

Original Paper

Women Leading University-Community Engagement: Disruption, Resistance; Resilience

Katy Campbell¹ & David Peacock²

¹ Women's and Gender Studies, University of Alberta, Canada

E-mail: katy.campbell@ualberta.ca

² Community Service Learning, University of Alberta, Canada

E-mail: peacock1@ualberta.ca

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Abstract

This paper explores the identity jolts and professional responses of female leaders of institutionalized university-community engagement in Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Australia. Using a feminist narrative approach we explored the disorienting dilemmas, critical events and identity jolts related to women's participation in the institutional leadership of social change initiatives, in particular university-community engagement (UCE). Themes of disruption, resistance and resilience in the neoliberal institutional cultures and practices in which university-community engagement (UCE) is situated are shared through participants' stories of praxis. This paper is one of a series exploring sociocultural influences on the institutionalization of university-community engagement and the development of engaged and engagement scholarship as an intellectual domain in higher education.

Keywords

women leaders, academic women, higher education, university-community engagement, professional barriers, identity

And when I left there...they had asked me to write a paper on the scholarship of engagement...all the time I'd worked there, I'd been working on ideas for that...They only wanted me to give it to them after I left...They didn't really want it... They wanted to keep me busy, I think.

Rosalie articulates a common experience for women leaders in academe who are asked to perform emotional labour that is not seen as core to the institutional mandate. The work may be part of the leader's personal and professional commitment to the institution, a project of passion and belief. She foresees the transformational impact of that labour, yet her work is constrained or minimized; her

identities – personal, social, academic and leadership- are challenged.

This paper explores the identity jolts and professional responses of fifteen female leaders of institutionalized university-community engagement in Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Australia. Using a feminist narrative approach we explored the disorienting dilemmas, critical events and identity jolts related to women’s participation in the institutional leadership of social change initiatives, in particular university-community engagement (UCE). We asked, “How do these leaders make meaning of these experiences to move forward in generative ways as they do the emotional and visionary work required to transform institutional culture?”, particularly, “How does this emotional labor impact their academic and leadership identities?” Themes of disruption, resistance and resilience in the neoliberal institutional cultures and practices in which university-community engagement (UCE) is situated are shared through participants’ stories of praxis.

This paper synthesizes literature on identity and leadership within a neoliberal cultural context in which the institutionalization of UCE and its gendered leadership are marginalized as service, relating the effects of this emotional labour on women’s academic and leadership identity transformation. While women’s leadership in higher education has been extensively studied, as has the leadership of UCE (c.f. Liang & Sandmann, 2015; Sandmann & Weerts, 2006), women leaders of this anti-neoliberal movement have not had much research attention.

1. Introduction

Women in the Neoliberal University.

Women’s participation in top leadership positions in higher education reflects institutional type and culture. For example, more women lead community colleges than research universities, and more women leaders are clustered in the social sciences and humanities than in STEM or Business faculties, and in “vice”, “associate”, or “assistant” roles rather than the top leadership positions (Eddy & Ward, 2017). Research has implicated structural and cultural issues such as masculinist human resource policies, normative gender expectations, colonial structures, and pipeline challenges, among others, that constrain women’s access to leadership, and in some cases lead to toxic work environments and professional failures. In her plea to decolonize Western academic contexts, Brunette-Debassige implicates an “ontology of hierarchy” rooted in the development and advancement of masculinist Euro-Western imperial and colonial societies. She criticizes an institutional model within which people are essentially managed as labourers within hierarchal authority structures, leading to a corporatization of education and managerialist approaches to leadership, relying on key performatives based on notions of rationality, predictability, and measurability (np). The stories we share reflect the effects of this model, in particular its reliance on emotional labour of marginalized academic “classes”, on the identities of women leading the turn to social justice through university community engagement (UCE).

For a number of reasons related to leadership in gendered organizations, women and racialized faculty

tend to be “stuck in the middle” (Van Der Linden, 2004). These administrators find themselves unequally performing activities that are rewarded differently, such as teaching and, especially, service work. Each activity, part of the triumvirate of teaching/research/service, has been characterized as emotional labour and includes managing emotions and relationships in the workplace. Lawless (2018) implicates the global trend towards neoliberalism, the commodification of academic work, and its “do more with less” mantra, with increasing service requirements for faculty (particularly for women and people of color), although, in general, emotional labor has not had much attention in the discussion about academic labor (p. 86).

In a neoliberal world the scholarship of engagement (SoE), and its institutionalization as UCE, is often characterized as service work. Not surprisingly, these efforts are led in the main by women, and particularly by “pracademics” (Peacock & Campbell, 2021, 2022). When institutionalized, for example in centralized units, we’ve observed that UCE is located at either vice or associate provostial levels, or is alternatively led by deans or directors in faculties. These positions are held disproportionately by women; the units do not exist comfortably in a neoliberal, gendered organization.

In our (2019-2022) study of sociocultural factors in the global institutionalization of UCE, which has involved twenty-six institutions in the US, UK, Canada and Australia, and from which this paper derives, we have found that UCE and SoE tend to be “women’s work”, which is precarious whether one is administrative professional staff, faculty member, or academic administrator. We speculate that the precarity of the work relates to its position in the academy, in particular in research-intensive universities, and its focus on relationship-building with communities and non-profit organizations emphasizing co-creation of knowledge capital linked to social justice, in other words, an enterprise that is difficult to commodify. According to Ball (2012) this places UCE at odds with the neoliberal university, whose expectations for relationships and scholarly productivity invades our “minds and our souls”, our social relationships, productivity, performances, flexibility and creativity (p. 18). Inglis (2011) charges “knowledge as capital” with “think(ing) out to the point of fracture” the defining relation of one’s discipline to one’s self, or one’s academic identity (in Ball, 2012, p. 18).

In the course of this research we have observed that, in universities invested in UCE, institutional leadership of the project lies either in the professional realm of advancement and communications, or scholarship. In either case the leadership of UCE requires intense emotional labour, and is an identity project that is academically fraught (Lawless, 2018). Even in (US) land-grant universities-whose tripartite mission to teach, conduct research, and provide service to communities-have tended to devalue the academic credibility of UCE because it has often been located in extension units, and even though these units are under relentless pressure to “generate revenue” they remain marginalized in university discourses. In this paper, we explore questions of academic and leadership identity through the stories of women leaders, reflecting the institutionalization of UCE as a disruption to (neoliberal) organizational culture.

Positionalities.

It will be helpful to our readers to understand the perspectives and positions from which the authors undertake this work. We both hold positions at the University of Alberta, in Western Canada.

In 2019, I (Campbell) stepped down from my position as Dean in a 100-year old faculty of extension that had attempted to identify ourselves as the academic nexus of the scholarship of engagement in a research-intensive, Western Canadian university. This grand project of strategic renewal and realignment engaged us from 2007, when I accepted the position of Acting Dean, and involved developing a new narrative, from outreach to engagement, through restructuring; recruitment of new faculty; development of new policy related to productivity, tenure and promotion; decolonizing the curriculum; and establishing a graduate degree in university-community engagement. I “surrendered” my leadership role in 2019 as it was becoming clear that the faculty would not survive a neoliberal restructuring of the university in which UCE would be cast primarily as a marketing and advancement strategy. A feminist committed to social justice, having grown up in a matriarchal family of teacher-activists, I experienced this as a devastating personal and professional failure— a disorienting dilemma leading to an identity jolt – that I have tried to make meaning of through a transformative learning lens (c.f. Mezirow, 2003). In this traumatic emotional journey, and in my new professional context as a professor of women’s and gender studies, I am trying to challenge my privilege as a white, cis-gender, middle-class woman, my loss of identity and social capital as an institutional academic leader (one of few in my university at the time), and the grief of losing social relationships in the academy and the broader community.

Since 2015, I (Peacock) have worked as a director of a community service-learning unit, based within a faculty of Arts but serving the wider campus. Community service-learning is a form of university-community engagement, and our unit intentionally brings together the academy and the community in mutually beneficial relationships and projects connected to the curriculum. I was employed as a Faculty Service Officer, a hybrid designation recognizing and requiring a mixture of research, administration and teaching, where teaching involves both supporting other faculty to incorporate the CSL pedagogy into their classes, and some direct teaching of undergraduate students. I gained a PhD (sociology of higher education, student equity policy and practice) in my 40s after a career in higher education as a community engagement professional. As a white, cis-gendered, abled, straight man leading a team of women community engagement professionals, I am aware of the privileges accruing to my role through my gender, even if I do not see them play out as consistently as I might. The ‘faculty service officer’ designation, however, creates a category of a second tier of academic citizenship, and impacts how my work, and that of the team, is recognized in the wider institution. Although I was expected to do research in my role, I had to seek ‘exceptional’ permission to apply for and hold external research funds and to supervise 1 post-doctoral employee, and although operating in a quasi-chair role for our small unit, have not been involved directly in decisions around the structuring of the unit within the faculty of university. If my gender affords certain privileges in the

role and a feminized field, my institutional designation also relegates the work of community engagement to something less than the core work of the institution.

2. Conceptual Frameworks

Narrative interviews of the women involved in this study elicited stories of the institutional worlds in which they developed their academic leadership identities. The feminist managerial literature shaped our interest in responses to the Western, masculinist, managerial cultural contexts in which community-based work, and the scholarship of engagement in particular, struggles for legitimacy. Specifically, we explored the university as a gendered workplace in which the emotional labour of UCE is performed mostly by women and is somewhat devalued by its alignment with “service”. Our understanding of these experiences were framed by the broad research literature on identity, and current research on emotional labor in a neoliberal, or managerial university culture.

Identity.

In the post-structural view one’s notion of “self” is developed through social discourses and the beliefs and values of one’s fluid cultural contexts; the “stable identity” gives way to performativity. In other words, individuals perform identity within and in response to community, societal, and organizational discourses. The question for us is how multiple relations of power and identity are enacted and intersect in the modern university’s conception of community engagement within the “systematic asymmetries of power and resources” (Apple, 1996) experienced by the women who lead it. While in the following discussion we separate personal/social identity, academic identity and leadership identity, in reality they interact dynamically with each other.

Personal and social identity.

Theoretically, the personal self has been defined as a continuous and unitary awareness of who we are, a conception that reflects a Western context with a strong emphasis on individuality and achievement. Depending on our investment a social identity may be more salient to one group than another. For example, that I am a member of Deans Emeriti is not salient to my membership as a professor in women’s and gender studies, except where I can call on my leadership experience to offer insights to departmental administrative issues. Social identity is not unitary, but adaptive, strongly affecting emotions and behaviour/performance. The social self is therefore a collective identity based on the social groups to which we belong. Since we belong to many groups, each of us has a range of different, intersecting social identities, which are sometimes abstract or ambiguous perceptions, expectations and reactions related to one’s role in a particular cultural context. Spears (2001) points out that there is interaction and competition between the personal and collective, or social levels of self. Social contexts are complex, dynamic, and distinctive, and relay information about social status. This is an important consideration for both group security and cohesion and individual sense-making. Sensemaking supports the management of sense of self (identity work), or, in this case, how the women in UCE leadership negotiate identity and address identity threats in the male-dominated, neoliberal university (Castro et al., 2013).

Academic identity.

Whereas, historically, academics thought of themselves as members of stable institutions that afforded them legitimate, stabilizing identities based on both individual and collective values, sense of meaning, and self-esteem in the academic profession (Henkel, 2005, p. 158), a more recent view of academic identity understands its development as a continuous and reflexive social construction, embedded in defining communities, and with a moral purpose. What it means to “be” is therefore multidimensional, ambiguous and contradictory, with the academic trying to reconcile academic identity and personal values, and involving, at various times, resistance and compliance. Churchman (2006) characterizes this work as surreptitious, as academics, particularly women and racialized faculty, undertake work that goes unnoticed and unrewarded.

Our academic identities are based on our sense of who we are, who we desire to be, and our social relationships with “in-groups”, e.g. academic disciplines, and their language, norms, values and practices (Nordbäck, Hakonen, & Tienari, 2021). Butler and Spoelstra (2020) contend that when these norms and goals are determined by the neoliberal agenda, we are sucked into the “game” of performing. Beilke (2005) maintains that a redefinition of academic identity, less tied to academic than civic professionalism, is central to contribute to contemporary debates about social issues (p. 13), however, this remains a site of academic/corporate tension (Churchman, 2006).

Earlier, we referred to research that explores why UCE tends to be academically located in “gendered” disciplines; we learned from our participants that one’s personal and academic identity creates a lens through which these leaders theorize and practice this work. Moving from a faculty role to a leadership role may precipitate an identity jolt. Identity jolts have been described by Williams (2002) as arriving in new world that can’t be meshed,

With the old world, and you are not quite sure which to keep- the one that isn’t you but is the majority of the world, or the one attached to your history, your experience, your emotion, your structure, your sense of self.

Throughout this study participants have referred to the deep learning that occurs in response to an identity jolt; after Mezirow (2003), elsewhere we referred to this process as a transformative learning process that underlies transformative leadership practice (Campbell & Peacock, 2021).

Leadership identity.

Again, taking a social constructivist view, DeRue and Ashford (2010) describe leadership as a temporal, interactive, relational, reciprocal, mutual influence process among individuals, during which leader and follower identities can shift over time. That is, these relationships and identities are not static, but are “cognitions that reside within an individual’s self-concept (and)... are inherently related” (p. 628). Leadership emerges as a result of individuals claiming, and being granted, leader identities in a negotiated process that, over time, establishes and reinforces patterns of leadership in the organization that influences both perceptions and decisions made about who is or can claim to be a leader (Marchiondo, Myers, & Kopelman, 2015).

The psychological literature shows gender to be an influential individual difference in shaping perceptions and behavior in relational contexts, with women weighing interpersonal dynamics more heavily than men (Marchiondo, Myers, & Kopelman, 2015). This approach to understanding leadership identity construction is compatible with the literature on gender and leadership in higher education that characterizes women leaders as more relational, collaborative, and oriented towards social responsibility. This is partly explained through gender-role socialization, for example, women are encouraged to emphasize interdependence and pay attention to social cues, leading to heightened empathy (c.f. Bekker & van Assen, 2008). Accordingly, women exhibit greater transformational and participative leadership in formal leadership positions. Through the lens of leadership models, many “ways of leading” include components of transformative and/or principle centered participative leadership such as collaboration, ethical action, moral purpose, and values-based approaches (Campbell & Peacock, 2021; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005).

Criticisms of leadership identity literature include its developmental and individualistic in nature, and for being rooted in masculinist notions that leave unexamined structural impediments for women’s leadership, power dynamics related to disciplinary status being one (Coate & Howson, 2016, p. 279).

3. Academic Women and Leadership Barriers

Systemic barriers to women’s leadership in higher education have included organizational structures, the concentration of women in various “feminized” disciplines, uneven mentoring and resource allocation, differences in management style, gender stereotyping, and unequal access to social capital resulting in less robust networks (c.f. Acker, 2014; Heijstra, Bjarnason, & Rafnsdóttir, 2015; Angervall, Gustafsson, & Silfver, 2018). Women tend to advance more slowly and continue to bear more family and community commitments (Heijstra, Bjarnason, & Rafnsdóttir, 2015; Rafnsdóttir & Heijstra, 2013). Further, women may be appointed in more “acting roles”, and stay in them longer, than men. In some cases, the “glass ceiling” has become a “glass cliff”, which describes the phenomena of women being appointed to top positions only when an organization appears to be failing. These situations are risky and precarious, exposing women leaders to harsher criticism when things go wrong (Einarsdóttir, Christiansen, & Kristjansdóttir, 2018), and adding to the stereotype of less competent women leaders. Perhaps that may be why women in middle-management (e.g. Deans) are more likely to be demoted or laid-off than men during times of economic retrenchment (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Psychologically, these challenges affect women’s self-confidence and self-efficacy, and they become less likely to seek leadership opportunities (Yee et al., 2015). Carli and Eagly (2016) and Eagly and Carli (2017) use the metaphor of the “labyrinth” to characterize this fraught environment, that requires women to be constantly vigilant and aware of challenges they may be facing. Women’s leadership in higher education is thus complex, precarious and stressful and, given the gendered expectations for women’s leadership identities, for example, that they be highly empathetic, often results in a heightened burden of emotional labour (p. 388). For several of our participants critical leadership incidents, creating

identity jolts, led to a return to non-leadership positions.

University-Community Engagement as Emotional Labor.

When emotion work is exchanged for something such as wages or some other type of valued compensation, such as tenure and promotion (Choi, Kim, & Kim, 2014, p. 77), it becomes emotional labour, a term first coined by Hochschild (1979, 1983). Emotional labour requires a degree of performativity, i.e. managing one's own emotions as a job requirement (Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009, in Hefernan & Bosetti, 2019). Subject to divisions of labour with varying degrees of status, Newman, Guy and Mastracci (2009) describe the emotional labour of public-facing jobs as a "performance art" that includes the "artful sensing of the other's emotional state and crafting of one's own affective expressions so as to elicit the desired response on the part of the other" (p. 31). Emotional labour may cause emotional dissonance, job dissatisfaction and burnout, although it also may also involve higher job satisfaction and lower emotional exhaustion (Choi, Kim, & Kim, 2014, p. 80)-we found both in our study. For example, Hort, Barrett, and Furlop (2001) conducted an Australian study of women academic leaders and identified a number of themes related to the self-awareness required of emotional labour: self-monitoring, self-punishment and repair work, self-justification, and pleasing behaviour. The consequences of such work were seen as "credit deficits", in which limited permission is given by the authority of the institution (pp. 8-9).

As a Dean, relationships were my oxygen. I devoted an inordinate amount of time and emotional energy in building and sustaining relationships with my faculty, staff, community members, and colleagues in the university; I knew that my priority was to create social capital against the always looming threat of de-funding and destruction of the fragile SOE domain we were building. This emotional labour involved a social as well as an academic mission. For example, I inaugurated and sustained a group of women Deans for years, organizing social events, remembering special occasions, and proposing administrative activism. Similarly, I celebrated the birthdays of every staff member in the Faculty, entertained them at my home for milestones such as achieving tenure, and fiercely advocated for the scholarship of "service" with high-level human resources committees and skeptical colleagues in other faculties, and at faculty evaluation time. Being deeply embedded in community required attendance at external events in the evenings and during weekends and holidays. While this is typical of an extension leader, as a leader of UCE I also felt pressured to justify intense community engagement in my own faculty; lobby for policy-change; protect faculty, staff and community members from inappropriate interference; and justify SOE as legitimate scholarship in academe, at the same standing down predatory Deans eyeing our budget. At one point I had to deal with the community demand to fire a faculty member who they felt was not collaborative enough. This cost me emotional equilibrium as well as a significant amount of personal income, and in some cases undermined my moral authority with staff and colleagues. This story is apocryphal in the narratives of our study participants.

Emotional labour in a gendered academy affects non-binary or other marginalized, as well as female and racialized, faculty (Guarino & Borden, 2017) and has been called the "gendered gully of service"

(Misra, 2011), and “cultural taxation” (Miller, Howell, & Struve, 2019). It tends to be assigned inequitably to these groups and includes relational tasks like teaching, advising, mentoring and community-based work, all of which have lower status than research and lead to the perception that these labourers are unproductive or presumed incompetent (Lawless, 2018). In academic disciplines closely associated with social change, like social work, this cultural attitude ghettoizes UCE praxis adding an even heavier emotional burden.

While internal service consists of activities that are institutionally-focused, only defined administrative roles receive compensation, whereas individual faculty service is acknowledged in performance reviews that carry much less weight than research performance. External service, by contrast, is typically led by senior men and consists of service outside of campus—to the profession and to communities at many levels (Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009; Ward 2003), obtaining higher status linked to funding and accolades. Despite institutional rhetoric, UCE often exists at a lower status level, frequently linked to marketing or advancement, requiring subsidies to support partner communities, and encouraging policy change. Related to the hard slog of UCE, however, several of our participants recounted confrontations with more senior administrators resulting in more marginalization than organizational change.

4. Design of the Study

Narrative inquiry

The primary method for this study is narrative inquiry, realized through unstructured interviews, email correspondence, and conversations that unfolded during site visits.

If the key task for us all is to make sense of our existence (Hort, Barrett, & Furlop, 2001), creating narratives, or storytelling, is a sense-making tool and epistemological category, as old as time, for this task. Narrative is used to locate the person within their wider social milieu, and their stories reflect the nature of that social world (Stephens, 2011). In other words, the narrative process is a project of identity formation; the university context is the site for this work. Our identities shift as we make meaning of our decisions and learn from our experiences, telling and retelling our stories with new perspectives, and in different social settings, for different purposes, i.e. storying our identities.

Casey (1996) describes narrative inquiry as a way to defy “the forces of alienation, anomie, annihilation, authoritarianism, fragmentation, commodification, depreciation, and dispossession” (p. 5) making it a powerful tool to understand the neoliberal university. It is also partial, political, relational, dialectical, and collaborative, that is socially and culturally situated. As a feminist approach, narrative inquiry is centered in feminist ethics and politics, emphasizing identity, power locations and dynamics through reflexivity (Goodson & Gill, 2011; Woodwiss, Smith, & Lockwood, 2017), challenging the master or grand narratives of a culture. As a cognitive and affective approach, identity work is as much the domain of the researcher as the researched in the storying and restoring of experiences and events. Accordingly, both authors benefitted from these constant collaborative conversations as they shared

their own critical events and identity jolts related to UCE.

Participants

The relationality of narrative inquiry was respected and established with professional relationships that often became personal. (First author) first met UCE leaders in 2007 at the annual conference of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC, <https://engagementscholarship.org>). ESC is comprised of over forty institutional members, most of whom are American institutions that have received the Carnegie Elective Classification for Engaged Universities (<https://carnegieelectiveclassifications.org>). Joining the Consortium in 2008 was a catalyst for the Faculty of Extension's strategic turn to the scholarship of engagement as its academic domain. For this study we first recruited participants from ESC and the Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship (ACES: <https://academyofces.org>), alongside well-known scholars in the field. Site visits, before they were halted due to COVID-19, yielded many more contacts. The authors both served on our university's Canadian Carnegie pilot, meeting and enrolling participants from the other Canadian institutions involved in the initiative (<https://www.sfu.ca/carnegie.html>). Through this work we became familiar with a parallel Australian initiative and, after a site visit in early 2020, invited participation from an additional nine institutions. The women featured in this paper hold academic positions and/or designated leadership roles, at the Associate/Assistant Provost, Dean, and Director levels. See Table 1 for demographic information for the women leaders involved in this study.

Table 1. The Women in UCE Leadership

Pseudonym	Title	Location
Rosalie	Associate Vice-Provost, retired	Northeastern US
Mary	Director, retired	Southeastern US
Shairoz	Vice-President Research	UK
Margeurite	Director	Northeastern US
Noreen	Associate Vice-Provost, interim	Midwestern US
Christine	Director	Western Canada
Hilde	Assistant Vice-Provost	Central Canada
Natalia	Associate Vice-Provost	Central Canada
Sarafiah	Dean	Midwest US
Janeen	President (retired)	Western US
Courtney	Director	Australia
Liza	Director (retired)	Southeastern US
Monique	Director	UK
Wanda	Executive Director	Australia
Tamil	Director	Western Canada

5. Data Analysis

We applied a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) to the analysis of our interview data. We individually coded the transcripts in several stages, involving constant comparison, and then verifying the coding together. We elaborated on member checks by inviting participants to engage reflexively with their transcripts as the study progressed; themes began to emerge. This kind of approach is compatible with narrative inquiry because issues of importance to participants emerge from the stories that they tell in conversation with the researcher; in the telling and interpretation knowledge is co-produced (Mills et al., 2006). Versions of conference presentations and papers were shared with those whose stories were included, both as a final verification and a commitment to the collaborative nature of feminist narrative inquiry.

6. Ethical Issues

With institutional ethics approval, we sought informed consent from all participants, assuring anonymity and confidentiality. We also invited collaboration during analysis and knowledge dissemination, and shared all interview transcripts before analysis. The process of narrative inquiry is not without challenges; ethical issues of voice (authenticity), representation, access, power and truth (interpretation) are involved. The researcher must take care to interpret a narrative with relational ethics in mind; be reflexive and open to critique in the retelling of the story. Narrative researchers struggle with the integrity of the researcher/participant relationship; this concern is exacerbated if the study involves individuals identifiable by virtue of the context or discipline (Chase, 2005). Sometimes, disguising context and anonymizing accounts are not enough to meet this covenant. As the institutionalization of the scholarship of engagement has been formalized and well-documented institutional leaders in the academic community are well-known. In this study, a collaborative narrative compact with engagement colleagues led to conflicts that required us to substantially reform several narratives. For example, as we share the transcribed conversations with participants, we sometimes encounter shock and surprise at ‘unpolished’ language (which happens often with academic participants). Negotiating the inclusion of the conversation “as is”, to capture nuance and texture, is a process of tact and empathy and may not result in the authors’ desired outcome. However, in such cases we actually learn more about narrative identity (from Campbell & Peacock 2021, p. 137).

7. Findings: Responses to Leadership Challenges

Women who lead UCE in higher education are a diverse group along many dimensions, although the majority of our participants were white and cis-gendered, holding positions of some authority. They counted different home disciplines, including adult education, extension, agriculture, education, medicine, theatre, psychology, history, and social work. None had received a graduate credential in the theory and practice of SOE, simply because such formal credentials did not exist. Several had recently retired from their positions. The stories of nine of these women are shared here.

These women daily encountered masculinist discourses of power in their roles: We heard resonant stories of agency and renewal, but also of mismatch, conflict, dismissal, dissonance and precarity. Institutionalizing UCE is a “disruptive challenge” to mainstream academic scholarship, involving an identity jolt as each woman endeavored to navigate barriers to developing engaged scholarship into a valued discipline comfortably institutionalized, with appropriate resources, in their institutions (c.f. Bloomgarden & O’Meara 2007; O’Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011).

Academic and leadership identities were transformed as these women tried to align community needs and expectations with disciplinary cultures and managerial systems. Their approaches required the emotional labour inherent in relational models of leadership. For example, interim assistant provost at a northeastern US research-intensive university, Noreen’s story reflects a number of tensions and identity jolts as she moved from a sessional to a tenure-track appointment, to being asked to take on interim leadership on the retirement of her male mentor in her centralized community outreach and engagement unit. Her strength lay in intervention research, “so I didn’t come in being able to collaborate and know what to do...with communities and being able to take their perspective”. A long process of emotional labour and identity work, “there was no moment where it all made sense”, but with one community-led project Noreen experienced what Mezirow (2003) labelled a perspectives transformation. She learned that contrary to her predecessor’s values-driven vision, as a leader she was “mission-driven”, i.e. more focused on delivering than transforming. Now, in a continuing precarious position, she realizes that she has to develop new, relational and organizational skills. Focused on building social capital and internal connections, she meets regularly with various associate deans of research. When we met with Noreen her unit had undergone an external review; with a new provost more focused on the STEM Faculties, for whom “mutual engagement”...ends up alienating potentially a lot of the people. The future of her unit has become tenuous and she has largely been denied access to the decision-making processes. Over this time it has become clear to her that,

The name of ‘assistant provost for university-community partnerships’ wasn’t appropriate for me...My connections are...in the early childhood community (and)...within the university trying to marshal the resources of the university to support that engagement mission.

Noreen is now engaged in the work of integrating her academic identity with a new leadership identity as her unit restructures. She has had to pivot from developing internal relationships to “just getting the office into a place (to be) for the next associate provost....and generating a list of people in the community to go start building relationships with”. Prizing transparency, she denies being a “really great political person...it doesn’t occur to me, the maneuvering”. At this point in time, Noreen has to, “Be very careful...but we want to make sure that this is something that’s considered as central to the mission as it is in the mission statement.” From an individual researcher working in a UCE unit led by a charismatic male leader, Noreen has had to redefine herself as a collaborative, engaged scholar and leader of engagement scholarship within a large, political, managerial university in a time of some financial retrenchment. She is nevertheless determined to reframe the mission of her unit and more

strongly embed it in the university's mission under a new President and Provost.

Noreen's story resonates with those of us who find ourselves in an unanticipated leadership role in the UCE sphere, feeling unprepared and displaced, experiencing many disorienting dilemmas (e.g. change in senior leadership, budget cuts, resistance from various disciplines, and exclusion), and continually navigating identity change. Three themes emerged from these narratives: disruption, resistance, and resilience. Many stories reflected the interaction of all three.

8. Disruption

Giddens (1979) described disruption as critical situations, full of tension and challenge. Requiring a departure from "taken-for-granted" life rhythms and one's understanding of human existence is a threat to ontological security. A disruption, or trigger event (Buzzanell, 2010), i.e. an identity jolt, occurs when life keeps moving forward, and may result in reintegrating or restorying to "'reconfigure' a sense of order, meaningfulness, and coherent identity" (Crossley, 2000, p. 528; in Tuohy & Stephens, 2012, p. 28). Such events set a process of sense-making in motion, as we have seen with Noreen. Buzzanell (2010) characterizes this process as "dynamic, integrated, unfolding over time and through events, evolving into patterns, and dependent on contingencies" (p. 2). Although they did not describe themselves as such, the women in this study were disruptors of the social order of the neoliberal university in the ways they challenged traditions, reframed initiatives, leveraged budgets, and subverted policies they found contrary to equity and inclusion. In turn, their lives and identities were disrupted as they sought ways to resist and reframe the disruption.

Natalia references her "activist roots", as a former frontline social worker in abused women's shelters. Characterizing the university "as a wealthy institution with lots of resources and potential supports", she asks, "How do we leverage those to support our neighbors and our communities that need them?" She works in tandem with Hilde, associate director of community engagement programs at a central Canadian research university, to "facilitate connection and communicate the work". Natalia's colleague, by her own admission, brings less emotion to the many dismissals of the work that they encounter and has managed to fund community projects partly through hiring community members as facilitators and project leaders.

Hilde also comes from a social work background, and worries about burnout in the communities working with the university. Even with the authority and assumed power of her position in the Provost's Office, attempts to open community access to the recreational and library services were unsuccessful, "because everything is being monetized and they're trying to make money off of everything". Hilde worked strategically to reconcile UCE with the "distasteful" cultural politics of neoliberalism that equate UCE with philanthropy, disrupting somewhat the discourse of advancement, "If you can look at community engagement as a vehicle for job readiness...it sells, so swallow your distaste, and let's use it in a way where we can bring people on board who think of things differently". As a pragmatist she found it necessary to use the neoliberal framing of advancement as corporate social

responsibility, but she resisted betraying her academic identity, “That’s the only way I have found to get any kind of progressive language” into a community hub initiative

Christine, the director of a faculty-based research centre, has been disrupted several times during her career as an engaged scholar, community advocate and leader. Centre director for seven years, her career at her Western Canadian university started twenty years previously, as the project coordinator for an Indigenous health research network funded through a federal health funding agency, a temporary position as there was a need for indigenous representation in that role. She has remained in a “boundary-spanning” role for over twenty years. After the network role, she, transitioned to a “polar” network where, over six years, she began to integrate her community-engaged background working with indigenous and northern communities. In our conversation she identified two key areas of personal and institutional disruption: in a restructuring precipitated by a conservative government, being moved from one Faculty to another during a pandemic; and assuming the permanent Director role of the centre. This context is still precarious, as the next institutional budget cut, or the withdrawal of community funding from the centre, could result in its dissolution. The centre was created by the community in partnership with the university and has a shared governance and budget model; although she reports directly to a Dean, the centre’s direction is set by a joint steering committee. This organization creates space for innovation and disruption,

I thought critically about the previous roles that I held within the university...able to really push the boundaries and think very intentionally about ... a critical space...when you have other types of things that are on your plate, you don’t have the liberty to move in there.

She sees her role as a connector, “Always looking to connect the pieces of what I’m seeing across the institution. I’m not necessarily just focused (on Centre projects)... in every single thing that I’m a part of, I’m trying to connect tangibly”. In this complicated liminal space, she finds it liberating to be able to have that lens. But after the recent restructuring she is keenly aware of her other responsibilities as a director,

How (do) we continue to function as an organization? That means in this current (neoliberal) climate, thinking about how the university is an asset, to the sector, and to the broader society...(and) there are a lot of different layers to the work that I can do in this merged type of role that I think is different than if you’re in one camp or the other.

Christine is well aware of the marginal status of UCE at her research-intensive university, and she sought to be on a senior advisory committee for the Canadian Carnegie Classification pilot, “To bring that voice, which I thought was really important for a unique piece of engagement that was happening at the university, to bear on this process to make sure it was present there”. She distinguishes the claims to engagement of communications and advancement personnel to those of engaged scholars connecting through an engagement hub,

Given the experiences that we’ve had...the faculty shift and moving elsewhere....there may be a certain perception of how (UCE) can be supported, centrally. That perhaps it’s perceived as being

a function, not necessarily an engagement...Going out and doing public consultation is a transaction. Engaged scholarship is relational. That's very, very different.

Positioning the Centre as a nexus of engaged scholarship in which influential community voices are brought to the "Provost's Table" is an act of resistance to the current strategy unfolding at the institutional level, a strategy precipitated by a governmental attack on public institutions and an internal attack, led by several powerful male Deans, that "decommissioned" the original extension home of the centre and forced its move into a Faculty with a much different mission.

Finally, Liza, the director of a research centre in the southeastern US, knows how to disrupt the discourses of space and power. She teaches these strategies to aspiring leaders at summer retreats.

If I had a meeting scheduled at one o'clock and the deans were in there... and I had faculty and community members outside, I'd open the door. 'Hey guys, I just need to have you be wrapped up and out of there in five minutes'...That stunned some people, but from my perspective, if you're going to tell me you value me, then you're going to pay attention to the day-to-day things that show value....I think it gave all of us a level of respect for each other.

9. Resistance

Kondo (1990) cautions us that, instead of being neat and internally coherent, resilience is a matter of consenting, coping and *resisting*. Instead, a more complex view of power and subjectivity recognizes that individuals cope and resist on a temporal plain at different levels of consciousness; in other words, "resistor" cannot be a singular identity (in Collinson, 2003, p. 541).

Resistance has been theorized as a negative and adversarial perspective but it can be recast as productive, creative and transformative. In this view, resisters can challenge power relationships and narratives that have a critical influence on decision-making (Courpasson, Dany, & Clegg, 2012, p. 802), as have Hilde and Christine. Productive workplace resistance involves engaging with prevalent managerial discourses, and operating against both cultural and ideological controls, crafting new identities as agents of change. Power is central to a discussion of resistance because it can lead to a threat to autonomy and identity, and because all workplaces are sites of power and resistance (Lawrence & Robinson, 2007), largely structured by tensions between different contending discourses and identities (Courpasson, Dany, & Clegg, 2012). By engaging in resistance, one can work on developing an alternative, more positive, more active sense of self than that which has been defined by and expected in the organization (Collinson, 2003, p. 539).

Janeen, who held several presidential positions in the US, was, at one point, "declared insubordinate" for resisting her Board of Governors' recruitment strategies, that were in opposition to diversity. In her next position she was "fired"; because of her leadership vision she resisted an expectation for the type of support to give a particular program near and dear to the Governors' hearts. Each time she moved on, Janeen sought an institutional culture that would support the scholarship of engagement as "a passion project", drawing, "On a genuine enjoyment of getting to know how other people see the world". She

traces this aspect of her leadership identity to her childhood when her father's profession forced constant moves to different regions of the country. Janeen says, "It started out in childhood as a way to try to fit in. Now, it's urgent to figure out a way to change the fit". Becoming reflexive about her leadership values, she now understands that what could have been experienced as devastating professional failures were, instead, confirmation that,

What I was discovering I cared about was not a core element of that particular institutional culture. It's very hard if you think one way and all your colleagues are habituated to acting in another way. You can temporarily...shift how they act, but because their thinking didn't change, they revert easily.

In other words, Janeen's leadership identity, as "chief learning officer", forged in part by early identity jolts, is closely aligned to her resistance to dominant institutional discourses.

Like Janeen, Rosalie, who has held chair and vice-provostial appointments at various universities, most recently in the Southern US, found different ways to resist at different levels of institutional leadership, at different times and with different colleagues. For example, she resisted the dominant interpretation of faculty evaluation at the levels of department chairs and advisory committees, and the misogyny of colleagues and supervisors at both personal and policy levels, for example, inaugurating a network for junior academic women in which they practiced salary negotiations. Rosalie based her change agency on the social capital she built working directly with the chairs of departments who did not see UCE as a legitimate scholarly activity. Learning how and when to address resistance, however, also fine-tuned her sense of the possible; she did not hesitate to seek opportunities more aligned with her values and commitment to UCE and to equity,

I know visionaries get shot down. But the reason I have moved is because...Too much is in the culture of any organization to allow women to move very far. So, I had the ability to move to another place if I'd gotten to a place where there was a glass ceiling.

Part of Rosalie's resilience lies in her ability to "anticipate the future", in order to help others with their mission. Rosalie's leadership identity is caring, relational and invested in the success of others, and depends on passion and a moral compass. Rosalie told us about one university president's "unconscious" dismissal of her work,

He was a sweet man, but he would talk about Rosalie's little program... little funding (successes). He liked me, but with the guys it was the blah, blah, blah program and for me it was Rosalie's little this. It was his way of saying, 'Well she's achieving, and we're surprised, but it's still little'.

Finally, she hit on a strategy of resistance-writing a speech for the President. "wrote one (about community engagement) for him" that he gave with "rave reviews" but, "Of course, no one knew I wrote it". She identifies as a democratic leader because, "The things that drive me to like community engagement scholarship, is, I like people to get credit for what they do". She was most concerned with including the voices of those who were marginalized, certainly community voices, but especially extension faculty, and women and racialized colleagues. Her strategies of resistance included extending

invitations to decision-making groups “beyond the usual, white male suspects” and advocating for colleagues who had been denied promotion or tenure.

Sometimes, resistance is contaminated by the power it resists (Fleming, 2005). Margeurite, an African-American leader at an Eastern university, discovered this irony when she led her university’s successful proposal to become a Carnegie Engaged Institution and lobbied the president to establish a central office. “The new provost said, ‘Well, let’s have (the former provost)...be the director. You’ll be the deputy director.’... I should have forced that point”, but not wanting to get involved in a power play that she would lose, she decided to “just do the work”, focusing on widening access to learning for marginalized groups through arts-based initiatives.

Margeurite told us that while she did not initially get the top job her responsibilities included the emotional labor of all the human resource functions. She acknowledges that she,

Really like(s) working in collaboration with people...I like to make sure I’m understanding what people are needing...I’ve tried to see... mutually beneficial goals in this endeavor...I think that’s really important in any type of role...being flexible, knowing that things may change, and to be ready when that happens, and to be caring. I think that’s important...especially as a leader, that you are aware of and caring of people who you work with.

Sarafia, a Dean in a college of education in the mid-west US, attributes her success at bringing in grant funding for UCE to being an “outlier”, an African American women who was recruited to education from a private practice in psychology. Not known as a researcher in UCE, rather as a community-scholar activist, she appreciates the kind of leadership, “that values the multiple sorts of contributions that create (this) sort of college”. Sarafia is aware that she follows in the footsteps of women (Deans) who disrupted the status quo of faculty evaluation. She is valued as a thought leader, “who can deliver in advancing new initiatives”. Outlier status may be productive in a field that is already marginalized as it protects space to be unexpectedly creative; even subversive.

Finally, initially defined by her extension role as a practitioner and administrator, as a leader Mary “saw the value in being a part of the research enterprise...where we started to think about outreach as scholarship...I moved from...doing the work, to leading the work, to studying the work”. She was able to integrate these identities, even though her scholarship was not evaluated at the time, because her UCE team was flying under the radar at her large Midwest institution.

10. Resilience

UCE tends to be academically located in “gendered” disciplines. Hilde believes that one’s personal and academic identity creates a lens through which these leaders theorize and practice this work. She began her academic career as a social worker who coordinated placements for her Canadian university while she studied for her PhD. Claiming a social justice orientation, she became “the” faculty member focused on engagement with NGOs, social service organizations, and social advocacy, trusted by both faculty colleagues and community members. She experienced an identity jolt when she moved into a

leadership role as, first, a faculty-based Associate Dean Research and then as Associate VP of Research and experienced a fracturing of her collegial relationships. She found that moving into a more institutional role created a divide with faculty, a “different nuance” and a suspicion of top-down initiatives. Hilde feels very lucky to have “come up through the ranks of a faculty member...involved in this at the management level” because she understands the UCE enterprise from both angles. She acknowledges that being in a gendered discipline without moral power “means that you don’t have a lot of political power and you don’t have the ear of senior management...(and) that’s critically important”. After a struggle to get tenure and promotion she speculates that women are afraid to “go for full”, and academic administration, because they see no advantage and are wary of rejection in a gendered institution. Hilde’s mother was black; her father was white and she grew up half Jewish and half Protestant. Volunteering as a tutor to under-privileged children, “was the first time I really felt like I fit and I belong”, leading her to choose social work as a career, yet admitting that her social justice identity was not valued during her years as a junior faculty member. A sense of anomie, the way one’s personal, social and academic identities are “distanced”, is a recurring theme in these narratives; our participants told us stories of resilience in the face of it.

Studying change in higher education, Jacobs, Cintron, and Canton (2002) explored how faculty retained their self-identity and self-respect and became resilient when faced with biases and disrespect from colleagues and administrators. Defined as “the capacity to absorb high levels of change while displaying minimal dysfunctional behavior” (Connor, 1992, p. 219), resilience in an institutional leader exemplifies positive action beyond simply coping. Ungar (2005) maintains that resilience is a transformative social practice that can either reproduce or challenge a dominant social order. Resilient leaders challenge the grand narratives of organizational culture, because the process of resilience is a social construction, dependent on interaction and discourse. Buzzanell (2010) takes up this notion, in that constructing resilience is seen as affirming identity anchors, or a cluster of identity discourses that explain who one is in relation to others. Liza defines cultural “fit” as a coherent alignment of values in this resilient response, “I worked for a woman here at (the university) who created a number of problems for a lot of people here. But she said to me one time, ‘You don’t understand, you just don’t fit.’ Well, as far as I was concerned, I fit... I just needed to surround myself with people that valued the same things that I did. So, I think the concept of marginalization is personally defined”.

Mary talks about the double-bind implicit in the marginalization of UCE into extension units led by women, who need to be “a builder and a bridger” between the community and the university, conversant in financial planning, human resource management, and program evaluation, “if you’re going to enact...the institutionalization of...community engagement“, while trying to maintain a credible academic identity, “there were times you needed to walk like a duck and talk like a duck, so they thought of you as a duck”, although she never felt “fully integrated.“ Margeurite and Mary both refer to a social justice commitment that leads to marginalization in the neoliberal academy, not getting the top job, which goes to a male, and performing the emotional labour required of UCE which puts

them further behind in their academic careers.

During our conversation about women in leadership, Sarafia reflected on the complexity and tensions of relationships with the communities she works in.

I think there is a recognition first of the value and power of relationships to advance land grant mission work... it starts from understanding the power of relationships...the power of partnerships, and then evolving those relationships into partnerships...I get a little...cautious about people throwing around the term partnership because I want to be mindful of the fact that...genuine partnerships are strong on integrity and trust.

Cognizant of the power dynamics inherent in UCE, between communities and the institution, and between faculty and administration, she nevertheless feels “blessed” in being able to enact her own “values and belief system”, despite the personal and professional “expectations and barriers” she has experienced, as a woman of color, as microaggressions,

That were intentional in trying to tell me you don’t belong here and you won’t get further. That’s always been there, recognized and not recognized at times, but it’s always been there. So, it’s having the other sorts of relationships and connections that kept me in the game.

Sarafia characterizes her internal and external relationships as “villages of support”, without which she “could not and would not have sustained in this very college 30 years...not making me feel anything other than a valued member of this academic community”.

Monique directs a multi-million dollar community-based research center in a UK university, and is also director of a centralized UCE unit. She picks up on the centrality of these principles to her academic identity as a resilience expert and leadership identity as a leader of community-based participatory research, describing a high-level conflict with the university’s CFO,

Because of the...managerialism in university systems...we’ve got a rule in the UK...to do with tax law that I’ve had to talk endlessly to our director of finance about. We can’t use university money to easily just fund community partner involvement in things. And it all came to a head and we had a big falling out and... I ended up crying at the injustice of it. I felt so angry on their behalf because it was like some homeless people or somebody like that who we paid their bus fares to come to something and he was saying, “Well, their organization should pay.”

Monique’s story resonates with many women colleagues, including me (first author) who react in anger with tears of frustration and fury to the insensitivity of the university’s bureaucracy that makes this work of community engagement difficult to sustain. I (first author) originally cringed at my tearful response to the provost informing me that “they” had decided to shut down my Faculty and dismiss our community-engagement work and the values of access and equity upon which we built our vision, because it wasn’t sufficiently revenue-generating. We knew that this project of our hearts, this emotional labor of SoE, hinged on disrupting not only masculinist epistemologies of worth and value, but also on how well we can play the detached politics of managerialism: There is little room for emotional response. Tears are interpreted as female weakness instead of the external sign of a

galvanizing, motivating fury to act. As Monique confirmed, in essence, these moments of crisis can be, “make-or-break moments in your career”, in which you vow, “I’m not going to be the director of the center that is supposed to be about community university partnerships and won’t acknowledge that they need funding” and set about fundamentally changing the direction. These incidents, full of values conflicts, may result in a consolidation, or a reconciliation, an affirmation of one’s leadership identity. We have demonstrated that women tend to face more difficulties in the higher education workplace and may consequently develop higher levels of resilience (Isaacs, 2014). Isaacs employed the Personal Resilience Questionnaire (PRQ, <https://positivepsychology.com/connor-davidson-brief-resilience-scale/>) in his study of 87 Deans, finding that the women exhibited higher levels of the characteristics of resiliency: being positive about the world, positive about themselves, focused, flexible in their thoughts, flexible towards others in their social environment, organized, and proactive (p. 117). Jenkins and Rondón (2015) urge emphasizing an approach to theorizing resilience that uncovers and challenges unequal power relations. Janeen exemplifies this approach by “leading up” as well as “leading down”. Leading up involved a creative process of engaging local community leaders and politicians during a budget crisis, “You’re looking at 20% reduction in state general fund support...That meant the usual annoyances, mistrust, nastiness that institutions tend to acquire-like a birds nest, it gets fouled”, but she pulled together a coalition, “And we created the urban university model”.

Sarafia reflects several characteristics of resilience, i.e., the abilities to deal with what comes along, handle unpleasant feelings, cope with stress, stay focused and think clearly and handle unpleasant feelings such as anger, pain or sadness (Connor, 1972), when she shares how she reacts to the microaggressions of faculty and administrators dismissive of community engagement.

What I have felt...is disillusionment, sometimes outright disgust, definitely frustration, outrage...some may say anger at times, (but)... what I feel is motivating... I’m cautious about anger...I’m thoughtful and clear about identifying what’s the real emotion here?...Sometimes you’ve got to check yourself and say, ‘So now how are you going to be constructive in addressing that?’

Like Sarafia, Rosalie has refused to get discouraged in the face of cultural resistance to change.

They did have a (promotion and tenure) function, and that was part of the committee at the president’s level... We could override what a department had said...for me personally, that was a great experience. There were some department heads I could not influence at all. They just had decided they weren’t going to look at anything else. So, I realized we needed to have both a promotion and tenure process that was outlined well enough at the system level that was part of the official P&T process.

Rosalie based her change agency on the social capital she built working directly with the chairs of departments who did not see UCE as a legitimate scholarly activity, directly funding professional development, consulting services, and opportunities to attend learning events. Learning how and when to address resistance, however, also fine-tuned her sense of the possible; she did not hesitate to seek

opportunities more aligned with her values and commitment to UCE and to equity. Part of Rosalie's resilience lies in her ability to "anticipate the future", because "if you can anticipate what's coming, then you can prepare people to be ready for it, and they can accomplish things". Rosalie's leadership identity is caring, relational and invested in the success of others, like Sarafia, depends on passion and a moral compass, to "model(ing) what you believe is right...as democracy, and caring about others and hearing ideas of others, as opposed to having a solution and dumping it on someone".

11. Finally, Disrupting an Institutional Narrative

The modern university as a neoliberal institution provided a context for understanding how UCE is situated and has shaped the academic and leadership identities of the women who lead these work. We locate the leadership of UCE in the literature about women in leadership in academe and posit that UCE requires emotional labor that is mostly taken up by women.

Understanding where UCE and SOE are located, and who leads it, is important because, while UCE is prominent in many institutional strategic plans, the actual praxis of it has fallen to faculty in disciplines or domains that are marginalized in large, research-intensive universities. Units and groups responsible for a centralized model are led by middle managers who are sometimes academic but more often administrative. Our research has led us to believe that if these positions are precarious-and in this category we include Deans of less-valued faculties such as extension, education, and social work-they are even less valued. In other words,

In the larger question of why women are shut out of higher status leadership, is UCE actually an opportunity for leadership for women that might not exist elsewhere? UCE is emotional labor, which is marginalized, and women who lead it are marginalized because they are women, leading a marginalized field-an academic double whammy. The leadership roles taken on by women may, in fact, further diminish the value or status of both UCE and its women leaders, which takes an emotional toll that can't help but impact the kinds of leaders they are or want to be. So why do women agree to assume lower-status leadership positions, even when they are aware that these roles do not always, or even often, lead to higher status roles with greater influence on university vision and values?

The women who participated in this study were all in late-mid career or retired from academe. They share in common a passion for social justice and a passion for this work, and remain positive about the potential for institutional transformation. However, their ambition for large-scale change has perhaps been tempered a bit, with a sharper and more sustainable focus on the praxis that can have an impact on one or more local communities, on internal relationships, or on the field of UCE and SOE in general. While these leaders are all resilient, they reflect on the emotional impact of institutional marginalization or even indifference towards UCE. We have seen, and the extant literature supports, women leaders self-construe as more relational; the relationships nurtured by these leaders positively influence attitudes, identification These are mature leaders, in generative stages of their careers, finding meaning and purpose in forming supportive and nurturing communities of intellectual inquiry that have

impact on peoples' lives, with the potential to contribute to large social shifts. We were interested in the numerous acts of principled, or even pragmatic, compromises women leaders of UCE consider as they build resilience and agency in their units. Compromise requires a moral deliberation (Weinstock, p. 540), and is therefore a relational response. The strategies they have chosen, sometimes unconsciously, of disruption, resistance and resilience influence their social, academic and leadership identities. In different ways each has challenged the discourses of power and engagement in their institutions. with and desire to stay in the team, and bring about positive affect and energy (Post, 2015, p. 1155).

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