

A Feminist Analysis of Administrative Educational Policies Related to Gender Equity: Policy Framing of Gender in Manitoba Education from 1975-2012

By

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This paper will detail my findings related to the range of conceptualizations of gender that I encountered in my analysis of administrative educational policies related to gender equity. My study examined one Canadian province's administrative educational policies related to gender equity from 1975-2012 from a feminist perspective. I considered how gender was conceptualized and framed within these policy texts (Blackmore, 2000; Blackmore, 2006) using feminist content analysis (Leavy, 2007) together with critical frame analysis (Domboas, 2012; Verloo, 2007) informed by feminist theory (Chafetz, 2004; Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2004; Tong, 1989). Although I found gender equity to be an educational policy concern throughout this time period, it was framed almost exclusively by liberal feminist conceptualizations of gender. Examples of the liberal conceptualizations included special funding for women in PhD programs in non-traditional programs, curriculum material revisions to reflect positive images of women, and professional development opportunities for educators related to sex roles and sex-role stereotypes. Such liberal feminist conceptualizations of gender delimit and limit the types of actions aimed towards gender equity articulated in the texts. Efforts to promote gender equity tended to target supports such as the development of courses for women and the development of curriculum materials. Towards the end of my study's time period, however, I noticed increasing inclusions of queer conceptualizations of gender, which may suggest a shift towards revised conceptualizations of gender in educational policies. My study confirmed that gender equity was a policy area of concern in the Manitoba context during this time frame (1975-2012), but it also highlighted the rise and fall of gender equity as a topic of concern within those time frames.

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