular logic of "leadership" and illuminates the importance of *spatio-temporal conditions*. The particular form of *relational* approach I am advancing seeks not to reduce all social relations to issues of power as many Marxist inspired accounts do, nor to strategies enacted to optimize individual or collective interest. Instead, I call for serious attention to the underlying generative principles of labels and the relations they share with the particular *spatio-temporal conditions* in which they are called upon.

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Chapter 6
The Matter of Context

Well-rehearsed arguments in educational administration stress that context matters. The degree of how much context (sometimes referred to as the environment or environmental factors) matters or more specifically the causal mechanism differs greatly. Lewin (1947), drawing on the application of systems theory, argued that behavior is a function of person and environment. The question of function and form, a linear causal relationship, has been an enduring question for organizational theory (e.g., Kornberger & Clegg, 2004). From a systems theory perspective, among others, context is reduced to a transactional variable and thereby derives its meaning, identity, and significance from the changing functional roles as a result of the transaction. Some 20 years after Lewin, Fiedler (1967) claimed that leadership effectiveness was the result of fit between leadership style (a stable/fixed entity) and context. Although this raised the importance of the relationship between individual and context, both remain separate entities, and the overlaid qualifier "effectiveness" is external to both. House (1971) added a sense of agency to the debate in arguing that leaders can alter their styles to fit situations leading to "contingency approaches" (a similar approach is taken up by Hersey's (1969) "life cycle theory of leadership" and then with Blanchard (1969) and their "situational approach"). Unlike the one-directional nature of transactional approaches, contingent/situational frames recognize reciprocity between context and practice. In more specific examples in contemporary educational administration dialogue and debate, effective school discourses are dominated by two major schools of thought: the (re)production (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977[1970]); and the compensatory (e.g., the "turnaround" principal/school). In the former, context acts in a deterministic way, and social institutions—namely schools—serve to reproduce the existing social stratification. In the latter, the role of schooling is to overcome social disadvantage, a social mobility agenda. Unlike the deterministic position that privileges social structures acting upon individuals and groups, the compensatory approach privileges (often individual) agency. These positions have implicitly played a role in shaping the dialogue and debate in educational administration.

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As argued in previous chapters, the uncritical acceptance of the ordinary language of the everyday in educational administration means that the underlying generative principles of claims are rarely brought into question. The commonsense appeal that context matters combined with the enduring traces of logical empiricism mean that context is often mobilized as a variable. As Liden and Antonakis (2009) contend, context is measurable, "must be modeled when attempting to explain a particular aspect of the leadership puzzle" (p. 1587), and is to be examined for the way it "influences the variability that may emerge in the constructs under study or by assessing how context can moderate relations between variables" (p. 1588). In doing so, its construction is built upon an artificial partitioning of the social, a scientific exercise in reduction that serves the classifier's purposes more so than reflects any form of reality. The preexisting normative assumptions of the researcher are brought into the social world in such a way that any subsequent research simply confirms the a priori assumptions of the researcher. When thinking about the role of the context in organizing activity, what becomes of significance are the underlying generative principles.

In this chapter, I offer an alternate means of theorizing the relations between contexts and organizing. The additional thinking that has gone into my position on contexts was very much sparked by Oplatka's (2016) response to *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015)—which is included later in this book (Chap. 12). His challenge forced me to explore the underlying principles of context and the implications for theorizing and methodologies in educational administration (and beyond). Having engaged in this further thought and wider inquiry, rather than conceiving of context and organizing activity as, shaped by and shaping of one another, I now advance the claim that organizing is context. In building this argument, I pay attention to the underlying causal logic of context and practice using this analysis to breakdown the orthodox position of layered (e.g., as per Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model) contexts.

Context as Causal

The uncritical acceptance of the importance of context in educational administration literatures means that the very idea of context is rarely challenged or interrogated for its underlying generative principles. To do so, and as the basis for my claims, I seek to highlight the causal logics of various positions on the relations between context and practice. This is important as the underlying causal logics of scholarship, whether theoretical/conceptual or empirical, are the basis of arguments. Even when not made explicit, causality is implied and therefore a constant in the ways in which organizing is conceptualized.

A common approach, although infrequent position in educational administration literatures, is the dependent logic. This approach is core to structuralist accounts of practice where form follows function (e.g., Parsons). There is a greater focus on structure than meaning, granting ontological status to the socially constructed

entities that constitute context. Furthermore, context becomes a social a priori constitutive of organizing activity. Without context, organizing would not be possible. It can be described as:

(1) Context (social structures) → practice

In this instance, sometimes referred to as a deterministic logic (Dépelteau, 2013), practice is dependent upon—or determined by—social structures. As noted previously, form follows function. To bring this into conversation with educational administration, and particularly the effective school literatures, this logic is central to claims of schooling as reproduction (e.g., the common appropriation of Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990[1970]). Bureaucratic accounts that stress the downward linearity of policy and constraints of environmental factors are aligned with this logic. As an approach, it is not particularly common in educational administration literatures (much more common in sociology of education and/or education policy literatures) as to align with this position would require recognition that there are significant limitations on what can be done. In other words, the explanatory value of school leadership (and schooling for that matter) is insignificant when compared to external social structures. This is one major critique that is raised against Hattie's (2009) work and his explicit overlooking of the role of context in the improvement of learning outcomes.

The counterclaim to the dependent logic is, not surprisingly, the independent. In this case, unlike the foregrounding of social structures in the dependent, there is a privileging of the agency of the actor (both individual and collective). Practice, conceived as synonymous with agency, is granted a freedom from social structures. This directly overcomes claims that structuralist accounts, especially those of the social deterministic kind, overlook the agency of actors to influence the world around them. To express it differently:

(2) Practice (agency) → context (social structures)

Not surprisingly, the literatures of educational administration are littered with accounts of the ability—often heroic—of great leaders (usually men) to overcome social structures and "turnaround" schools (e.g., Day & Gurr, 2014; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008). In this agentic logic, the strong leader, usually an individual, is not confined by his/her context and through the exercising of agency facilitates performance that is beyond expectations (for that context). This causal logic is foundational in notions of management and the manipulation—not necessarily a negative—of environments and populations. After all, the pursuit of a controllable and predictable outcome (some might say, future) is a driving force for organizational studies (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004).

An alternate approach to the dependent and independent logics plays off both, arguing that practice is both dependent and independent at the same time, a recursive position where practice is produced by and also producing of itself (Drew & Heritage, 1992). In *Educational leadership relationally*, this was the position I held, and it can be expressed as:

(3) Practice (agency) ↔ context (social structures)

However, while the double-headed arrow begins to conflate practice and context, it does not overcome the original separation of the two. Conflationism is therefore not a solution to the theoretical (e.g., ontological) problem of substantialism. In a similar case, Dépelteau (2013) identifies a hybrid form of this conflation that remains based on analytical dualisms. It can be expressed as:

(4) Context (social structures) → (+/−) practice (agency) → transformed or reproduced

Both (3) and (4) move beyond the opposing ends of a structure-agency continuum, yet continue to construct practice and social structures as separate "entities" or to think with Durkheim (1982[1895]), "social facts." While (3) recognizes reciprocity, in (4), both context and practice become moderators. The relations, or really relationships, in these substantialist causal logics are conceived of as what White (1992) labels "measurement constructs." This conceptualization enables the mapping of ties and chains of interactions between individuals and/or institutions that can be codified and visually portrayed. The relations between the constructs (e.g., practice, social structures) are thought of in such a way that they can be conceived of and then measured for direction and strength. This conceptualization of relationships is consistent with the statistical analysis of various relational/social network analyses (e.g., Daly, 2010; Liou et al., 2015) and the structured equation modeling frequently found in the school effectiveness and school improvement literatures (e.g., Chapman et al., 2016; Creemers et al., 2010).

Irrespective of the above causal logic mobilized, contemporary thought and analysis in educational administration relies on a separation of context and practice. As noted previously, this is not overly surprising given that the genesis of organizational theory is arguably built upon the construction of entities (e.g., the organization). Popular forms of causality, in organizational sciences and beyond, rely on (stable) entities/social facts. The logic of if X then Y, if not X then not Y (see Gergen, 2010), needs to be rethought in a relational approach. The increasing critique of arguments that essentialize "organizing" as an entity (or attribute) in person/s or situations (e.g., Crevani, forthcoming) calls for something of a rethink of causality, organizing, and relations. This is not to endorse the abandonment of causality, rather a re-orientation beyond causal determinism. Taking context to be the ongoing configuration of temporal and spatial conditions provides the basis for an alternate conceptualization of context and causality. The enacted nature of organizing as a relational construct shifts attention to the unfolding description of practice and greater theorizing of *spatio-temporal conditions*—relating activities to one another rather than necessarily applying a linear cause and effect set of claims. Relations become causal rather than effects.

Before going on to explain what I mean by the temporal and spatial conditions of organizing, there is the need to address a relational entity matter that plagues contemporary dialogue and debate in educational administration, leadership, and policy. To achieve a *relational* understanding, there is a need to go beyond the

artificial partitioning of the social world and the construction of external knowable entities. Arguably finding roots in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) layered ecological model and taken up with greater frequency with the expansion of globalization, educational administration studies often discuss context in a layered form. The local, national (or regional), and international are common in a (at least) three-tier layering of contexts. There are of course many versions of the layers, what I am highlighting is the very conceptualizing of contexts as layered. The partitioning of levels, the hierarchies of scale, and the relationships between layers are only possibly with entities. While consistent with classic organizational theory in educational administration that build upon entities (e.g., the school, context), and the stratification of organizational actors (e.g., bureaucratic accounts of organizational roles), a layered approach is inconsistent—and incoherent—with a *relational* approach. A shift to relations is therefore not just epistemological, but ontological (a message that I have sought to stress across a number of chapters).

More Than Layers

Fairhurst (2009) contends that social constructionist—to which many relationalists are linked—approaches to organizing view context as multilayered, co-created, contestable, and locally achieved. As noted previously, the multilayered modeling of the social world is very much based on a Bronfenbrenner-inspired macro-, meso-, microlayering, with each layer reflecting a scale of practice from the local to the global (or particular through to universal). Fairhurst's claim is very much grounded in such a conceptualization, evidenced in her reference to "multilayered" and "locally achieved." In educational administration, there have been some attempts to overcome this layering, such as the rather awkward "glocal" perspective (e.g., Brooks & Normore, 2010), but as with my argument earlier, this does not alter the distinctions, merely conflates them. The layered conceptualization relies on a form of scalable infrastructure, or external social structures. It is very much grounded in a classical sociology with roots in the nation-state. The means of thinking through a more globalized world, or the liquid society of late modernity (Bauman, 2000), that is contemporary life is problematic and beyond a transactional model of exchanges between entities. As a means of overcoming this theoretical problem, I am going to bring a number of relational sociologists into conversation as a basis for claims to a flat ontology and my organizing as context argument.

Prandini (2015), in discussing pragmatic approaches to relational sociology (e.g., Dépelteau), notes, "… it is not necessary to use distinctions between macro, meso, or micro levels of analysis, because the social universe is 'flat'" (p. 6). A key thinker in thinking through this distinction, although often pitted against Dépelteau, is Pierpaolo Donati. He argues that relations cannot fade away substances (Donati, 2015), but makes the substantive argument that society does not have relations rather society is relations (Donati, 2011). Taking this argument seriously, context cannot be reduced to transactions or exchanges between layers. For Donati, what is

required is a shift in the unit of analysis/focus of inquiry, a move away from substances to relations. After all, if relations are the very stuff that we call the social, then they should be the central focus of the social sciences.

Using relations to go beyond social structures such as a layered approach to contexts re-orientates notions of time and place. In particular, it requires a shift from time and place to *spatio-temporal conditions*. From a relational standpoint, the construction of time and place as though they are separate, even if interdependent, is inconsistent at best, and arguably incoherent. This has significant conceptual implications for both time and place. From a time perspective, the substantialist notion of clock time, where time is overlaid on practice and broken down into units of the clock, is no longer particularly helpful. There is a need to shift from clock time to an event-based notion of temporality (e.g., Adkins, 2009; Duncheon & Tierney, 2013). The mapping of practice with time that enables comparison across space (e.g., inter-/national testing regimes) is rethought in a generative sense. Instead of practice having time, practice makes time (Adkins, 2011). Causality takes on a different approach. Rather than questions of why things are happening, and a linear causal pathway, focus shifts to associating actions with other actions and from a scholarly perspective, the need for increasingly elaborate descriptions (Savage, 2009). This also moves scholarship beyond essentialist arguments. As Crossley (2015) argues, matters such as gender, ethnicity, occupational class, income are conceptualized as positions in the social rather than individual attributes. As positions, rather than attributes, the associating of action means paying attention to the distance and distinctions between actions and *auctors* inscribing them in *spatio-temporal conditions* and avoiding the errors of essentialism, substantialism, and/or reductionism.

A layered approach to understanding context relies too heavily on stability of borders and the interactions with social (super) structures to meaningfully engage with relations. Although this is not to denounce the possibility of scale, any approach that assumes a coherent whole (e.g., the organization, the nation-state) yet relies on the atomistic division of individuals within is problematic. It is impossible to understand the whole without the individual and vice versa. The point of distinction between the local and the global is not definitive. Any separation is based on a decision by the observer. For the purpose of building an argument, usually for publication in a book or a journal article but also for conference presentations, it is still possible to demarcate a focus. This does not negate the possibility of a flat ontology. The argument has a theoretical edge, one that cannot be solely limited to a particular time and place. The stability and equivalence required to hold a layered view of the social world simply cannot be defended. Relations open new avenues and new theoretical possibilities for thinking through practice. This is not to say that they have not been present in scholarship for some time (e.g., most notably in the work on gender in educational administration), but they have yet to achieve mainstream status in educational administration or been coherently articulated in such a way to engage the field at large. In making the shift to a *relational* approach,

attention moves from place (the inscription of the local) and time (the external overlaying of clock time) to *spatio-temporal conditions*—a conceptualization that is beyond layers. The possibility of "on" or "in" context is replaced with organizing as context.

Organizing as Context

Asserting that organizing is constituted in and through relational activity is not controversial (Crevani, forthcoming). Practice as generative of *spatio-temporal conditions* while also emergent from them does, however, challenge the orthodoxy of educational administration literatures. Recasting context as *spatio-temporal conditions* and part of, rather than separate to, *organizing activity* has clear implications for theorizing. The overlaying of an external frame (e.g., time) is neither desirable nor particularly useful. Instead, what I offer here are the intellectual resources to understand organizing in new terms. In doing so, many of the normative assumptions regarding the organizing of educational activity are unsettled. Most notably, these concern the unfolding of activity (temporality) and socio-material configurations (space) that constitute *organizing activity*.

Temporality

Modernity privileges a particular version of the temporal. The dominant ideology of Western thought, achieved through an appeal to the rational individual, universalism, and standardization, is based on the clock. It is therefore not surprising that schooling as a major social institution of modernity is a temporal activity. As I have argued previously:

> What we have come to know as the school and the administration of schooling is constituted through the operationalization and privileging of clock time. The temporal rules of schooling construct the school day, terms, semesters, the school year, class schedules and the notion of progression based on time (Eacott, 2013, p. 96).

To think of *organizing activity* in such a way is to mobilize a version of temporality that is a measure external to events and reversible to units of the clock (Adkins, 2009). As Bourdieu (2000[1997]) argues, legitimized through the ordinary language of the everyday, time is constituted as a "thing"—an entity—that one has, gains, or wastes. The possibility of time being anything other than the clock is beyond everyday comprehension due to our complicity with the orthodoxy. Clock time has come to occupy all aspects of daily life and is central to our understanding of institutions and labor. Marxist social theory, critical theory in educational administration (e.g., Bates, 1983; Foster, 1986), and to a lesser extent Weberian theorizing (e.g., Weber, 1978[1922]) argue that the clock is an instrument of control

through the regulation of labor. Taylor's (1911) germinal work, *The principles of scientific management,* was based on the efficient use of (clock) time, and with the centrality of his approach in the early development of educational administration programs (Callahan, 1962; Tyack & Hansot, 1982), traces remain in existing theorizations (Kanigel, 1997).

As the orthodox version of temporality, when combined with contemporary moves for reproducible and scalable research providing "what works" for policy makers, systemic authorities, and practitioners (Camburn et al., 2016; Donmoyer & Galloway, 2010), it is not surprising that an apparently objective, external, and knowable construction of temporality—clock time—is the dominant position.

For educational administration, the experience and utilization of time has been of enduring importance. The concern with temporal aspects of schooling (Daniels & Haller, 1981) is based on the perception of time as a resource and lever for improving performance (Yair, 2000). In the contemporary marketplace that is education, the value of the institution, and individuals within it, is based on their effective and efficient usage of time. However, to conceive of time as an external measure leads to analysis primarily concerned with return on investment or at the least, a conflated correlation-based causal claim concerning activity and outcome. As with Taylorism, efficiency becomes of primary importance. Mobilized as a measurement construct, the unit of measure (partitions of the clock) becomes of greater significance than the object it is being mobilized to measure. Theoretically, there is a focus on structure rather than meaning. The structuring of this line of inquiry focuses on the "passing of time," granting ontological status to a social construction as though it is an external and knowable entity/substance. Time becomes a social a priori constitutive of the organizing of society. In short, educational administration would not be possible without this external time. Administration in all forms finds its origins in the pursuit of social order with substantial control exercised over the use of this "time." This underlying generative principle brings a form of rationalism to research and conceives of time as an unquestioned foundation of the social.

Given the absence of scholarly debate around notions of temporality in educational administration, it is of little surprise that the theoretical resources of the broader social sciences have not been put to use to engage with matters of *organizing activity*. This is even less surprising if we consider that our current time problems in educational administration are widely understood to concern a crisis of not having enough (clock) time. In an era of clock time-based accountabilities and reporting, it might be useful to ask of what value are alternate perspectives of temporality, but this is the very question of importance. In failing to move beyond the measure of time based on the clock, or at least being open to alternatives, it is impossible to generate any disruption to the existing social order.

To this end, in advancing my argument that organizing is context it is the contention of this section to rethink spatio-temporal relations. After all, you cannot find "the school." It is a fiction. Instead, what you find are events, held together

through *organizing activity*. For the most part, they may transpire in a specific physical location, but this does not give rise to "the school," as the coming together of *auctors*, both human and non-human, make the events possible. The existence of the material building is not sufficient to make the school as that would require a singular version of what is, and can be, the school forever more. Temporality is integral to our understanding of organizing. It is not separate to but deeply interwoven and constitutive of *organizing activity*.

Recent concerns over school performance in Australia (e.g., Masters, 2016), but also elsewhere, reflect a crisis caused through the overlaying of an external narrative of time on the social. Note the way in which temporal language frames the argument of the previous sentence. The perceived decline in student outcomes, primarily in large-scale national and international testing regimes, can be rethought as a crisis in theorizing temporality. The concerns regarding decline, even if such declines are relative to others—rankings—rather than slips in performance, are centered on rates of production. With strong traces of Taylorism, administrative focus is concentrated on outputs (e.g., student outcomes) and the maximization of labor (e.g., teaching). The data generated is used as the basis for comparison—frequently, but not always, beyond the organization. The mobilization of a theory of temporality, in this case clock time, remains external to activity. It is simply a measurement construct overlaid for the purpose of comparison. Presenting as a form of objective/scientific account of the world, as a separate entity or social fact, to theorize temporality through the units of the clock is to reify practice and remove it from context. In other words, to rely on a conceptualization of temporality that is limited to clock time leads to a decontextualized account of organizing activity. The performance is constructed as the variable, and time passed as the constant.

There has been increased scholarly attention to time, or a temporal turn, in the social sciences, evidenced in sociology (Adkins, 2009, 2011), human services (Colley, Henriksson, Niemeyer, & Seddon, 2012), education (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013; Lingard & Thompson, 2017), teacher education (Eacott & Hodges, 2014), and educational administration (Eacott, 2013). While external measures sufficed in modernistic accounts of organizing, they have little traction from a relational perspective. For the relational theorist, temporality is not something separate to activity but unfolds with it. This is not a new argument, having featured prominently in geography (e.g., Massey, 2005) feminist sociology (e.g., Adkins, 2009), and among others. The geographer Massey (2005) mobilizes a relational view of space—with embedded temporality—to move beyond a position of it "already there" to one of always "under construction." Her work has been used in a number of organizational studies (e.g., Cervani, forthcoming; Beyes & Steyaert, 2011; Vásquez & Cooren, 2013). Rather than as a synonym for material place, for Massey, space (and time) is a dimension that is enacted in socio-material relations (see also Vásquez & Cooren, 2013). Significantly, in relation to temporality, Massey (2005) introduces the concept of trajectory, or story-so-far, to express the process of change in a phenomenon. In addition to historizing activity, this ensures that space and time are

both embedded and embodied in activity. Similarly, the work of sociologist Lisa Adkins opens avenues for alternate concepts of temporality. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Adkins, 2009, 2011), and more recently Luc Boltanski (Adkins, 2014), Adkins argues that the intellectual usefulness of an external account of time has reached its limits. The indeterminacy and openness of the contemporary world cannot be captured in a modernist notion of temporality. Instead, as with broader attempts of renewal in the social sciences, shifts in understanding of temporality are demanding that scholars address questions of change and time in new ways.

Consistent across both Massey and Adkins, among other social theorists, is that temporality unfolds with practice. This is a significant theoretical challenge for educational administration. The inertia of systems thinking has long constructed context as an interchangeable variable for understanding organizations and organizing. Matters of time have been a baseline from which to measure and compare performance.

Massey's (2005) stories so far, while giving an appearance of organizational relativism, are far from it. Incomplete, or arguably more accurately, enduring stories, which can be inferred from the notion of stories so far, acknowledge that present-day actions are historical artifacts. They are the combination of our past (collectively and individually) coming together with the present—that which is the anticipation of the forthcoming. As Massey notes, these trajectories generate time and space. An important consideration here is the potential usefulness of the notion of "the future" or even "futures." If practice is the product of histories engaging with contemporary *spatio-temporal conditions*, what then becomes of the explanatory value of the forthcoming?

Educational administration literatures have a fixation with the future. Despite origins as a historical field (Baron & Taylor, 1969) and calls for it to become an historical discipline (Samier, 2006), educational administration has remained committed to the rationalist pursuit of improving performance through incremental steps (e.g., interventions/manipulations) toward a desired utopia. In doing so, the future is conceived as a desirable, yet separate event. It is to be carefully planned for, and prudent action in the here and now is required to achieve desired outcomes. This conceptualization has a generative developmental logic, or more specifically, a logic of perpetual improvement, one embodying traces of Taylorism. In addition, this logic is constitutive of a competitive marketplace and leading to a form of social Darwinism—something that business schools have welcomed and embraced, and the contemporary entrepreneurial turn of innovation and disruption relies upon.

What these approaches rely upon is the notion that time is a thing that one has and can use or waste. Orthodox approaches to understanding organizing activity mobilize time as a commodity. Relational theorizing challenges this. Time does not act upon organizing, as per deterministic accounts, nor is it co-constructed, as per conflationist accounts, rather organizing is temporal as much as the temporal is organizing. There is no separation of organizing and temporality giving rise to a defensible focus on the relational organizing events.

Space

Planning controllable and predictable development is a driving force in organizational studies (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004) and space plays a central role. Founding figures of modern management, such as Taylor and Henry Ford, re-arranged space with the intent of raising productivity. The significance of space for organizational theorizing has been enduring, so too in broader social theory. Foucault's (1977 [1975]) articulation of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon demonstrates how power is inscribed in spatial organization rather than beyond it. That said, although the recognition of space as socially constructed is quite widespread (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004), it is usually mobilized as a metaphor or heuristic tool than as a practice or theoretical framing (Vásquez & Cooren, 2013). As a particular kind of organizational theory, educational administration has an unproblematic use of space. Despite the presence of critical social theory (to which, for illustrative purposes, I am including postmodernism/post-structuralism), such as those drawing upon Foucault and other social theorists, not to mention the extensive feminist critique of educational administration (e.g., Blackmore, 2013), space has remained underdeveloped in orthodox educational administration literatures.

Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is an active force noting that social relations "have no real existence save in and through space. *Their underpinning is spatial*" (p. 404, emphasis in original). Rather than conceiving of space as a particular location that practice takes place on, I argue for the need to think of space (as with temporality) as produced through *organizing activity*. If we return to Max Weber's (1978[1922]) original description of the bureaucracy, he articulates the role of administration (albeit from a structural position) on the production of space and in a particular case, "historical empire formations" (p. 969). In other words, *organizing activity* is generative of space. The theoretical move here is from thinking of space as a thing (e.g., a particular socio-material object) to thinking relationally. It is not to conflate organizing with the production of space, but to conceive of relations as foundational. Space becomes emergent from and constitutive of *organizing activity*. This does not deny the presence of socio-materiality and the varied sources of presence generated through physical materials (e.g., buildings, rooms) and less obvious structural materials and legitimizing authority through forms and applications. Claims regarding the proliferation of bureaucracies focus on the expansion of structures without due attention to their genesis. In doing so, primacy is granted to the discursive mechanisms through which activity is ordered and (re)produced. Although moving the discussion beyond a particular site, space is reduced to the scope and scale of structures. In doing so, organizing continues to be understood in terms of ordinary, repeated, and not necessarily intentional, spatio-temporal terms. What remains problematic is that orthodox ways of understanding do not have the intellectual resources to engage with the spatio-temporal. The result is that educational administration literatures remain constrained by the rules of structural arrangements—even those of absolute agency—rather than the strategies of their genesis.

The epistemic imperialism referred to in the previous chapter is an example. Contemporary organizing activity is "deterritorialized" (Carney, 2008) yet as with European and American capitalism has a tendency toward expansionism and the production of space (Harvey, 2005). To think relationally here, *organizing activity* is generated by *auctors* but the expansion of this activity is not necessarily dependent upon those original *auctors*. Globalization has brought the need for such theoretical resources to the fore. Our complicity with (capitalist) expansion, its inevitability, and the logic of scaled significance and local relevance has shifted understandings of space. The specific site of *organizing activity* is important, but more important is the abstract systems of distance between *auctors*, in other words, relations.

Current moves to studying the virtual networks of educators, such as Chou's (2016) recent work on Twitter-based professional learning communities, have arguably identified the problem of orthodox spatial representations in educational administration literatures. However, these are far from unproblematic in recasting our understanding of *organizing activity*. Complicity with orthodox conceptions of space means even when novelty is brought to research in content (e.g., Twitter) or method (e.g., social network analysis), the underlying generative assumptions remain intact.

The intellectual resources required to rethink the *spatio-temporal conditions* of *organizing activity* arguably do not lie with educational administration literatures. They do not lie in structural accounts of administration and organizations and their expansion in a globalized capitalist society. Nor do they lie in the agentic accounts of innovation and disruptions in production (e.g., turnaround) where individuals can overcome spatial markers (e.g., socioeconomic status) as though they exist outside of them. Instead, I argue that organizing is generative of space (as with temporality). A focus on space as an external entity overlooks the genesis of its production. Any sense of separation and interaction between organizing and space sustains a separation. However, as Massey (2004) states, "space is not static and time is not spaceless" (p. 264). My argument is that *organizing activity* is generative of *spatio-temporal conditions* (hence the value of *auctor* as a theoretical resource) rather than taking place in time and on space. Intellectual attention must therefore be directed as relations as opposed to relationships and the generative nature of organizing than the static, or even dynamic, work of organizations.

Conclusion

Calls to contextualize practices are not new (Denis et al., 2010), but what it means to do so have rarely been articulated. Arguments stressing the need to bring back space in organizational theory (e.g., Kornberger & Clegg, 2004) go part of the way, but are often decoupled from temporality, and vice versa (e.g., Duncheon &

Tierney, 2013). Core to my claim that organizing is context is recognition that relations are the focus of analysis and a framework (theory) for inquiry. In doing so, I move beyond the attribution of causation in contexts (as per structural/determinist accounts) and the conflation of context with time and place (e.g., Kemmis et al., 2014). Instead, I have sought to advance an argument built upon the relations of temporality and space where *auctors* generate *spatio-temporal conditions* rather than interact with, context. Relations are ontological and not merely an attribute of the social (the latter being a strict empiricist position). To that end, relations are not, as Aristotle would have it, subordinate to substances. Substance is, at best, co-primal with relations, but quite possibly, subservant.

The spatial and temporal dynamics of organizational life are much neglected (Fahy, Easterby-Smith, & Lervik, 2014). Although appearing in broader organizational study literatures (e.g., Endrissat & von Arx, 2013; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Samra-Fredericks, 2003), notions of temporality and space remain underdeveloped in educational administration literatures. The intervention of this chapter is not about mapping the social with a new lexicon and instead focused on understanding *organizing activity* in new terms. These new terms not only allow for an unsettling of many of the normative assumptions regarding time and space, but they also allow for questioning the causality and generation of organizing. Beyond substances, entities, and a variable view of contexts, a *relational* approach grounds explanations in *spatio-temporal conditions* without assuming their existence a priori and/or bringing them into being post hoc. Such a position is challenging for the interventionalist mind-set of the impact agenda and the policy makers/systemic authorities seeking to "change" organizations. This is not to denounce the possibility of generalizable claims, or at least claims that travel across boundaries—namely geographic. However, to generate the possibility of traveling claims requires attention to the ontological and epistemological preliminaries of scholarship and privileging the theoretical over the empirical question. The theoretical question travels while the empirical is constrained by particularism.

The argument of this chapter treads a fine line. Without a doubt, my goal has been to generate a theoretical position that is distinct from the orthodoxy of contemporary organizational theory in educational administration. But in doing so, I am mindful of the establishment of analytical dualisms, and the rather unhelpful divisions that they create. My argument is not an either/or as such a claim assumes playing the same game but differently. What I am proposing is not playing the same game, but challenging the very foundations of the game itself. What I have put forward is a viable alternative to existing ways of theorizing *organizing activity* in education (although its reach is not limited to educational organizations). Moving beyond binaries is important in advancing the *relational* program. As with reducing, or negating the perceived distance between activity, time, and space, binaries such as structure and agency, universalism and particularism, individualism and holism have plagued educational administration. Recasting organizing activity in *spatio-temporal conditions* through *relational* theorizing generates the necessary intellectual resources to negate analytical dualisms.

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Chapter 7
Overcoming Analytical Dualism

Well-rehearsed arguments stress that relational approaches emerged as an alternative to substantialist approaches. In doing so, the relational is established as the opposite of, or an analytical dualism with, substantialism. However, given the lengthy history of relational accounts (e.g., Emirbayer, 1997), they are less of a counternarrative and more an alternative. That is, while increased attention may have come from those displaying a dissatisfaction with substantialist accounts, this is not their genesis. Rather, they are a distinct set of approaches, not polar opposite to, but distinct from. My preference here is to stress distinction instead of alternative in order to go beyond the construction of an analytical dualism. This is not to say that to some extent I have contributed to this dualism throughout this text by staking claims of the relational being different to substantialism, but distinctions are real—both empirical and epistemic—without being final, stable, and forevermore. Distinctions exist without needing to construct an "other" that is exclusive, essentialized, and binary. From a knowledge production standpoint, adopting a relational approach enables you to demonstrate the distinctions that such a lens affords for understanding the social without necessarily destroying or negating the substantialist worldview (even if showing some limitations). Understanding the relations between the approaches becomes of greatest importance. Not surprisingly, relational approaches privilege relations.

Although I would argue that the logic of academic work—argument and refutation—is not orthodoxy in educational administration scholarship (a matter I return to in the following chapter), there is a particular by-product of this mutation of logic. With a preference for parallel monologues (Eacott, 2017), educational administration research frequently reproduces analytical dualism in its knowledge claims. Building arguments on simplistic representations of the social world, with minimal if any attention to alternatives, leads to binary thinking which does little to advance knowledge. In this chapter, I pick up on common (even if implicit) analytical dualism mobilized in educational administration research (structure/agency, universalism/particularism, and individualism/holism) and demonstrate how the key terms of the *relational* program (*auctor, organizing activity,* and *spatio-temporal*

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
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conditions) overcome them. Significantly, I stress that these terms overcome the dualism rather than simply replace them with a novel vocabulary.

My stylistic choice in this chapter—and throughout the book—is to italicize the key vocabulary of the *relational* program (e.g., *auctor, organizing activity*, and *spatio-temporal conditions*). This is deliberate and to remind the reader, even if only subconsciously, that there is a sophisticated social theory behind these terms, and they are not to be confused with novel vocabulary or the fancy (and often made up) words used to create some consultancy niche. Moving from organization (the structural) or leading (the agentic) to *organizing activity* creates the possibility of engaging with fluidity and the constant flux of the social without granting too much explanatory value to structures or agency. It is both ontological and explanatory. Attempts at understanding this activity, even partially, requires more than just mapping it or overlaying it on an external space and time. Instead what is required is locating the activity in *spatio-temporal conditions*. These terms are not just semantics. Orthodox notions of time and space construct a distance between activity and conditions, frequently privileging measurement over the relations, including historical, that are of significance in attempts to understand activity. In breaking down any constructed distance, traditional conceptions of actors, agents, and the like no-longer capture the generative role played in ongoing activity. To that end, *auctor* (he/she who generates) provides the underlying generative assumptions to recast the generation of activity. Explicitly building from the arguments in previous chapters, the substantive claim of this chapter is that in shifting the focus of inquiry (and at a more foundational level, ontologically and explanatory) through key *relational* terms provides the necessary intellectual resources to overcome enduring analytical dualisms by denying their existence in the first place.

Structure and Agency

As flagged in Chap. 1, it is not surprising that educational administration research has often relied upon structural assumptions. The very label of educational administration mobilizes a series of assumptions regarding the overarching coordination of activity (e.g., education) by a select class (e.g., administrators). This coordination can take many forms, but demonstrates a particular desire to put structures in place to support, maintain, and arguably reproduce the status quo. These structural accounts have an inbuilt hierarchy, one where positions or titles are used to locate a role within the structure. Most notably in educational administration are those within the school such as principal, heads of department, teachers, students, and external to the school building such as superintendent. In articulating the characteristics of a bureaucracy, Weber (1978[1922]) notes, the principles of office hierarchy and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of super- and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones. The rank, or class, of an individual grants them a particular level of authority from which they can act—mobilizing a sense of determinism in structural

arrangements and arguably limiting the possibility of dramatic shifts in the status quo. Taylor's (1911) work is consistent with and arguably built upon this notion of supervision and classes within an organization. The initial establishment of educational administration enhanced these ideas through a foundation on the strict separation of administrative theory from educational concerns and a focus on the mechanics of school organization (Bates, 2010). Taking up Talcott Parsons' theoretical grounding in the "form follows function" axiom, structural accounts frequently default to a form of functionalism, where research becomes concerned with how well organizational members perform their function and its contribution to organizational effectiveness. With hierarchical assumptions, certain classes within the organization are granted greater explanatory value. These underlying generative assumptions are significant as they are legitimized through the a priori categories of research and confirmed through analysis. It is why, despite a sustained critique of "leadership" (see Chap. 5), its explanatory value goes relatively unchecked in the orthodox literatures of educational administration.

Structural accounts also remain evident in some elementary social critical scholarship. I am aware of the judgment here regarding elementary research and will seek to explain what I mean. For some seeking to mobilize critical theory (I use the lower case here, but it equally applies to some attempting to use capital C), administration is a technology of control. Administration is proxy for social structural constraints placed on individuals, shaping the possibilities of actions and opportunities. The larger critical project of emancipation is frequently lost in these accounts. What remains is a somewhat negative portrayal of restrictive systems and structures that limit the possibility of hope while at the same time the pursuit of a utopian version of schooling and society. It is however to be noted that the Frankfurt School and more specifically pioneers of critical theory in educational administration such as Bates (1983) and Foster (1986) are infrequently called upon in contemporary scholarship. In contrast, French thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault are increasingly being called upon (e.g., Gillies, 2013; Niesche, 2011; Thomson, 2017). The additional attention, as with the C/critical, does not necessarily break with structuralism. Bourdieu's theoretical core of field, capital, and habitus is frequently called upon to demonstrate how educational administrators are conditioned into particular ways of thinking, doing, and relating. Working from Foucault, among others, notions of governmentality, performativity, and subjectivities are used to argue for the various apparatus through which managerialist discourses shape educational administrators. Both Bourdieu and Foucault offer more than just critique and instead provide the intellectual resources to illuminate problems and possibilities in the social. The social critical work, both the elementary kind and the more developed (e.g., the work of Jill Blackmore, Fenwick English, Helen Gunter, Richard Niesche, Pat Thomson, Jane Wilkinson), remains on the periphery of educational administration (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013).

Counter to structural accounts are those stressing the informal organization (although they arguably simply mobilize a different structure rather than overcome structural assumptions) and/or the agency of individuals and collectives. Rather than default to position (although this is contested) or titles, agentic approaches

stress the possibilities of actions through enactment. You can achieve anything if you set your mind to it sits underlying many agentic claims. There are many approaches within this agentic agenda. It is however best captured in the "turn-around" leadership stream of the school effectiveness and school improvement tradition. This class of leader—which incidentally reinforces the heroic individual narrative and replacing one social structure with another—is capable of overcoming structural determinants and produces outcomes above those that would be expected for that location (granting increased importance to measurement and comparison). Apart from granting substantive causal power to the actions of individuals, central to knowledge claims is the agency that individuals (and collectives) have in their choice of action. By privileging agency and in doing so reducing the explanatory value of structure, agentic approaches infrequently, if ever, engage with the conditions in which such agency is possible instead assuming a universal possibility of action. This is what enables Dinham (2005, 2007) to confidently claim that effective principals and heads of department are more likely to "seek forgiveness rather than permission" to undertake initiatives. It is also what allows Gurr (2014) and Drysdale and Gurr (2017) to claim that successful principals are not context dependent, capable of overcoming context. The agentic is therefore also likely to embed universal assumptions with an uncritical belief in the individual, positioning it in opposition to alternate claims that concern structure, particularism, and/or holism.

An approach that has the *auctor* generating *spatio-temporal conditions* breaks down the possibilities of deterministic structuralism and absolute agency. Even the well-rehearsed argument of a continuum (as depicted in Fig. 7.1) rather than strict extremes of structure and agency does not go as far as *auctor* due to relying on the existence of binary logic. While the continuum brings a gradient into the discussion, it simply does not remove the original construction of the two entities (structure and agency) and the perceived distance between individuals and spatial conditions. Unlike the actor who acts upon existing—and external—spatial (and temporal) arrangements, or the agent who exercises a freedom to act, an *auctor* generates. This shift is more than semantics. Through generating, activity is never simply the product of social structures nor entirely free. This is not to say that social conditions do not contribute to activity, they do, but through participating *auctors* contribute to their maintenance (including disruption as well as sustainment). Relations, both historical and contemporary, are constitutive and emergent from activity. Nothing is exercised in absolute agency or structural determinism. This is a well-rehearsed argument, but rarely are the necessary theoretical resources provided to go beyond structure and agency. *Auctor* removes the need for a substantialist reduction to identify structural arrangements such as the final decision maker, the structure, and

Fig. 7.1 Structure/agency continuum

the possibility of an individual or group taking possession of the somewhat external entity of agency.

In negating the possibility of structure and agency through *auctor*, the relations with *spatio-temporal conditions* are heightened. The key move here is the increased importance of relations for understanding the social world rather than individuals, structures, or other entities. Possibilities of identifying a universal, essentialized list of key attributes that lead to increased organizational performance are significantly challenged. This is not to say that it is impossible, or even difficult, to identify the conditions and/or formula for success in contemporary conditions, but from a relational standpoint, the rules of the game are brought into question. The analytical dualism of structure and agency is of lesser explanatory value in a relational analysis. Neither structure nor agency is granted unquestioned ontological status when relations are central as to do so would be to adopt a substantialist perspective. In addition, structure and agency require some form of stability and distance. *Auctor* and *spatio-temporal conditions* mobilize a different form of temporality that privileges here and now—with due recognition of the role of historical events in shaping activity: There is no ahistorical moment. With *organizing activity* both constitutive and emergent from *spatio-temporal conditions* and *auctors* having an active role, the possibility of reducing explanation to a distinct external and arguably universal concept such as structure or agency is theoretically incoherent.

For educational administration, this troubles orthodox approaches. As a community of scholars, educational administration researchers have established a number of large international studies. Recent initiatives such as the International School Development Network (an initiative of the US-based University Council for Educational Administration and the UK-based British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society), ongoing work such as the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP) (e.g., Day & Gurr, 2014), and past projects such as the International Study of Principal Preparation (e.g., Slater & Nelson, 2013) represent concerted efforts to generate cross-national explorations of school leadership. Apart from a number of underlying generative assumptions regarding structure and agency, these projects introduce a second analytical dualism into the analysis of educational administration through assumptions concerning the universal and the particular (as depicted in Fig. 7.2).

The relations between educational administrators and *spatio-temporal conditions* require nuancing. The idea of being able to scale up arguments of structure and/or agency becomes problematic without some attention to relations. This is why the implications of mobilizing the *relational* approach work on both knowledge production and descriptions of practice. As Dirlik (2007) argues, we are entering a period of global modernity. Rather than an older Eurocentric modernity that is associated with Western imperialism, colonialism, and the presumption of civilizational progress, global modernity is characterized by a plurality of modernity arising from a plurality of cultural traditions (e.g., Confucian, Arabic, Islamic, African, Japanese, and Western). *Auctors* generate rather than act upon or within. It cannot therefore be assumed that *spatio-temporal conditions* are the same in different locations. Arguably, it cannot be assumed that they are too different either.

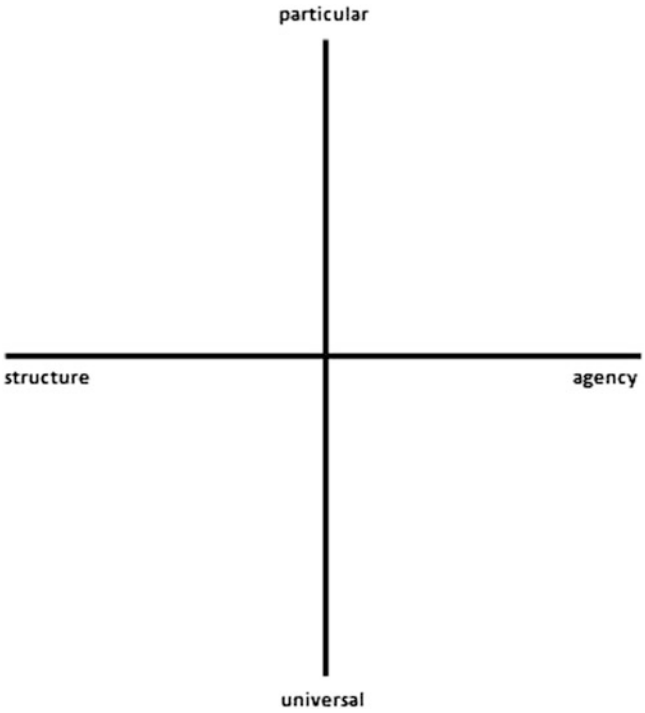

Fig. 7.2 Matrix of structure/agency and particular/universal

To seek an understanding of such, even if partial, means to actively engage in what is meant by key terms and how they look in different locations. In this sense, the researcher is an *auctor* generating the conditions in which his/her thought is exercised without absolute agency or structural constraint.

Universalism or Particularism

Oplatka's (2016) critique of my argument in *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015) concerns the notions of universal and particular. As discussed at greater length in Chap. 6 regarding the role of context, the enduring tension of universalism and particularism remains strong in educational administration scholarship. In Fig. 7.3, I build on previous figures to demonstrate where orthodox educational administration literatures fit within the analytical dualism of structure/agency and universal/particular. There are three major points I have sought to bring attention to, each reflecting a different set of relations with structure/agency and universal/particular.

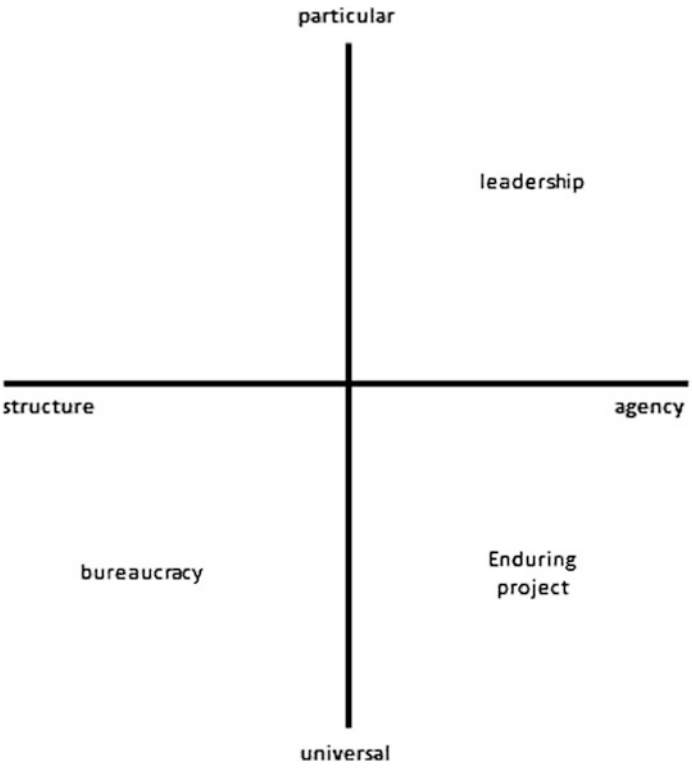

Fig. 7.3 Orthodox accounts in educational administration

Structural accounts of organizational theory, the best known of which is the bureaucracy, are crafted to some extent on an assumption of a universalism of (structural, and in particular, hierarchical) conditions. While not always made explicit, these are the arguments in educational administration that rely on the principles of structure. In addition to Weber and Taylor, other classic management thinkers such as Henry Fayol, Luther Gulick, Lyndall Urwick, Chester Barnard, Herbet Simon all fit within this tradition. It is the structure that makes it possible for Gulick and Urwick (1937) to argue for POSDCORB (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting), Barnard's (1938) work on the functions of the executive, and Simon (1945) on decision making.

The bureaucracy remains the most commonly used (and arguably abused) symbol of the structural accounts to organizational theory. Through its privileging of structure over agency, it has greater interest in universalism than particularism. Hierarchy, classes of officers, and adherence to rules/processes construct patterns of relationships. These relationships, as commonly mobilized in the literatures of educational administration, align with co-determinist approaches where they can be measured for strength and direction. In defining tasks, functions, roles,

responsibilities, and the like, structures facilitate the application of universal processes of management and a framework for order and command (hence the critique mounted by the social critical perspective). Structural explanations of organizational performance were arguably the orthodox approach from the inception of educational administration through until the rise of leadership over the past 30 years. The US-based Theory Movement of educational administration and its pursuit of a value-free science was a major contributor to the universal structural claims of educational administration.

Apart from arguments that simply change language rather than assumptions, leadership is most frequently mobilized as the opposing view to structural accounts courtesy of its agentic core. In making claims of agency, structural explanations are replaced with increasing individualism. Driven by managerialist policy moves such as school-based management and increasingly individualized performance measures, disruption has become a desirable. This disruption is different to the universal and instead places greater value on the outliers, the particular. This particularism is often critiqued for its underlying endorsement of subjectivism (with some implicit links to Thomas Barr Greenfield's intervention) and a particular form of relativism. Constructed in binary opposition to the perceived objectivity of the universal structure, the focus on the particular and the exercising of agency significantly narrows attention. It also highlights an issue for knowledge production.

The well-rehearsed critique of educational administration relying on small-scale, often poorly located (in the literatures, but also *spatio-temporal conditions*), case study-based research is a product of a subjectivism that privileges the particular. Arguments stressing the uniqueness of each and every school (and individual) are often used as the basis for poor located studies that overlook, or at least do not acknowledge or recognize, complexity in the social world. In short, they remove relations. Examples of positive organizational scholarship—a focus on outliers to the positive of a study's measure/s—rarely call into question contributions from influences outside their core measure/s. The causal claims (often based on correlational data) between performance and the particular, be that a school or individual administrator, have an underdeveloped theory of relations by overlooking the contribution of *spatio-temporal conditions* in the generation of activity.

A focus on the particular can operate at the individual (e.g., the principal, administrator, leader) and the collective (e.g., a school, system, region, district). This is what enables researchers to focus on particular traits and/or behaviors, keeping scholarship firmly rooted in knowledge claims from a century ago, that can then be either scaled up (to support universal claims) or defended—at least to some extent—as context-specific (to support particular claims). Where previous universal structural accounts gave rise to the school reform and school effective agendas, the school improvement, and more recently successful schools, agenda is more commonly based on agency and particularism.

The third point is what I see as the enduring project of educational administration, the question that serves as the raison de'être of an applied field, the universal agentic: a definitive list of traits, behaviors, characteristics that explain organizational performance irrespective of location. This has arguably been the

holy grail of educational administration since its inception, captured in the Theory Movement agenda, embodying Taylor's "one right method," and sustained through the best practice rhetoric. The contemporary popularity of "leadership," as an almost universally accepted desirable and overcoming of the structural constraints of education, is the key symbol of the universal-agentic agenda. Large-scale international projects seek to advance this cause. Policy makers, systemic authorities, and arguably aspirants seek their solutions or answer to the question of what makes an "effective" (high performing, successful, great, …) administrator or administration. When the particular is introduced to this discussion, it is usually explained away through statements such as "being interpreted for context" and/or "aligned with contextual variables," once again reflecting co-determinist approaches.

Spatio-temporal conditions offer the theoretical resources to overcome the analytical dualism of universal and particular. This is achieved through empirically grounding knowledge claims while not rejecting the similarities shared by multiple locations in the social world. In recasting orthodox approaches to "context" (see Chap. 6), *spatio-temporal conditions* shift attention to the relations of the social rather than the attributes of social structures and/or agents. As per Heraclitus' argument of the river being in constant flux, so too are social conditions and the arbitrary division of universal and particular (a somewhat layered model of the social world) constructs divisions that help the observer to build categories and their relationships more so than understand the relations that are constitutive and emergent from activity.

When brought into relations with *auctor, spatio-temporal conditions* make it difficult, if not impossible, to defend substantialist claims of distance between individuals and collectives. No *organizing activity* is done in isolation. The possibility of identifying, once and for all, universal anything is too abstract to be of any value, and the context-specific claims of the particular are too underdeveloped to make a contribution courtesy of their lack of locating within broader conditions.

Individualism or Holism

A third analytical dualism present in the literatures of educational administration is that of individualism/holism. It is not entirely separate from the universal/particular and/or structure/agency, but nevertheless adds a dynamic to knowledge claims. It is to be noted that Evers and Lakomski (2013) use structural and individualism as the two major explanatory categories for organizational performance. Building from the previous section, the individual/holism dualism is frequently linked to matters of scale, but there is a far more foundational set of claims. The tension between individualist and holist explanations of *organizing activity* is an age-old problem and concerns the focus of inquiry. There can be no society if we limit analysis to individuals. At best we can have a collection, but even then, it is a collection of individuals. Similarly, a more holist approach blurs individuals into a larger entity

(with explicit connections to the universal). These tensions can be seen in the work of Émile Durkheim (e.g., social facts), Max Weber (e.g., individual rationality), and many other major sociological figures. From an organizational theory perspective, particularly in educational administration, there is an ontological and an explanatory claim underlying the mobilization of individualist or holist approaches.

The ontological claim concerns aggregation or reduction. Durkheim (1982 [1895]) argues that "there can be no sociology unless societies exists and … societies cannot exist if there are only individuals" (p. 38). This holism is central to social analysis—at least in the Durkheimian vision of sociology. For educational administration scholars, this aggregation, when brought into conversation with Greenfield's (1973) claims around the organization as a social construct, poses some interesting questions for the ontological status of organizations. Following Durkheim, there can be no educational administration (as a field of knowledge production) unless organizations (e.g., schools, universities, early childhood centers) exist, and organizations cannot exist if there are only individuals. Early trait-based approaches to organizational behavior, including educational administration, research were heavily critiqued for their privileging of individual-level psychological measures and granting them too great an explanatory value. This broad critique means that organizations cannot simply be the aggregation of individuals nor reduced to their constituent parts.

The explanatory claim concerns what analytical categories best account for organizational performance. An individualist explanation might argue that the quality of teachers is not what it should be and that they are incapable of, or lack, the necessary training to meet organizational demands. This argument is not uncommon in educational discourse and with increasing managerialist policies quantifying performance measures, not to mention the commonly cited "teachers are the greatest (within-school) influence on student outcomes" catch cry, individual teachers are expected to perform at a maximum level irrespective of conditions (a somewhat Tayloristic version of organizational oversight). The individual parts can be added together to give an overarching account, but the constituent parts remain separate even if connected. Systems' thinking employs this logic and the potential for intervention based on the lowest (which becomes relative terms rather than absolute) performing unit being the target of specific programs or review to raise performance. The cycle becomes iterative, or arguably perpetual, in the pursuit of improved performance and played out through the management of subordinates. A holist account on the other hand does not distinguish between individuals and instead considered the organization to be a coherent whole. Embedded within such a position is that a high achieving school is filled with high achieving teachers and students. Conversely, a poor, or really lower, performing school is filled with poor performing teachers and students. A common critique of this holist position is that the variance in teacher quality is as great, if not greater, within schools than it is across schools. The stance that one adopts toward individualism or holism is therefore of considerable consequence when it comes to understanding educational administration.

The *relational* program offers a means of overcoming this dualism. The focus on *organizing activity* takes attention away from "the" organization or leader and moves to activity. In doing so, attention is granted to *auctors*, he/she who is active in generating the *spatio-temporal conditions* of that activity. This is an important shift in thinking. Rather than acted upon, or done to, *auctors* generate. It is neither an individual activity nor a collective. *Organizing activity* cannot be broken down to its contributing parts and is instead both emergent and constitutive of activity. In short, it is far messier than an analytical dualism. Ontological and explanatory categories that rely on the individual or holist accounts understate the significance of broader causal influences. For an organizational theory that is more robust, not to mention theoretically and practically adequate, a more relational-based approach is required.

Advancing the *Relational*

To advance the relational is to denounce the orthodox analytical dualisms of hegemonic Western language and thought. The analytical dualisms of structure/agency, individualism/holism, and universalism/particularism have limited the possibilities of different educational administration research traditions from engaging with one another. The core assumptions of differing approaches have conceived by many to be incommensurate, and therefore, alternate positions are not acknowledged at best and more often simply ignored. Any means of recasting this situation offers a productive space for theorizing. Unlike co-determinist or conflational approaches that cannot overcome separate entity-based thinking, the *relational* program provides the necessary theoretical resources to think relationally and go beyond substantialist accounts that simply link through relationships between entities.

In not bringing the underlying generative assumptions of scholarship to the level of discourse, educational administration research has remained complicit with orthodox analytical dualisms. Even semantic shifts from administration to management and then leadership have not so much overcome underlying dualisms as replaced one dominant version with another. With a preference for currency in educational administration, the assumptions of the orthodoxy remain uncritically accepted. More so, they are advanced through their acceptance at face value and further legitimized through continued empirical and theoretical argument. Researchers, as *auctors*, contribute to this situation. The move from administration and/or management to leadership may have shifted the explanatory accounts of the field, but by not engaging with the (possibly) shifting ontological accounts, little self-awareness is exercised in complicity with the status quo. As an example, calls for increasing school autonomy have been lauded as a major shift in educational administration (e.g., Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). From an explanatory standpoint, the move is to recast schools, and in particular school leaders or leadership teams, with greater agency and control over their work. Yet, absolute autonomy is not

possible, nor is judgment of performance without some relations to others. Therefore, in pitching autonomy as in opposition to structural accounts, advocates have sought to establish an analytical dualism but not recognized their own complicity with orthodox accounts. Similarly, advocates for leadership (as opposed to management and administration) sought to move beyond structural accounts but did so by introducing an alternate class-based structural arrangement of leaders and non-leaders. As another example, the recent shift to "successful" schools rather than "effective" schools makes the same error. Replacing the label does not negate the underlying generative principles of distinction and explanatory focus.

In recognizing one's ontological complicity and seeking to establish some form of epistemological break, language—and particularly labels—becomes problematized. Rather than simply accepting terms and granting them ontological and usually universal status, underlying assumptions, problems, and possibilities are raised to a level where they can facilitate dialogue and debate. In a domain of inquiry that is prone to parallel monologues, making visible the language games and underlying assumptions provides an explicit opportunity to advance knowledge in relation to rather than in intellectual silos. This demonstrates how researchers as *auctors* play a role in *organizing activity* (the work of research/knowledge production). Illuminating the underlying generative principles of research, in particular the language used, rather than accepting orthodoxy, opens the door for dialogue and debate with different perspectives. Any sense of critique can be met with justification, and the logic of academic work—argument and refutation—becomes central rather than confusing concept/s and loyalty to those as the basis of distinctions.

To make explicit the use of labels enables work to be located in *spatio-temporal conditions*. No activity takes place in a vacuum. Labels may change, but do the underlying generative principles of work? Despite semantic shifts between administration, management, and leadership, there remain structural undercurrents. These structural features are granted almost universal status, and the changes in labels are explained as evolutionary steps in knowledge frontiers. However, as the previous two chapters have demonstrated, the *spatio-temporal conditions* in which thought is exercised matter. The rise of leadership is part of broader conditions. Attempts to create distinctions from the past often result in establishment and maintenance of dualisms. What becomes lost is history in the constant arguing for the next greatest conceptual leap. To think *relationally* breaks down the artificial partitions generated in the creation of the latest breakthrough by not conceiving of them as separate knowable entities but in relation to alternatives. The intellectual resources of *auctor, spatio-temporal conditions,* and *organizing activity* mean that activity in all its forms (e.g., scholarship, practice) is always grounded while simultaneously theoretical.

What this chapter has sought to do is highlight that the *relational* program offers a means of advancing knowledge without needing to call upon analytical dualism and dismissing other approaches. Orthodox dualisms lead to binary thinking and a lack of engagement. Going beyond analytical dualisms not just for critique but for contribution means the *relational* approach is concerned with recognizing the frontiers of knowledge claims and pushing them further. This, I would argue, is a

useful exercise in and of itself. What this chapter has therefore set up is a demonstration of how the *relational* research program is less concerned with critique (for its own sake) and instead focused on providing the intellectual resources to recast educational administration. To that end, the *relational* approach makes a productive contribution to the field. With provision for knowledge production and descriptions of practice, the *relational* offers a means of engaging across intellectual traditions and generating a productive space for theorizing.

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Chapter 8
Productive Thinking

With the establishment of educational administration departments in US universities in the early 1900s (Tyack & Hansot, 1982), educational administration (as it was then known), as a field of study, was granted ontological status. Its foundations however, according to Bates (2010), were based on the artificial partitioning of what Dewey (1902) labels the "mechanics of schooling" and "educational ideals." The partitioning of knowledge production, and subsequent further partitioning, has remained an issue for the field since its inception. With the proliferation of higher education and accreditation/licensing requirements, educational leadership (as it is now known) has expanded and splintered into various subfields and/or scholarly communities. The field has become organized around different intellectual traditions (Gunter, 2016), each with their own discourse communities, complete with conferences, journals, and international networks. This is often presented as an evolutionary and inevitable product of scholarly fields, but for educational administration at large, as both a domain of knowledge production and one of practice, it poses a significant inhibitor to substantive shifts in thinking. This is especially so when there is a well-identified lack of meaningful engagement across research traditions (Blackmore, 2010), and a state of tacit agreement where those with whom we disagree, we treat with benign neglect (Donmoyer, 2001; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003).

The fifth *relational* extension is: "[building from the first four extensions] there is a productive—rather than merely critical—space to theorize organizing activity." This does not imply that the *relational* research program advances without critiquing. Through the engagement with the underlying generative principles of scholarship, as outlined in the previous four chapters, the program is concerned with advancing knowledge claims in relation to alternate positions. In this chapter, I argue that parallel monologues—a failure to engage with alternate positions—are a major issue in educational administration scholarship. Bush (2017) contests my central argument, but his critique is limited to a single sentence, "Eacott's claim that educational administration journals and conferences are somewhat devoid of debate is also contentious" (p. 62). Therefore, what I offer here, and in the spirit of moving

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
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beyond parallel monologues, is a further nuancing of my claim built on the general thesis that parallel monologues (e.g., failing to acknowledge relationally alternate positions and most importantly, the critique they may raise with your position) are a violation of the logic of the academic work—argument and refutation—and significantly inhibit knowledge advances. It is through the (social) scientific struggle, played out in the scientific system (namely peer-reviewed scholarship), that knowledge frontiers are recognized and pushed further. My argument concerns the ontological insecurity of educational administration (particularly "leadership") as a field of knowledge production and the implications this has for the (social) scientific system. The intervention of this chapter is to propose the *relational* alternative that overcomes the analytical dualisms and solutions that have come to dominate contemporary thought and analysis. In doing so, I offer the *relational* program as a basis for a social epistemology for educational administration, one that offers a productive space to theorize.

Our Relations with the Field

Any claim to advance the scholarship of educational administration needs to confront the ontological question of what is the object of our collective endeavors (hence the focus of Chaps. 4 and 5). As Oplatka (2009) notes, the primary question of "What is educational administration?" has not been answered with any sense of adequacy. The hegemonic positivist image of organizations, orthodoxy since Taylorism supplanted the ordinary language of the everyday and then strengthened during the Theory Movement, has generated and legitimized a particular ontology for educational administration. Organizations, as with the individuals who labor within them, are conceived as external knowable entities—"social facts" to think with Durkheim (1982[1895]). The subjectivist alternative, led by the pioneering work of Greenfield (1973, 1974; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) and continued through postmodern (e.g., Maxcy, 1993; English, 2003), feminist (e.g., Blackmore, 1999), post-colonial (e.g., Blackmore, 2010) and post-structuralist (e.g., Niesche, 2011, 2014) approaches, has yet to significantly destabilize the substantialist foundations of a modernist science of educational administration. Mindful of the dangers of oversimplifying the complexity of sophisticated theoretical arguments, for illustrative purposes, Table 8.1 displays an overview of some of the major theoretical positions in educational administration. Although the ontological and epistemological distinctions between these positions prevent a universal acceptance of concepts, causal claims, and procedure, there is demonstrable interest, at scale, in educational administration as worthy of scholarship. As noted earlier though, there is a distinct absence of dialogue and debate between positions. More often than not, arguments are raised without any attention to the critique that could be raised by different perspectives, yet alone how one could overcome such critique and contribute productively to advancing the knowledge claims.

Table 8.1 Overview of major theoretical positions in educational administration

	Logical empircism	Naturalistic coherentism	Subjectivist	Social critical	*Relational*
Description	Research is characterized by objectivity, reliability, operational definitions, coherent or systematic structure, and comprehensiveness	A post-positivist approach concerned with coherency through super-empirical virtues of consistency, simplicity, comprehensiveness, conservatism, fecundity, and explanatory unity	A phenomenological approach to scholarship concerned with how we see and experience the social world	Concerned to reveal and emancipate leaders and followers from social injustice and the oppression of established power structures	At its broadest, the *relational* program is concerned with the constitution and emergence of *organizing activity* through relations
Ontological assumptions	Organizations are an external knowable reality	The most coherent ontology is that the natural world exists (e.g., organizations are real)	Organizations are not things, have no ontological reality and there is no use studying them as though they do	Reality is created and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic,and gender-based forces	Relations have a reality of their own, not simply derived from something else (e.g., interaction) nor psychic or merely in the minds of the observer
Epistemological assumptions	Objective knowledge claims justified through empirical verifiability	Epistemological diversity, assuming that theories meet the criteria of coherentism	All of our knowledge contains an irreducible subjective component (denial of objectivity)	We cannot separate ourselves from what we know and this influences inquiry	Knowledge claims are generated through one's relations with the social

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

	Logical empircism	Naturalistic coherentism	Subjectivist	Social critical	*Relational*
Normative/ethical assumptions	Improvements can be achieved through objective knowledge of what works. Dichotomy between what is and ought. Separation of fact and value	Fact and value cannot be separated and the goal is to improve through the best (e.g., coherent) theories	Organizations are conflicted. Find out what values are embodied in organized activity and whose they are. Change the people or change the values	Concerned with promoting "collective social value," such as participatory democracy and human emancipation, to build a better society	Less concern for right/wrong and instead with describing unfolding activity and why it took place in the particular *spatio-temporal conditions*
Theory of the subject	Organizations are real in the world, and individuals are a product of them	The basic unit of analysis is individual interactions with the natural world	Individuals acting singly or together	Organizations as the embodiment of power relations/structure	Relations between *auctors* as the product and emergent from *organizing activity*
Canon (and contemporaries)	Vienna Circle, Theory Movement, Simon, Halpin, Griffiths, Leithwood	Evers and Lakomski	Greenfield, Hodgkinson, Gronn, Ribbins	Marx, Habermas, Frankfurt School, Bates, Foster, Smyth, Blackmore, Gunter, Thomson, Niesche	Simmel, Marx, Tarde, Elias, Luhmann, Bourdieu, Latour, New York School, White, Donati, Fuhse, Mische, Dépelteau, Eacott

There have been many attempts to classify different approaches to organizational theory (e.g., Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hage, 1980; Scott, 1981), and its mobilization in educational administration (e.g., Griffiths, 1988; Evers & Lakomski, 1991; Rowan & Miskel, 1999). Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigms model is one of the most popular. Originally welcomed in educational administration (e.g., Griffiths, 1985), it has not been without critique (e.g., Griffiths, 1988; Evers & Lakomski, 1991). The limitations of the paradigm approach are that it essentializes work, and in the case of Burrell and Morgan, relies upon an initial analytical dualism (e.g., subjective/objective and regulation/radical change). In doing so, competing theories are conceived of as incommensurate. For my purposes, such a conceptualization is not particularly useful. It is dependent upon a shared ontology and then epistemological diversity. I argue that the ontological question of what is educational administration, or even what is an organization or organizing, remains unattended to and that illuminating such underlying generative principles (which Table 8.1 seeks to do, even if just as an illustrative exercise) in relation to those held by others offers a productive space to theorize the organizing of education. My argument is not concerned with bringing different positions together in an overarching agreement or about building a set of claims in opposition or critique of other positions. Instead, what I am arguing for is crafting knowledge claims in relation to different positions. The distinction is subtle but significant.

The ascendancy of educational administration within the global social scientific community has seen the establishment of a Division of the American Educational Research Association (Division A—Administration, Organization, and Leadership) and networks/special interest groups within the Australian Association for Research in Education, British Educational Research Association, European Educational Research Association and Nordic Educational Research Association, and among others. In addition, there are field-specific associations such as the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration (Hayes, 1966) and the University Council for Educational Administration in the USA, national level associations (e.g., British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society, Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration) and supra-national entities such as the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (e.g., Thomas, 1971; Ewing, 1975). The presence of such scholarly networks, legitimizing the ontological status, frequently leads to the uncritical acceptance of educational administration as a worthwhile object of analysis without ever raising questions of its ontological security.

Despite some significant handbooks (e.g., Boyan, 1988; Murphy & Louis, 1999; English, 2011; Waite & Bogotch, 2017) and meta-commentaries (e.g., Evers & Lakomski, 1991; Gunter, 2016; Oplatka, 2010; Burgess & Newton, 2015), there is little dialogue and debate about ontology and epistemology in educational administration. However, in the broader leadership literature (Drath et al., 2008; Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010; Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2010; Kelly, 2014) and to some extent recently in educational administration (e.g., Lakomski, 2005; Eacott, 2013; Lakomski, Eacott, & Evers, 2017), there has been some concern with the ontological foundations of leadership. A significant move in this questioning is

the recasting of leadership as a social rather than physical object (e.g., Kelly, 2014; Eacott, 2015). As a social construct, educational administration covers a "multitude of ideas and activities representing considerable differences of view between various groups" (Bates, 1980, p. 2). The multi-disciplinary nature yet fragmentation of educational administration scholarship has long been identified (e.g., Hills, 1978; Campbell, 1979; Riffel, 1986; Oplatka, 2009). However, with minimal—if any—inter-tradition dialogue and debate, the competing theoretical positions remain insular (e.g., Griffiths, 1997; Fitz, 1999), a form of theoretical relativism (as opposed to pluralism), and ultimately, an unproductive approach to knowledge production. The possibility of within-field regulation based on shared principles of legitimation (e.g., legitimate forms of knowledge) is highly unlikely, if not impossible. It is not that there is enduring contestation of the ontological (and epistemological) preliminaries rather the possibility of any significant convergence, or even mutual recognition, at the ontological level is lost due to the absence of dialogue and debate.

As a potential solution to address this concern, Oplatka (2009) argues:

> … the field needs a widespread general agreement over its core contents and central purposes, which in turn demarcate its intellectual and epistemological borders and sharpen its distinctivess in relation to other fields of study. (p. 27)

The desire to identify a core set of problems or questions to demarcate educational administration is a well-rehearsed argument (e.g., Tschannen-Moran, Firestone, Hoy, & Moore Johnson, 2000; Oplatka, 2010). As has been attempts to historically demarcate epistemological foci (e.g., Culbertson, 1988; Park, 2001; Oplatka, 2010), which has not been without critique (e.g., English, 2001). Rarely do these accounts go beyond the epistemological and confront the ontological question. This is not surprising, as the social foundations of educational administration mean that it is always epistemological (even ideological) rather than ontological.

Over 30 years ago, Riffel (1986) argued that if debate in educational administration is to ultimately become more fruitful, it must extend to include critical attention to the assumptions of others. Alternatively, as English (2006) out it, advancing scholarship requires criticism of it philosophically, empirically, and logically. To locate this further in a historical dialogue, Bachelard (1984[1934]) denies science the certainties of a definitive heritage and reminds us that it (science) can only progress by perpetually calling into question the very principles of its own constructs.

Making sense of the heterogeneous contributions to educational administration literatures is complex. For many, the competing theories of organizing in education are incommensurate and the possibility of any form of equivalence is limited to artificial merging or conflation of theoretical positions (e.g., as is often done in the "mixed methods" approach) without due attention to the distinctions of their underlying generative principles. Apart from a very superficial, and for the research field rather useless, level of agreement, there is a significant confrontation between different truths expressed by scholars. Overcoming such requires a conceptualization of the field based on scholarly pluralism rather than relativism. I use

"theoretical pluralism" in a different sense to Griffiths (1997). He mobilizes it as a form of conflationism where multiple perspectives are brought together to engage with a single problem. In contrast, I propose that pluralism is a recognition, and acknowledgment, of alternate positions without the prescription of a single approach. Here, the logic of academic work—argument and refutation—becomes of primary importance. This repositions engagement with ("other") scholarship within emergent distinction generating activity. The attribution of quality to scholarship becomes about the justification of claims and their defense in the face of critique from alternatives. In short, scholarship is a generative relational activity. Research is an *organizing activity*.

I consider scholars to be *auctors* rather than actors. The subtle, but significant, shift is to move beyond conflationism (actors shaped by, and shaping of, conditions) to a relational ontology (*auctors* as the generators of *spatio-temporal conditions*). The theoretical contribution/s of *auctors* owe as much of their constitution to the set of relations they share with other positions as they do anything else. Knowledge production is *organizing activity*. Concern is less with the exhibitionism of data and procedure—a trend common in US-centric scholarship—and more with the distinctions one has with competing theories. Contributing to and potentially recasting the field is difficult. However, as the pioneering Australian scholar Walker (1976) notes, "scientists cannot be held back by the constraints of mere difficulty" (p. 423).

From a Field to Traditions

The paradigm wars of the 1970s and 1980s had a significant effect on an already fragmented educational administration field (e.g., Waite, 2002). Different epistemological positions—although often limited to the analytical dualism of quantitative and qualitative (and this is why the most common usages of "mixed methods" is nothing more than conflationism)—were pitted against one another and the traces of deep-seated divisions remain in contemporary scholarship. Gronn (2017) ponders whether the current fragmentation and insular dialogue is the legacy of the post-paradigmatic warfare settlement. To some extent I agree, as the paradigm wars have arguably strengthened divisions; however, the social rather than physical foundations of educational administration had already legitimized the fragmentation. As with any social scientific field, there are collections of researchers built upon specific interests, in/formal activities (e.g., workshops, symposium, and colloquia), projects and publications (Fitz, 1999; Gunter, 2000, Oplatka, 2009). The theoretical position held by group members provides the "intellectual lenses through which problems are defined and their solutions sought" (English, 2001, p. 32) primarily through determining what "knowledge and practices are to be regarded as legitimate and in what knowledge forms and practices they are prepared to invest" (Fitz, 1999, p. 313). Again, for illustrative purposes, Table 8.2 displays

Table 8.2 Overview of approaches

	Logical empiricism	Naturalistic coherentism	Subjectivism	Social critical	*Relational*
The problems that have been identified (issues that have caught authors' attention)	Organizations not performing to the desired level Organizations can be more effective and efficient (perpetual improvement)	Organizations are not functioning optimally until they demonstrate coherence	Conflict between individual/collective values and those of organization or beyond	Social institutions function as a technology of oppression on individual freedoms	Existing explanations of *organizing activity* are limiting the possibility of alternatives Contemporary attempts to move beyond orthodoxy do not provide alternatives but iterations of existing theories
The solution	Find out how do organizations work and what works most effectively/efficiently in bringing about desired outcomes	Human behavior is not random and failures/errors can be filtered out Science (of the naturalistic coherent kind) is best for understanding human behavior	Find out whose values are (and are not) embodied in organizing activity Alignment of individual/collective values. May involve changing the people and/or the values	Find out the ways in which power is exercised in existing social structures Remove barriers to individual freedom for the purpose of a better society	Illuminate the underlying generative principles of existing theorizations and methodologies Inscription of *organizing activity* in *spatio-temporal conditions*
What is rejected	That high performance is not a universal possibility Explanations that cannot be empirically verified (e.g., the metaphysical) The subjective and the particular	That science is not appropriate for understanding educational administration That all forms of knowledge are of equal worth	Organizational activity can be explained solely through structures and data The organization as a thing The possibility of a single collective voice/shared meaning/group mind	Existing power relations are logical progression of society There is no alternative Social structures are a fait accompli Emancipation is not possible at scale	Uncritical adoption of the ordinary language of the everyday (pre-scientific) The separation of activity from time and space Analytical dualisms Critique without the provision of alternatives Static forever more conceptualizations based on substantialist thinking

an overview of major theories in educational administration, and what they mean for problems and possible resolutions.

The theoretical relativism of educational administration does not grant equivalence to competing positions but instead they exist in parallel—ignoring the "other." Unlike the Kuhnian (1962) "normal science," more common in the natural sciences, where scholarship coalesces around the dominant paradigmatic position of the time—through a consensus of concepts, procedures, and forms of argument—in the social sciences traditions matter. The consequences of the ontological insecurity of educational administration and its social rather than physical foundation have led to a splintered field based on ideology (e.g., Samier, 2016). Ideological divisions are far greater to overcome the epistemological, and this is arguably the single greatest challenge for educational administration both now and into the forthcoming.

For those new to the field, or socialized into the "recent literature" phenomenon (Hallinger, 2013), the trajectories of positions can be often be missed. Scholarship can only be understood through an examination of the intellectual histories that have shaped inquiry (demonstrating the significance of *organizing activity*, *spatio-temporal conditions*, and *auctor*). Educational administration has a trajectory built upon history, or at least the past (e.g., Baron & Taylor, 1969), and according to Samier (2006) should be a historical field. This history, and historical lens, is often overlooked in the obsession with "currency" and "the future." My personal preference is "the forthcoming" rather than "future" as the latter assumes a distance between the here and the now, whereas the former recognizes the forthcoming embedded in the present—that which itself is the manifestation of the past. This is more than mere semantics, it speaks to the longevity of ideology and arguably how despite well over a century's work of research the field continues to have as many, if not more, questions than it does answers without any serious deviation in the object of analysis. As with Gronn (2017), I believe we need to accept the fragmentation of educational administration. Significantly though, as with many others before me, this diversity should be seen as a strength rather than a weakness. Kuhn (1962) argues that such diversity is a sign of a healthy science. The field is not "over-diversified" (Oplatka, 2009) but does have a problem with dialogue and debate. To this end, I propose that a solution to ideological division is to be found in the logic of academic work.

While contemporary educational administration is quick to reject any sense of "science," critics are quite happy to argue for greater accumulation of knowledge, building upon one another, and the centrality of ideas, concepts, and procedure—basically, what Kuhn labels "normal science." What is lost in this appeal for linear progression and rational process is that the rejection of science is nothing more than a rhetorical game. As a post-Theory Movement move (even if unrecognized), there is an attempt to distance oneself from positivism and the somewhat naïve belief in an objective reality and objective observer. The equating of "science" with "positivism" (or more often "logical empiricism") is highly problematic.

There are multiple forms of science, and the simplistic dismissal of science does little to advance the standing and credibility of the field within and beyond the

academy or, more importantly, generate the conditions for original contributions to knowledge.

The positivist philosophy of linear progress and knowledge accumulation cannot cope with the diversity of educational administration. Research traditions are relational. They cannot be clearly demarcated as they can only be understood in relation to alternatives (this is not to endorse an analytical dualism, rather illuminate the relational and enduring dynamics of knowledge production). The presence of different scholarly communities is not a problem and arguably a sign of a potentially fruitful field of inquiry. Numerous intellectual resources have been crafted to engage with this diversity, including Peter Ribbins and Helen Gunter's mapping (Gunter, 2001; Gunter & Ribbins, 2002; Ribbins & Gunter, 2002), Thrupp and Willmott's (2003) work on textual apologists and, to a lesser extent, Evers and Lakomski's (1991) commentary on methodological controversies, just to name a few. In the past decade, however, this work has been primarily limited to Oplatka (2009, 2010) and Gunter (2016). Despite these resources, it is quite possible educational administration scholars have become resigned to the fragmentation of the field and looked elsewhere for intellectual stimulation. Any resignation of the field to fragmentation and the lack of need to engage with alternatives do particular things to the literatures, especially academic journals.

Locating in Literatures

Academic outputs, and particularly journal articles, are the currency of researchers (Eacott, 2016). Journals remain an arena where dialogue (not necessarily debate) about knowledge production, the nature of the field, and promising lines of inquiry takes place (Immegart, 1990; Gunter, 2002; Oplatka, 2009; Thomas, 2010). Analysis of academic productivity (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2000; Eacott, 2009, 2014; Hallinger & Bryant 2013a, b), journal rankings (Mayo, Zirkel, & Finger, 2006; Richardson & McLeod, 2009; Cherkowski, Currie, & Hilton, 2012; Eacott, 2016) and journal citation analysis (Rodríguez-Ruiz, 2009; Wang & Bowers, 2016) have become more common in the past 10 years. Many of the founding journals of educational administration are into, or about to enter, their sixth decade: *Journal of Educational Administration* (founded in 1963), *Educational Administration Quarterly* (established in 1968), and *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* (established in 1972).

Recently, Wang and Bowers (2016) sought to understand how knowledge is exchanged and disseminated in educational administration through a journal citation analysis. Building on past citation analyzes in the field (e.g., Haller, 1968; Campbell, 1979; Haas et al., 2007; Richardson & McLeod, 2009) they used social network analysis to illuminate the relationships between different journals. Not surprisingly, there was a geographic skew in journal clusters, with the core cluster being US-centric featuring *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Journal of Educational Administration* (mindful this is based in Hong Kong currently—and

soon on the move again, after a long history in Australia), and *Journal of School Leadership*, but also broader journals such as *American Educational Research Journal* and *Teachers' College Record*. Richardson and McLeod (2009) had previously built an argument for where academics should publish to get noticed based on what "they see" (as there is no empirical justification for the choice) as the two leading journals in the field: *Educational Administration Quarterly* and *Journal of School Leadership*. Subsequent work by Cherkowski et al. (2012), using an active scholar assessment (although a small and unrepresentative sample), showed that awareness is not necessarily positively correlated with quality. For example, *Journal of Educational Administration and History* was 35th for "awareness" but 8th for "quality" (see also Eacott, 2013). Their argument for such data is that it is "possibly reflective of a relatively new, developing, top quality journal or for a top quality journal in a relatively small niche field" (p. 218). The latter is an interesting observation and something that could have been related to Fitzgerald and Gunter's (2008) discussion of the readership that *Journal of Educational Administration and History* attracts.

The past 20 years has seen a "big bang" expansion of literatures (Oplatka, 2009) with a number of journals adding issues per volume—including *Educational Administration Quarterly* (from 4 to 5 in 1996), *International Journal of Educational Management* (6–7 in 2000), *Journal of Educational Administration* (5–6 in 2001), *School Leadership and Management* (4–5 in 2005), *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* (4–6 in 2009), and, most recently, *International Journal of Leadership in Education* (4–5 in 2016)—but this does not indicate any sense of inter-tradition dialogue and debate rather an expansion for existing discourse communities.

Furthermore, the analysis of Wang and Bowers (2016) did not show evidence of a canon for educational administration. There was reference to the Murphy and Louis (1999) *Handbook of research on educational administration* but not the earlier Boyan (1988) edition. Not that too much can be made of simply counting citations as it does little to illuminate the ways in which work was cited. That said, throughout Wang and Bowers' list of most cited works, there is no mention of Andrew Halpin, Daniel Griffiths, Don Willower, Thomas Barr Greenfield, Christopher Hodgkinson, Richard Bates, Bill Foster, Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski, Jill Blackmore, George Baron and William Taylor, or Bill (William) Walker. Pioneering scholars from various theoretical traditions have been silenced, a forgotten foundation. Hallinger (2013) warns that we should not forget the roots of our scholarship and that despite a privileging of current literatures, high-quality research retains an especially long shelf life. However, with an increase in ideological papers (Oplatka, 2012) and a decline in epistemology as a topic of interest—at least in *Educational Administration Quarterly* (Wang, Bowers, & Fikis, 2017), there is a lack of continuity in the field's dialogue. Decoupling discourse from its history, a lack of attention to the underlying generative principles of research, and the absence of dialogue and debate between competing theories further destabilizes the field and reduces scholarship to parallel monologues.

Parallel Monologues

Willower (1981) argues that constructive controversies give a field its vitality. The lack of rigorous and robust internal dialogue in educational administration is a well-rehearsed claim (e.g., Campbell, 1979; Haas et al., 2007, Pounder & Johnson, 2007). The expansion of writing in the field, mindful that Taylor (1969) noted this over 40 years ago, has not facilitated internal dialogue. This may be the result of the orthodoxy of a functionalist (classic) empiricism—that which is privileged in the field on the basis of an "applied" focus—frequently leading to a selective engagement with the literatures (often only supportive or superficial critiques) rather than what Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997) describe as positioning one's work to make a contribution through establishing a stance on the coherence of the literatures and problematizing the existing body of work. It has been some time since systematic debate, the scholarly act of argument and refutation, appeared in educational administration literatures.

As noted in the preface to this book, while reading for my doctorate, two exchanges inspired and frustrated me in an enduring way. In short, they sparked my intellectual curiosity. The first was a series of exchanges between Gronn (1982, 1984, 1987), Thomas (1986; Thomas, Willis, & Phillipps, 1981) and Willower (1983) following the publication of Martin and Willower (1981) and Kmetz and Willower (1982). Making public the disagreements between academics on how best to theorize, study, and argue educational administration was exciting. It set up my expectations for academic conferences and reading journals—a primary concern for the debating of ideas. That said, educational administration research conferences and journals have not lived up to this expectation (at least for me) as there is little dialogue and debate and more talking past one another or to a sympathetic audience. Bush (2017) does reject my claim here though. To some extent, this talking past one another played out in the Gronn and Thomas discussion as neither altered from their original position as a result of the dialogue—simply remained resolute. The second example appears in the (ongoing) work of Evers and Lakomski. Following their germinal text *Knowing educational administration* (Evers & Lakomski, 1991), there were special issues of *Educational Administration Quarterly* (volume 32, issue 3), *Educational Management, and Administration* (volume 21, issue 3), some dialogue in *Journal of Educational Administration* (volume 32, issue 4), and reproduction of these exchanges as a section in *Exploring educational administration* (Evers & Lakomski, 1996). After originally advancing their naturalistic coherentism research program by articulating what they saw as flaws or limitations in alternate positions, Evers and Lakomski recognized that to convince others of their evolving framework they needed more evidence, argument, and examples on what their alternative approach would look like. To achieve this, they sought to strengthen their framework through debate against critics. These debates help to shape the program by encouraging—if not forcing—greater clarity and substantial extensions to the work. Embodying an openness and ongoing approach to scholarship, matters that could be defended were retained (although

arguably changed as a result of the exchange) and those that could not be were refined or left behind. This engagement with others, and thinking programmatically rather than from project-to-project was central to my coming to understand what scholarship is and can be.

Moving beyond parallel monologues and explicitly engaging with alternative approaches is central to asking questions about knowledge frontiers, building on their successes and pushing those further. As I have argued previously:

> To overcome potential skepticism about new claims and/or substantial departures from the orthodoxy, arguments need to be grounded in the logic of academic work – argument and refutation. If we embrace the notion that scholarship is pedagogical, then the publication of an argument is not the end of it. Publication serves, as Berger (1966) argues, as an invitation – an invitation to think with, through, and where necessary against, in the spirit of the scholarly enterprise. Through the composing of a systematic argument others can engage with your knowledge claims to support, extend or challenge them. This is only possible through engagement. By engaging with counter claims, refinements lead to greater clarity. With greater clarity come advances in knowledge. If educational leadership aspires to advance knowledge and not simply produce more, then it is imperative to engage with the other and move beyond parallel monologues. (Lakomski et al., 2017, p. 188)

The explicit "response" and/or "rejoinder" are rare, if even present, in contemporary educational administration journals (a search of Table of Contents for journals over the past decade confirms this claim). The same can be said for many conferences too. Instead of engaging with one another, we (as I am equally complicit in this agenda) are more inclined to ignore those from a different persuasion. Nicety prevails in journals, examinations of theses and the like. Rarely do we call each other out apart from in blind/anonymous reviews where there is little dialogue and instead one-way communication. This has arguably led to a reduction in the field of research programs and an increase in projects. It is not uncommon to find researchers jumping from hot topic to hot topic in the pursuit of the next grant (or at least trying to be competitive for the next grant as educational administration has never been well funded: Campbell & Newell, 1973; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; Mulford, 2007). The possibility of being able to write Evers and Lakomski's *Knowing educational administration* now, being able to identify contemporary scholars building distinctive research programs—not just a body of work—is questionable. Despite the ongoing expansion of the literatures, where theory is constructed as self-indulgent and exotic (Gunter, 2013), is there even the prospect of a looming theoretical crisis or significant disruption? As Samier (2013) notes:

> In the field I eventually settled in, educational administration, significant changes were taking place, beginning in the late 1960s and the 1970s and accelerating throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with feminist critiques, the School of Critical Theory, the emergence of hermeneutics and phenomenology, the transformation of organizational behavior into organizational studies as a broadly encompassing pursuit that included culture, micro-politics, aesthetic analysis, and psychoanalysis, all spilling into administrative theory as postmodern critiques appeared in English. And then … Not nothing, as this might have been a state preferable to the rise of neo-liberalism, the New Public Management, and the market model fostered and distributed internationally through globalization. (pp. 234-235)

While neoliberalism, managerialism, and the like have come under consistent attack, so to the performance of education systems and educators, across the globe, there is somewhat surprisingly (and troublingly) an absence of theoretical crisis in contemporary educational administration. I am not saying there is an absence of critique, as such work continues to advance—even if on the margins (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013)—rather, it is difficult to point out any signs of deep ruptures or confusions in dialogue and debate. Most concerning about this situation is that no significant breakthrough is possible within the confines of the status quo. Greenfield did not disrupt the hegemonic logical empiricism of the Theory Movement by only engaging with a sympathetic audience. Instead he took them on, engaged with their ideas, refuted their claims, advanced his own, and pushed knowledge frontiers. It is, however, to be noted that this came at a cost, both professionally and arguably less well documented, personally (e.g., Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993).

A Social Epistemology

Consistent with my goal to intervene and not just critique, I propose an alternate, a *relational* approach that focuses on illuminating the ontological and epistemological preliminaries of scholarship to foster dialogue and debate. It is the absence of debate, the violation of the logic of academic work, that I would argue is central to any perceived morbidity of the field in England (Gunter, 2010) and Australia (Gronn, 2008), among others, and a broader departure of scholars to more intellectually rewarding endeavors (Smyth, 2008), leaving for the most part, those primarily concerned with "getting things done" (Thomson, 2001). A social epistemology has the potential, or at least promise, of providing "a" (not "the") set of theoretical resources (taking theory as method) to facilitate purposive and meaningful engagement with others and privileging of the logic of academic work.

The uncritical adoption of a social construction is highly problematic for educational administration. There is great difficulty in studying the social world in which one is involved. The boundaries between the empirical and the epistemic blur through our ontological complicity. Alternatives get rejected rather than engaged with. However, if we go beyond our investment in the world as it is, we can begin to subject to scientific scrutiny everything that makes the orthodoxy possible. In short, we illuminate the ontological and epistemological preliminaries of our claims rather than engage in premature empiricism or editorializing based on a preexisting normative orientation. This opens up an avenue for engagement with the other that is solely about a particular model but the generation of knowledge production.

Whether they are acknowledged or not, all research mobilizes ontology and epistemology. This is not to argue that all contributions to educational administration are ontological and/or epistemological pieces rather that authors make explicit their contribution to the field. Articulating the underlying generative principles of scholarship enables a clear demonstration of distinctions from others. What is the same, different, new, how does it relate to others? Not what supporting

literature can one find, but doing work on the state of knowledge production and how a piece contributes productively to ongoing dialogue and debate. Attempts at conflationism cannot resolve deep-seated positions of difference in the field, but scholarship is a relational activity and distinctions are only possible in relation to others.

The primacy of the empirical problem has created an issue for educational administration research. The universalism of education yet the perceived particularism of practice has meant that context has been reduced to localized physical space. Thinking of scholars as *auctors* means that context—or more specifically *spatio-temporal conditions*—is not separate from knowledge production, but part of it. Contemporary dialogue and debate finds its roots not in the issues of today but in the trajectories of the past. There is a reason that a number of social critical theorists are located in Australia given the legacy of the Deakin School (e.g., Bates, Blackmore, Smyth, and alumni such as Thomson). Despite the denial of the Theory Movement in current discussions, and the absence of historical recognition (e.g., the Tayloristic roots of many departments of educational administration), logical empiricism (and a functionalist version of that) remains the orthodoxy of US-based journals and conferences. This is not to say that all knowledge producers are the product of their locales—as such a deterministic logic is highly flawed and contrary to my alignment with *auctors*—but to draw attention to how as scholars we are both emergent and generative of our *spatio-temporal conditions*. The embedded and embodied *auctor* is to be recognized and acknowledged.

The intellectual history of educational administration has generated multiple research traditions. Their presence—mindful that the points of demarcation are not easily identified—is less problematic than the lack of engagement. The analytical dualism constructed by scholars to create the "other" as a separate entity is not helpful for advancing knowledge claims. Thinking relationally does not negate different research traditions but instead is based on the notion that understanding a tradition (and its legacies) can only be done in relation. That is, you cannot understand one position without conceiving of it in relation to another. They are not separate at all, different yes but not separate. Failing to acknowledge this leads to parallel monologues and the inability to generate robust scholarly distinctions that can hold up in the face of critique. Relational thinking facilitates moving beyond the critique for the sake of critique and provides alternatives. In doing so, a social epistemology of knowledge production is a productive space.

Conclusion

To contribute productively, my argument is that scholarship needs to advance in relation to alternatives. A common criticism of the postmodern/structuralist stream of research is that it only critiques and does not provide alternatives. While I do not entirely agree with this reading of the posts, the larger point about contribution requires attention. Educational administration is ontologically insecure. This is why

I have gone to such lengths in earlier chapters (particularly four and five) in discussing the importance of making visible the underlying generative principles of scholarship. As a field of inquiry educational administration has a long-standing reputation for low-quality scholarship (Coladarci & Getzels, 1955; Walton, 1955; Eacott, 2016) and conservatism (Waite, 1998). To contribute productively to knowledge brings the extensions of the *relational* program together. Rigorous and robust knowledge claims relate to alternatives without assuming separation and externality. Distinctions are relational.

A common approach to differentiating approaches is to dismiss other claims as deficit and the provision of a better model. The differences though are often little more than normative matters rather than based on the scholarship itself. What I am arguing for in this chapter, and building from the previous four, is that in making explicit the underlying generative principles of scholarship we have the necessary conditions from which dialogue and debate can take place with alternatives. Rather than simple dismissal based on disagreement, there is a need to engage in the logic of academic work—argument and refutation. Productive contributions are relational. The strength of productive contributions comes in the ways in which they are built on argument and refutation of alternatives. This relational approach to knowledge production is a form of social epistemology. It is not a form of knowledge centrism. Pluralism remains. What we have is scholarship that not only acknowledges but engages with alternatives and locates knowledge claims in the *spatio-temporal conditions*. Here, we see the *relational* program working through scholarship. Advancing knowledge claims is *organizing activity*. Scholars are *auctors* generating the conditions in which their thought is exercised. The *spatio-temporal conditions* ground knowledge claims but they are not isolated. No thoughts are entirely original. They have a history, a trajectory.

Foregrounding relations enables one to move beyond the positivist ideal, concerned with the accumulation and linear progression of knowledge—the next big thing or breakthrough being the incremental development of all that has gone before. In contrast, the logic of academic work, argument and refutation, has been central to my *relational* claims. The *relational* program that I am advancing is based on the premise that we can only come to understand our knowledge claims in relation to others. This is not about establishing a binary between "us" and "them," or a distance between knowledge claims and claimants, rather about acknowledging and engaging with unfolding knowledge production. Productive contributions therefore are constitutive and emergent from relational engagement not critique.

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Part III
Dialogue and Debate

Chapter 9
Advancing the Intellectual Development of the Field

Helen Gunter

How and why human beings go about thinking, doing, and talking within and for activity is as old as time and remains core to research conceptualizations and fieldwork designs underpinned by a range of ontological and epistemological positions. The field of educational administration is no exception, where primary research draws on discipline-located knowledge production from within the social sciences and humanities, where descriptions, meanings, and explanations have been enabled through sociology, history, political studies, economics, philosophy, etc., to name just a few. However, that the field is in difficulty is recognized, with many millions of words already invested in scoping the intellectual limitations of field projects and outputs. Eacott (2015) has entered this situation through both presenting and positioning "relationality" as "a theory and methodology" (p. x) as a specific contribution. This strategy is not new, but the intellectual histories that have been constructed for and about the field have demonstrated the need to keep reformulating and restating such an agenda, and following Hanna Arendt, reminding new field entrants of plurality, and the capacity to do something novel (Gunter, 2014). At the core of Eacott's (2015) argument is that research can be disconnected and is usually ignored, where he scopes the reasons for this and presents a strategy for enabling utility and impact. He is seeking to address, "how the production of knowledge about the legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency, and morality of administration connections with the practices of administration" (p. 5), and this leads him to consider the interrelationship of the researcher to the object of research or the researched. In this particular think piece, I intend examining the importance of Eacott's contribution where I confront and consider the contribution of socially critical research.

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Rendezvous Fields

Educational administration is an example of a "rendezvous field" (Breckman, 2014) where it is a site where various people are located for periods of time (e.g., parents, children, professionals), are invited to journey to (e.g., politicians, researchers), and or may invade and colonize (e.g., media, business owners, corporate consultants). Purposes and practices regarding education in general and the provision of services (e.g., a school, a nursery, home tuition, distance learning) are therefore open to ongoing challenges with settlements made and unraveled. In this context, Eacott (2015) poses the question: "what does it mean to be an educational administration scholar when the notion of "administration" at the school level is under revision?" (p. 49), where he identifies that there are at least two problems: first, the separation of research and researchers from the situatedness of educational administration, where the "canonical opposition between theory and practice" (p. 18) evident in notions of the science of implementation known in the vernacular as "best practice" is not particularly fruitful for either professors or professionals, and second, the confusions and disconnections about the pertinence of such applied models to the provision and monitoring of standards in public education have led to the emergence of "state science" (p. 58) in the form of coherent, rational, and technical training and practice for the effective and efficient implementation causally linked to the delivery of output data (e.g., Metz & Bartley, 2012).

While Eacott's (2015) diagnosis is located in the Australian context, there is little that field members in other parts of the world would quibble with. Hence, relationality as the antidote to the Theory Movement, and more recent developments such as the Audit Movement led by heroic transformational leaders, is welcome and necessary. Such position taking connects with work in other fields, where for examples Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) read their "very practical and embedded" (p. 1429) data from Federal Security Directors in the USA, and so demonstrate that leadership is within "embedded experience and relationships" (p. 1429). While some researchers and fields are now recognizing relationality, Eacott (2015) shows this approach is deep within educational administration knowledge production, whereby the Greenfield contribution and legacy (e.g., Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) are evident in how the working lives of those who work in educational services are conceptualized and captured in different ways and in how methodological gains have been made (e.g., Ribbins, 1997). For example, Rodney Evans (1999) as a school principal embraces relationality where his focus on values rather than value, and on scientific inquiry rather than science, fits with Eacott's (2015) general direction of travel.

While embracing the criticality involved in Eacott's challenges and provision of a way forward that rejects and seeks alternatives to the ontology and epistemology within positivist (e.g., Caldwell & Spinks, 1988) and behaviorists (e.g., Hoy, Miskel, & Tarter, 2013) knowledge production, I have been provoked to contribute to thinking and debate in two main and interrelated ways. The first matter is about

how the field is characterized, and the second is with how criticality in relation to, within and for the field is scoped.

Eacott (2015) insists on calling educational administration a "discipline" and often interplays this with field. This needs attention. Educational administration is a field. What this means is that there is no agreed canon or methodology, but rather the approach is interdisciplinary regarding the humanities and social sciences as an intellectual resource. The field is therefore plural, but how ideas, methods, and strategies are accessed, combined, and deployed are a key feature in the construction of intellectual histories and resources for and about practice (e.g., Gunter, 2016a). The field is therefore replete with standpoints about and for plurality that can be ideological (spectrum positioning from right and left wing), professional (where a person earns their living, and hence has the job prescribed by that job), political (where ideology and job interplay regarding networked connections and networking processes), and contextual (where knowledge production if located within historical legacies that structure the opportunities afforded by agency). Hence, the promotion and adoption of relationality is a valid and welcome restatement of an approach within field intellectual traditions, but whether the normative claims made by Eacott (2015) are read, understood, accepted, and adopted is related to the objective relations within the field, and following Pierre Bourdieu how the field is positioned in relation to the fields of power and the economy (Thomson, 2005).

The ontology and epistemology of leaders, leading and leadership does not float free of how plural intellectual resources are recognized, and how this juxtaposed with standpoints. For example, Bristol in 1974 was the perfect location for Greenfield to make his challenge to the knowledge claims underpinning the Theory Movement. Not only was the time right to espouse that the separation of facts and values could no longer be tolerated, but also that this had not been the tradition in England anyway. My own research with UK field members has generated testimony that Greenfield was "pushing at an open door" and they did not really see what all the fuss was about (Gunter, 1999). While early field members had sought to establish the field in UK higher education through networking in Australia, Canada, and the USA, the field grew from practice where professional knowledge has normally trumped professorial knowledge. The strong tradition of the researching professional shifting identity and occupational location to become a professional researcher working in higher education with the researching professional is very strong. Such work can be through postgraduate programs and doctorates, training and professional development, as well as consultancy. Enabling of this is how the field is defined as inclusive of all, from parents and children, to professionals and to ministers (e.g., Baron, 1969).

So the "educational administration scholar" (p. 49) as a descriptive label speaks to a range of people in different occupational locations. In this sense, the notion of relationality in regard to situatedness is core to field dispositions, and also how the identities of those who moved into higher education from the 1960s onwards are rooted in their first occupations in schools and local administration is vitally important. Indeed, it could be argued that the core problem for the field in higher

education in England is that identity is primarily located in previous occupations with a predisposition to service solutions to policy changes taking place in local administration, without an evidence base that is grounded in educational research. The demand for high-quality primary research by universities, as distinct from problem solving for and with the researching professional has produced professional biographies for educational administration scholars that demonstrate a sense of being trapped between the demands of the academy and their orientation to serve the professional group that they continue to identify with (Gunter, 1997, 1999). In order to examine the claims for relationality as a methodology, then Eacott needs to map and examine the biographies of those who have and are constructing the field in Australia. The possibility exists to understand and explain whether the challenges of the Theory Movement are pertinent to those traditions but also how and why field members position their work in particular ways. While relationality is difficult to argue against (and who would want to do that?), the ontological and epistemological positions within a person's portfolio of projects and practices have to be understood within wider historical, political, and economic contexts (Gunter, 2012).

So Greenfield's challenge needs to be understood in relation to localized histories of knowledge production. But there is something else as well. There was a huge fuss regarding Greenfield's contribution and this played out publicly in journals and books. But there is a darker side, where in recalling the personal attacks (as distinct from debating ideas), Greenfield notes the inability of the field to engage in the type of debates that Eacott (2015) is promoting, and the pettiness that is evident in how he was excluded from field events. While some of this happens in public, such conduct endures but remains hidden within the field both in England and globally, where instead of engaging with debates about knowledge production there are struggles for positioning through assaults on personal lives and integrity. Eacott (2015) is helping by reminding us of our shared and distinctive histories and to push at the frontiers of how we think about and engage with knowledge, but the reasons why his claims may be rejected may not be to do with the elegance of his argument and the veracity of his evidence but to do with the fact that he has said it. Furthermore, Eacott has demonstrated the necessity to read, think, and write in ways that run contrary to much that is published and presented as educational leadership. This is hard but necessary work. Eacott is speaking to a field that works hard at being intellectually lazy, where there is an insatiable market for delivery techniques that do not need intellectual work.

This connects with my second point that has been stimulated by Eacott's (2015) engagement with how field purposes can be characterized and understood. Based on my work (Gunter, 2001) he aligns with and troubles the critical tradition, and such an approach is welcome and not new (e.g., Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). Criticality is not oppositional (though it can be unhelpfully characterized as this), but is about shifting attention away from the functional and normative modes of instrumental functional change toward the realities of doing the job. This is where Greenfield's legacy is alive and well, and it enables attention to be given to how people work and relate to each other in regarding to the division of labor, and the habits they have developed with each other (e.g., Gronn, 2009). However, in examining this position

in regard to distributed leadership, our team at Manchester identified the contribution from *socially critical* analysis (e.g., Gunter, Hall, & Bragg, 2013). Here we not only outlined the functional and critical resources, but how researchers seek to examine the power dimensions that raise critical questions about social justice. Notably, we consider the relationship between distributed leadership and power structures that deny access and opportunity (class, race, age, sexuality, gender), and we take seriously notions of democracy with a discussion about anarchy as the most authentic form of "distribution".

Eacott (2015) is troubled by socially critical approaches, where he raises a number of really important issues:

> In drawing on the social sciences, one is able to map the terrain using novel thinkers from elsewhere. As a result, the critical is often constrained within the critique. Unlike the instrumental, the scientific and the persuasive humanists, the critical does not offer the profession something tangible. (Eacott, 2015, p. 79)

We do need to consider what is gained by engaging with the conceptual tools provided by—often—dead French men. Much has been reported about such gains, particularly how descriptions, meanings, and explanations are different as a result of socially critical analysis (e.g., Anyon et al., 2009; Courtney, McGinity, & Gunter, 2017). However, it could be said, well she would say that wouldn't she? Yes, that is possible. I could be deluded or perhaps seeking to promote the book series that I am an editor for. But a more productive assessment is located in what socially critical ideas can and cannot do. Such ideas are not about the "terrain" but about how the researcher—and this can include professionals, children, parents—thinks about an issue or situation that constitutes that terrain. Hence, and following Greenfield, the terrain exists in espoused values and following Bourdieu the terrain is revealed through practice. In other words, thinking with theory and theorizing enables relationality to shift from understanding through sharing a situation to explaining that situation from which a way forward can be generated. So being a leader, doing leading and exercising leadership requires thinking, talking, and doing, is relational and this is intellectual practice. What is "tangible" are understandings and explanations that are not possible otherwise, and it is an educative learning process that is transferrable and developable to other situations. The question we have to ask ourselves is whether professionals are enabled to think in ways that give recognition to the "tangible" or rather reveal the disposition for the "tangibilities" that critical thinking generates.

There are moments when this is made public—my own doctoral students simultaneously display anger at being denied access to ideas and thinking that are tangible for their practice and excitement at how they can now move forward in ways that the technology of functionality denies. This is shared, where Stephen Ball gives an account of how professionals speak of his contribution as enabling them to understand that they are not responsible for the situation that they find themselves in (Gunter, 2013), and where head teachers (principals) use theory to bring new understandings to and for their practice (Addison, 2009). What this suggests to me is that instead of focusing on making the adjective in front of leadership work in

more interesting and valid ways, that we might stop engaging with what is and is not educational administration (and its hybrids and mutations such as "management", "leadership", "entrepreneurship") and instead focus on the power dimensions in how situatedness is understood and explained. For example, we might give attention to issues of equity or what it is like "relationally" for human beings in organizations, where power structures enable and limit agency (e.g., Blackmore, 1999; Blackmore & Sachs, 2007); or issues of change or what it is like "relationally" to bring about change (e.g., Ball, Maguire, Braun, Hoskins, & Perryman, 2012; Wrigley, Thomson, & Lingard, 2012); or issues of voice or what it is like "relationally" for elite leaders to create the conditions in which the led are actually enabled to lead (e.g., Smyth, 2006); or issues of community and what it is like "relationally" to act politically (Gandin & Apple, 2003).

Underpinning this is the need to not only know our field better through primary research but to give recognition to how the context in which we are doing it is anti-research. There are a number of key contextual issues that are visible in the context of England:

Post-factual/truth politics: this has been identified by Davies (2016), and I want to use it to recognize that lying has become a normalized political strategy where claims are made for which there is no evidence, or even major evidence to the contrary. For example, the Theresa May Government has decided to extend academic selection at the age of 11 with the expansion of Grammar Schools. The claim is made that this enables social mobility, and yet all the evidence from the 1950s (e.g., Jackson & Marsden, 1962) and subsequent historical analysis (e.g., Todd, 2014), as well as current debates (e.g., Gunter, 2016b; Gunter & Courtney, 2016), demonstrates that there is no evidence for this policy. Irritations with researchers can be dealt with by ignoring the claims or through speedy dismissal with exhortations to professionals to focus on what works. However, the situation has become more sinister with Michael Gove (Secretary of State of Education, 2010–2014) attacking professors who signed a letter regarding planned curriculum change, as "enemies of promise" and "the blob" (Gove, 2013), and more recently in the European Union (EU) referendum campaign he claimed that Britain has had enough of experts (Deacon, 2016).

Downton Abbey politics: this has been identified by Kettle (2013) who used it to talk about the state funeral for former UK prime minister Margaret Thatcher, and I want to think about how lying is a product of a social, economic, and political system in which elites dominate. It seems that certain values matter more than others, and where those who espouse those values are positioned in ways that mean others have to accept their claims without accountability. Where change can happen because it can, and there is no need for articulating plans as those in power are to be trusted as ideologically and practically in tune with public opinion as they "know best" (e.g., no clear definition or strategy for Brexit prior to the referendum of June 23, 2016). For example, there are now between 70 and 90 different types of schools in England (Courtney, 2015) with direct accountability through elected representatives being replaced through corporate elite networks and cultures. This is evident in a range of ways: first, the growth of philanthropy for the funding of educational

services, with wealthy individuals allowed to provide and control provision (Gunter, 2011); second, the corporatization of professional identities and practices through the creation of multiacademy trusts, where the links with the locality are tenuous and where provision has to fail in order for chief executives to be removed (Courtney, 2017); third, the creation of public education as the site for profitable business, where privatization is promoted through consultants, consulting, and consultancy from large global firms through to individuals who have been made redundant from public service (Gunter & Mills, 2017).

So following Eacott (2015), what it means to be an educational administration scholar when the notion of "administration" at the school level is under revision is to identify and name the lies, to work with professionals and parents as education scholars who recognize this, and to sustain a shared "scholarship with commitment" (Bourdieu, 2003) to keep certain truths alive. Again this is hard and relentless work, is rarely given media attention, but where there is a groundswell of activism that is both in sight but can be kept out of sight. In summary, socially critical approaches to how and why humans work together have the potential to enrich our research collaborations with a view to both satisfying the purposes of education and the production of world leading research.

Underpinning my reflexive analysis provoked by Eacott's (2015) significant contribution to the field is to ask myself why the field continues to exist? It exists in the first place because professionals sought to examine and think about their practice, and to do this, they networked and sought legitimation through professional and academic locations. It now exists in order to market solutions in order to deal with problems of profit maximization. The field in various locations (in schools, universities, offices, homes) have to take responsibility for this, and following Apple (2006) there is a need to respectfully recognize how market solutions speak to the concerns and aspirations of those who are deeply embedded in design, purchasing, and delivery. So perhaps the most appropriate position to take in response to Eacott's (2015) question is to work relationally within and for and about educational matters: teaching and learning. Perhaps this might connect educational administration with purposes and practices, and enable teachers, children, and parents to be the most important contributors to the field that they should own and lead. Such an approach is about enabling teachers, children, and parents to develop and deploy criticality in ways that are creative and enabling:

> Being critical, then, demands alertness and insight. Not all change leads necessarily to rewarding improvements, and many changes culminate in punishing losses for too many. Much of what is critical consciousness constitutes cultivating an awareness of the conditions of instability. These conjectures for configuration usually can become, for better or for worse, decisive turning points for all. What is critical? To recognize how much modern life adds up to being snared within permanent conditions of crisis. Failing to exercise informed judgment in comprehensive appraisals of these precarious conditions is deplorable. (Luke 2016, p. 4)

An example from everyday relational encounters illuminates the situation we are in. Two people have separately said to me that they have a right to an opinion—yes they do. We can have opinions about a range of things from taste of food to taste in

clothes, but when I said to one that the vote in the EU referendum and to another that state murder of citizens through "capital punishment" is not about opinions but is something more important, there was stunned silence. The idea that all we need to have is an opinion that is disconnected from evidence, debate, and "informed judgment" speaks to a democratic deficit that is profoundly dangerous. Where the borders lie between opinion, evidence, and decision making is integral to the purposes of and practices within education systems, and while relational leadership has the potential to enable us to think productively about this, it has to have socially critical purposes within design and delivery. The final word goes to Luke (2016): "the critical are those who judge, evaluate or analyze the ideas, performances or works of themselves and others in struggles of hope against defeat, improvement against debasement or humanity against brutality" (p. 4).

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Chapter 10
Relational Leadership: New Thinking or Established Ideas in "New Clothes"

Tony Bush

The terminology used to characterize school organization has shifted over the past 50 years, as noted by Scott Eacott. He argues that leadership has become the dominant focus of research attention in educational administration, but he adds that this is largely a change of label rather than substance. It should be noted that, in some contexts, including the UK, management supplanted administration as early as the 1980s, because administration in this context tends to denote routine processes. This is reflected in the gradual expansion of the title of its professional society to the British Educational *Leadership*, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS), and of its academic journal, educational management, administration, and *leadership* (Bush, 2016). The English National College for School Leadership (NCSL), founded in 2000, reinforced this shift (Bush, 2011). Elsewhere (Bush, 2008), I ask if this shift is purely semantic or signals a more fundamental change in the ways in which the field is understood and practiced. One fruitful line of inquiry might be changing assumptions about the link between structure and agency but Eacott (2015) argues that this "binary" distinction is not helpful. Indeed, he argues, too strongly, that "the boundaries between leadership, management, and administration blur until all that is left are the pre-existing normative assumptions of the researcher" (p. 43). I will return to this relationship later.

Eacott (2017) notes the "slippery" nature of leadership and criticizes its alignment with influence (e.g., Yukl, 1981) and with change (e.g., Caldwell, 2007). There are clearly definitional aspects around the meaning and value of leadership. One such issue relates to the relationship between leadership and vision, barely addressed by Eacott. Vision has been a significant element in leadership discourse for more than 20 years (Bush, 2011; Dempster & Logan, 1998; Southworth, 1993). The latter states that "leadership is the pursuit of … individual visions" (pp. 73–74). This emphasis has also been criticized, notably by Fullan (1992), Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington, and Weindling (1993) and more recently by Murphy and Torre (2015) who argue that "voice" is more important. Despite these critiques, vision has utility in that it offers a "sense of direction," regarded as a central element of successful schools, for example by Leithwood, Jantzi, and

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6568-2_10

Steinbach (1999). This also links to the articulation of sense of purpose; what are we trying to achieve, often encapsulated in mission statements? However, there is also a robust view that meaningful school-based visions are difficult to sustain because of external accountability pressures, for example from the English national inspection framework (OFSTED) (e.g., Bottery, 1998). Any vision you like as long as its the central government's (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). This critique links to the notion of context, discussed by Eacott. I will return to this issue later.

Addressing Binaries

Eacott notes the limitations of binary thinking, especially when encapsulated in distinctions between individual and collective and between structure and agency. Traditional approaches to understanding educational organizations have been dominant since the industrial revolution, through the work of Weber (1989). Briefly, this formal model of characterized by the following features:

- A hierarchical structure
- Goal seeking
- Rational decision making
- Positional authority
- Vertical accountability patterns.
  (Bush, 2011; Bush & Glover, 2014)

This model has been strongly challenged, notably by Greenfield (1973, 1975), as also noted by Eacott. There is insufficient space to rehearse all of Greenfield's arguments against the orthodoxy, but he was especially eloquent and persuasive in asking: "what is an organization that it can have such a thing as a goal?" (Greenfield, 1973, p. 553). In practice, such organizational goals tend to reflect the personal aims and values of senior members of the school, notably those of the principal. This view leads to consideration of the relationship between structure and agency. In the bureaucratic model, the structure is paramount, reflected in organizational charts (Bush, 2011). These figures are almost always vertical and are remarkably similar across national contexts. One central assumption underpinning such representations is that people are subordinate to the structure and that principal agency is limited. Little change is expected as one post-holder replaces another. Power accrues to principals because of their position, not because of their personal qualities.

Much leadership theory, in contrast, stresses, and often celebrates, the personal characteristics of the principal. Much of the literature suggests that principals should act in ways which are consistent with their values, professional, and personal and that these should anchor leadership practice. Because leaders differ in numerous ways, including background, experience, gender, ethnicity, and religion, they are thought to perceive events differently, leading to potentially different responses to

events, problems, and situations (Bush, 2011). The difficulty with this analysis is that it underestimates the accountability pressures associated with high-stakes testing. Even in ostensibly decentralized systems, leadership is constrained by systemic mandates and imperatives. Expressed differently, agency is shaped and limited by structure.

The other binary discussed by Eacott relates to the distinction between the individual and the collective. Much leadership theory, explicitly or implicitly, assumes either solo or shared leadership (e.g., Crawford, 2012). Managerial, transactional, and transformational approaches, for example, might be seen as individual while distributed, collegial, and participative models are usually portrayed as collective. Eacott comments on a shift from person-centric accounts to a recognition of practice being co-constructed by actors. Relational approaches are presented as an alternative to these binaries, as we shall see later.

Leadership Models: Normative or Operational

Theory is one of the four essential building blocks of school leadership. Alongside policy, research, and practice, it provides helpful insights into how schools are led and managed. The theory of leadership is important for two main reasons. First, it provides a way of understanding and interpreting the actions of leaders. Second, the understanding theory provides a guide to leadership practice for principals and other leaders. It widens horizons and avoids drawing only on the inevitably limited individual or collective experience of any school's leaders (Bush, 2016).

Leadership theory is subject to fashion, and models increase and decrease the perceived importance over time. The reasons for such changes are not always apparent, but one way of understanding them is through explicit recognition of the normative basis of leadership models. Eacott comments that "leadership is the articulation of a preexisting normative orientation. It is based on how one believes an organization, and individual actors within it, *ought* to behave" (original emphasis). This is true of much leadership theory but hardly applies to notions of political leadership, which has few "desirable" features or to the pragmatic notions underpinning contingency theory. However, the "ideological" nature of leadership language should help us to recognize the fallacy of relying on a single approach as the elixir for school improvement. As with managerial, collegial, and transformational approaches at different times in the last century, distributed leadership has become the normatively preferred leadership model in the twenty-first century. Its endorsement by the NCSL confirms this preference in the English context. I return to this model later.

The normative shift toward leadership has led to a plethora of different and competing, explanations about the nature of leadership, sometimes caricatured as "adjectival" leadership. I will briefly review some of these models, drawing on Leithwood et al. (1999), Bush (2011, 2016), and Bush and Glover (2014).

Managerial Leadership

As noted earlier, Leithwood et al. (1999) include managerial leadership as one of five models in their typology and add that, "there is evidence of considerable support in the literature and among practicing leaders for managerial approaches to leadership" (p. 15). They also note that "positional power, in combination with formal policies and procedures, is the source of influence exercised by managerial leadership" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 17). They also argue that influence is allocated in proportion to the status of those positions in the organizational hierarchy, strongly indicating that structure is more important than agency.

The difficulty with this leadership model is that it scarcely differs from management, suggesting that the differences between the two constructs may be exaggerated (Bush, 2016). One of the main problems is the danger of managerialism, where there may be value-free management, focusing on efficiency for its own sake, what Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p. 68) describe as "management to excess" where following procedures are more important than encouraging innovation or "agency."

Transformational Leadership

This model assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals, and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals, are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 9). Much of the visionary rhetoric associated with leadership arises from this model, as leaders are expected to inspire followers to perform at higher levels as they commit to what are presented as school goals. The transformational model stresses the importance of values, but the debate about its validity relates to the central question of "whose values?" Critics of this approach argue that the decisive values are often those of government or of the school principal, who may be acting on behalf of government. Educational values, as held and practiced by teachers, may be subjugated to internally or externally imposed values (Bush, 2016). This raises critical questions about the extent to which teachers may exercise "agency," rather than being limited by the structure.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is often with transformational approaches (Bush, 2011; Miller & Miller, 2001). Transactions involve an exchange process between leaders and followers. At its most basic, followers offer educational services, including

teaching, assessment, and student welfare, in exchange for salaries and other rewards. Principals may also seek the cooperation of staff and offer rewards, such as promotion or supportive references, in exchange. The major problem with this model is that it does not engage followers beyond the issue which is the subject of the exchange (Bush, 2016).

Eacott's discussion of relational leadership notes that it has been used synonymously with transactional approaches but that the latter arguably stresses structure more than agency, as leaders use their positional power to influence followers' actions.

Emotional Leadership

Crawford (2009) stresses that emotion is concerned with individual motivation and interpretation of events, rather than emphasizing the fixed and predictable aspects of leadership. This view echoes the earlier discussion about structure and agency. Beatty (2005, p. 124) makes a similar point. "When I look at Weber's iron cage of bureaucracy … I see rungs of emotional silence." She adds that hierarchy and stratification hamper the development of dynamic learning communities.

Distributed Leadership

The models discussed above are essentially about individual (usually principal) leadership. Crawford (2012) notes the shift from solo to shared leadership and attributes this, in part, to well-documented failures of high-profile "superheads" in England, leading to skepticism about individual, or "heroic," leadership. In Eacott's terms, this suggests a normative move toward collectivism.

Several shared models have been advanced in the literature, including collegiality, once described as "the official model of good practice" (Wallace, 1989) in England, and teacher leadership (Frost, 2008). Leithwood et al. (1999) include participative leadership as one of the five models in their typology derived from scrutiny of four leading journals. In the twenty-first century, however, the most favored shared model is distributed leadership.

Gronn (2010, p. 70) refers to a normative switch "from heroics to distribution" but also cautions against a view that distributed leadership necessarily means any reduction in the scope of the principal's role. Indeed, Hartley (2010, p. 27) argues that "its popularity may be pragmatic: to ease the burden of overworked headteachers." Heads and principals retain much of the formal authority in schools, leading Hartley (2010, p. 82) to conclude that "distributed leadership resides uneasily within the formal bureaucracy of schools." Harris (2005, p. 167) argues

that "distributed and hierarchical forms of leadership are not incompatible," but it is evident that distribution can work successfully only if formal leaders allow it to take root. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) also refer to the residual significance of authority and hierarchy, suggesting the enduring power of structure, despite Spillane's (2005) emphasis on interactions, suggesting a relational approach. Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling's (2009), distinction between allocative distribution, which links to the hierarchy, and emergent distribution, which may arise from anywhere in the organization, shows that the relative emphasis on structure and agency may differ, even within what is usually portrayed as a single model.

Distributed leadership provides the most significant contemporary example of the nature of theory in educational leadership. To what extent is theory a representation of practice (description), and to what extent does it constitute advocacy; a normative perspective? Lumby (2013, p. 582) comments that discussion of distributed leadership as a heuristic tool gave way to an evangelical approach, for example in NCSL publications. This may explain, in part, the frequent references to distributed leadership by participants in a study of English senior leadership teams at school rated as "outstanding" by OFSTED (Bush & Glover, 2012). Distributed leadership is the most recent model to be subjected to a strongly normative approach; "the theory of choice for many" (Lumby, 2013, p. 581).

Context and Contingency

Eacott discusses an apparent disconnect between leadership and context. "Leadership as a construct is essentially devoid of grounding in time and space. It is beyond content." He adds that "the holy grail" is to find the "definitive list" of behaviors, traits, and practices that have maximum utility, through a decontextualized, or context-free, version of leadership. While this is an understandable view, there are many counterarguments. Leithwood et al. (1999, p. 4) argue that leadership is exquisitely sensitive to the context in which it is exercised, while Southworth (2004, p. 77) notes that "one of the most robust findings is that where you are affects what you do as a leader."

Phil Hallinger's keynote presentation to the 2016 BELMAS conference, subsequently developed as a paper (Hallinger, forthcoming), discussed the centrality of context, focusing on "identifying, defining, and examining how school contexts influence leadership practice". He commented on the interrelationships between national, local, and institutional contexts, and might have added the international context, given the evidence of policy borrowing across education systems. He also noted the differences between rural and urban contexts, for example in China, and claimed that societal culture is given inadequate attention when seeking to explain the nature of school leadership. He concludes that "leadership practice results from an interaction between the individual (the person-specific context) and the broader context."

Contingent Leadership

Contingent leadership acknowledges the diverse nature of school contexts, and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a "one size fits all" stance. The educational context is too complex and unpredictable for a single leadership approach to be adopted for all events and issues. Leaders need to be able to read the situation and adopt the most appropriate response. Contingent leadership is pragmatic, rather than normative, but it provides a helpful way to avoid excessive dependency on the latest "fad" and enables leaders to assess what works best for the specific context. Claims about the universal utility of anyone leadership theory should be challenged (Bush, 2016). As Lambert (1995, p. 2) notes, there is "no single best type." The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts, and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a "one size fits all" stance.

As Eacott notes, some normative approaches to leadership assume that "good" leaders can operate equally well regardless of context. This is evidenced in the English government's plans to offer rewards to heads willing to move to challenging inner city or coastal contexts, regardless of whether they have previous experience of working in such settings. Similarly, China has begun to deploy "successful" heads to underperforming schools, with mixed results (Ping, in preparation).

The prevalence of so many leadership models provides the "raw material" for a contingent approach and demonstrates the pluralist nature of the field, with more voices and perspectives. To claim that leadership is universal defies the evidence, from both theory and practice, that a more nuanced and selective approach is required to align leadership and context.

Leadership and School Improvement

What Eacott describes as "the unquestioned belief in leadership" means that there is widespread confidence that it can (and does) make a major contribution to school improvement. He argues that "much of the scholarship of educational administration is focused on the improvement of practice." This is a valid claim but, if theory is irrelevant to practice, it can easily be dismissed as arid and esoteric, a product of the classic ivory tower. The real challenge is to conduct more research that explores, without preconceptions, whether and how leadership practice is informed by theory, whether explicit or implicit. A contemporary example relates to instructional leadership, which is being advocated by governments in some of the most centralized systems in the world, for example in Malaysia and Thailand, in defiance of the administrative norms which have underpinned such systems for generations (e.g., Hallinger & Lee, 2014). These prescriptions are based on a belief (or

"theory") that adopting instructional leadership would enhance school and student outcomes. This has some empirical support (e.g., Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe, 2008), but Viviane Robinson and colleagues' synthesis relates to studies undertaken in very different contexts from some of those where instructional approaches are now being advocated.

The discussion of context in this chapter shows that the search for universal panaceas or "best practice" is doomed to failure. This is even more evident when the "best practice" is drawn from non-educational contexts such as business settings, as advocated by the former Teacher Training Agency (TTA, 1998) in England. Even within education, let alone beyond, "it is not always clear what constitutes best practice … there are different approaches and contending schools of thought" (Glatter, 1997, p. 187). Research about "what works," and in what contexts, is required to provide evidence, and "grounded theory," about how leadership may lead to school improvement.

Recent evidence in England (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins, 2006), and internationally (Robinson et al., 2008), provides powerful empirical support for the widely accepted view that the quality of leadership is a critical variable in securing positive school and learner outcomes. Leadership is second only to classroom teaching in its potential to generate school improvement. However, much less is known about how leaders impact on outcomes. While "quick fix" solutions to school underperformance, often involving strong managerial leadership, can produce short-term improvement, sustainable progress is much harder to achieve (Bush, 2016).

While this evidence is persuasive, it does not address the underlying question about whether successful leaders have changed their behaviors to enact leadership rather than administration or management. We should also note the caution expressed by Leithwood (1994) that the differences between leadership, management, and administration are not easily observable in the practices of school principals. If behavioral changes are not observable, they are unlikely to be significant. Leithwood et al. (1999) also include managerial leadership in their typology, a model which is very similar to contemporary definitions of management (Bush, 2011). The reality may be that leadership is normatively preferred, as in the name chosen for the NCSL, but that practice has changed more slowly, if at all.

What Can We Learn from Relational Approaches?

Eacott describes a "relational" way of thinking as "beyond" leadership, but it could readily be regarded as a different approach to conceptualizing and understanding leadership. As noted earlier, this is "crowded territory," with many different leadership models (Bush, 2011; Bush & Glover, 2014). For relational approaches to have a significant impact on leadership theory, they need to offer something distinctive, going beyond current and previous models. In this section, I consider whether, and to what extent, this has been achieved.

Eacott's intention is to "unsettle" many of the normative assumptions about leadership and to "disrupt the dominant epistemologies and methodologies of educational administration." As noted earlier, the influence of leadership theory is temporal, so notions of dominance are fluid. Eacott argues that "everybody of leadership literature includes a degree of advocacy." While this is debatable, it appears to be accurate in respect of the relational approach.

The components of relational thinking, as discussed by Eacott, include the view that it is a social construction; "a recognition of practice being co-constructed by actors." However, it could be argued that this has many similarities with two current models, subjectivist and distributed leadership. Greenfield's (1973) classic work on subjective leadership (see Bush, 2011) focuses on the individual interpretation of events but Strain (1996) argues that the social world spans the individual and the collective. Eacott rejects such binary thinking, but he also notes that the relational approach privileges the situated nature of actions, apparently acknowledging the interaction between actions and context, although he claims that relations "constitute contexts" rather than "taking place in a context." This is a fine-grained distinction which may be difficult to sustain. Eacott seeks to "honor" Greenfield's work, among others, but a fuller consideration of the connections to, and differences between, his writing would be helpful in delineating the space occupied by relational thinking.

The social construction of practice seems to overlap with several aspects of distributed leadership theory. Bennett, Harvey, Wise, and Woods (2003, p. 3) state that "distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of individuals, in which group members pool their expertise." Eacott notes the links between relational thinking and networks but, arguably, they need to be explored more fully. Relational theory also seems to connect with Spillane's (2005) view that distributed leadership focuses on *interactions*, rather than actions. Distributed leadership is uncoupled from positional authority and Harris (2004) claims that it is a form of collective action. This suggests co-construction, but Eacott does not consider whether and how relational theory connects with, and differs from this, currently popular model.

Eacott acknowledges that his work is not the definitive word on the relational approach but is grounded in the belief that there is a need to promote a narrative of rigorous and robust scholarship in educational administration. He has succeeded in locating relational thinking on the map of leadership theory, but more analysis is required to assess how it fits with contemporary understanding of schools and what may be its distinctive contribution to establish notions of organizations.

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Chapter 11
Relational Goods, Democracy, and the Paradox of Epistemic Privilege

Fenwick W. English

Scott Eacott's passionate advocacy for a relational approach to researching in educational administration borders on missionary zeal. It is almost a catechism. In his exposition of the virtues of adopting his version of a relational approach, he derides and criticizes much contemporary research on leadership as unproblematic and tautological where the a priori presence of a leader position in a bureaucracy is used as the raison d'étre for leadership itself (Eacott, 2015, p. 20). His disdain for much traditional "leadership studies" as amounting to a kind of folk wisdom is continuously hammered for the lack of scientific rigor replete with the absence of a specialized and technical terminology as dysfunctional and pre-scientific at best, self-deluding at worst. His sweeping indictment of an entire genre of prior research in the field is a trenchant manifesto, and while some of his targets are justifiably unmasked, and flawed claims and arguments exposed and deconstructed, I am reminded of a quote from Bagehot that, "To illustrate a principle you must exaggerate much and you must omit much" (as cited in Hoffer, 1951, p. 59).

Eacott indicates that "I (he) outline and defend a particular 'scientific' view of scholarship before using that perspective to criticize existing administrative theories" (Eacott, 2015, p. 1). This critical gaze advances the alleged superiority of this "scientific approach" of the relational perspective and the shortcomings, fallacies, and flaws of other perspectives, but conceals a paradox, i.e., what is distinctive and also superior than all the rest, cannot simultaneously be construed as universal like all the rest, i.e., relational. Relationality is more than simple civility or even mutual respect; rather it is centered on the more rational principles of reciprocity and at least intellectual parity among viewpoints so that there is an exchange "which are irreducible to each, such as values, norms, goals and means used" (Donati, 2012, p. 73). This is clearly not the case with Eacott's advocacy and criticisms of educational administration and its lack of alleged scientificity as I shall try to illustrate in this brief chapter.

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The Criticality of an Entry Point or Lincoln's Broadsword Advantage

Eacott's insistence that his criticisms of traditional leadership research are not an attempt to discredit past work which has avoided "…the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of scholarship which limits what can and cannot be said about the research object" (Eacott, 2015, p. 100), the relational perspective as explicated amounts to that because his approach is touted as superior in standing. By setting the standards firmly within the proposed virtues of a scientific relational approach, Eacott forces all of the alternatives to abide by its rules which carry a distinctive advantage in an argument about so-called "scientific rigor." If something can be branded as "pre-scientific" than it is impossible by definition for it to be considered scientifically rigorous. It is proof by tautology.

I am reminded of Abraham Lincoln's triumph in personal combat which occurred quite early in his political career. As a jejune state level politician, Lincoln had engaged in anonymous personal ad hominin attacks on a political rival in a local newspaper journal. When the recipient of the attacks found out, it was Lincoln who had written them he challenged the future sixteenth President of the USA to a duel. Lincoln, aware that his adversary was an excellent shot with a pistol, had the prerogative of selecting the weapons. He chose cavalry broadswords which at his height of six feet, four inches (the tallest US President in history) meant his arms and legs were considerably longer than his adversary who stood only five feet nine inches tall. Lincoln's choice of weapons gave him a decided advantage in engaging in a form of lethal joust (White, 2009, p. 115). Eacott's purpose is not to compare the relational approach to others noting strengths and weaknesses, but, "My intellectual project—an ongoing and generative one—is to recast educational administrative labour and the relations between the researcher and the researched" (Eacott, 2015, p. 7). Thus, Eacott's effort is not a dialogue, but a calculated intervention and a conversion of the thinking and research practice in the field.

A paradoxical situation exists with Eacott's caustic review of past research projects in educational administration, including the An Exceptional Schools Outcome Project (AESOP, e.g., Dinham, 2005, 2007) and the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP, e.g., Day & Gurr, 2014), where he postulates that what he is seeking is "a space where we can communicate and engage around the research object, how we know it, and what we can say about it" (Eacott, 2015, p. 102.) Such a space becomes the "point of entry" without which,

> … the parallel monologues of the domain persist and will arguably never close. Importantly my argument is not for a single approach or position for the scholarship of educational administration. The loss of diversity would be detrimental to advancing knowledge. … what I am arguing for … is a means for intertradition dialogue. Not speaking past one another, or ignoring each other. … All approaches are related in the dynamics of the social world and there are productive spaces yet to be engaged with at scale. (Eacott, 2015, pp. 102–3)

At least this reviewer fails to see how there can be a dialogue among equals (something Fraser (2007) has called "participatory parity", p. 20) when some of them have already been declared "pre-scientific" and loaded with imprecise language which, according to Eacott prohibits adequate theorizing from occurring and thus denies such efforts the sobriquet of being "scientific." This may be what is meant with the term "at scale." Some perspectives are at a much larger scale than others. Clearly, they are all not at the same scale.

It should be recalled that in true Bourdeusian conceptualizing all social spaces are hierarchical with competing individuals and groups vying for supremacy (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]). Since there is no ultimate authority in any field by a person or group which bestows legitimacy, such competition is continuous (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990[1970]). Eacott (2015) acknowledges this notion when he says, "What I see happening in the disciplinary space to which I pledge allegiance is a theoretical problem around legitimation" (p. 141). Within such a space, Eacott sees a dialogue as advantageous to the advancement of knowledge, but dialogue is going to be decidedly unequal with some views already bracketed as lacking scientific credibility and hence denied serious academic standing. They can only be minor gods at best in the scientific pantheon and some will have little to no status in any kind of legitimate conversation because ultimately legitimacy is acquired by acquiring greater cultural, symbolic and social capital in competition with rival perspectives or interests. The conceptual/intellectual subordination of some perspectives at the outset, i.e., that some are "pre-scientific" and/or mostly folk wisdom based, means there isn't going to be much of a dialogue. Rather it is much more likely to be a monologue and cancel out any true reciprocal relational approach.

The point of entry is the playing of the game of relations with loaded dice. If the game is "correct" science, the fight is fixed. It's Lincoln's broadswords and not pistols. The only way other perspectives have to be an equal competitor is to embrace Eacott's relational approach. That is to accept Eacott's "re-casting" project and convert their approach to his. How this point of entry advances knowledge is decidedly Procrustean in nature. It is knowledge of only one kind defined by only one set of rules. It is the enshrinement of "epistemic privilege." Thus, the matter comes down to the issue of "who defines the rules" by which we determine what is true or not, or what is "science" or not, when one position is from the outset sanctioned over all the others? In this situation, the result is going to continue to be talking past one another or ignoring one another.

I would argue that unless there is some kind of "participatory parity" from the beginning a dialogue is impossible. As Fraser (2007) notes one of the obstacles to such parity is, "… institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that deny them (some people) the requisite standing … in that case they suffer from status inequality" (p. 20). Such status inequalities are huge in the scientific world where paradigmatic dominance is a prized position, and where alternative perspectives are relegated to the dustbin of "non-science" and hence have no legitimate standing in academic discourse (e.g., Kuhn, 1962).

In contrast to Eacott's advocacy of an approach to an epistemic discussion in which his own "scientific" view is privileged at the outset, is the concept advanced by Scollon and Scollon (2003) of "inter-discourse communication" in which one person who identifies within multiple discourses interacts with another person who is a member of different discourse systems. As Scollon and Scollon (2003) write, "An interdiscoursive approach to intercultural communication has led us to prefer to set aside any a priori notions of group membership and identity and to ask instead how and under what circumstances concepts such as culture (and I would add here the concept of 'science') are produced by participants as relevant categories for interpersonal ideological negotiation" (p. 544). The idea of a relational approach would at first make such a promise of true ideological negotiation possible. However, grounding a view that privileges only one perspective (science) and relegates all the rest to a lower status (pre-scientific) cancels out any kind of epistemic parity.

The Epistemological Break with the Language of the Everyday

Eacott positions the *relational* approach as superior than others because it engages in questioning preexisting assumptions regarding epistemology and ontology while others have ignored or been ignorant of these issues. This is what is meant by an epistemological break. The signature of that break is to abandon everyday language and substitute in its place a more scientific and precise vocabulary, or in Eacott's (2015) own words, "…researchers need to combat and systematically resist the infiltration of ordinary language and spontaneous understanding of the social world" (p. 24). Such a break provides for a "grounding of observations in time and space which make them empirically defensible" (Eacott, 2015, p. 131). Exactly, how this occurs is a mystery, that is, how such a break enables observations to become more "empirically defensible" is far from clear. In the typical research tradition, an empirically defensible observation is established via triangulation with other observations or sources (Briggs & Coleman, 2009, pp. 100–101).

Eacott decries the use of an "ordinary vocabulary" in contemporary scholarship in our field (pp. 11, 17, 25, 76, 87) and stresses that the presence and use of a special vocabulary become the basis for ascertaining if a viewpoint can be considered scientific (Eacott, 2015, pp. 17, 24, 26). The function of the assertion amounts to the creation of a line of demarcation that is the point at which one can decide if a perspective is scientific or pre-scientific (non-scientific). What Eacott has attempted to establish is a meta-criterion for justification for sorting superior and subordinate rival epistemic narratives into two basic camps. Lakatos (1998) has called this the "demarcation problem" as the "normative appraisal of scientific theories; and, in particular the problem of stating universal conditions under which a theory is scientific" (p. 168). Eacott poses the line of demarcation similarly to

what Michel Foucault called (1972) the point of scientificity. This is a place in a social space or field in which it is established what counts and what doesn't as "correct" knowledge. Once established, all knowledge prior to the point of scientificity is earmarked as "the field of memory" which consists of content that is "no longer accepted or discussed, and which consequently no longer define either a body of truth or a domain of validity" (p. 58).

Eacott (2015) has decided that prior to the adoption of the relational approach the "scientific study" of the field has not yet arrived when he said that one of his aims was "to break new ground methodologically for the 'scientific' study of educational leadership, management and administration" (p. 139). The insistence on this point is underscored by the fact that the largest category in the subject index of Eacott's (2015) work is devoted to science and its derivatives of or about science. Fully, 13% of all the references deal with these issues. In a contrast to other explications of relational sociology, Donati (2012) has none, and Crossley (2012) has only five, but none of the five references avers the lack of science itself or the absence of a "correct" science as Eacott postulates in educational leadership, administration, and management.

I want to argue that neither linguistic precision nor esoteric language is necessarily more truthful than those statements less precise nor abstruse, nor is it necessarily an indication of scientific rigor, nor of some content being labeled "scientific" and other content being considered "non-scientific." In otherwords, the use of ordinary or special languages cannot be used as a reliable line of demarcation between science and non-science.

Eacott's (2015) inspiration for this view comes from Pierre Bourdieu when he says, "As with Bourdieu, I have a belief in science. An alignment with the view of science, and more specifically scientific inquiry, as an act of distinction from ordinary language and the underproblematized view of the social world *as it is*" (p. 17). While Eacott appears to be convinced of Bourdieu's assertions regarding the use of special language which is not ordinary, other sociologists have demurred on this point.

For example, Jenkins (2002) writes that Bourdieu's power is "considerably undermined by the nature of the language that he uses and his writing style" (p. 9).

> Idiosyncratic uses and neologisms, allied to frequently repetitive, long sentences which are burdened down with a host of subclauses and discursive detours, combine with complicated diagrams and visual schemes to confront the reader with a task that many, whether they be undergraduates, postgraduates or professional social scientists, find daunting…I will argue in a later chapter, are unnecessarily long-winded, obscure, complex, intimidating. He does not have to write in this fashion to say what he wants to say (pp. 9–10).

Jenkins (2002) also refutes the premise that contextual complexity requires the type of language used by Bourdieu when he notes, "I do not think that his use of language—his choice of words and his overall style—is in any way entailed by the nature of complexity of his substantive subject matter or his theory" (p. 163). In otherwords, the social reality which Bourdieu is describing does not require a

writing style and vocabulary which is opaque, obscure, and overly idiosyncratic, i.e., complex.

Another French sociologist, Verdes-Leroux (2001), a researcher at the National Center for Sociological Research in Paris, similarly critiques Bourdieu's construction of a unique and uncommon vocabulary to protect against distortion. She calls such writing, "… an exercise of lofty rhetoric, very frequent in Bourdieu, is not only an exercise in 'stylistic arrogance' underscoring the theoretical magisteriality exerted by he who writes; a stereotype of symbolic violence, if functions effectively to protect the statement from any discussion" (p. 13).

Verdes-Leroux (2001) notes with some degree of sarcasm that instead of saying "the occupants of temporally dominated positions in the field of power" one would simply say "intellectuals" and likewise instead of writing, "the built-in structures of anticipation" one would write, "expectations" that clarity is achieved without sacrificing complexity (p. 79). Eacott does not provide any examples of how an uncommon language would enable a type of writing to be considered "scientific" instead of "unscientific" or even "pre-scientific."

Furthermore, when a researcher engages in the use of such distinctive and uncommon terminology, the task of translation to a common vocabulary almost always has to accompany it for readers, even those in the same field, to understand what is being proposed, discussed or asserted. Despite a more precise, or in the same vein as Bourdieu, lexicon that is peculiar (not scientific), greater clarity may prove to be illusive. A highly technical or esoteric terminology is not linguistically secure or final. For words to be understood via definition, one always uses an undefined word to define a word. This is the problem of infinite regress (Haack, 1996, pp. 21–22).

Brown (1977) has argued that all of the social sciences are suffused with metaphorical images and usages and that "the failure to recognize the metaphorical character of 'scientific' language leads one to mistake the proper metaphorical nature of theories, models and representations" (p. 102). I would argue that the complexity, technicity, or power of any theory, approach or model, does not have to depend on those arcane, abstruse or uncommon words to be considered scientific. In fact, the power of such theories or approaches to be understood in the language of the ordinary is the index to be measured by. I cite here two examples of writers who have been identified as unusually clear in the academic prose using everyday language, Karl Popper and Bertrand Russell (Edmonds & Eidinow, 2001).

Edmonds and Eidinow (2001) describe how each of these philosophers dealt with linguistic precision:

> Russell had pioneered the analysis of concepts, and, like Popper, thought this could often clarify issues and clear away the fog which surrounded them. But, also like Popper, he believed precision was not the be-all and end-all. Popper pointed out that scientists managed to accomplish great things despite working with a degree of linguistic ambiguity. Russell averred that problems would not disappear even if each word were carefully defined. (p. 237)

The Fallacy of Epistemic Exchange in a Relational Approach Anchored in the "New" Science: The Loss of Relational Goods

Eacott extends an argument advancing, "An interrogation of the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of research, those underlying generative principles, is imperative for advancing a rigorous and robust research programme" (p. 27). In doing so, "I am going to argue that a relational approach breaks down the epistemic boundaries of objects (e.g. leaders, schools, systems) and in doing so recasts educational administrative labour" (p. 50). Finally, Eacott admits that he is arguing for "…a re-thinking of scientific inquiry in educational administration" (p. 17).

I will argue that the imposition of the agenda to recast educational administration, so as to be amenable to a new science which casts all previous approaches into the "field of memory" as "pre-scientific" insures that there is not likely to foster a "productive space into being" (Eacott, 2015, p. 66) that is pluralistic. Rather what will be the result is a non-relational approach that is monopolistic, exclusionary, and elitist.

Donati (2015) has created criteria to determine if relationality is positive and leads to the creation of relational goods, or creates the opposite of relational evils. He defines relational goods as "a type of goods that are neither material things, nor ideas, nor functional performances but consist, instead, of social relations…" (p. 198). Donati (2015) indicates that "…these goods can be produced and obtained only through positive reciprocal actions" (p. 199). Similarly, his discussion and explication of the nature of relational goods shed some light on why competitive interests are not likely to result in the production of relational goods. A relational good occurs "…when participating individuals themselves produce and enjoy it together" (p. 199). Furthermore, according to Donati, "Relational goods have an intrinsically democratic character in that they distinguish themselves from bureaucratic organizations that act by command and generate goods that redound to their surrounding community's benefit…" (p. 200).

Donati (2015) sets forth six criteria that define a relational good, among them the condition that the personal and social identity of the participants is known and that the participants genuinely care about one another. A key criterion is that "conduct is inspired by the rule of reciprocity" and further that there is "total sharing" so that it comes into being "if and only if the participants generate and enjoy it together" (p. 212). These indices seem to be the opposite of how Bourdieu (1998[1994]) describes the workings of a social space and a field permanently in competition and conflict and even Kuhn's (1962) work with paradigmatic conflict, combat, and change. These are the "normal" rules of science and intellectual and philosophical dominance and subordination which is a permanent feature of what has been colloquially called "the paradigm wars" between entity and relational scholars (Hosking, Shamir, Ospina, and Uhl-Bien, 2012, p. 502) of which an excellent example is illustrated in Edmonds & Eidinow's (2001) account of a ten-minute argument between Karl Popper and Ludwig Wittgenstein which occurred in

October of 1946 at King's College, Cambridge University, before the weekly discussion group, the Moral Science Club.

These two giants in the field of philosophy exchanged heated words before Bertrand Russell and others regarding what Eacott would term an epistemic and ontological exchange regarding whether philosophy was an inquiry into the nature of what Popper perceived as very large problems or Wittgenstein who denied there were large problems, only "puzzles" about language. Wittgenstein focused on linguistic issues and he had "a passion for exactitude in all things: a thing was either exact or it was not, and if it was not, it was literally too painful to endure" (Edmonds & Eidinow, 2001, p. 198). It was during the exchange with Popper that Wittgenstein took the poker from the coals in the fireplace and brandished it in the air and then abruptly left the room.

Donati (2015) would label this exchange an evil relational good. Both men despised one another, believed the other to be fundamentally wrong in his views, and each went to great pains to discredit and demean the other on every occasion possible. There was no positive reciprocity between them, not even a quid pro quo. Epistemic and or ontological discussions have proven to be some of the most violent confrontations in the history of the evolution of human thought, with many prior thinkers and scholars also ridiculed or banished to some who were tortured or burned at the stake. When Eacott (2015) asserts that, "I am going to argue that a relational approach breaks down the epistemic boundaries of objects (e.g., leaders, schools, and systems) and in doing so recasts educational administrative labour" (p. 50) I have the gravest doubts. My view of such epistemic revelations is that they are among the most difficult, intractable, and volatile of human exchanges, overlaid with the politics of domination, power, hierarchy, competition, and academic settings are no exception to such activities and conflict.

Conclusion

There is much I admire in Eacott's book. Whether I agree with him or not he has raised important issues for the future of our field, ones that will continue to be discussed and debated. I am hopeful that in my comments we can produce a relational good as defined by Donati (2015):

> In essence, relational goods are those immaterial entities (intangible goods) that consist of social relations that emerge from subjects' reflexivity that is oriented toward producing and enjoying together, in a shared manner, a good that they could not obtain otherwise (p. 213).

I leave it to our readers to decide.

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Chapter 12
Educational Administration and the Relational Approach: Can We Suffice Contextual-Based Knowledge Production?

Izhar Oplatka

History is replete with intellectual struggles and ferments as well as reflections over a field's nature, methodologies, purposes, boundaries, and knowledge base. Since the establishment of educational administration as an academic field of study, scholars have narrated its intellectual history (e.g., Callahan, 1962; Culbertson, 1988; Donmoyer, 1999; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Murphy & Forsyth, 1999), sought to understand the theoretical and practical nature of the field (e.g., Boyan, 1981; Eacott, 2013; Heck, 2006; Ribbins, 2006), and reviewed the knowledge to obtain an overview of the dominant concerns and trends within the field using textbooks, curricula, course syllabi, proceedings of international conferences, doctoral dissertation, and journal articles (e.g., Haller & Knapp, 1985; Oplatka, 2008, 2013; Swafford, 1990). Debates about the ways of knowing, doing, and being in the social world have been central to advancing scholarship.

Eacott's (2015) book continues these scholarly streams of thoughts and reflections upon the field. The author criticizes current administrative theories and develops a distinctive alternative, one that he labels a relational approach in educational administration. He further asks what the large-scale theoretical and empirical problems on which educational administration is based are and his answers along the book are based on critical social theory that originated in sociology. This approach views knowledge as socially constructed and distributed and claims that the contemporary social conditions cannot be separated from the ongoing and inexhaustible, recasting of administrative labor.

A central feature of the relational approach, according to Eacott, is that an organizing action cannot be separated from the contemporary conditions in which it is enacted, i.e., it is highly contextualized rather than universal. This is in contrast to mainstream rhetoric in educational administration that seeks to construct universal lists, frameworks, capabilities, or standards for leadership (e.g., school effectiveness, excellent educational leaders). In this sense, the contents of all knowledge must be produced socially and require a determination of the carriers of such knowledge—of a social category, group, community, or subculture (Bohme, 2005).

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
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Thus, it is the societal orientation of science that insures what kind of knowledge we ultimately have in science and what social processes are responsible for the inner structure of knowledge and its conceptual apparatus (Stehr & Meja, 2005). Knowledge is neither context-independent nor politically indifferent and constrained by social factors and contexts of power that are in essence classificatory, cognitive systems in which symbolic capital circulates (Bourdieu, 1975; Fuller, 1993).

In this response chapter, I would like to propose a counterargument that draws on the literature about the school as an organization (developed initially in sociology of education and later on in the field of educational administration) and on the literature about disciplinarity (the field that explores the structure and processes of academic disciplines). Briefly speaking, while context matters, many features of the school as an organization (e.g., teaching, culture) are universal to such an extent that they allow the foundation of a field of study (educational administration). This field explores and examines similar organizational phenomena worldwide. Consequently, this field is supposed to engender common conceptualization and models of these and related phenomena (e.g., educational leadership). In the remainder of this chapter, I extend the debate about these issues.

Isomorphism: The Culture of Teaching (Technology) and Its Impact

From the relational approach, as Eacott indicated, it is the context in both temporality and social spatial terms that gives behaviors or interventions meaning and significance. The philosophies of the individual, though, cannot be separated from their location in time and space, i.e., educational leaders' conjectures and role perceptions are entwined within their value system and the spirit of time.

Whereas the context plays a salient role in our explorations of educational administration and leadership, yet its influence upon these organizational phenomena is constrained by major elements of the school organization such as the culture of teaching and the nature of the school's main technology (i.e., teaching). Put another way, I argue that the unique characteristics of the teaching profession, the core technology of the school organization, are more universal than particular and therefore they engender similar professional and organizational contexts for schoolteachers and educational leaders worldwide. This, in turn, not only enables the foundation of a field of study named educational administration whose goal, among other things, is to provide educational administrators with common, universal theories, models, and applied insights into their job. I elaborate on these arguments in the next pages.

Teaching has long been conceived of by education scholars as a very inchoate, immeasurable, and messy profession that resembles art rather than science, because it involves artistic judgment about the best ways to teach and is based primarily on

feelings and invention (Doyle, 1990; Munthe, 2003; Todd, 2012). It is unlikely to have a simple set of easily prescribed behaviors that invariably add up to teaching effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995). In addition, teachers' personal constructions and images of what it means to be a professional teacher, have been influenced to some extent by national cultural scripts, historical forces, school culture, social myths, public discourses, and the general environment (Goodson, 1997; Korthagen, 2004; Moore, 2004). Thus, teacher identities are constructed both from what Day (2002) calls "the technical aspects of teaching," and from what Van den Berg (2002) observed as, "the interaction between the personal experiences of teachers and the social, cultural, and institutional environment in which they function on a daily basis" (p. 579).

To this point, though, the reader may feel that the relational perspective coincides with conceptualizations of teaching as a contextual-based profession. But, a deeper look at the attempts to conceptualize teaching in recent decades shows that education scholars share similar points of view with regard to the major tasks of both elementary and secondary schoolteachers worldwide; they are pedagogical and instructional in character (e.g., Connell, 2009; Gordon, 2010; Moore, 2004; Pearson, 1989; Wu, 2004; Yildirim, 2003) Thus, a teacher's fundamental obligation everywhere is to teach, develop, and prepare pupils for participation in the wider society. The teacher is not merely in school to teach, but rather is expected to stimulate and promote learning processes among the pupils if adequate "right" teaching is to occur (Pearson, 1989; Osei, 2006). I have never heard about a class or a school whose focus is not on learning promotion and processes.

Teachers worldwide face similar problems stemming from the semiprofessional nature of their profession; they hold less-specialized knowledge base, vulnerable to state interference resulting in decreased level of role autonomy and lack control over standards of entry into the profession (Lortie, 1975; Sadovnik, Cookson, & Semel, 2001). They also consider their training to have little to do with their work (Tyler, 1988), perhaps because teaching lacks an objective body of knowledge available to teachers to guide their practice into which new teachers need to be inducted (Furlong, 2001). The research has consistently provided evidence of this kind from different countries.

Waves of globalization and internationalization, leading to new educational reforms (e.g., accountability, marketization) in many countries, have resulted in an increased workload for teachers, intensity of investments in meeting their students' needs, increasing external pressures, extension of responsibilities and multiple, even contradictory tasks and obligations (Odhiambo, 2005; Oplatka, Foskett, & Hemsley-Brown, 2002; Oplatka, 2007; Somech & Oplatka, 2014; Timms & Brough, 2013). In the Netherlands, for example, the teacher's work has become considerably more complex, and teachers are being confronted by a variety of expectations with regard to how they should work that have been formulated by diverse groups of stakeholders (Van Veen, Sleegers, Bergen, & Klassen, 2001). Similarly, a study in England found that teachers are under pressures to "cover the content" and adopt didactic pedagogies of examinations and results (Helsby, 1999).

These pressures have been reported by teachers in different countries during the last decade (e.g., Moore, 2004; Odhiambo, 2005; Osei, 2006; Yildirim, 2003).

As the technology usually shapes the structure of the organization (Meyer, Scott, & Deal, 1992), I would like to argue that the common features of the teaching profession across national and cultural boundaries are likely to shape similar structural contexts for teachers and educational leaders worldwide. Illustrative of this is our visits to school overseas when we realize that schools all over the world are built in a similar way, including classes, yard, staffroom, the principal's room, the assistant principals' rooms, laboratories, library. Students are given a weekly schedule, and educational leaders should engage with teachers, pupils, stakeholders, and politicians.

A support to my claim in that teachers and educational leaders share similar organizational and professional contexts worldwide we gain from the literature about the school organization originated in sociology of organization and extended by educational administration scholars in the subsequent years. Accordingly, the school has long been conceived of as a unique type of organization defined by Tyler (1988) as "a localized administrative entity concerned with the face-to-face instruction of the young" (p. 224). It is described as a "loosely coupled system" (Weick, 1982) which means that structure is disconnected from technical work activity, and activity is disconnected from its effects. Purposes and programs are poorly and uncertainly linked to outcomes; rules and activities are disconnected, and internal organizational sectors are unrelated (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). Consequently, educational leaders need to manage their school in a way that differs from business administration characterizing in the industrial and service sectors.

One aspect of the loosely coupled system refers to the isolating condition of teachers' work. Despite attempts to promote teacher collaboration in many educational systems (Ben-Peretz & Schonmann, 2000; Galton & MacBeath, 2008), teachers still spend their time in individual classrooms with little feedback, little opportunity to interact with other adults during the workday, and with maximum responsibility to control often unruly groups of children (e.g., Somech & Oplatka, 2014). This is not to say, nonetheless, that teachers are unlikely to receive some support from their colleagues and educational leaders, but rather to emphasize the unique nature of teaching and the school in many educational systems on the globe. Put another way, the context of many teachers and educational leaders is similar, a view supported by a large body of research conducted in various Western countries, finding lack of diversity among schools operating in educational markets and greater uniformity in the school system (e.g., Hirsch, 1994; Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995; Adnett & Davies, 2000).

This lack of diversity (i.e., the similar organizational contexts) is further explained by the institutional theory of organizations indicating that organizational conformity to institutional rules is likely to mold the structure of organizations, and over time, leads organizations in the same institutional environment to resemble one another (Rowan & Miskel, 1999). Schools are no exception.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991) contend that there is great pressure on organizations to engage in the same types of activities to look and act alike. Thus,

organizations within the same institutional environments tend to become homogenized through coercive conformity (e.g., government mandate, regulations), imitative conformity (e.g., adopting standard responses from "excellent schools" to reduce uncertainty), and normative conformity (e.g., receiving the same professional training and cognitive knowledge).

In that sense, schools even in competitive arenas are supposed to resemble each other in respect of buildings, instruction and curriculum, classroom design, and ways of engaging in teaching and learning processes. However, and consistent with the criticism against the institutional perspective (e.g., Hoy & Miskel, 2008), I am aware that the isomorphism process tends sometimes to be moderate rather than total, due to disagreements among organisational decision makers concerning institutional influences, different responses to educational policies, and internal political arrangements that make schools more or less receptive to change processes.

In sum, the basic nature of teaching, the main technology of the school, is practiced in a similar way worldwide, as evident in the research on the teacher's role described above. This results in unique professional and organizational contexts for many teachers and educational leaders (e.g., loosely coupled systems), supported by previous finding about low levels of interschools diversity and explained by institutional theorists of organizations as part of an isomorphism process. In other words, the resemblance of schools justifies the emergence of a field of study that explores educational leadership in schools and aims at proposing universal theories, models, and implications to teachers worldwide, based on the conjecture that their contexts are more similar than different.

Epistemological Consideration and the Field's Legitimacy

Thus far, I claimed that the school organization and its main technology are more universal than contextual-based, and therefore the field of educational administration should "produce" universal theories, models, and concepts as part of its attempt to explore educational leadership and organizational phenomena. My second argument, though, is that the universal nature of the field's models, perspectives, and concepts endows academic legitimacy to its members (i.e., scholars and researchers) in universities worldwide. Therefore, educational administration scholars have always striven to produce theoretical and empirical knowledge that is cross-national and valid in multiple educational arenas as is evident in the "practical implications" section in many journal papers published in the field's journals. I elaborate on the significance of the universality in academic disciplines and knowledge production in the next pages.

It is widely accepted that the academic discipline as the basic unit of social organization of knowledge production and development is an essential feature of modern science (Messer-Davidow, Shumway, & Sylvan, 1993; Whitley, 1984). Scientific and social research rests primarily on and in communities of arguers,

inquirers, and critics. A condition for the possibility of such communities of scholars is their common language of shared recognition and references to some common rules of intellectual and creative behavior (Bridges, 2006). Thus, each discipline internalizes its aim and becomes increasingly specialized (Hausman, 1979).

In addition, it is apparent that a discipline is composed of some major elements including commonly understood norms of inquiry, shared discourse, shared goals, shared systematic communication, common educational apprenticeship, and relative unanimity of group judgment in professional matters (Bridges, 2006; Kuhn, 1977). Additionally, despite their temporal shifts of character, disciplines have recognizable identities and particular cultural attributes (Becher, 1989). By insisting that authors refer to particular scientists and currently established evidence, reputational disciplines ensure that work is not too far removed from the aims and procedures of the dominant group (Whitley, 1984).

What can we learn from these two paragraphs about universality versus particularity in scholarly and empirical works? A common language, norms of inquiry, discourses, and areas of interests shared by field members from different parts of the world cannot be developed when every field member produces contextualized knowledge that is too unique (local?) to allow his/her counterparts to learn from it or to apply it in their own contexts. Put another way, a field of study cannot be developed and shaped when its members lack shared universal bases of knowledge, theories, perspectives, models, and concepts that enable the creation of a common denominator and knowledge exchange. For example, despite an increase in the publication of international authors, the educational administration field's journals publish works related, mostly, to educational leadership, administration, policy, schools, and so on (Oplatka, 2010), all of which topics that educational administration readers worldwide are interested in. Without a common universal (rather than contextual) theoretical and conceptual basis of these papers, a field member from one geographical part would not be able to understand the paper of a field member working in another part of the world.

Furthermore, without a common, universal knowledge base, field members could have never claimed for academic legitimacy to "their" field of study, as no academic legitimacy has ever been given to fragmented accumulation of knowledge production that is highly contextualized and consecutively lacks any coherent and consistent forms of knowledge production. Thus, as Waite (1998) maintained, the field of educational administration has responded to questions of its legitimacy through an expansion of leadership to the extent that the labels are now mobilized to refer to individual, groups, networks, institutions, roles, structures, and practices.

Therefore, and inconsistent with Eacott, the purpose of educational administration field is to unearth a core set of behaviors, traits, and conditions that are most important or impactful on performance and school improvement, and I would add one that is applicable in as many educational systems as possible. In fact, these findings are supposed sometimes to generate "how to do it" prescriptions that are beyond one context, despite the many weaknesses of this type of prescriptions. After all, the preparation of future educational leaders is based on common

principles of training, learning, and internship that are cross-cultural and suitable to educational systems worldwide. Without (universal, context-neutral) implications for leadership development programs, what is the legitimacy of educational administration departments in higher education? Even Eacott indicated that "once society, or at least enough people, began to see administration as a key leverage point for improving outcomes (social and economic), there was demand for systematic inquiry" (p. 10).

Inherent to every "good" research, in addition, is novelty production, originality, and innovation, according to which every new outcome in science must be different from preceding ones if it is to be regarded as a highly influential contribution to knowledge base (Whitley, 1984; Wolff, 1969). But, if we believe that educational administration is contextual-oriented only, what is the meaning of scientific novelty and innovation? For example, if our knowledge is only highly contextualized, shall we expect to have many "novelties" and "innovative" studies resulting from particular changes in a local context? If we do, what is the scientific contribution of this "novelty" to our accumulated knowledge base? I am afraid that too many contextualized novelties will create a fragmented knowledge base in our field of study and will result in a decreased ability for international collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Finally, the claim against universality held by the relational approach contradicts, in my view, a major function of every university—the promotion of critical, reflective thinking. Accordingly, the core purpose of the modern university is the intellectual enterprise of independent analytic, rational, systematic, and critical thinking (Groves, 1968; Teichler, 2007). Keniston (1968) clarifies this function:

> By criticism, I mean above all the analysis, examination, study, and evaluation of our society at large, of its directions, practices, institutions, strengths, weaknesses, ideals, values, and character; of its consistencies, and contradictions; of what it has been, of what it is becoming, of what is becoming of it, and of what it might at best become. The critical function involves examining the purposes, practice, meanings, and goals of our society… (p. 146).

The critical function entails the evaluation of the past, present, and probable future and the right to prescribe solutions, alternatives, and new directions, and to act in support of them. Thus, if we limit our empirical works and scholarly writings to a specific context, how can we create a field of study that will question available (universal) wisdom and establish ways of problem solving, or contribute vigorously to critical discourse about government policy? Thus, the educational administration field should encourage its members to think up, explore, and criticize new concepts, techniques or representation, and arguments, because any profession or occupation must involve some tradition of critical philosophical reflection (Bridges, 2006; Pelikan, 1992). We cannot expect the generation of critical knowledge that is limited in time and space and lacks holistic dimension that is necessary to understand the complexity of our contexts. After all, intercultural fertilization is very illuminative and evocative as it shows the relativity of our life in many social institutions.

Summary

Following the relational approach which engages and debunks the myth of universal leadership that exists separate to time and space, Eacott indicated in his book that in the case of educational administration, "despite the universalism of education, I contend that the organizing of education is a local phenomenon. At the very least, we cannot assume a utility of ways of organizing even if educating is ubiquitous with developed and developing nations (p. 128)." Although Eacott's insights are very illuminating and thoughtful, I allowed myself in this essay to challenge the parts of his analysis that advocates the contextualized nature of knowledge production. I did it not because I assume that this analysis is completely detached from educational administration, but rather because I believe the educational context, both on the teaching and the administration levels, is different from the contexts observed usually by sociologists, in general, and those advocating the relational approach, in particular. To strengthen my counterargument, I drew on scholarly and empirical works that focused on teaching as an uncertain profession, the loose coupling of the school organization and the teacher's role, on one side, and on the epistemological literature about higher education and academic disciplines, on the other side.

Thus, I learned that teachers and educational leaders worldwide share similar instructional, professional, and organizational contexts due to many common basic aspects in the teaching–learning process and isomorphism processes among schools. I also realized that the field of educational administration would have never been given any academic legitimacy in the higher education sector if its knowledge base had been highly contextualized rather than universal, as the purpose of the university is to produce valuable scholarly and empirical insights from which both academics and practitioners could benefit considerably. I suspect that a knowledge base that is limited by and large to time and space will be of minor significance, to say the least, to most educational administration field members in the world. This is even more critical in applied fields of study.

More and more politicians in our era believe in the need to produce practical, "useful" scientific knowledge intended to discover the problems to which society has to attend, to promote economic growth, and to mold policy and practice by offering independent criticism of policy or practice (Humes & Bryce, 2001; Nisbet, 2005; Stehr & Meja, 2005). The function of a "professional discipline," which includes also the educational studies, is more application-oriented. Members of this type of discipline are responsible for producing knowledge that can be or has the potential to be applied by practitioners (Hunt, 2002).

More specifically, applied research is supposed to provide solutions to problems, assist practitioners at work, guide policy, provide insights and understandings, or establish fundamental principles of learning (Dobbins & Lee, 1968; Dunnette, 1990; Nisbet, 2005). Good research is research which can be used and that identifies what works (Nisbet, 2005), although many applied research findings are

becoming increasingly less useful for solving practical problems, as Rynes, Bartuneck, and Daft (2001) noted in respect of organizational science.

If we accept the need of educational administration field to be also of much value to the practice of educational administration and leadership, I conclude this essay by lending several consecutive ponderings: What is the value of highly contextualized knowledge base to practitioners in diverse educational arenas? To what extent could practitioners use knowledge produced in a very specific social arena and is limited in space and time? Is there any benefit in an applied field of study that elucidates scant reference to universal wisdoms? Is there any reason to prevent educational administration researchers from generating universal knowledge bases given the universal nature of education and schooling?

Underlying applied knowledge is its instrumentality and application that is of value insofar as it can be used to solve problems or guide policy (Nisbet, 2005). This cannot be achieved by merely producing scholarly and empirical works that are bounded by time and space. It is not necessary, though, in a field of study that focuses on universal organizational phenomena.

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Chapter 13
Productive Conversations from a Feminist Perspective

Dawn Wallin

My initial excitement about contributing a feminist perspective on the ideas expressed in Scott Eacott's (2015) book, *Educational leadership relationally*, was initially dimmed when I read the first page of the Preface. While acknowledging the scholars who have contributed to his developing ideas regarding a relational approach to educational administration, Eacott named Lisa Adkins, BHP Billiton Chair of Sociology as a primary influence. As a feminist writer myself, I was delighted to read that this influential male scholar of educational administration was acknowledging her work. I was less impressed by the relational assumption that was articulated in his subsequent comment, "While best known for her work on gender and labor, it is her engagement with Bourdieu that was most insightful" (p. ix). I pictured Lisa Adkins being patted on the head while being told that her gender work is "cute," but it is her engagement with white male Western knowledge traditions that lend her credibility in educational administration. Alas, I cannot say that this is the first time that female scholars of educational administration have dealt with comments of this nature, even when, as I believe in this case, they are intended to be complimentary. A comment such as this makes an implicit presumption about the relations between knowledge traditions. In one sentence, the relationship between gender studies and its connection to labor, and therefore, management studies, has been severed by an assumption that it has less to offer, and/or is less theoretically sound than the white male Western canon. As a female scholar of educational administration who also pays attention to gender studies, this was not an optimistic start.

In the spirit of intellectual pursuit, however, I continued to read the text, and I found many touchstones of interest. Eacott expresses a desire for others to engage in "a generative reading, other case studies in different locations (both in time and space) to advance our understanding, and importantly, for others to work with, beyond and where necessary against what I have proposed in the interests of the intellectual enterprise" (p. 12). I appreciated the invitation to engage in this scholarly pursuit, and to be respectfully critical in the interests of advancing the scholarship of educational administration. As Eacott notes:

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
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> As it stands, there is an awful lot of talking past one another with a number of completely contradictory viewpoints, arguments and interpretations whirling around the pages of publications, but more importantly, the lack of any really meaningful dialogue between them…as a domain of inquiry, educational administration exists in a state of tacit agreement where those with whom we disagree, we treat with benign neglect. (pp. 10–11)

Though fortunately less of an issue today, the invitation to be part of how educational administrative thought is shaped has not historically been offered to women (Young, 1994), though many have worked tirelessly to "write themselves into being" (Wallin, in press). I frame my paper around feminist theoretical perspectives and the experiences of female scholars of educational administration, in order not only to critique some of the ideas found within the text, but also to add to the theoretical development of this relational approach. The invitation to be critical offered more intellectual excitement than sometimes is the case when writing for administrative audiences who are more interested in instrumental ideas. Finally, as a scholar and practitioner of educational administration, I embody and embed the socially constructed assumptions of educational administration that tend to promote an enjoyment in the debate of ideas, so debate I will, and happily so!

New Ways of Seeing Educational Administration

Eacott suggests that his relational approach to educational administration "offers theoretical interventions that enable one to see the leadership, management and administration of educational institutions in new ways" (p. 10). Though he offers an approach (not a theory) for the study of educational administration that has not been explicitly outlined in a single text before, the ideas are definitely not new, and Eacott acknowledges this. In many respects, his ideas are reflective of the ideas put forward by feminist scholars who were unable to gain traction in the discourses of educational administration until those ideas were legitimated by male scholars (Wallace, Wallin, Anderson, & Viczko, 2014). Eacott acknowledges this potential when he states that, "as with any argument that directly engages with, or challenges the status quo, there is the very real and likely outcome that it will be rejected by the existing guardians of the domain" (p. 27). For example, feminist methodologists have long paid attention to the relations between the researcher and the researched, which Eacott calls the "epistemological preliminaries of scholarship" (p. 8). They have been integral in developing contemporary understandings of embodiment, researcher reflexivity, and performativity (Bell, 2012; Blackmore & Sachs, 2005; Butler, 2005) that are fundamental aspects of the relational approach.

Eacott's premise is that "[s]truggles for legitimacy are at the core of institutional labor, whether that is the principal working in a school or an academic in a university. These tensions are performative in that they only exist in practice and cannot be solely reduced to the structural arrangements of the empirical. The contested terrain that is the struggle for legitimacy is inexhaustible and as such, is a forever unfinished project" (p. 8). The struggle for legitimacy over contested terrain

has been a common theme uttered by feminist scholars who have been influenced by critical, post-critical, and/or post-structural perspectives, women such as Jill Blackmore, Judith Butler, and Pat Thomson—all of whom are acknowledged in this text. To that end, the ideas behind the relational approach are not new thinking related to the study of educational administration; rather, they create an affinity between the approach and the experiences of females in educational administration over time, not only as female faculty members, but also in their pursuit of legitimation as knowledge producers (Wallace & Wallin, 2015).

Embodied and Embedded

Eacott's obvious alignment with Bourdieu's sociological perspective is not unproblematic from a feminist perspective even though many of Bourdieu's ideas have been taken up by feminists. For example, Mathieu (1999) has written that Bourdieu's (1990) work on male domination ignores most of the feminist work conducted on this construct. In addition, Bourdieu was known to make sweeping generalizations and critiques of feminism that actually demonstrated how little he understood the experiences and perspectives of the different social and historical locations of women. Thompson (2001) critiques Bourdieu's sociological perspective as lacking in political awareness particularly as it relates to women:

> Bourdieu is right to emphasize the important role of the symbolic … in generating and maintaining the reality of domination. The problem is that Bourdieu's sociological perspective does not automatically translate into political awareness. It is still the case that the social positioning of privileged men engenders blindness to what is at stake for women, especially as women are still struggling to understand the ramifications and reach of male supremacist relations of power (p. 65).

Eacott claims that part of the value of his growing research program is that he is "willing to put my ideas out there rather than playing it safe behind the names of great thinkers" (p. x). In his framing, he acknowledges the political realities of the "scholarly game" as he calls it, and he suggests that "the internal politics of scholarship matters" (p. 21). However, he critiques critical theory because "it seems unproductive to engage in a power explanation whose mechanical utilization risks crushing the narrative prior to any data being generated" (p. 4). I bring this up because Eacott suggests that the relational program provides an opportunity for engaging in "a productive—rather than merely critical—space to theorize educational administration" (p. 5). By implication (and I hope not intended because the research tradition section is underdeveloped in this short introduction), critical theoretical perspectives are connoted as being unproductive. This comment stands in paradox to his advocacy for valuing multiple perspectives in the interests of rigorous and intra-disciplinary research pursuits. It also stands in contrast to Eacott's own critical social theory background that is articulated in other examples of his work (e.g., Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013) but has been curiously muted for an audience of scholars of educational administration. Although there is a distinction

between offering a critique of ideas for the purpose of academic criticality, and being critical for no purpose other than defamation or blind advocacy, the distinction needs to be made clearer in the beginning of the text so that readers are not led to believe that he is suggesting that critical theory as a research tradition is generally unproductive.

What would be valuable to include in this discussion is his own embodied and embedded social construction as an increasingly prominent male scholar in the discourse of educational administration. His very ability to "put himself out there" underscores the privilege he has to speak out critically in the political realities of the scholarly "game" of educational administration. Feminist scholars who have taken similar risks as they attempted to (re)shape the discourse of educational administration have not always been met with open minds and increased career opportunities (Wallace, Wallin, Viczko, & Anderson, 2014). For example, when the women in educational administration programs whose experiences I studied with my colleague Dr. Janice Wallace put forward their epistemological and ontological understandings of power and its influences on the discourse and practice of educational leadership, management and administration in the preliminaries of their research projects, they bore the brunt of that risk in publication rejections, tenure refusals, and ostracizing from the educational administrative discourse.

There also exists in the text an oversight in a presumption that critical scholars speak of power only from an entity perspective. Although this may be the case with some of the research conducted from a critical approach, there also exists a huge body of literature that utilizes Michel Foucault's perspective of relations of power, in which power is not considered to be an entity moving between individual actors, but that it is constructed through the relations of actors fluctuating in time and space. Sometimes the relations of power construct is considered as the research object, but often it is used as a construct by critical researchers to interpret the various relations that have been described to exist over time and space. Outlining these ontological and epistemological positions is exactly what Eacott suggests should happen more consistently in the work of research in educational administration, and would preclude the potential of essentializing the work of research conducted within any one tradition.

As he notes in the text, theoretical positioning will always shape research methodology:

> Theory is both product and producer of the scholastic enterprise, whether it is acknowledged or not. It is not a case of theory 'and' method, rather theory as methodology. The individual methods mobilised by a researcher are consistent with their ontological and epistemological position. The methods are consistent with the knowledge claims the researcher holds to be true. (p. 134)

If theory is methodology and vice versa, theory will also inevitably shape how the findings surface and how further questions arise. This is no more so the case for critical theory as it is for instrumental, scientific, or humanist research. Arguably, this is also no more the case than for the biases evident in the relational approach. "Strengthening" the research by doing a more thorough job of theoretical

preliminary work inevitably embeds the epistemological and ontological values inherent within it. It is unclear, then, how any theorizing can ever be considered to be unproductive unless one completely rejects the epistemological and ontological premises found within it. Even then, if multiplicity of perspective should be valued, there remains merit in the theoretical perspective as an alternate view to one's own. In actuality, theoretical positioning both opens and closes possibilities for research methodology, findings, and conclusions. The key is to be immediately upfront with the limitations of any one perspective, while acknowledging the potential for alternate perspectives. In addition, a research approach can never be completely separated from the embodied experience of the lived lives of real people (the empirical situation) even if the goal is to try to find theoretical implications that may exist across time and space. Eacott acknowledges this, even as he tries to move beyond the problems, this creates for the research endeavor. Ultimately, the decision to engage in a research approach is itself an embodied endeavor; the implications of the research for those who read about it, and/or are affected by it, are also embodied. Attempts to divorce the approach from its empirically lived experience, either in its preliminary stages, or in methodology, or in the final outcomes of a project, or in its readership, can reinforce an artificial mind/body dualism and the theory/practice divide that are criticized in the text.

The point that is crucial, however, is that Eacott calls for increased dialogue between, and interrogation of, all perspectives, and he advocates for the choice of perspective that best suits the types of questions that ought to be asked. This is fundamentally important to the scholarship of educational administration, and something that has been lacking in the published scholarship. However, I use the word "ought" with some cheekiness because Eacott tries very hard to claim that the relational approach he is advocating would not build in any prescriptive end state, even as his examples suggest that he believes different questions ought to be asked than currently is the case in educational administration research.

Eacott also acknowledges, and is critical of, the power of the instrumental managerial discourse of educational administration that is shaping research and practice, which in his view is stymying intellectual scholarship related to educational administration. Though he suggests that the Australian examples he offers are not provided in an attempt to disparage the work, but are used instead to demonstrate how the relational approach can lead to different questions, his attention to them actually underscores his consideration of them as poor examples of educational administration research. Eacott does proffer that many of his ideas are influenced by critical theory, but he resists claiming this space for the relational approach, even as he is obviously working against the dominant hegemonies currently framing educational administration. Although to support his theoretical positioning he does not want to give a prescriptive list of how to study educational administration, there clearly is embedded in the work a presumption that what currently exists is not ideal, and that a different approach smattered with Bourdieuian social constructivism influenced by critical and post-structural ideas would provide value to educational administration research and theorizing.

Eacott acknowledges that "This book is not free from contradictions gaps, tensions, puzzlements, and unresolved questions" (p. xi). What develops in the text, then, pigeons him in a bit of a conundrum. The biases of the individual man and scholar are evident, yet he wishes to claim that the relational approach can lead to something akin to neutrality through the interpretive description of the social phenomena. Though this desire to strive for some level of personal distance by focusing on self-reflexivity and epistemic vigilance aligns with the theoretical ideas of the relational perspective (and Eacott does work in the text to overtly explicate this), inevitably, as a socially constructed human being himself, tensions are created around the discussion of theoretical neutrality when the individual biases leak out, as they do in any scholar's text. As Eacott acknowledges:

> The researcher does not stand outside of the social world they analyze, nor do they look down on it from above. Instead, the researcher is an actor in the social world and the pre-constructed objects of education administration become self-evident and legitimate through the actions of subjects (including the researcher). The social world deals with things that they construct, modify and transform through their actions, including scholarship, and the actions of others. (p. 98)

We are all as individuals a writing mass of biases and contradictions that are embodied within us. We are all embedded in the discourses into which we are born, that shape us, and are shaped by us. Eacott makes that point well in the text. What might help deal with some of the tensions, therefore, would be for him to write more about his own embodied and embedded social location personally and professionally, articulating how these shape his understanding of this relational approach. In fact, he has done some of this work in prior publications (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013), and it would be very interesting to see how he ties this personal deconstruction to his developing theoretical ideas.

Bourdieu has been labeled a misogynist; Heidegger was a member of the Nazi party; Levin was convicted of crimes related to child exploitation. None of these personal considerations necessarily detract from the merit of the ideas spouted in these scholars' works, but their psychological and social backgrounds have definitely shaped their understandings of those ideas, and therefore their understandings of how/what they consider to be primary relations existing around and between the researcher and the research object. There exists no distinct space for any individual where the embodied self ends and the "rational" mind begins, and where we can pinpoint a separation of mind/body and theory/practice. In addition, each scholar's personal and social locations shape the ways in which individuals engage with their theoretical and empirical claims, which is something that is not taken up in this text, but would be important to develop in the future. This is especially the case when one advocates for a consideration of temporality and socio-spatiality in which the actors (including the researcher, the researched, and the reader) have parts to perform in the larger theoretical relations of legitimation.

Temporality and Socio-Spatiality

Eacott discusses the need for greater attention to temporality and socio-spatiality in educational administration research. He advocates for long-term research programs that "transcend the temporality and socio-spatial conditions … and produce new ways of thinking, but to think itself and even to out-think itself" (pp. x–xi). He critiques the emphasis on "clock-time" that demonstrates an entity perspective in the educational administration literature, arguing instead for a conception of time that "does not operate externally to events, but unfolds with events. This conceptualization of time explicitly challenges the delineation of past/present/future, and the commodification of time" (p. 41). In his view, "a lack of attention to the situatedness and specificity of contexts leads to a privileging of the directly observable features of practice rather than the underlying generative principles" (p. 43), leading to a misplaced belief in universal principles. In his disparagement of the term "leadership" as an epistemic concern for educational administrative research, for example, he suggests that:

> Grounding the scholarly narrative in time and space will bring to the level of discourse the subtle ways in which constructs such as 'leadership' are legitimized. In doing so, rather than basing 'leadership' on an abstraction of the social worlds there is a strong need to focus on the context, or the situated nature of relations, and a need to describe what is taking place (p. 44).

For Eacott, what is most necessary is to conceptualize temporality as trajectory in which the narrative of performance is historicized, and where the actors' efforts coevolve over time. Eacott advocates for a shift away from an entity approach to a relational approach focused on the organization of schooling that "is a phenomenon generated in the interactions among actors in time and space with particular reference to reciprocity" (p. 59). The emphasis on legitimacy inevitably means that "change in institutions can only take place through shifts in the logics whereby legitimacy is assessed, or, in other worlds, the standards whereby alternatives are deemed to be appropriate" (p. 68). Although he advocates for a shift away from an entity approach, it may be that the dualism cannot be separated so nicely. Many feminists would argue that the nature of the single entity (formal leader, policy, etc.), does matter. Their own socially constructed understandings will have some determination on subsequent relational events and effects as individual actions and/or actors may, in their social interactions, either perpetuate or disrupt the temporal trajectory of those socially constructed understandings. To that end, the liminal space of the moment, or the "space in between" (Buber, 1981[1923]) the single moment in time and the temporal trajectory, is very much an important moment of possibility. Some attention on how the two approaches might interact (if one could acknowledge that there might not be complete incommensurability) might provide for interesting complexity in the approach that could avoid the binary thinking that Eacott wishes to avoid.

Eacott critiques the notion of the local because of the problem associated with creating boundaries around complex and contested spaces. The attention to

contested space is a common feature in feminist pursuits, both within feminist theory itself, and within educational administration (e.g., Asher, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2010). Such theorizing not only leads to divergent thinking, but also creates problems with creating the "scientific demarcations" between researcher and research object. On the one hand, scholars are asked to do the preliminary work of the study to contextualize it theoretically, which should lead to demarcations in methodology and method, and arguably influences findings and conclusions. On the other hand, the theorist must be wary of creating boundaries on knowledge, temporality, and socio-spatiality in order to avoid entity thinking and to encourage fluidity of understandings. How then can the scholar know, and/or come to terms with where she/he is to demarcate (or create boundaries) for the purpose of scientific/theoretical inquiry of a study, yet avoid creating boundaries on knowledge? This is not a direct criticism of Eacott's work alone, as it is a common problem in post-structural understandings of the world given that discourse is entirely problematic and constantly shifting. As Marx (Marx & Engels, 2007 [1848]) noted, "All that is solid melts into air" (p. 38).

For Eacott, context "becomes an inter-disciplinary and fluid notion. … brings into play many diverse disciplines (e.g. sociology, philosophy, history, economics, public administration) for the purpose of understanding" (p. 118). The large-scale theoretical question of concern becomes "What is it about the unique socio-geographic conditions, including the configuration of key actors that is producing the contemporary condition?" (p. 71). I support the idea that scholars of educational administration should do more to bring together intellectual threads in history, philosophy sociology, geography, literature, and psychology, but I query whose version of those disciplines tends to dominate. All of those disciplines have histories where particular discourses and/or scholars were legitimated, and others were cast to the margins or outside of the discipline entirely. The study I conducted with Janice Wallace on the contributions of the first female academics in Canadian programs of educational administration articulated their attempts at bringing interdisciplinarity into the discipline of educational administration, and the marginalization and/or rejection many of these women faced on a variety of fronts (Wallace & Wallin, 2015). Now that prominent male scholars are advocating for interdisciplinarity, the acknowledgement of work "on the margins," or in "contested spaces," the academy is rushing to legitimate the ideas; when women advocated for similar understandings, or they critiqued the "center of educational administration" decades earlier, they were told they were corrupting the field (Wallin, in press; Young, 1994). Ultimately, there is much value in hearing the voices of those whose perspective of history is different than what exists in the commonly accepted discourse. These tales need to be told by differently positioned actors who experienced the moment in time and space so that the historical relations are themselves demonstrated to be contested space(s). In addition, there needs to be acknowledged that much of the temporal trajectory of the discourse of educational administration is being socially (re)constructed by people who were never part of that historical moment and time. As each new "version" is (re)created, it is influenced by

additional perspectives, social constructions, and personal interests in the (re)telling of that trajectory.

As a further example of this problem, the history of educational administration in the text is male-dominated, though with attention to key female figures. This is not surprising, as this has been the accepted history of educational administration taken for granted in programs around the Western world. In fact, the critical social theory movement of the 1960s and 1970s greatly influenced feminist studies (and scholars) who came into educational administration in the 1970s and 1980s. Their work could not be described as "sporadic and piecemeal" (p. 1) but rather, it was deliberately marginalized and not granted legitimacy within the prevalent discourses of educational administration at the time (Wallace et al., 2014). Powerful scholars of educational administration had the ability to keep this work out of the discipline by controlling systems of knowledge dissemination, through hiring practices for positions in the academy, and by using socially constructed dominant hegemonic practices and ideology to keep alternate viewpoints out. Eacott acknowledges this possibility when he states that he has recognized that "publishers, or at least reviewers and editors, will often refuse to publish work until labels are updated to the contemporary title 'educational leadership'" (p. 34). This is simply a "new" spin on an old concern that is crossing the boundaries of sex and gender. A similar concern was faced historically by feminists who wrote themselves into being within the discourse of educational administration in Canada. These women noted that their work was often accepted (and translated) in non-Western, or at least non-Canadian, venues more readily than at home. Eacott also recognizes the potential for scholarship to be marginalized because it questions the status quo of the discipline:

> It is quite possible that a great deal of disruptive and innovative work is taking place but it exists at the margins or periphery of the field (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013) and very little change occurs in the mainstream discourses and various traditions within the discipline. As a result while for many the diversity of traditions within the discipline is a strength, or at least evidence of a degree of scope, it does little in facilitating a coherent and robust response to questions of its scholarly significance and intellectual value. (p. 125)

If he can acknowledge this reality in 2017, how much more evident was this in the early days of the discourse? And what does this suggest about the notion of historicizing the temporality of the relations of educational administration? What is necessary is a deeper examination of the discourses that have been on the margins within the temporal and socio-spatial locations in which educational administration has positioned itself, *why* that may be so, and *how* those discourses may in fact have much to offer the (re)shaping of the discourses of educational administration from a relational perspective.

Finally, Eacott makes some excellent connections to the historical actors whose work is acknowledged as the canon of educational administration scholarship. Interestingly, many of these individuals were not "embedded" as educational administrators, but contributed their ideas from management theory, which has its own temporality and socio-spatial discourses that need critique.

Feminists have some concern with this traditional parade of actors for the reasons outlined above. In addition, by describing this particular canon of thinkers, Eacott underscores the binary of sex and reifies the masculinist perspective of educational administration. Through oversight, attention to many of the historical female actors who influenced the thought of educational administration through their work in disciplines such as organizational theory, sociology, and history (e.g., Mary Parker Follett, Lillian Gilbreth, Dorothy Smith, Allison Prentice) is dismissed. Eacott does include contemporary female scholars of influence in his text, but the general oversight of historic female actors underscores the need to be wary of any type of temporal or socio-spatial description because historical approaches themselves are bound up in hegemonic and socially constructed discourses. Nowhere is this more evident than in the post-colonial theory and research that is leading the critique of temporality evidenced in the grand narratives of history (Asher, 2010; Grande, 2008; Laroche, 2007; St. Denis, 2007, 2011; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Interpretive Approach

Eacott suggests that his approach is non-prescriptive, and is most concerned with:

> rigorous scholarship around a theoretical problem and mobilization of appropriate intellectual resources to engage with the empirical. … The key being does the work align with the key features of the relational programme concerning the epistemological break with the everyday, the locating in time and space, and the absence of binaries for the purpose of productively thinking in new ways (pp. 133–134).

As a consequence, he suggests that what is necessary is an "epistemological *break* of the embodied agent, and the *construction* of the research object, rather than just the *confirmation*, or disconfirmation, of the researcher's model of reality" (p. 17). He describes administration as being a complex, messy endeavor, and its study necessitates that the researcher makes an epistemological break with his/her/their own embedded and embodied understandings of educational administration. He advocates that researchers pay stronger attention to theorizing the preliminaries of the work, and that they utilize a self-reflexive attitude open to casting doubt on the "orthodoxy" of the grand narratives found within educational administration. Eacott uses local Australian examples of the grand narrative of leadership to demonstrate that researchers have unquestioningly presumed its empirical reality without problematizing or questioning the concept, resulting in "serious questions being asked of the research concerning what it offers a theory of knowledge and the legitimacy of the school leadership research in the wider academy—even if the work is popular with policy makers and practitioners" (p. 86).

As a consequence, Eacott advocates for something akin to a neutral distancing of the researcher in the study of educational administration, as for him, "the goal is the

pursuit of increasingly detailed and sophisticated descriptions of how actions relate to one another" (p. 80). The goal of research in his view should be to richly describe what *is*, not what *ought* to be, and that "the jump from the *is* to *ought* should be delayed, if not avoided" (p. 72):

> the relational approach is centrally concerned with description. Developing an understanding of what is taking place and how that fits within a trajectory. It is the integration of a theoretical question (in this case around the legitimation of the social world) in an empirical problem (the organization of education) and an emphasis on robust description that brings rigour to the relational approach. (p. 131)

This positions Eacott as scholar who has a preference for an interpretive approach to research, and this preference is used as his rationale for why he does not situate himself directly as a critical theorist. However, he also states that "this is not to suggest that the scholar is neutral" (p. 72). This is definitely the case, as the examples he utilizes and the critique of the current discourses and research found within the text suggest that he is doing a little more than interpreting what *is*.

In any type of research, there will be tensions around value and values, but they are consciously or unconsciously embedded within every research project. Value-free description is arguably impossible because of the epistemological and ontological assumptions that each researcher brings to a project. A value judgment has been made in the first decision to choose one particular research object over another. When Eacott narrows his research program to focus on efforts of legitimation of the social world as opposed to some other research object that could be tied to the study of educational administration, he is making a statement of what he values as being worthy of study. He also suggests that "[t]he only way to change the world is to create the conditions in which alternates can be conceived" (p. 76); this implies that he is not totally satisfied with the current state of the world.

As with any researcher, and noted by Eacott himself, Eacott's values are shaping the framing of the relational research program. In his view, the researcher should provide thick description of the social world that will "create these conditions without necessarily deliberating a 'how to' approach" (p. 76). This begs the question, "If world change is the goal, who owns the responsibility for making it happen?" It appears that the researcher's role is to create conditions for change through thick description of the messiness of the world of administration—but there is absolutely no responsibility for him/her/them to do anything about it. This approach is far removed from that advocated by Samier (2013), who calls for a disruptive theory of educational administration, one that:

> would also have to account for the political will, organization, and willingness to risk-levels of commitment, critique and action that our texts rarely include except for a minority of voices. It requires also drawing on primary disciplines to a much larger and deeper degree (p. 242).

It would be difficult to suggest that we should not place a value judgment on theoretical premises and/or empirical research situations in which the researcher knows that harm is/will occur to the participants. Moral judgments are evidenced through action—but they are also evidenced through inaction. To make a choice to

focus on the thick description of the social circumstance in the interests of a greater theoretical and/or research good, rather than acting on a social harm in any one place and time, also evidences values in action. Consider the case of the school shootings in La Loche on January 14, 2016. Although a researcher could write a thorough description of the temporal and socio-spatial relationships in existence within and between the body of actors in the interests of developing a theoretically rich conceptualization of school violence as a research object, there is no doubt that the choice to conduct this research, the research object in question, and the influences that would shape the researcher's understanding and positioning of the theoretical and empirical constructs are premised on value judgements about violence in schools, and the desire to avoid harm to children. Value judgments are also made by those who would read the research, because readers have particular value-based reasons why they wish to pursue certain types or topics of research. They also will judge the researcher based on his/her/their positioning in the research. Whereas the social organization of "leadership" or "principal autonomy" may be as innocuous as they are significant, school shootings are not. Yet they reflect the messiness of educational administration precisely because they cut to the heart of values, because they disrupt the construction of "social organizing," and because they overtly articulate a need for theorists/researchers/educators to become actively engaged in trying to stop the phenomena from occurring in the future.

Finally, values are tied to the heart of our ethical approaches to research and theorizing, and must be at the forefront of any research design. Hence, the research approach embodies a host of values before the researcher ever moves into the field to collect empirical data. These considerations blur the boundaries between the theoretical and empirical aspects of research that Eacott tries to distinguish. However, if, as he argues, theory is methodology, and vice versa, a true separation of theoretical and empirical concerns is also artificial and sets up a dualism that Eacott tries to avoid—that of theory versus practice, but in this case, research practice, rather than administrative practice. A true separation of value and judgment is therefore virtually impossible, and potentially not very admirable, both in theorizing research in educational administration and in its empirical situatedness. The best that a researcher can do is to be continuously self-reflexive, constantly work toward self-awareness of his/her/their own values, and be clear about those in the preliminaries of the research work. By doing so, those who take up the work have a deeper understanding of the values that inevitably shape the research project, and they may see how other ways of being and/or thinking could lead to different conclusions.

My presumption is that Eacott is a critical social theorist (with some post-structural influences), but his text advocates for an interpretive critical perspective in/on educational administration that distances the researcher from more active engagement with the research object and/or findings. His brief reliance on Gunter's (2001) description of critical theory as a research tradition does not speak fully to the vast discourses available within the tradition. He is very much aware that the danger for critical theorists is the possibility of exchanging one hegemonic discourse for another. The feminist tradition, however, has demonstrated that this

exchange is virtually impossible practically, empirically, and theoretically, because the intent of feminist approaches is to be critical of the potential for hegemony regardless of the form in which it may assert itself. This has been evident in a variety of critiques of feminism(s), including the underlying epistemological considerations of the theoretical perspectives being used (e.g., critiques of liberal feminism that argue for "sameness" of the sexes), the role and responsibilities of the researcher (the level of objectivity/subjectivity assumed to be necessary in the research process and the role of the researcher positioned on a continuum from "armchair interpreter" to "engaged activist"), and the privilege that is embedded in certain ontological perspectives (e.g., white Western academic perspectives). Those who are influenced also by post-structuralism recognize the importance of deconstruction of new hegemonic discourses and/or devices. As soon as the idea is uttered, it is open for further critique and/or deconstruction (Lather, 1991), which paves the way for the perpetuation of multiple perspectives to exist within/from any critical discourse. Even though Eacott is careful of uttering that his approach is one among possible alternatives, he is not moving toward the extreme view of complete relativity leading to nihilism which is the postmodern critique. He is, however, arguing for a more self-reflexive querying of the hegemonic discourses of educational administration in order to open spaces for multiple and alternative discourses to influence how, why, and what research is conducted:

> It is as though the scholarly practice of reflexivity, or critically turning upon itself, has been neglected for the purpose of maintaining a particular relationship with practice. The argument that I am building … is that to engage, and arguably combat, questions of the quality of educational administration research as a scholarly endeavor, greater attention is needed to the ongoing construction of the research object and its relations with the researcher. (p. 27)

Eacott certainly has values-based views of what "quality" research entails, and/or what is not quality research, and he is critical of the current research "in vogue" in educational administration, even though he does not suggest that there is one prescribed way of conducting quality research.

Language and Discourse

In his discussion of the tensions inherent in current research in educational administration, Eacott borrows Foucault's consideration of the "gaze" to discuss how the embedded and embodied nature of administration shapes the intellectual and scientific pursuits of inquiry. His thorough critique of the term "leadership" as a research object, and/or adjectival leadership clearly exemplifies how these terms have become empty signifiers that have achieved "epistemic imperialism" (p. 33) with little theoretical justification. In his view, "the explanatory power of the theoretically infused description of educational administration is far less seductive than the everyday language employed in descriptions of 'what works'" (p. 36).

Eacott also is critical of the rational and normative language use of managerial initiatives that shape understanding and practice, and leave little room for alternative thinking and/or approaches. Eacott exemplifies this point in his discussion of the changing nature of schooling in Australia, particularly in relation to the intrusion of capitalism, consumption, and choice that are changing the nature of relations that exist between actors. He problematizes the notions of community building and "the local," particularly as market ideologies situate the school similarly to that of a firm. He notes that:

> managerialist policy operates at the collective, first speaks to the individual, most specifically through atomizing the collective and pitting individual institutions against one another over the stakes of the game. … The contemporary capitalist condition has the individual school and arguably the individual educator, vying for attention in the fluidity and diversity of the marketplace (p. 56).

He aligns himself with Blackmore (2004) when he argues for a relational, rather than instrumental, approach to research grounded in "broader social, economic and political relations that shape education work" (p. 53). In his view, what is lacking in much of the research in educational administrative research is a "[l]ack of attention to the discursive nature of the social world" (p. 90).

I concur with Eacott's sentiments vis-à-vis the world of research and note that many feminists have made similar arguments, particularly those who have framed their research from perspectives offered by Butler. However, given the focus on the importance of language and hegemonic discourse in this section, I want to bring up two phrases that were mentioned more than once in the text that are problematic when reflexivity and the critique of discourse are championed. The first is the use of the term "common-sense," that is used a number of times as a means of justifying particular points of view. The worry here is that "common sense" connotes that a normative understanding of the idea should be so common as to be a socially constructed taken for granted way of viewing the world—which is exactly what Eacott is warning researchers against as they engage in their work. By extension, to not align with the viewpoint suggests that the reader has no sense. Secondly, in a number of places in the text, Eacott alludes to scholarship in the academy as a "game." The metaphor has a tendency to reaffirm mind/body dualism by suggesting that there is an artificial disassociation of the "real" embodied self/researcher/theorist with the "gamer" who knows how to play the politics of the academy in/and educational administration. It also positions the individual in a place of privilege in which the individual presumably has the luxury of treating scholarship as a game. In fact, for many scholars, women and men, the politics of scholarship has had serious effects on individuals' abilities to maintain careers, positions, and individual self-worth as scholars. As Eacott himself notes, "[t]here is of course substantial risk, at least intellectually, and arguably career wise, in trying to know, and make known, what the world of educational administration knowledge may (or does) not want to know, especially about itself" (p. 21). The use of the term also reinforces the idea that relations of power are very much a part of the academy, and of administration, and therefore, very much worthy of being a research object of study.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Eacott advocates for a long-term research program that allows for "increasingly sophisticated ways of knowing and being in the world, scholarship that is continually delving deeper into the research object, its construction and constant re-construction" (p. 24). Though this level of involvement and study over time no doubt leads to greater sophistication, Eacott's Australian examples caution against the traps of self-validation and hegemonic discourse perpetration that can occur with time and scholarly "fame," Rather, the discourse, and the scholar, must remain critically and reflexively responsive to temporal and socio-spatial changes as the program proceeds and remain vigilant about his/her/their own embeddedness in the discursive nature of that social world. Eacott's hope is that scholars consider a more intra-disciplinary approach that builds upon different research traditions and disciplines grounded in historical temporality and socio-spatial positioning, with "as much attention given to knowledge production as it does the understanding of practice" (p. 141). However, he acknowledges that hegemony has been alive and well within the discourses of educational administration:

> educational administration has a tendency—as do many disciplines—to provide only minority status or even othering of approaches which do not conform to the hegemonic position (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013). With its status as an applied field, educational administration has for the most part, ignored scholarship that asks questions. (p. 135)

Eacott suggests that intertradition dialogue can be enabled if "the logic of justification, how we defend our knowledge claims, becomes a focal point" (p. 99) of scholarship. Although the desire for a process that includes provision of argument, advancement through critique, and ongoing refinement of dialogue and thinking is arguably the fundamental purpose of academic knowledge pursuits, Eacott makes a valuable point when he suggests that it is the lack of attention to this that has "led to the benign neglect knowledge workers in educational administration demonstrate for one another" (p. 99).

It is my hope that a feminist analysis of Eacott's work can help to refine and nuance a relational approach to educational administration, and is not benignly neglected or dismissed as being unproductively critical. In many respects, feminist scholars have advocated for similar approaches to the study of educational administration over time. In the spirit of scholarly engagement and the pursuit of academic rigor, then, I conclude with a number of suggestions that may minimize (though never "solve") some of the tensions found in the work, and some cautions regarding the assumptions, values, or implications that spill out in the text.

Firstly, more attention to the notion of self-reflexivity, and the positioning of the author as an "actor" professionally and personally within these sets of ideas would be helpful. This would be fruitful because one of the main premises of the approach is to acknowledge the embodied and embedded nature of the researcher/theorist. It also helps to answer the question of "why is this research approach advocated by this actor in this time and space?" More attention to this positioning could lead to reflection on some of the phraseology and language used, and the privilege or

discursive hegemony to which it may inadvertently allude. By doing so, Eacott could underscore how difficult it is for researchers to disentangle themselves from their embodied and embedded positions. A stronger connection between author and reader as being complicit in the problems of theorizing research could be made, which might create stronger receptivity to the idea that these concerns are faced by all researchers/theorists. The text then would minimize a potential tone of admonishment to "those other researchers out there who are doing things wrong," and instead underscore that the struggle to be self-reflexive is incredibly difficult, takes significant time, and is a fundamental and significant concern with which all theorists/researchers struggle.

Secondly, more engagement with the multiple perspectives found within various research traditions is necessary. The lack of deeper engagement in the text with alternate traditions essentializes the multiplicity of perspectives that exist within them. Granted, it would be impossible and unnecessary to detail all of the literature and research that attends to these ideas, and it is important to provide some touchstones of understanding within those research traditions. However, if one of the intents of the relational perspective is to detail the temporal and socio-spatial development of theoretical perspectives, then attention to how those perspectives become more nuanced within a particular research tradition over time would also be valuable, and would provide evidence that a relational approach can deepen the scholarship of any one particular research tradition.

Thirdly, more discussion of the body of work that is found "on the margins" of the discourses of educational administration is necessary. The absence in the text with bodies of literature that have not been part of the normative discourses of educational administration actually reifies that normativity. Given the references in the text to the dangers of hegemonic discourse, to the politics of education that can get in the way of scholarship, and to the intent of those in control of discourse to minimize that which would question it, the lack of attention to the literature "on the margins" is problematic. More attention to why some perspectives exist on the margins and what they might offer for deepening the theoretical understandings of the discourses of educational administration would add to the sophistication of the relational approach. It would also support Eacott's stance that more dialogue between traditions, even within the tradition of educational administration, is valuable.

Fourthly, as it currently stands, the focus on the relations is between the researcher and the research object. Another avenue of fruitful consideration for the future is that of the reader/she/he who engages with the "text" and takes up the work. The social construction of the reader and the relations that have impacted him/her/them over time no doubt effect his/her/their level of investment in the work and the willingness to engage in a continuing dialogue to help refine the scholarship (or treat it with benign neglect). In my case, for example, I have been impacted by my deepening understandings of feminist thought and its relations within my own embodied life in the academy. I am therefore more apt to be sensitive to particular aspects of the work that may not enter the consciousness of others, and/or be insensitive to some aspects that flare for others. As must be evident by now, for

example, the very thought that critical theory would be charged as being unproductive rankled, and I thought to myself, "them's fighting words!" How, then, do we deal sensitively with that third very important "site" in the interests of developing theoretical sophistication? No matter how hard we try, our academic egos, and the relations that have shaped our socially constructed selves are deeply implicated and affect our willingness to engage in dialogue for the purposes of theory development.

Fifthly, I support the advocacy for more intra-disciplinary dialogue between intellectual disciplines, but I am skeptical of the hegemony that dominates in any one of those. History tends to legitimate what counts in that historicizing. Unless the historical canon is also critiqued for what it does, or more importantly, does not, include, our scholarly trajectory will not deepen in a more sophisticated manner. Instead, it will continue to privilege a Western thought tradition that will not be open to multiple perspectives or the diaspora. The lack of attention to historical female thinkers and/or non-Western thinkers in the attempt to historicize the influences on, and trajectory of, educational administration discourse in this text demonstrates this concern, even as Eacott advocates for multiplicity and dialogue. In actuality, educational administration has developed "camps" of scholars who exhibit benign neglect of each other, sometimes precisely because they cannot agree on whose history matters.

Finally, the attempts to ameliorate the values issues within research and scholarship through the use of judgement-free description are too problematic for me to accept, even if there is a theoretical desire on my part for a researcher to be able to do this. Values exist in every decision, every non-decision, every description, and/or every advocacy measure. Epistemological and ontological value premises underpin every theoretical perspective and are embodied in every researcher and in every reader of that research. Judgements are based on, and evident within, action and inaction. This is particularly the case of research ethics issues, and/or the potential for social harm to participants. I do not agree that the role of the researcher should be, at most, to write rich description in order to interpret the legitimation of the social world, even if the interpretation is critical. Rather, I believe that the researcher must provide an honest account of how values premises underlie his/her/their epistemological and ontological positioning theoretically and personally. They must be vigilant to engage in self-reflexivity throughout the project, to provide a thick description of the methods utilized and their limitations, and to attempt within the conclusions to offer other alternatives and/or frameworks for thinking about the research object. It is then the responsibility of the reader to critique the merit of the work, and to engage in a dialogue that offers alternatives regarding how that research object could be studied, so that the depth of understanding can be refined over time.

In conclusion, Eacott's developing work is of interest because it attempts to deal with the messiness and complexity of social organization and its legitimation. Feminists the world over have attempted to address these same concerns. The advocacy for openness to multiplicity in perspective, attention to temporality and socio-spatiality, and the dangers of hegemonic discourse provide fruitful and

exciting avenues for scholarly theorizing and research in educational administration. The tensions inherent in the work are both empirical and theoretical tensions that cannot be untangled without creating new paradoxes, but they are worthy of dialogue in the interests of rigorous scholarship. To that end, I look forward to continued, *critically productive* discussion of these ideas.

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Chapter 14
Thinking Relationally About the "School Leader"

Augusto Riveros

This chapter engages with the program outlined by Eacott (2015) in *Educational leadership relationally*. I aim to mobilize some of the themes explored in the book to analyze a contemporary phenomenon in the administration of education: the enactment of standards for leadership practice. I situate my analysis in the Canadian context, in particular, the province of Ontario. This analytical engagement has two purposes: first, to investigate the possibilities that a relational approach has to offer to the study of the enactment of leadership standards and second, to interrogate some of the assumptions and implications of the relational project for the study of educational administration.

As neo-liberal discourses in education promote the commodification and instrumentalization of knowledge, theoretical inquiry becomes a rare occurrence. Theoretical work in educational administration and leadership is no exception to this trend. Blackmore (2013) noted that "as a concept that has significant normative and political capacities as well as consequences, leadership is discursively overworked and theoretically underdone in policy and in much of the literature" (p. 140). Of course, this does not mean that the study of educational administration is devoid of theorization. The history of this field of inquiry offers notable examples of theoretical engagements, principled debates, and conceptual interrogation, such as Greenfield's (1991) challenges to the theory movement or Evers and Lakomski's (1991, 1996, 2000) naturalistic coherentism program. As Gunter (2005) noted in her typology of research orientations in the field, knowledge claims in educational administration and leadership are necessarily situated within intellectual traditions and discontinuities that engender debate and contestation. Donmoyer (2001) noted, however, that the different orientations treat each other with benign neglect, without engaging in critical conversation about their object(s) of study.

Eacott's proposal to adopt a relational perspective in the study of educational administration and leadership comes at a time where performativity has consolidated its place as the logic of education reform. In Ball's (2003) words, "the novelty of this epidemic of reform is that it does not simply change what people, as educators, scholars and researchers do, it changes who they are" (p. 215).

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
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Evidently, under these historical circumstances, social actors involved in the administration of education, including researchers and practitioners, have the opportunity to interrogate the discourses and forces that shape the contemporary social condition through administration in a globalizing world. These forces are evident in the current obsession of most of the literature aiming to link student achievement and the actions of the principal.

As much of the research engages in the search for the mechanism of perpetual school improvement, little has been done to interrogate the very constructs that drive the research in this field. Eacott's proposal offers a way to investigate the social and historical construction of the object of inquiry, as well as the implications of this construction for practice and research.

The Relational Approach

In a relational ontology, relations are ontologically more fundamental than entities. That is, entities are constituted through relations and not vice versa. The interactions, connections, disconnections, and differences between beings determine their identity. In contrast, an entities-based ontology assumes that identity is an intrinsic property of beings. The relations between beings do not affect their identity in any substantial way. For instance, a relational ontology would characterize a teacher's identity as a product of multiple relations between policies, material spaces, discourses, and practices. What makes someone a "teacher" (or a "principal" or a "parent" for that matter) is the multiplicity of intersections between education policies, social practices, practices, gender roles, and other markers and positions that engender this identity. There is nothing intrinsic to an individual that makes her a "teacher" or a "principal"; her identity is constituted by the position that she occupies in the educational system, the policies that enforce that system, and all the other social-historical arrangements that facilitate the emergence of such identities. A relational ontology portrays its objects as emergent, as products of the intersections between discourses, practices, social forces, other identities, and other social and material realities.

The analytic of relationality has an illustrious history in philosophy and sociology. Notably, in the works of Heidegger (1962), Foucault (1971), and Deleuze (1993), who challenged each one in their own way, the individualistic/atomistic assumptions of modern thought. Eacott draws his relational proposal inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who famously argued for a relational understanding of the constitution of social reality. For instance, in his discussion of social space, Bourdieu (1998, p. 31) argued that:

> The notion of space contains in itself, the principle of a relational understanding of the social world. It affirms that every reality it designates resides on the mutual exteriority of its composite elements. Apparent, directly, visible beings, whether individuals or groups, exist and subsist in and through difference; that is, they occupy relative positions in a space of

> relations which, although invisible and always difficult to show empirically, is the most real reality (the ens realissimum as the scholasticism would say).

Difference is a relational property, one that could only be understood in terms of the distinction between entities in a social space. Consequently, the identity of an individual, a practice, or a process is an effect of the configuration of the relations in which that individual, practice, or process participates. Eacott adopts this analytic in his discussion of the construct of "leadership" and the recasting of "administrative labor."

One clear advantage of adopting a relational approach is that it immediately highlights the situatedness of the object under examination. In the case of leadership, Eacott investigates the social and historical conditions under which the label of leadership has been created and appropriated. He argues that the label of leadership has become part of the managerialist project of the state (Eacott, 2015), a label of choice that legitimizes the adoption of performative regimes in education. Eacott's claim echoes a growing dissatisfaction in the academic literature toward the uncritical embracing of this label in academic, professional, and policy circles. For instance, according to Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003),

> that there is a strong discourse emphasizing leadership and that this is repeated by mass media, the public, people in organizations, and leadership researchers is no proof of anything—except, perhaps, about the popularity of this discourse. That there is considerable leadership research studying and claiming the existence of leadership does not prove anything either. Much of this research takes for granted leadership and is stuck in this assumption. The research assumes what it perhaps should study in a much more open and questioning way. (p. 377)

The interrogation of the idea of leadership has compelled researchers to call for a reorientation of the field toward a broader understanding of educational organizations (Glatter, 2006) and the practices within them (Lakomski, 2005). O'Reilly and Reed (2010) expressed similar concerns mobilizing the notion of "leaderism," which refers to the introduction of the narrative of leadership in policy discourses, representing "an evolution of entrepreneurial and cultural management ideology and practices which are focused on 're-imaging' the public service user as a consumer (or 'co-producer') rather than as a citizen or client" (p. 960). Relatedly, Hall (2013) argued that the "discourse of leadership and the communication of the leadership imaginary to schools in England […] have enabled the adaptation of the teaching profession to the radical changes associated with NPM [New Public Management]" (p. 267).

Eacott's proposal contributes theoretical resources to researchers interested in exploring the constitution and emergence of leadership as a social construct. His analysis reveals that researchers have taken the existence and meaning of this construct for granted, engaging in an ontological complicity that assumes the causal influence of leadership in shaping organizational realities. In Eacott's view, by uncritically accepting the existence of leadership and its causal influence, researchers and practitioners have been complicit in the re-creation of a school that perpetuates the belief in the necessity of leadership as an explanatory mechanism

for educational outcomes. One consequence of this reification of leadership is the preservation of traditional positivist dichotomies, such as subject/object or agency/structure. Indeed, by portraying leadership as a causal mechanism that influences the operation of the school, most of the research assumes that the school is a well-defined entity that could be intervened and reformed through the action of the leader(s). Leadership, in this image, is a resource, a powerful mechanism that could be appropriated to organize and mobilize social actors toward the achievement of predetermined goals.

The relational perspective advocated by Eacott purports to map out the interactions that contribute to the construction of these objects. It would allow us to interrogate the conditions for the existence of these entities and would allow us to question the legitimacy of the mechanisms used to intervene and reform the school. In my own work, I have studied one of these mechanisms of reform: the creation and adoption of standards for leadership practice. In particular, I am interested in the enactment of the standards in order to understand how they reconfigure practices and identities. In what follows, I aim to explore how a relational lens could be mobilized to study the enactment of leadership standards, offering, at the same time, a critical examination of Eacott's proposal.

Applying the Relational Approach to the Study of the Enactment of Standards for Leadership Practice

One obvious implication of relationality is its necessary grounding in contexts. If the real is relational and reality is contextual then a relational analysis would be an analysis of the context. Eacott warns us that the "context matters" narrative has done little to define what context is. Clearly, context is not synonym with "local." In research, we use context as a heuristic, as a category that helps us situate the object of inquiry. While most of the research in educational administration has adopted the "context matters" dictum, the definition of the context usually corresponds to pre-established categories, such as the school, the district, or the nation. Without a critical examination of the discourses that frame their definition of the context, researchers are destined to reproduce these taken-for-granted categories through their research. In contrast, a relational understanding of context is interdisciplinary; It portrays the local and the global in a dialectic relation, recognizing that "context" is always an emergent reality, produced through the intersections between practices, identities, and discourses.

In line with this understanding of context, the notion of "policy enactment" (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012) offers a situated understanding of policy processes:

> Policy is complexly encoded in sets of texts and various documents and it is also decoded in complex ways. Policy enactment involves creative processes of interpretation and translation, that is, the recontextualisation through reading, writing and talking of the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualized practices. (Braun, Ball, Maguire & Hoskins, 2011, p. 587)

This situated characterization of policy contradicts the traditional notion of "policy implementation" in which policy is seen as a linear, top-down process with school actors having limited involvement. In contrast, policy enactment is a situated, dynamic, iterative process framed by particular social and historical circumstances. Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) argued that the study of policy includes the practices of the actors and their creative efforts to interpret and contextualize the policy messages into their specific circumstances. In their view, the analysis of enactments includes the following: the historical and locational aspects where the policy is put in practice; the professional cultures; the material circumstances; and the wider social and political forces that interact with the practices of social actors. Policy frameworks, discourses, and initiatives represent some of these forces.

Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) argued that conventional accounts of policy implementation tend to dematerialize the school context, assuming the "best possible" environments for "implementation": ideal buildings, students, teachers and even resources' (p. 41). This idea resonates with Eacott's examination of some studies that assume the existence of leadership as an empirical reality that exists with independence of social and historical contexts. This decontextualized characterization of leadership is evidenced in much of the policy geared toward leadership reform. Newton and Riveros (2015) argued that contemporary discourses on school reform position leadership as a key mechanism in education reform. As neo-liberal discourses in education reform introduce new forms of managerialism in the administration of schools, the "leader" is construed as the key agent in charge of mobilizing the organization toward the goal of reform. In these discourses, "student achievement" has been defined as the ultimate purpose of education, and leadership has been positioned as the mechanism that would produce this desired outcome.

This "leadership turn" in education reform (Riveros, Newton & Burgess, 2017) adopts the construct of "leadership" to position the school leader as the agent in charge of reform. This is evident in the obsession over the principal as the focus of the inquiry in most of the literature in educational administration. In two recent reviews of the literature, Lawrence Ingvarson et al. (2006) and the OECD (CEPPE & OECD, 2013) noted the growing popularity of policies on leadership standards around the world. The leadership standards movement started in 1996 in the USA with the publication of the Interstate School Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (NPBEA, 2015). After numerous boards adopted the ISLLC standards in the USA, other jurisdictions followed suit creating their own standards, notably, the UK (DfES, 2004, 2015), Australia (Education Services Australia, 2011, 2015), Alberta (Alberta Education, 2009), British Columbia (BCPVA, 2007, 2013), and Ontario (Institute for Education Leadership, 2007, 2013), among many others.

Despite the controversies around defining and studying leadership (Gunter, 2005; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Oplatka, 2009, 2010; Newton, & Riveros, 2015), there are significant similarities between the formulations of the standards. The CEPPE-OECD (2013) study noted that most leadership standards include five key domains: (i) to establish a guiding mission, (ii) to generate organizational conditions, (iii) to create harmony within the school, (iv) to develop the self and others, and (v) to do pedagogical management. The overlap between the different

formulations of the standards suggests the existence of global policy transfer mechanisms (Lingard & Rawolle, 2011) that are materialized in the emergence of leadership policies in different jurisdictions across the globe.

In a study conducted in the province of Ontario, Riveros, Verret, and Wei (2016) investigated the enactment of the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) (Institute for Education Leadership, 2013) aiming to understand how school actors in urban schools in Ontario translate these standards into practices. Briefly, the OLF aims to provide "leaders with a clear picture of what effective leadership looks like at both the level of the individual leader and the organization. It describes what an effective leader does and what an effective organization does" (Institute for Education Leadership, 2013, p. 6). The OLF includes five domains where leadership is demonstrated: (i) setting directions, (ii) building relationships and developing people, (iii) developing the organization to support desired practices, (iv) improving the instructional program, and (v) securing accountability.

Through a case study approach that included semi-structured interviews with principals and vice-principals and document analysis, Riveros, Verret, and Wei (2016) identified key analytical themes that offered insights into the enactment of the standards. One key finding relates to the constitution of the "school leader" as an emergent identity.

The "School Leader" as an Emergent Identity: A Relational Story

A relational perspective avoids essentialist accounts of identity. As indicated above, the subject is constituted in the interconnections between other identities, discourses, practices, and other social and material circumstances. Our initial analysis of the OLF suggested an essentialist or "entity" ontology in which the leader is the school actor who reflects the domains listed above. "Leadership" is conceived as a real property that could be easily transferred between contexts and adopted by different actors. In his analysis of the leadership standards in the USA, English (2012) argued that these frameworks constitute instruments of rational control over the actions and practices of school actors. They become instruments of subjectification, namely, tools that configure subjectivities through diverse articulations of power (Foucault, 1982).

Evidently, we did not begin the analysis with a pre-constructed notion of "leader" or "leadership," instead, we allowed our participants to articulate through examples situations in which they consider they are responding to the demands of the OLF. Our initial analysis revealed that the OLF was largely used in processes of recruitment, evaluation, and promotion. The OLF provided a fixed list of criteria used to contrast their practice against an abstraction of what leadership looks like in the best-case scenario. While the OLF play an important role in defining who enters, stays, and moves up in the ranks of school districts in Ontario, its relevance

as a guide for the daily practice of school administrators is less clear. Here, we see that the role of the "school leader" is construed in ambivalent ways: the portfolios for promotion, the annual evaluations, and the reports to the school board portray a "school leader" that fits neatly defined categories. This identity appears ex post facto, in reflection, when the OLF is used as a template to evaluate performance. However, it is important to note that the mechanisms created to enforce compliance with OLF have an effect on the practices of the administrators.

While it is tempting to say that school administrators display two sets of practices: one set to comply with the OLF and another to deal with their daily work, the deployment of the surveillance mechanisms mentioned above compels administrators to act in ways that ultimately reflect the domains in the OLF. In this process of enacting the policy, namely, in the process of re-contextualizing the OLF through situated practices, the "school leader" emerges as an identity. In Ontario, the "school leader" is a term that has become intimately associated with the OLF. One salient example of this association could be seen in the principal preparation courses offered to those wishing to join the administrative ranks in their districts. Our review of these programs revealed that all of them have used the OLF to structure their curricula. This is an instance of the ontological complicity that Eacott (2015) mentioned in his analysis. The emergence of the "school leader" as an identity has been made possible by a number of social and political factors that include (i) the global circulation of policy discourses on leadership and school reform, (ii) the unproblematic acceptance of these discourses at the local level, and (iii) the materialization of these discourses in practices and mechanisms of surveillance and control. The tacit complicity of policy makers, researchers, academics, and practitioners toward defining the 'school leader' has made the emergence of this identity possible.

This school leader is a systems leader whose role is to mobilize the school toward student achievement. This leader does not act nor reflect on issues of oppression, marginalization, or emancipation. More problematically, no space is there to include key markers of personal identity, such as gender, race, ability, or sexual identity. By portraying the 'school leader' as a homogenous identity, the OLF does little to open spaces for diversity in the administration of schools. This decontextualized treatment of leaders and leadership fails to acknowledge the realities of women, racialized minorities, LGBTQ people, and people who live with disabilities, as they consider joining the path of school administration. By portraying the "school leader" as a homogenous identity, the OLF reinforces the social privilege of the white middle class in the administration of education. This lack of diversity in the administration of schools is problematic, especially in a province that has an increasingly diverse population, particularly in its urban centers.

Expanding the Relational Perspective

In the last section, I argued that the social construction of leadership as an empirical object creates and re-creates identities in educational administration. I aimed to show how the analytic of relationality offers situated insights into the constitution and emergence of the "school leader" as the preeminent agent of school reform. In doing this, I aimed to engage my own scholarship in the exploration of what it means to adopt a relational perspective. Eacott (2015) pointed out that,

> the relational research programme is a generative way of thinking about educational administration. The interpretation of what it is, and what it is not, is an ongoing – and enduring – question. This is why I cannot prescribe a how to, only to stress that theory is methodology and not separate entities. (p. 134)

While the intention of the book is not to offer yet another recipe to "do leadership," it provides interesting groundwork to re-imagine the objects of inquiry in educational administration. In what follows I suggest a few venues where the relational program could be further developed.

Power and Identity

Analyses of power have been central to the development of social theory. There are, however, different perspectives when it comes to define what power is and how it exists in society. Eacott suggested that the legitimation of the object of study depends on the way such object is constructed in relations. As we study relations, more attention could be paid to the ways power circulates and contributes to the enactment of social realities. Further, is power something held by groups or individuals, a property of relations, a condition of control and influence or an ubiquitous productive force? At times, the analysis seems to portray power as a symbolic and cultural instrument that creates the conditions for social difference. "Theoretically, this takes analysis beyond the reduction of relations to the enactment of power, as is often the case with Neo-Marxist accounts, and brings to the fore attention to temporality and socio-political space" (Eacott, 2015, p. 71). However, as we pay attention to time and socio-political space in the constitution of the object of inquiry, the role of power in the legitimation of these objects is less clear. In my exploration of a relational perspective above, I argued that the definition of the object of inquiry has material implications for the emergence of identities in educational administration. One way to expand this analysis could be to investigate whether time and space as categories are created as an effect of disciplinary powers or regimes of truth (Foucault, 1982).

The Dichotomy Critical/Productive

Eacott indicates that the relational approach aims to investigate the legitimation of the object of inquiry in educational administration, going beyond a mere "critical" perspective:

> The relational approach is concerned with the legitimation of the social – the various ways in which the contemporary social conditions have come to be, and importantly, are sustained. This is not couched in a negative perspective, rather one seeking description for the purpose of understanding, not judgement. The critical seeks to emancipate from regimes of oppression. In contrast, the relational, built upon description, pays attention to the construction and ongoing maintenance of the contemporary condition. Rather than explicitly seeking emancipation, the relational offers the means for alternatives to be promoted through its focus on the genesis of the contemporary. The critical and the relational are not so much different, but the distinctions matter. (Eacott, 2015, p. 79)

This distinction is stressed out throughout the book and seems to suggest a distinction between "critical" and "productive." I have to confess I am puzzled by this distinction. Is not emancipation a productive goal of critical theory? Why is it important to make this distinction? Clearly, a critical theorist could endorse an entity ontology and still mobilize their critique to overcome institutional and social sources of oppression. Critical theory takes the political seriously and asks whether realities are constituted through political action. I believe a relational perspective is not incompatible with this claim. Perhaps the question that could be asked here is whether the political should be prioritized in the characterization of the real as relational.

Concluding Remarks

I believe the relational perspective proposed by Eacott is engaging and intriguing. It offers novel possibilities to investigate knowledge and knowledge production in educational administration. As a proposal, it offers meaningful questions for researchers to consider as they embark in their studies. Perhaps one critical aspect that should be carefully considered by those interested in the study of relations is the interrogation of the nature of relations. What counts as a relation and what type of relations should be taken into account? If relations are ontologically primitive, the definition of what a relation is and what type of relations are constitutive of the object is of utmost importance.

In this brief chapter, I aimed to engage relational thinking in the analysis of an issue in educational administration: the enactment of standards for leadership practice. I paid particular attention to the constitution of the "school leader" as an emergent identity. Using the analytic of relationality, I interrogated the ontological assumptions and the implications of policy discourses that aim to characterize the school leader as the agent of school reform and noted that this identity is emergent,

fluid, and fragile. Finally, I made a few suggestions for researchers interested in mobilizing a relational perspective in their own work.

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Chapter 15
Engaging with Educational Leadership Relationally

Megan Crawford

In any field, we can get stuck within the same parameters of thinking and doing. As we build up a research profile, it is sometimes easier to not engage with ideas and practices that are outside our own comfort zones. Writing this short chapter has allowed me to connect with many areas in the field of educational administration that I had either not considered or had looked at only briefly. Reading *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015) has not only allowed me to consider Scott Eacott's recent work, but also begin to consider where the field is moving in the next decade, and the gap between theory and practice. Eacott (2015) argues that educational administration scholars should engage with leadership in particular. His work focuses on the idea that "leadership" is "not an external knowable entity, but the product of cognition—a social construction." He claims that mobilizing a relational approach means that scholars can unpick some of the normative assumptions, which many of us have regarding what "leadership," is, and its explanatory value for both research and practice. It could be, he argues, that we should recast our ways of thinking about organizing, in order to make the everyday experiences of organizational life strange. This chapter will ask whether the explanatory power or descriptive value of relations is a stimulus for new thinking or a return to older values and assumptions. After all, Eacott asks scholars to debate whether relational approaches are at the cutting edge of contemporary thought and analysis, and if they are, how can we theorize and understand relations in the organizing of education and educational labor?

The Arguments

Much of the argument can be seen to consist of how or if we can define "leadership" at all, given the difficulties that various scholars have had over the decades, both in industry and professional settings, as well as specifically in schools. The idea of a "leadership" worldview having its own expectations against which

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"leaders" are judged has deep echoes of the current state of school "leadership" in England (Coldron, Crawford, Jones, & Simkins, 2014). His argument that our failure to focus our attention on the concept while blaming an individual or an organization, has led to flawed thinking about what is actually happening within an organization, is an intriguing one. Noting that "leadership" language is reflective of an ideological position on organizational life, helpfully allows the reader to also reflect that the same ideological positions in various policy contexts may also bring pressure to bear on the language that is used systemically by those in "leadership" positions. His work is also very clear on the epistemological implications of language use in the field of educational leadership and administration.

Eacott's argument comes into its own with his debate about the ontological position of educational leadership researchers. Qualitative researchers often clearly state that they have assumptions or unconscious bias that may creep into their work and may even argue this position as a positive. In educational leadership research, this unconscious orientation may indeed be more damaging if, as he suggests, "how the researcher believes organizations *ought* to behave is used as a lens to evaluate how they are currently acting." This is a particularly interesting point to reflect upon for commissioned research from governmental departments. Eacott argues, convincingly, that many of the distinctions in the literature about "leaders" and others or "leadership" and "non-leadership" "are the manifestation of the preexisting normative orientation of the researcher." Thus, we need to critically examine both the language we use, and the descriptions we undertake of situations.

Making his key argument the shifting of the research object and an intention to disrupt the dominant epistemologies and methodologies of educational administration, his overall argument seeks to set out a relational approach that "privileges the situated nature of actions" (Eacott, 2015, p. 8). What exactly does this mean? The argument seems to be that relationships constitute context. Drawing on Bourdieu, he argues for five *relational* extensions, which draw on shaping and reshaping relationally through the research process, while at the same time, the view of organizing is continually re-shaped. His proposition is that this allows for relational thinking that in turn generates new ways of theorizing more productively, even if it does not do away with some of the difficulties of the field that he articulates. Instead of developing a new vocabulary to describe similar situations, his hope is that thinking *relationally* will allow researchers to allow new ways of understanding to develop, by getting rid of normative assumptions in the field. The argument is that new ways of thinking and understanding will allow many different ways of looking at the field of educational administration. In particular, my reading suggests that he wishes to encourage a healthier debate around epistemological issues, having no patience with the way the field has failed to engage over a long period of time. Thinking relationally, he suggests, would give the field the intellectual means to think differently, and more deeply, about our areas of concern. This includes giving due attention to the "space between" (Buber, 1981[1923]), which, he argues we are in danger of reducing immeasurably in search of the quantifiable. At the heart of his discussions are what we as scholars mean by "leadership" and why and in what ways it matters, given that his argument suggests that both the

research object and the researcher are rooted in, and exemplify contemporary social conditions. Eacott suggests that scholars need to ask how we can explain these dilemmas further, but not necessarily by solving problems but by asking other questions. These may be based on developing descriptions of organizational happenings by researchers who are at all times aware of conceptual systems within the social space however defined, which do not necessarily use the concept of "leadership" as a key variable for the achieving of organizational goals.

I warmly welcome anything that allows scholars to question deeply the field as it has developed, particularly over the last twenty years; faced with agendas in many countries which promote school autonomy while at the same time leveraging into place strong accountability measures that make that autonomy a chimera for many, and a power base for some. Also, I am fully in agreement with his assertion that we need to go beyond what passes for a commonsense approach to everyday social life in schools. If a relational approach does give the field an approach it can build upon, allowing new knowledge claims to develop as well as the healthy debate concerning the status quo, then that can only be a good thing in my view. It is challenging in and of itself to suggest that a relational approach can at one and the same time promote a narrative of rigorous and robust scholarship in educational administration while remaining critical of any narrative promoting versions of rigor and robustness. However, surely that narrative should be a basic tenet of what scholarship is about? In throwing out the challenge to other researchers in the field, Eacott promotes critical views on the *relational* approach, because that is what the scholarly must be about if areas are to grow, thrive, and develop robustly in the future. Eacott opens his book quoting Fenwick English (2006) who argues, that the advancement of any discipline requires deep and sustained criticism of it, philosophically, logically, and empirically. For me, there are several challenges that the relational approach brings, that are both about the advancement of the discipline in the way English describes, but also about the power of the "leadership" narrative to twist and subsume scholarship to pragmatic needs, rather than using challenging scholarship to ask new questions about the intellectual and practical social spaces in which schools as organizations are engendered. The rest of this paper will suggest why this might be the case, and what version of critique and challenge will encourage a space for debate.

Compliance and Conformity

In looking at the field in the UK particularly, there are strong social pressures, or norms, to conform in research in educational administration. Norms allow things to run smoothly, and we can follow from Eacott's arguments that the norms of the field have shied away from the intellectual debate, and moved towards trying forever to define "leadership." Social relations theory suggests that people conform or many and varied reasons, but any group has to be attractive to others for the conformity to apply; normative influence is where the pressure to comply comes

from others in the group. A strong feature of funded research in many countries is concerned with evaluating what may be influential policy strands, and where researchers have to maintain or conform within an established relationship with policy makers. Often, this might be categorized as public compliance where the individual researcher conforms but has not actually changed their private viewpoint as an "expert" in the field. The more appealing a group is to someone, the more likely they are to conform to the norms of that group. This could be one explanation for the lack of appetite in some international research communities to take up similar critiques of the field. That is, researchers want to belong to a community of researchers with influence in public policy spaces, for example, and although they may voice disquiet about managerialism and its effects on policies and the like, few are willing to step out and critique publically. In the English system, research in schools through teaching school alliances and similar is more likely to reinforce, rather than extend the boundaries of thinking, but it could be argued that such research is not conceptually driven, and therefore needs to be critiqued and judged differently. This would be an area to develop the discussion of relational aspects further in order to aid practitioners in schools with such a review.

As Eacott argues, there is widespread disquiet in some research communities about such issues as the advancing managerialist project (Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2011), and it would perhaps be a shame if the critique we are examining was focused in too restricted an area. As most writers in educational administration agree about the importance the role of context, this is a fertile area for deconstruction, discussion, and conceptual advancement. There are also, as Eacott delineates in his writing, central issues about individualism/collectivism and structure/agency, which are discussed and debated regularly, and often circuitously. If a relational approach is to be a key one for moving the field forward, Eacott's exhortation to be restless about the current state of thought and analysis becomes critical. My question would be to ask how near we are in the field to be dissatisfied with the status quo, where serves many well. Possibly much nearer to it then we were five years ago, but there are some difficult challenges to overcome. While many have to do with scholars themselves, others as I have suggested, may be rooted in vested personal and political interests. If a vigorous debate is wanted among scholars and the more pragmatic world of school leaders, arguments about the nature of research will need to be made clearly, concisely and in language that aids rather than hinders understanding. Eacott makes a clear argument to scholars, but I would argue there is also a piece of intellectual work to be done outside of our own community to facilitate discussion and give signposts that illuminate understanding. So, while I may appreciate Bourdieu, my work within schools suggests that this appreciation requires nurturing by those of us who work in such spaces, in order that the tools to aid debate are not lost at the first hurdle of understanding. Critics may say this is underappreciation of the intellectual resources of teachers in schools. I would argue that such resources need not only to be understood but to be internalized in a social arena where the time for reflection is always at a premium. Engaging with educational leadership relationally is a task that needs to be looked

at from both within and outside of the traditional research community with its particular writing voice, or it will consistently be marginalized.

Conclusion

If a state of disequilibrium and dissatisfaction with the status quo can help build a new norm for researchers in educational administration, then writers and thinkers need to actively consider how best, and where to, promote such a new norm. As I have noted above, and Eacott underlines in his writing, where authority lies is a crucial factor. Although it may be very difficult to determine where that authority lies in terms of research into the field, this does not mean that we should not try. Indeed, a step that might be taken next by those researchers and writers particularly interested in moving ideas forward is to engage in some writing, and/or workshops about where authority lies in certain areas. The policy would seem, initially to be an area of investigation where authority is clear-cut, because in many countries research is driven by policy imperatives. However, the nuances of this might be a useful discussion in terms of the debate on educational leadership from a relational perspective. I am heartened by the exhortation to shake off complacency, and even promote disequilibrium and dissatisfaction (in a positive way, of course).

Articulating the unseen in a way that stimulates debate in educational administration, and to do, it clearly and carefully is a challenge that I would be willing to accept. I do have reservations about the scale of the project if it is to truly challenge the existing structures of research and persuade researchers to be actively critical of the dominance of certain methodologies. This is because there are dangers of either tackling too great a task or even be afraid to start on the task for fear of returning to the old traps of "leadership." I would ask Eacott and other scholars to be explicit about how this task can be framed as the joint critical endeavors of a community of scholars. This piece, and others like it, may well be the start of this, but in order to build on these foundations, something inside my (perhaps managerialist) head, nudges me to thinking that joint critical endeavors require either extensive collaboration and debate with like-minded scholars or the setting up of a framework within which such debates can take place. Whichever way the discussion goes, I hope to be a part of it.

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Part IV
Moving Forward

Chapter 16
Response to Commentaries

In this chapter, I take up the opportunity to respond to the commentaries provided in the previous six chapters. In an ideal world, it would have been nice to afford the contributors the opportunity to respond to my response and keep the conversation going—and that is an opportunity that I hope to take up in other forums. As I have in multiple locations throughout the book, I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank (in alphabetical order) Tony Bush, Megan Crawford, Fenwick English, Helen Gunter, Izhar Oplatka, Augusto Riveros, and Dawn Wallin for the care and thought they exercised in engaging with *Educational leadership relationally* (Eacott, 2015) and contributing to a project that is increasingly uncommon in the literature of educational administration. Within the confines of this chapter, I can only take up a few of the many useful points they raise but I will be working through each one as I seek to advance my *relational* program.

Some of the matters raised in the previous section have been addressed, although arguably partially, in Part 2 of the book. This is emergent and constitutive of the approach to putting the book together. I was writing Part 2 at the same time as Part 3 was being written by respondents. To that end, flaws that I had identified or featured in the 2016 special issue of *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations*, but in many cases are far better nuanced by contributors in this text were engaged with. This includes matters of context (e.g., Chap. 6), distancing from the social critical (e.g., Chap. 8), and some possible means of mobilizing *relational* theorizing. Have I addressed the matters to the satisfaction of the contributors, possibly, but then again, possibly not. This is one of the highs (and lows) of the scholarly enterprise. The logic of academic work, argument and refutation, is rarely resolved (if it ever is) within a single back and forth exchange. It is an ongoing project. To frame this chapter, I am going to draw loosely on the *relational* extensions to discuss matters of scholarly identity; the pre-scientific/scientific distinction; grounding the scholarly narrative; and social epistemology. Before engaging with these matters, there is a concern raised in a few spots that need attention, that is, what is a relation?

S. Eacott, *Beyond Leadership*, Educational Leadership Theory,
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What Is a Relation?

There are many who identify with some form of relational scholarship—as shown in earlier chapters. This is a positive reflection of the increasing interest in relational approaches, but also a complexity as to what is meant by relations, relationships, and relational scholarship. Interest in relational (theoretically and methodologically) approaches emerged from a dissatisfaction with substantialist accounts of the social world. To that end, relational scholarship is about a way of thinking about the social. It is not about the demarcation of what is a relationship and the measurement of that relationship for direction and strength. The requirement for explicit parameters and operational definitions is not only unnecessary but also contrary to the *relational* approach I am advancing. To make a universal statement as to what is, and by virtue is not, a relation would be to outline a static and immovable object. What I am arguing for is openness in scholarship and inquiry and this is why relations rather than relationships are the focus. As a consequence, however, scholarship becomes a little fuzzy. Given my trajectory in Bourdieusian social theory, I am drawn to the opening passage of Ladwig's (1996) *Academic distinctions* citing Bourdieu claiming that one should "not be more clear than reality" (p. 1).

A fundamental question from sympathizers and critics remains—"What is a relation?" A key insight here is provided by Donati (2015) when he argues that society does not have relations but *is* relations. Following Donati, I argue that we cannot have a *relational* approach to educational administration (or any focal area) unless we see the relation as an emergent and constitutive of the social world. Educational administration is at once emerged from and constituted by relations. Relations are not things but the very stuff of the social. It is not possible to articulate in advance what is, and is not, a relation. To do so would be to construct the relation as an entity, an approach that would fall into the measurement construct critique raised by Harrison White. More significantly, it would be contrary to the initial stimulus for relational scholarship. Therefore, the question of what are relations is the wrong question. What is needed are the theoretical resources to make it happen. This is why I have extended my previous arguments to now include the resources (e.g., *organizing activity*, *auctor*, and *spatio-temporal conditions*) that enable us to discuss the world relationally. If society is relational, then we need relational resources rather than a definition of what is a relation. The *relational* approach is theoretical and methodological.

Scholarly Identity

The first *relational* extension is concerned with illuminating our own complicity with the social world as it is. Gunter raises the significance of scholarly identities in educational administration noting that the identity of scholars is frequently rooted in

first (or at least previous) occupations. In the case of educational administration, this frequently includes a service orientation and a desire to provide insights into the technical and functional operations of organizations. What Gunter flags is less of a critique and more a comment on a much under-discussed and under-developed aspect of educational administration scholarship. As Wallin points out, strengthening the articulation of the underlying generative principles of scholarship provides a productive means to theorize and contribute.

As argued in Chap. 4, language is an organizing feature of the social. It frequently blurs the empirical and the epistemic. This is why the *spatio-temporal conditions* are important. The *relational* provides the resources to illuminate our ontological complicity and in doing so recognizes that there is no pure truth but that more rigorous and robust knowledge claims are based on acknowledging—as best as we can—the relations in which thought is exercised. A consequence of this approach is that there are often questions of the self, one's positionality in the social and the influence that this has on knowledge generation, that require reflexivity in scholarly argument. This is very challenging for those who align with logical empiricism. More so, building on Cassirer (1942), it presents a paradox for advancing knowledge claims. Rather than the accumulation of knowledge and the incremental building on past knowledge, reflexivity means that knowledge claims of the past may be rethought, recast, or even disbanded. If that is possible, then it is possible that the same can be said for contemporary claims. The *spatio-temporal conditions* are again heightened, not to mention the role of the researcher as *auctor* in the *organizing activity* that is knowledge production.

To turn knowledge claims back on the self also encourages, if not forces, scholars to recognize their own privilege in making such claims. This point is raised by Wallin in relation to my own privileged position to be arguing for the *relational* program. She argues that as an "increasingly prominent male scholar" (to which I can add white), I hold a privileged position to be able to speak out, one that is not afforded to others—notably feminist (and arguably more broadly, female) scholars. This is a thought provoking observation, and supported by empirical examples, of the gendered organizing of an intellectual community. As a white male scholar located in a developed nation—one with an intellectual history of producing educational administration scholarship—I did not sufficiently acknowledge the "trajectory" to think with Massey (2005) of my intellectual lineage. Nor did I acknowledge the gendered organizing of educational administration as a domain of inquiry. That said, the *relational* approach that I am advancing is at the periphery of educational administration. There is a reason that *Educational leadership relationally* was published by Sense—a publishing house considered by many to be of inconsistent quality. Similarly, the special issue dedicated to debating the book was published in *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations* (an open-access journal that has since merged with another Canadian journal). Although this follow-up book is published by Springer—which is almost universally accepted as a leading publisher—for *Educational leadership relationally* I could not get a major publishing house interested and/or they wanted me to produce a very different book. Nor can I get many educational administration journals

willing to publish a piece either (and I have many rejection letters to confirm this). There is an explicit desire for me to locate my position within a particular school of the zombie canon—the key criticism being "what theorist are you using?" In the previous book, I sought to address this issue. On page seven, I declare that despite my obvious trajectory in Bourdieusian social theory, my use of Bourdieu is without "utmost loyalty or reverence." This was central to my naming of Lisa Adkins as an academic mentor. Across her body of work Adkins has consistently demonstrated the ability to work with, and where necessary beyond, the zombie canon. Rather than a compliant disciple, Adkins has built a scholarly program through explicitly acknowledging her trajectory and generating contributions rather than mere appropriations of the master (e.g., Adkins & Skeggs, 2005). This I would argue is crucial for social scientific inquiry.

The Matter of Science

English is critical of my use of science and in particular the distinction between "pre-scientific" and "scientific" work but also around knowledge centrism. The former is primarily concerned with the epistemological break and an attempt to establish a distinction between the scientific and the pre-scientific. There is a need for further nuancing of these claims to negate any misinterpretations. The epistemological break is not about replacing the ordinary language of the everyday with scientific language, rather it is about illuminating the underlying generative principles of scholarship and acknowledge positionality through reflexivity. My argument was not an attempt to establish an analytical dualism (pre-scientific/scientific) and instead concerned with going beyond the orthodoxy and creating the conditions in which we can engage across scholarly traditions. To make this possible requires acknowledgment of the construction that the scholar undertakes in crafting the scholarly narrative. As the Bourdieu quotes used in multiple places throughout this text states, the difference is not between a science that does and does not undertake this construction but between one that recognizes and acknowledges it and one that does not. This is why reflexivity is important. My argument is not one aimed at building a single version of social science or dismissing all that has gone before. What I am after is a social science that pays equal attention to matters of knowledge production as it does the knowledge it produces.

That said, I do acknowledge that I have built into this text the addition of the theoretical resources of *organizing activity*, *auctor*, and *spatio-temporal conditions* (mindful that the initial work for these appears in *Educational leadership relationally*). Specifically, I italicize these resources. The decision to do this is to create distinctions from the everyday uses of these labels. That is, I want to remind the reader, even if only unconsciously, that there is a specific social theory that sits between these labels. As a stylistic approach, this is not necessarily uncommon. Grenfell (2010) has consistently used italics to distinguish between Bourdieusian

terms (e.g., habitus, field, capital) and others (e.g., Grenfell, 2010). Karl Maton has done similar with Legitimation Code Theory (e.g., Maton, Hood, & Shay, 2016).

More central to English's critique is the matter of knowledge centrism and what he sees as my attempt at converting all scholars to my way of thinking and the dismissal of all else as inferior. Embedded in his argument is arguably an orthodox (and somewhat positivist) version of science. English's claim that I seek to bring social scientific inquiry to a single form (*relational*) is mistaken. While I will admit that building a stronger program (more scholars, more work, etc.) would be a positive outcome, the expansion of the *relational* to the exclusion of all others would effectively destroy the *relational* program as there would be nothing from which to relate it to. Any singularity of social scientific inquiry is something that I argue against. Knowledge claims need to be related to other claims, this is what it means to put relations first rather than entities (e.g., content). To that end, I have no problem with plurality. The *relational* provides a means of facilitating cross-tradition dialogue and debate without crushing alternatives. Therefore, my counter to English's critique is that the *relational* is actually arguing against a single version of science although I do see merit in the *relational* program and believe it offers a fruitful direction for scholarship.

Of all of the contributors, English paid the greatest attention to matters of science. This in itself is an interesting matter. English is located in the USA. The genesis of the Theory Movement and its pursuit of an objective science in US-based scholarship is a well-rehearsed claim. The Greenfield revolution caused the greatest disruption in US-based discourses. Greenfield's claims were far less confronting for those located within the Commonwealth. English has situated his scholarship throughout his career outside of the orthodoxy of US-based research. His objection to my use of science as a label and my claims for a social science are potentially as much about the trajectory of localized discourses and the position of "science" as a label, as they are about my argument (e.g., Wallin reads my call for plurality very differently, almost oppositely to English). As noted above, I do not seek knowledge centrism or objectivity. What this does raise, however, is the significance of *spatio-temporal conditions* and the grounding of the scholarly narrative and scholarship itself.

Grounding the Narrative

Oplatka asks questions of the importance of context in educational administration and in particular challenges the idea that knowledge generation is context-specific. He makes a persuasive argument for the pursuit of a universal account of educational administration. Courtesy of his contribution featuring in the earlier special issue of *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations*, I have had the opportunity to attend to a number of the issues he raises in Chap. 6. Riveros notes from my work that context is not synonymous with local, and Crawford interprets my work to mean that relations constitute contexts. Unlike Riveros and Crawford

who make passing remarks about context, Oplatka devotes his entire contribution to asking questions of the role of knowledge in educational administration knowledge production.

A goal of the *relational* research program is to move beyond an argument based on layers (local/global; micro/meso/macro) and analytical dualism (e.g., universal/particular). Oplatka makes many interesting points regarding the consistency or stability of patterns in educational administration globally and much of what he argues is consistent with the central thesis of my book. In thinking through the matters raised by Oplatka, and to a lesser extent Riveros, it raised questions regarding the causal mechanisms of context. Although this is somewhat tangential to the matters raised by Oplatka, I see them as central in trying to come to understand what we mean when we mobilize the term context and its implications for understanding educational administration.

In nuancing my argument in Chap. 6, I explicitly sought to break down the perceived distance between activity and context. *Organizing activity* is an active and generative idea. *Auctors* generate the *spatio-temporal conditions* in such a way that organizing is causal. The version of context as an external, separate, and knowable entity that is a variable for educational administration knowledge is incompatible with my claims. What I have put forward is a viable alternative to existing ways of thinking about educational administration (although the reach of the *relational* program is not limited to educational organizations). Knowledge calls on power and the like. Moving beyond analytical dualism such as universalism/particularism, structure/agency, individualism/holism, rethinking ideas of time and space, the *relational* recasts *organizing activity* in *spatio-temporal conditions* through privileging the theoretical problem over the empirical problem. The focus becomes one of why do certain activities take place in particular times and place and the unfolding of practice rather than the enduring project of educational administration—the universal what works.

Knowledge Production

A few of the contributors note that the arguments I raise in *Educational leadership relationally*, and arguably this text, are not new (Gunter, Wallin, Bush). But as Crawford observes, what I seek is a healthier debate in educational administration scholarship. To that end, I was happy to see Wallin commend my "willingness to put ideas out there rather than playing it safe behind the names of great thinkers" (Eacott, 2015, p. x). It is, however, to be noted that English does not consider the previous book to be about dialogue and debate and instead me positioning myself as superior to others and dismissing lesser argument. Having previously discussed English's concerns (at least partially), I am going to pick up on matters of knowledge production raised by contributors.

Both Wallin and Riveros pick up on my assertion to deliver a productive rather than merely critical theorization of educational administration. This is an important

observation about *Educational leadership relationally* and a reflection of my loose use of language. In Chap. 8, I directly engage with this matter by recasting my goal around a social epistemology rather than distancing from the social critical. As Riveros and Wallin both point out, the *relational* program is not incompatible with the critical. The somewhat forced distinction I previously made did not sufficiently capture the relational, my intention to contribute and not just critique. Rather than knowledge centrism or parallel monologues, greater nuancing of my claim around contributing strengthened my belief in the productiveness of a social epistemology. An approach to knowledge production that is not separated through fields, disciplines, or even traditions, but one that embodies the relational and embeds knowledge claims in relations. Chapter 8 is devoted to advancing the social epistemology, and to some extent, I would argue that the structure of this book likewise demonstrates a form of social epistemology. The idea of a social epistemology also addresses English's concern of knowledge centrism and therefore does substantial work for advancing the *relational* program by further embedding and embodying the program with relations. This does not, however, attend to all matters of knowledge production in educational administration.

Crawford raises the theory and practice issue with specific reference to matters of translation or application. For me, the central issue here is one of the audience. Rather than fall into the analytical dualism of theory and practice, the examples Crawford uses to outline her claims concern the accessibility of my argument to a specific audience—those working in schools. There is no doubt, at least to my knowledge, that *Educational leadership relationally* was written, as is this text, for scholars. It is a text that delves into theory and methodology and pays little, if any, attention to matters of translation and application. This is not to say that the *relational* research program does not offer anything for those working in educational organizations, rather the text *Educational leadership relationally* did not set out to deliver a guideline for practice. This has not stopped me from using the *relational* approach in classes and workshops with school leaders or multiple doctoral candidates mobilizing the approach to investigate various empirical problems. In short, the *relational* research program provides a methodology for thinking through practice rather than findings for practitioners.

A challenge for educational administration literature is the legitimacy of multiple audiences, or more specifically, that not all pieces of scholarship need to speak to all audiences. The increasingly common inclusion of "practical implications" in the structured abstracts of journal articles and the professionalization of graduate programs in educational administration legitimize the belief that all research should have an applied end. This actually speaks to the claims of *Educational leadership relationally*. The underlying generative principles of research, notably those of ontology and epistemology, are silenced in the literature. The research object is rarely brought into question and is instead uncritically accepted in the pursuit of how to do it better.

A second, but somewhat related, a matter that Crawford raises is solicitation in educational administration research. In the professions, or applied fields, notions of

solicitation have been enduring. In the broader context of the social sciences, Bourdieu (2004[2001]) notes:

> As for the social sciences, one might imagine that since they are not in a position to provide directly usable, that is immediately marketable, products, they would be less exposed to solicitations. In fact, however, social scientists, and especially sociologists, are the objects of very great solicitude, whether it be positive – and often very profitable, materially and symbolically, for those who opt to serve the dominant vision, if only by omission (and in the case, scientific inadequacy suffices) – or negative, and malignant, sometimes even destructive, for those who, just by practicing their craft, contribute to unveiling a little truth of the social world. (p. viii)

Educational administration, as a social science, is in a unique location in relation to this debate. Whereas sociologists may not have been directly marketable products, the technicist/functionalist stream of educational administration research does seek to produce marketable products. To think with Halpin (1990) and Gunter (1997), this is the "management by ring binder" approach to educational administration. The type of research that is called upon by politicians, the media, and to some extent education systems, is centrally concerned with "how to do things better." In times of increasing fiscal pressure, the neo-Taylorism of such research is overlooked through the privileging of translation and/or application. Scholarship which does not fit or align with the ideological position of the powerful (or even majority) is marginalized, labeled as anti-progress and/or left-wing idealism. As Gunter (2010) argues, (social) theory only seems to matter if it can be directly translated into decisions to be made at 9:00 am Monday morning. The result is that theoretical work, which travels across borders (both physical and symbolic) better than empirical examples (Eacott & Evers, 2015), is labeled exotic and not in the public interest (Gunter, 2013).

This does specific things to dialogue and debate in educational administration. As MacLure (2010) reminds us, it is a theory that stops us from forgetting that the world is not laid out in plain view and thinking that things speak for themselves —"the data," "practice," the pure voice of the previously marginalized. Recognizing the uncritical acceptance of the ordinary language of the everyday is generative of the approach I am advancing. In particular, drawing on a rich intellectual trajectory from Gaston Bachelard through Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu, the *relational* approach provides the theoretical resources to interrogate the claims of the solicited and challenge them on the underlying principles rather than on a disagreement on the ends. The source of debate becomes the why not the what. This is crucial to productive theorizing.

Scholarship can arguably make contributions in multiple ways: theoretically, methodologically, and practically—to name a few. A question that has plagued me is how can we seek to improve "leadership" in schools and other educational organizations without a serious dialogue and debate about what it means to "lead"? Without explicitly articulating what we mean all we are left with are the individualized narratives of how one believes things ought to be. Although at a certain level there may exist some patterns, the legitimized relativity of such a model for knowledge production results in substantial talking past one another. Alternate

arguments are dismissed due to a lack of coherence with preexisting orientations. The *relational* approach provides the intellectual resources to improve the robustness of knowledge claims through attention to the underlying generative principles of research. Does this resolve the matter of solicitation?no, but it does facilitate a potential discussion.

Other Minor Matters

Other matters that I have sought to attend to include explicitly removing any reference to educational administration as a discipline. Gunter pointed out the absence of a canon and therefore the difficulties in establishing educational administration as a discipline and the more appropriate label of field. In building my *relational* argument, and particularly concerning a social epistemology, I would like to take this further, and something that I believe is consistent with Gunter's own work, and speak of research traditions rather than a field. Gunter has done work around traditions herself in a number of places, most recently in her (2016) book *An intellectual history of school leadership practice and research*, and in going beyond parallel monologues this is a key move.

While I take on board Wallin's critique regarding my apparent dismissive tone to Lisa Adkins' work, it is actually the way in which Adkins engages with Bourdieu that was of most interest and inspiration to me as a scholar. Rather than simply appropriating a member of the zombie canon, she worked beyond him. Our ideas are the product of lineage—a trajectory of ideas—they are not entirely original, but then again, neither are they merely appropriation, replication or reproductions. Through my engagement with Adkins during my time at the University of Newcastle (Australia) and in her publications, I learnt about acknowledging those who have gone before but contributing through extending knowledge in the enduring scholastic project.

English makes an observation regarding the index of *Educational leadership relationally* and the attention granted to matters of science, with particular reference to the differences with Donati (2011) and Crossley (2011). My initial comment back to this is that the index was arguably lazily put together. This was a task left to me at the completion of the text and this is arguably reflected in the quality of the index. The claim that I argue, potentially too strongly, for "science" in relational scholarship requires further comment. In particular, English compares my index with that of Donati and Crossley. Donati builds on a Parsonian approach, although without any great loyalty. As a critical realist, he offers many analytical formulae built around the Adaption, Goal-attainment, Integration, and Latency (AGIL) framework of Parsons and offering a practical application of it. To that end, Donati might refer to less orthodox science in his index yet the nature of his work is more closely aligned with the science that English critique me of arguing for that I do. Crossley makes use of a range of statistics in generating his network analysis, and while he may mobilize them in a different sense to orthodox usage (primarily

through his cultural studies approach and recognition of spatio-temporal dimensions), there is more science in this than what I am proposing. While this is a somewhat under-developed, and peripheral, refutation of English claims, my point is that we cannot make too much from index entries.

A few minor matters that Bush raises that are worth comment: the links between leadership and vision; Emirbayer's use of transactional; and adjectival leadership. The linking of leadership and vision works in a few ways. To some extent, it is further evidence of the vacuous nature of leadership and how it is often used as a proxy for other concepts (e.g., vision). To get at these under-currents requires attention to the under-lying generative principles of scholarship, often the normative orientation of the researcher. This is similarly an issue for the multiple forms of adjectival leadership. The distinctions between the various forms of leadership are based on epistemic variance and measurement is reflective of, once again, the preexisting normative orientation of the observer. The mention of Emirbayer's use of transactional is discussed in Chap. 1, but this reflects the difficulty in transported language between traditions. The *spatio-temporal conditions* in which thought is exercised matters. Language, as an *organizing activity* is no different and needs to be problematized rather than uncritical accepted. There is comfort in being able to address many of the concerns raised by contributors through the revision and refinement made to the *relational* program as a result of their contributions. This is a social epistemology at work and demonstrative of how adopting a *relational* approach enables generative knowledge production built on relations.

Conclusion

The intellectual project that I sought in curating the previous section was to advance the *relational* research program by making public the dialogue between myself and fellow scholars. I cannot hide from the matter that this section is somewhat self-serving. After all, the very topic of my engagement with colleagues was my previous book and as with the special issue of *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations* it is somewhat of an (implicit, arguably explicit) marketing strategy. The engagement of the contributors with my work helps me to clarify my own thinking and advance my agenda. The choice of contributors from different parts of the world and more importantly, research traditions, further increases the reach and scope of the *relational* program. I cannot hide from these personal gains. That said, there was a risk involved. It was possible that the critiques punched too many holes in my work—potentially devaluing my argument and causing irrefutable damage to my research program (especially given the status of contributors within the field internationally). Possibly I had seriously overlooked matters. Maybe they picked up on typographical errors such as referring to Mary Uhl-Bien as Mary Ulh-Bien on page six, or Karen Seashore Louis as Karen Seahorse Louis on page 61. Potentially my ideas were not as robust as what I had thought or simply a rehash of previous work. These were all risks. However, it

would be contradictory for me to argue for a more open version of (social) science for educational administration and then hide behind covers.

The logic of academic work—argument and refutation—I seek to embody. The dialogue and debate included in this section is just part of an ongoing agenda centrally concerned with advancing scholarship. Having others critically engage with your work and then thinking through how you respond definitely strengthens and extends your own capacities. While this approach is absent in the vast majority of the literature of educational administration I am sincerely grateful for the contributors (both those featuring in the book, but also those who took to time to reach out with critique of my work at conferences and seminars) for their support of this project and encourage others to do the same.

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Chapter 17
Advancing Educational Administration Relationally

Over 20 years ago, Emirbayer (1997) noted that "social thinkers from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, national traditions, and analytic and empirical points of view are fast converging on this [relational] frame of reference" (p. 311). More recently, there have been significant contributions in sociology (e.g., Crossley, 2011; Dépelteau, 2018; Dépelteau & Powell, 2013; Donati, 2011; Powell & Dépleteau, 2013), leadership (e.g., Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012), educational administration (e.g., Eacott, 2015), communication (e.g., Wang & Chen, 2010), and psychology (e.g., Gergen, 2009), among others. Conferences or symposia have been held in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, and Italy, and a book series on relational sociology (Palgrave) has recently been launched. With an interdisciplinary and global scale, various networks of scholars, volume of contributions in journals and books, an array of international meetings/forums, Prandini (2015) argues there is a "relational turn" in the social sciences. The label of "turn" indicates an epistemological breakthrough that has transformed an intellectual space, altering its constitution and "providing a blueprint for new developments" (Gulson & Symes, 2017, p. 125).

Despite this identification of a contemporary turn, the relational scholarship is not new. There is a long and rich history. In US-based scholarship, particularly sociology, significant attention is granted to what Mische (2011) labels "The New York School," built primarily around the work of Harrison White, Charles Tilly, and colleagues at Harvard. There is also a significant, and much longer, tradition in European scholarship including the works of Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Gabriel Tarde, Norbert Elias, Niklas Luhmann, Pierre Bourdieu, and Bruno Latour. Emirbayer (1997) takes the tradition even further back by tracing it through to pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Relational scholarship also extends beyond the social sciences with work featuring in quantum mechanics (e.g., Rovelli, 1996; Teller, 1986) and physics (e.g., Bohm, 1988; Capra, 1975; Wolf, 1980), among others. In management and organization studies, there was the pioneering work of Follett (1927, 1949), Elton Mayo and colleagues in the Hawthorne Studies (e.g., Mayo, 1933), and the subsequent Human Relations

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Movement. Despite this lengthy history and contemporary attention, relational scholarship is diverse with the common thread being a general belief in the centrality of relations (rather than substances) for understanding the social world.

In the introductory text for this book, I name my dual aims as articulating and justifying a serious piece of scholarship and demonstrating an approach to scholarship. In working toward the former, each chapter in the book has provided a contribution to the emerging *relational* research program. Early Chaps. (1–3) locate the work in broad intellectual traditions. The next set of Chaps. (4–8) provided a more nuanced articulation of the program working in relation to the earlier locating chapters. The arguments and refutations by respondents (Chaps. 9–15) demonstrate an explicit engagement with different theoretical positions and open the possibility of advancing the *relational* program through a social epistemology rather than a parallel monologue. This was further progressed through the previous Chap. 16 where I sought to respond to the major points raised by respondents. Working with all of these positions and contributions, here I offer a synopsis of the *relational* program, an argument for why it is a strong (rigorous and robust) program and an overview of the key theoretical resources (e.g., a concept glossary) to continue the ongoing work of the program. In other words, this concluding chapter will synthesize the work of the book in relation to my intent of advancing the *relational* research program.

Theoretical Resources

The interdisciplinary focus of relational theory breaks down boundaries by not reducing possible intellectual resources to the arbitrary division of scholarship (e.g., sociology, management, educational administration) and instead privileging a concern with contribution to the theoretical and methodological problems with which we are faced. This is not problematic given that the disciplinary location to which I am usually associated—educational administration—is the combination of at least education (in the broadest sense) and [public] administration, not to mention matters of sociology, management, and organizational studies. Well-rehearsed arguments across these various disciplinary traditions have stressed the significance of relations and relationships for understanding *organizing activity* yet the intellectual resources needed to engage with such matters are far from the orthodoxy.

Relational theorizing calls into question hegemonic substantialist approaches. It is not an adjectival approach to scholarship despite the mobilization of relational as an adjective in some educational administration studies (e.g., Branson, Franken & Penney, 2016) nor is it an adjective to add a construct (e.g., leadership) to advocate for a particular form of organizing (e.g., Giles, Bell, Halsey, & Palmer, 2012). The latter confuses the preexisting normative orientation of the author for what Durkheim (1982[1995]) labels a "social fact," while the former misrecognizes the epistemic categories of analysis with the ontological and epistemological preliminaries of scholarship. In many cases, adjectival relational approaches do not move

beyond the somewhat commonsense claim that having positive relations (as opposed to negative ones) is a good thing. Co-determinist approaches reduce relations to the relationships between entities (substances), leaving them as what White (1992) labels a "measurement construct." With some grounding in Parsons' (1937) system thinking, primarily advanced in educational administration through Getzels and Guba (1957) and then Hoy and Miskel's (1978) much-used text, co-determinist approaches sought to bridge structural and agentic (a much-used analytical dualism) accounts but failed due to the absence of a theory of relations. Attempts to go beyond co-determinism often evolve into conflationism where two previously separate concepts/constructs/entities are granted a single identity. This approach is uncommon, but examples include Brooks and Normore's (2010) "glocal" perspective in educational leadership (blending the global with the local) and Helstad and Møller's (2013) argument for "leadership as relational work."

Recently, but building on a range of literatures, my own *relational* approach recognizes relations as the foundational focus of inquiry for organizational theory in education. Unlike alternate approaches, it provides a methodological frame for organizational theory, one that grants primacy to relations not relationships. It has been mobilized to discuss the shifting temporality of teaching (Eacott & Hodges, 2014), policy (Eacott & Norris, 2014), leadership preparation in Kenya (Eacott & Asuga, 2014), research administration (Eacott, 2017a), knowledge production (Eacott, 2017b), and ongoing work on principals' experiences of temporality, teacher identity in Hong Kong, supplementary education in China, privatization in Saudi Arabia, among others. The work has been debated by a number of scholars, many of whom have been included in this volume (e.g., Tony Bush, Megan Crawford, Fenwick English, Helen Gunter, Izhar Oplatka, Gus Riveros, and Dawn Wallin). Built on a very Bourdieusian craft of scholarship (e.g., Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]; Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992[1992]), but without any great loyalty or reverence, my approach is based on five *relational* extensions:

- The centrality of "organizing" in the social world creates an ontological complicity in researchers (and others) that makes it difficult to epistemologically break from the ordinary language of the everyday;
- Rigorous (social) scientific inquiry calls into question the very foundations of popular labels such as "leadership," "management," and "administration";
- The contemporary condition is constantly shaping, and shaped by, the image of organizing;
- Foregrounding relations enable the overcoming of the contemporary, and arguably enduring, tensions of individualism/holism, universalism/particularism, and structure/agency; and
- In doing so, there is a productive—rather than merely critical—space to theorize organizing.

In shifting the focus from entities/substances to relations, the approach moves beyond the application of an adjective, which does not limit the conceptualization

of relations to measurable relationships, nor seek to conflate analytical dualisms. Instead, the approach offers a means of composing theoretically inscribed descriptions of *organizing activity*. It directly engages with the relations of the researcher and researched, the uncritical adoption of everyday language in scholarship, the role of *spatio-temporal conditions* in shaping understanding and vice versa, the limitations of binary thinking, and seeks to productively theorize—not just critique. As an approach, it does not definitively resolve the ontological and epistemological issues of educational administration, but it does engage with them. In doing so, it offers the potential to bring about new ways of understanding more so than simply mapping the intellectual terrain with novel ideas and vocabularies.

A Strong Program

A weak quality profile has been an enduring issue for educational administration research arguably since its inception (Gorard, 2005; Griffiths, 1959, 1965, 1985; Immegart, 1975). As a domain of inquiry, educational administration has arguably contributed to its own legitimacy crisis by failing to deliver on its own promise. In seeking to provide the definitive "what works" in organizations and increasingly accurate measures of success, educational administration has been stuck within its own normative bounds and sought to replicate hegemonic notions of scientific methods. Attempts to go beyond this perception have focused on the adoption of particular scientific (usually equated, falsely, with logical empiricism) methods. I argue that the *relational* research program is a strong program with significant potential to contribute to educational administration, particularly beyond the contemporary focus on leadership. There are a number of versions of what makes a strong program, notably the Edinburgh School, particularly the work of Barry Barnes (e.g., Barnes & Bloor, 1982; Barnes, Bloor & Henry, 1996), David Bloor (e.g., Bloor, 1976), and to a lesser extent, Mary Hesse (e.g., Hesse, 1980), but also various forms of the work of Thomas Kuhn, C. Wright Mills, Jeffrey Alexander, among others. It is possible to argue that the super empirical virtues of Evers and Lakomski's (1991) naturalistic coherentism constitute criteria for a strong program. My argument for a strong program, building from the *relational* extensions, is based on four core points: (i) the explicit articulation of theoretical commitments; (ii) a methodological commitment to description; (iii) a causal base; and (iv) a sense of reflexivity. These four are not discrete components of a strong program, but when viewed together—in relation—provide the basis for what I claim to be a strong and generative research program. As with my previous argument for a social epistemology, the four core points of the strong program further demonstrate how the *relational* program maintains attention to knowledge production and knowledge claims.

The Explicit Articulation of Theoretical Commitments

A central argument throughout this book, and elsewhere, is for the importance of making explicit the underlying generative principles of scholarship. As part of a broader social epistemology, a commitment to making explicit the underlying generative principle (theoretical) commitments of research is concerned with establishing the criteria for which one seeks to be assessed. When such commitments are not made explicit, it is left to the reader to establish the criteria, and this frequently leads to dismissal of alternatives usually as a result of overlaying the terrain with theoretical commitments generated elsewhere and for different reasons. The distance between work and the overlaying perspective is problematic, at least from a relational standpoint, and establishes the basis for an argument based on an a priori incoherence. In contrast, by making explicit the underlying generative principles of scholarship, any dismissal requires an engagement with the logic of academic work, argument and refutation, generating the necessary conditions for a social epistemology.

Making explicit the theoretical commitments of work by illuminating the underlying generative principles is imperative for a strong program. Rather than prescribing a particular version of the social world and how it ought to be, the theoretical resources of a program need to allow for the dynamism of the social, primarily through recognizing the unfolding nature of activity, and generate the conditions in which work can be assessed against, namely coherence. To that end, a strong program is identifiable through its coherence among ontological, epistemological, normative/ethical, axiomatic, and causal assumptions. The intellectual resources mobilized need to be consistent with the underlying assumptions. Through an ontological commitment to relations, an epistemology built upon relations and the intellectual resources (e.g., *organizing activity*, *auctor*, and *spatio-temporal conditions*) of the *relational* program, there is sufficient evidence to claim a strong program against this criterion. More than just theoretical though, these commitments are manifested in the methodological act of description, or inscription, of the social world.

A Methodological Commitment to Description

The act of description is methodological work. The threshold for scientific description is having the best resources for the task. As an example, Savage (2009) notes that it is the Hubble telescope rather than the personal digital camera pointing to the skies that define the high ground, or cutting edge, of scientific practice. Inscription devices serve as a key distinction between the physical and social sciences. While increasingly detailed visuals that enable measurement might be useful in the analysis of celestial entities, the mechanical reproduction of social

relations through numbers, variables, and visual diagrams is not necessarily useful for illuminating the ongoing work of organizing.

There are mixed views in educational administration regarding the scholarly value of description. It is frequently mobilized in a derogatory manner, dismissing work as merely descriptive and the lowest form of scholarship. Central to such thinking is the artificial partitioning of arguments and the lack of problematizing of the research object. The failure to locate work in broader dialogue and debates means that the specific empirical problem is privileged over the larger theoretical problem. The result is that the description is of little, if any, value beyond itself. In contrast, locating work in broader debates facilitates a contribution to contemporary thought and analysis in the discipline (e.g., Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997) and even possible to generalize from a single case study (e.g., Evers & Wu, 2006).

What is important here is the embedding and embodying of arguments in relation to broader thought and analysis while also illuminating the particular *spatio-temporal conditions*. Thinking *relationally*, the social world is not divisible into a series of separate—even if interrelated—layers, as is depicted in concentric circles building from the individual/local to the global, but rather flat. This blurs the constructed binaries of the universal and the particular, individualism and holism, structure and agency, and provides the basis for the role of description. It becomes no longer appropriate to assume that the particular is separate to, or merely interacts with, the universal. *Spatio-temporal conditions* become of central importance in constructing meaning for *organizing activity*.

Description provides an avenue to explain, potentially in new ways, what is taking place in the organizing of the social world. It is very much a generative program contributing to increasing elaborated descriptions of relating activity to other activity. In doing so, the *relational* program is not defined by the problems it solves but the questions it asks, questions that retain a causal base.

A Causal Base

Educational administration, which is frequently identified as an applied field, has always had a particular relationship with causality. Interventions of practice are based on making changes that have a direct, and often immediate, impact on organizational performance. From Taylorism, systems thinking, and the Theory Movement, causality has maintained a privileged position. That said, since the waning of the paradigm wars in the 1990s and early 2000s, researchers have become more focused on getting on with the work (Smith, 1996) or content to remain working with others (including literatures) within their own epistemological and methodological positions (Teddlie, 2005). For any research program to contribute, and be a strong rigorous and robust program, there is a need to engage with matters of causality.

Levačić (2005) argues that reporting, or making explicit, causal assumptions needs to be much more common in educational administration. A quick scan of

literatures (e.g., journals, book chapters, books, conferences) arguably shows that case studies (in many forms) of "effective" or other facsimiles (e.g., successful, turnaround) leadership or organizations are the most widespread focus of attention. Therefore, while explicit discussion of causality may have declined, the presence of underlying causal principles remains central. Any research that focuses on organizations, or organizing, mobilizes some normative end. Judgement, or evaluation, is made against how organizational factors (variables or mechanisms) contribute to outcomes. The underlying causal principles are foundational to the theoretical and methodological features of research.

It is not inappropriate to ask causal questions of research/researchers. Orthodox approaches to causality describe a relationship (notice the -ship) between two entities/events separated by distance, usually temporal but sometimes also spatial. The underlying causal logic is that is that one activity is dependent upon another. This works for co-determinism and arguably the adjectival and conflationary, but not the *relational*. Causality need not be based on a linear positivist notion and can instead include more historical/narrative approaches. Unlike orthodox approaches to causality, the *relational* program privileges detailed and rich accounts of *organizing activity* and how *spatio-temporal conditions* are constituted and emergent from *auctors*. It is not about understanding why someone is doing something in a linear and rational sense, rather to relate activity to other activity. This is not about developing more sophisticated mathematical approaches to measuring causation but concern with an elaborated description of unfolding activity. Causality is therefore central to the *relational* program, but not in an orthodox sense, and requiring of enduring attention.

A Sense of Reflexivity

With the decline of the paradigm wars, there has been very little attention in educational administration on knowledge production. With few exceptions (e.g., Evers and Lakomski, Oplatka, Gunter), far greater attention is paid to describing and explaining practice. This minimal attention to matters of knowledge production is often overlooked due to the exhibitionism of procedure and method. Apart from contributing to a breakdown in dialogue and debate, it often means that the standards or conditions in which other positions are held to are rarely used to assess the self. The result is an absence of reflexivity. A strong research program not only explicitly articulates its own assumptions but holds itself to account.

As I have argued throughout this book, to advance knowledge claims requires a social epistemology. Unlike the well-rehearsed dismissal or ignoring of those with whom we disagree, a social epistemology means to hold oneself to the same standards as others. Through an emphasis on making explicit the underlying generative assumptions of research, there is an inbuilt reflexivity in the *relational* program. This is a crucial matter for advancing knowledge claims. It is not about expecting more, or less, of others but the same; the same levels of rigor and

robustness. Dialogue and debate is not limited to difference and othering, but in relating knowledge claims within the unfolding activity of knowledge production. The *relational* program is based on the premise that we can only come to understand our knowledge claims in relation to others. Working in an ontologically insecure domain of inquiry (educational administration) makes the role of reflexivity all the more important. As a social scientific approach, the *relational* advocates for taking for its object, rather than getting itself caught up in, the struggle for the monopoly of the legitimate representation of the social world. As Bourdieu (2004[2001]) notes, every word uttered about scientific practice can be turned back on the person who utters it. This is a fundamental point about scientific inquiry. What I am arguing for is that paying serious attention to the relations between the researcher and researched (not that such a distinction is clear, if even possible) will advance our understanding in new and fruitful directions and potentially, in the sense of a social epistemology, create a space for various scholarly traditions to find common space from which to engage in dialogue and debate.

In being self-aware, a research program remains part of an enduring activity. Researchers are conceived as *auctor* generating the ongoing *spatio-temporal conditions* of the social world. This awareness is crucial to the denial of certainty and a forevermore version of the social and aligns with Bachelard's (1984[1934]) claim that progress is only possible by perpetually calling into question the very principles of our own constructs.

Conceptual Glossary

The above argument stresses what I see as the core reasons that the *relational* research program represents a strong program. Importantly, rather than being caught up with any specific technique, the *relational* program is based on a theoretical and methodological commitment to relations. The extensions ensure a recognition and sustained engagement with the underlying generative principles of the program. The intellectual resources and particularly the key concepts (e.g., *organizing activity*, *auctor*, and *spatio-temporal conditions*) generate the necessary conditions for the underlying generative principles to be worked through, not separate to, the social world. What this highlights is that the *relational* program is as methodological as it is theoretical. This is not some form of conflationism, rather an argument for the relations of theory and methodology. They are not separate and need not be discussed as such. More so, there is no specific method to which they can lay claim.

This section offers an overview of the *relational* approach I am advancing through the explicit articulation of a concept glossary. Paying attention to the core theoretical thrust of the *relational* program—the *relational* extensions—this section demonstrates how these intellectual resources are crucial to maintaining coherence. Creating distinctions from other relational positions, such as the adjectival (e.g., Bell, Palmer, Halsey, Giles, Bills, & Rogers, 2016; Branson et al., 2016),

co-determinist (e.g., Savvides & Pashiardis, 2016), and conflationary (e.g., Helstad & Møller, 2013), I offer a nuanced, within the confines of a single section of a chapter and mindful of the previous work within this book, account of how a relational ontology differs from hegemonic substantialist approaches. This section is not about constructing a dense and inaccessible technical language, rather than articulating and defending a vocabulary to discuss and understand the social world relationally.

To break with substantialism, there is a need to recast many of the foundations of organizational theory in educational administration. First, we need to break from "the organization" and shift to *organizing activity*. The individual is no more, nor are they separate from context. Therefore, instead of actor or agents, we have *auctors*. As we have now broken down the distance once perceived between the *auctor* and context, we speak not of environment/context and the like and instead of *spatio-temporal conditions*. This brings time and space into conversation in new ways. The three concepts of *organizing activity*, *auctor*, and *spatio-temporal conditions* lay the foundations for the *relational* research program and theorizing organizing.

Organizing Activity

The centrality of organizing in the social world creates complicity with orthodox structural accounts. This complicity secures the ongoing legitimacy of "the organization" as an entity and a substantialist worldview. Shifts in language to adjectival forms of organizations do little more than rearrange our lens than alter the schemas of perception. In mobilizing the *relational* approach, one thinks not of organizations and instead through *organizing activity*. In doing so, scholarly attention shifts from overlaying the social with structural arrangements and granting them explanatory value to a focus on describing (or inscribing) of social activity played out through relations. Unlike substantialist approach which focuses on the relationships between entities (e.g., the organization, individuals), a *relational* approach is concerned with relations and how relations are constitutive and emergent from *organizing activity*. Individual *auctors* are important, but it is relations that are the focus. The *organizing activity* is grounded in activity.

Rather than being problematic given the ontological insecurity of educational administration, *organizing activity* does not rely on the assumed stability of external structures. This shift is important and has ontological and epistemological implications. As with Greenfield's intervention, it opens the door for theoretical and methodological reconstruction. We cannot fall back on common labels and need to construct the image, however partial, of the social world from which we are inquiring. There is consequentially a craft of scholarship underway in this move. *Organizing activity* as a focus demonstrates an awareness that what we have is only a partial take on the social, but that it represents the empirical manifestation of a larger theoretical question. It does not make the description less significant, as the

activity is articulated in relation to other activity. The argument is grounded in relations and is crafted through the articulation of relations. These relations, or *organizing activity*, are generative of further activity and contributing to the enduring unfolding of activity.

Auctor

Donati (2015) introduces the term *auctor* meaning she/he who generates. Working from *organizing activity*, any perceived distance between individuals and contexts is broken down and replaced with a more nebulous notion that recognizes relations rather than relationships. As with Heraclitus and the river, *auctors* generate rather than act upon or are acted on. This is an important move when consider that educational administration is littered with accounts stressing the structural constraints on practice and/or the agentic ability of "effective" leaders to overcome context. *Auctor* provides the intellectual resource to overcome the structure/agency analytical dualism through recognition of relations and the generative nature of activity. An *auctor*, even through passive action, contributes to the folding of practice. They are not separate from *spatio-temporal conditions* but simultaneously constitute of and emergent from. The substantialist basis of educational administration theory is broken down through relations. This is why, despite my partitioning of *organizing activity*, *auctor*, and *spatio-temporal conditions* here, they work together, in relation, to generate an elaborated communication of activity.

Spatio-Temporal Conditions

With attention to *organizing activity* and the generation of *auctor*, it is not surprising that the *relational* approach recasts time and space. Context, an aggregation of temporality and spatial dimensions even if not always discussed as such, has always played an important role in educational administration discourses. In many ways, hegemonic labels have reflected the contemporary explanatory value granted to contexts. This has enabled analytical dualism (e.g., structure/agency, individualism/holism, universalism/particularism) to legitimize and sustain themselves. Any shift to relations requires a recasting of the temporal and spatial dimensions. Rather than separate too, they are instead constitutive of and emergent from. Orthodox conceptualizations cannot handle this shift. Therefore, the *relational* program mobilizes *spatio-temporal conditions* to reflect how *auctors* generate the conditions—not with absolute agency or constraint, nor entirely individual or collective, nor particular or universal—of *organizing activity*. The once perceived as external measure of time and space are embodied and embedded in activity. The *relational* view considers the contemporary condition to be constantly shaped by and shaping of, the image of organizing. As with *organizing activity* and

auctor, *spatio-temporal conditions* require a recasting of orthodox causal matters and a shift in the focus of research from substances to relations. In doing so, they ensure the theoretical coherence of the program through a sustained theoretical and methodological focus on relations.

Conclusion

Dorato (2006) argues that as is sometimes the case in philosophy, one way to solve a problem is to dissolve it. That is, to show what had so far been considered a substantial debate is in fact not genuine at all. In advancing the *relational* research program, I have sought to demonstrate how the contemporarily popular pursuit of "leadership" is significantly caught up in the underlying generative assumptions of scholarship. Any chance to go beyond leadership as a foundational explanatory system for organizations requires theoretical resources that can make visible the underlying generative assumptions of our ways of knowing the social world. The value of the *relational* program is that it not only illuminates underlying assumptions but opens them to the logic of academic work, argument and refutation.

Contemporary thought and analysis in educational administration is not a site of rigorous and robust dialogue and debate. Alternate positions are frequently dismissed without due attention to why they are not viable explanations yet alone why they are not valuable or even possible in the first place. My intervention in this book has been to disrupt the dominant theoretical and methodological approaches of educational administration by challenging them not at the level of content but the underlying generative principles of scholarship. My interest and contribution are in providing a viable alternative, one in which the avenues for dialogue and debates with alternatives are open and not shut down in its very conception. The *relational* research program is an invitation. An invitation to think differently, relationally, where ideas are put forward and dialogue and debate is based on the logic of academic work—argument and refutation—rather than dismissal because we disagree. Knowledge production is an enduring project, and we need the intellectual resources to engage in this ongoing activity.

Therefore, this chapter, as with the book, is not the final and definitive work on the *relational* research program. What I offer is a generative program that will constantly call into question its own knowledge claims as well as the status quo. Its genesis, and the origin of my critical engagement with leadership, is grounded in a belief that there is a need to promote a narrative of rigorous and robust scholarship in educational administration while at the same time remaining critical of any narrative promoting versions of rigor and robustness. That is, the *relational* program, or any program of research for that matter, must remain critical of its own agenda as much as it is of alternatives. The *relational* approach that I am arguing for in this book and elsewhere is my attempt to not only engage but also contribute (as an *auctor*) by providing theoretical resources that may hold potential for overcoming some enduring issues in the scholarship of the field. Pursuing this

agenda, I encourage others to think with, through, and where necessary against what I have argued in the interest of the scholarly enterprise. As a generative research program, this book represents the latest contribution to an ongoing agenda, an agenda that even if you choose not to join me on, you can at least acknowledge its potential, and as something worthy of engagement with in the interests of advancing knowledge claims.

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