The Irony of Ethics:

(De)Coding the Lived Experience of Women and Minority Faculty

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Abstract

What does it mean to 'be' an ethical faculty member? A number of scholars point to legal and moral issues, aligning ethics with professional codes and regulated by institutional policy. From this perspective, being ethical is a matter of knowing and following the professional rules—the goal is to avoid certain actions. On the other hand, others question this objectivist approach and position faculty ethics as an experience, a fusion of personal and professional histories that include disciplinary training, socialization to the profession, and—especially—the specter of faculty rewards such as tenure and promotion. This article explores these competing perspectives in a qualitative meta-synthesis of data collected across studies of faculty identity, professional epistemology, and academic ethics. This analysis concentrates on 116 interviews with women and minority doctoral students and faculty members conducted between 1999 and 2012, a subset of more than 200 interviews I conducted during this timeframe. All interviews were initially coded using constant comparative analysis. For the meta-synthesis, I chose to apply an elaborative coding technique that juxtaposes data with the ethics literature related to *chilly and alienating climates*, *cultural taxation*, and the *snare of faculty rewards* in higher education. This (re)analysis allowed me engage in a formal dialogue between local theory and scholarship, resulting in six sub-themes: 'real'izing, acting out/in, toiling, serving, aligning, and diverging.

Keywords: Academic ethics, Faculty identity, Professional epistemology, Discrimination, Qualitative meta-synthesis

> *The Duchess: 'Tut, tut, child! Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.'*
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> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

1. Introduction

Faculty ethics. The very mention conjures an image of legal or moral indiscretion, even blatant misconduct (Reybold, 2008a, 2009). Scholars across the disciplines are quick to point out acts of commission such as grant fraud, sexual harassment, and abuse of state and federal resources (Bruh, Zajac, Al-Kazemi, & Prescott, 2002; Kelley & Chang, 2007). Others focus on acts of omission, citing the failure of faculty to live up to its obligations such as academic civility and professional service (Keith-Spiegel, Whitley, Balogh, Perkins, & Wittig, 2002; Landau & Osmo, 2003). Either way, faculty ethics is often defined as a *negative concept* and a problem that must be rectified (Sundberg & Fried, 1997; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). "Fundamentally, ethical codes take on the most troublesome of behaviors related to academe and present ways for individuals to behave in the face of pressures and uncertainties" (Bray, Molina, & Swecker, 2012, p. 73).

Recent scholarship on faculty ethics has focused less on misbehavior and more on integrity as professional identity (Reybold, 2008a; Reybold, Halx, & Jimenez, 2008). At the very least, the subtexts of these divergent connotations of faculty ethics lead scholars to study ethics in different ways, and thus results in two competing versions of ethics: 1) an objectivist position in which ethical behavior is defined according to moral and legal obligations, versus 2) an interpretivist position in which ethical behavior is a cultural model of human experience. This language of ethics matters, and not just for scholars. In an age of political scrutiny of higher education in general and faculty roles in particular, "ethics is quite the catchword" (Reybold, 2009, p. 375). Further, Bray et al. (2012) raised the question "as to

whether ethical codes accomplish their goal to authentically reflect the values of, and provide guidelines for, their individual organizations" (p. 78).

Defining faculty ethics as integrity—especially in terms of faculty preparation and development—is consistent with many organizational codes of ethics that offer aspirational guides to professional ethics. In higher education, for example, the American Association for University Professors (AAUP) established an original set of principles in for professional ethics (1967/2009). The authors of the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics were clear the principles were never intended to identify moral turpitude among faculty members. Rather, the principles were to guide individual faculty members as they interpret ethicality in their roles as teachers, scholars, colleagues, and citizens. (See AAUP Website for full Statement on Professional Ethics.)

Most other professions make a similar distinction between ethicality and legality—particularly those associated with medical and counseling practice. Still, these same professions do not always advise educators how to deal with the dialectic of professional ethics:

> Most disciplinary codes do not speak to the ethical roles of educators. This multiplicity and overlap of codes presents its own ethical quandary. Without a clear understanding of how to apply ethics codes in the face of ethical dilemmas, many professionals rely on personal morals and socialization experiences to guide them. (Reybold, 2009, p. 376)

Professional codes are both ideal and idealistic, assuming all faculty members are subject to a core set of neutral values. But ethical codes function is "to guide, not script, ethicality" (p. 376). This conundrum creates a gap between the caricature of faculty ethics as immorality and the lived experience of faculty ethics as integrity in everyday decision making. Also, a premise of any professional code of ethics is that its members want to be ethical; another is that ethicality is an individual responsibility—all while ignoring the impact of bias and discrimination on individual choices and decisions (Reybold, 2008a, 2009; Reybold, Brazer, Schrum, & Corda, 2012). Professional statements and codes of ethics generally allude to collegiality and cultural sensitivity, but they do not account for the personal experience of being ethical in higher education.

The academy, and faculty work in particular, is under considerable scrutiny by media and scholarly critics who "claim higher education faces a crisis of integrity" (Reybold, 2008a, p. 280). These commentators often point to "diminishing public trust and heightened demands for accountability" (p. 280). As with other public institutions, resources are scarce and constituencies want to know if monies are being used effectively and efficiently. Criticisms are magnified by media and scholarly fixation on unethical behavior and often result in calls for increased oversight and rigorous enforcement of existing ethical codes—or even the development of more stringent ones (Bruhn et al., 2002). The university and its faculty, according to some critics, are not living up to "a high moral standard" (p. 471).

McLaren (1994) advanced the idea of faculty members as cultural workers and moral agents who should embrace a vision "that is not content with adapting individuals to a world of oppressive social relations but is dedicated to transforming the very conditions that promote such conditions" (p. xxxiii). He spoke from a political perspective that situated faculty in the larger historical context of prejudice and discrimination. Similarly, Wilcox and Ebbs (1992) argued that "colleges and universities are custodians of knowledge" (p. xix); as such they are "institutions with moral responsibilities" to society. A decade later, Bruhn et al. (2002) said "it is reasonable to hold academics to a high moral standard" (p. 471) because of their influence over students and public opinion. Faculty members "are in a prime position to influence young minds through their modeling and control of information" since they "often influence public opinion and contribute to social constructions of 'truth" and morality'" (p. 471).

These and other similar statements echo a growing public distrust of the university and its faculty, and they further defined the academy's moral obligation in terms of potential abuse of privilege and resources and as an issue of financial accountability. While descriptions of the moral obligation of higher education are not necessarily at odds with one another, they do point out a substantial undercurrent of thought that defines ethics as "doing the right thing" (Reybold, Halx, & Jimenez, 2008).This muddles the distinction between ethicality and legality, and it conflates both concepts with personal morality.

My interest in faculty ethics was stimulated during a pilot study of student-to-faculty transitions and their development of faculty identity and epistemology. My initial interest was participant definitions of ethics, and my goal at that time was understand how academics developed and applied these definitions as they transitioned into and through their faculty career. That pilot study grew into a longitudinal qualitative investigation that spanned a decade of data collection, and it led to other studies about academic identity, epistemology, and ethicality. Interviews with scores of participants challenged my initial focus on definitions of ethics; I began to examine ethics as everyday lived experience.

These experiences revealed a powerful and pervasive narrative of sexism, racism, and homophobia that redefined faculty ethics as social and political constructions in the academy (Reybold, 2008a).

Across each year of conducting interviews on this topic, I concentrated each research cycle on specific aspects of faculty ethicality. Each cycle allowed me to tune my research questions to explore emerging themes, but that also restricted the findings each cycle to that particular set of questions. Applying the method of qualitative meta-synthesis (McCormick, Rodney, & Varcoe, 2003; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003a, 2003b), my goal was to understand the data as a whole, to (re)view original transcript data and findings in terms of the emergent research question: How do women and minority faculty members experience ethics in their everyday work lives? Since participants had shared narratives of acute bias and discrimination, I chose to explore these experiences in relation to the literature connected to participant themes: a) "chilly and alienating" climates in higher education (Aguirre 2000, p. 39), "cultural taxation" (Padilla, 1994, p. 26), and the "snare of faculty rewards" (Reybold, 2009, p. 375).

My discussion begins with a review of the academic and media emphasis on faculty ethics as legal accountability and moral responsibility, as well as the role of codes of ethics such as those developed by the American Association of University Professors. Then, I explain the utility of combining the method of qualitative meta-synthesis and theory-driven analysis, followed by a presentation of data in relation to chilly and alienating climates, cultural taxation, and the snare of faculty rewards.

2. Method

> 'I could tell you my adventures — beginning from this morning,' said Alice a little timidly: 'but it's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.' 'Explain all that,' said the Mock Turtle. 'No, no! The adventures first,' said the Gryphon in an impatient tone: 'explanations take such a dreadful time.'
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> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

The analysis presented here began as an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995) of a few doctoral students in education at one institution; I simply wanted to understand these students' experiences. I centered my first set of interviews on a few specific questions: Why do you want to be a professor? How did you make that decision? Over time, the focus of the study evolved with each year's set of interviews and addition of new participants (all in education), resulting in a series of interviews I conducted annually. I was able to follow some participants up to nine years across the development of their career, and the addition of new participants challenged me to revisit previous interviews and analyses. As I coded each interview, I identified new strands of inquiry, and then I would review all previous data to both confirm my interpretation and to check for nuances of experience. For example, participants spontaneously mentioned ethical issues, disillusionment with higher education, and concerns about professional transitions; I reviewed existing data for these experiences and added questions to the next year's interview guide. Over time, faculty ethics as a social and political construct became the central focus of my continuing inquiry, as well as the lens for my reexamination of all of the interview data.

Early on, these micro-studies evolved into a grounded theory of faculty identity and epistemology, leading me to reconsider the role and value of existing theory and concepts. The analysis presented here is a qualitative meta-synthesis of these studies and their findings. This section reviews the development of the longitudinal study and the rationale for a meta-synthesis technique.

2.1 The Longitudinal Study

My concept of ethics was initially grounded in theories of identity development and epistemology (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky et al., 1986; Bruss & Kopala, 1993), and later informed by theories of faculty socialization and career development (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In my interviews, though, I began to notice a consistent narrative of ethics being experiences as social and political, emotional and experiential—and not just behavioral. Interestingly, many participant stories were in stark contrast to the literature's characterization of faculty ethics as a set of academic indiscretions (*e.g.,* Bruhn, Zajac, Al-Kazemi, & Prescott, 2002; Hamilton, 2002; Kelley & Chang, 2007). In fact, participant stories were inconsistent with the expectations described in the *Statement on Professional Ethics* issued by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 1967/2009).

The constructivist, emergent nature of the longitudinal study fit my grounded theory intention—each of the annual interview studies was intentionally focused on a specific aspect of faculty identity, epistemology, and ethics. On the other hand, how could I account for both the data as a whole and the micro-studies that explored new territory? Zimmer (2006) noted a similar dialectic; "qualitative studies are characterized by singularity of context" (p. 312); but meta-synthesis allows "theory development, higher level abstraction, and generalizability in order to make qualitative

findings more accessible for application in practice" (p. 313). Thus began my exploration of qualitative meta-synthesis and reconsideration of the term *generalizability*.

I decided to (re)analyze the data with an eye toward the literature on women and minority experiences in higher education. Across the studies, the findings had consistently pointed to three areas of literature: a) academic workplaces as "chilly and alienating" climates (Aguirre, 2000, p. 39), b) "cultural taxation" of faculty diversity (Padilla, 1994, p. 26), and c) the snare of conventional faculty rewards (AAUP, 2006; Reybold, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Turner, 2002). Checking and rechecking interpretation is a hallmark of qualitative research. How, then, does a researcher hope to 'bring it all together' after more than a decade of study? I began my faculty career with two pressing questions that cut across my longitudinal and tangential studies. The first question was: How are faculty ethics defined socially and personally? The second one was: How are faculty ethics experienced? Based on the experiences of participants, combined with my own professional experiences and growth, I identified a core question that has driven my inquiry since 2006: How do we reconcile professional codes of ethics with the actual experiences of faculty members, especially as *advocates* of diversity (Reybold, 2009)?

While my initial research question in a 1999 pilot study had focused on how faculty members in education define and experience ethics in the academy, conversations with so many participants since then had pointed me to this more critical question. True to the iterative nature of qualitative research, my early interpretations of the data had taken me far beyond my initial research questions, but eventually led me back to the starting point: the data. I had conducted more than 200 in depth interviews, most of them with 75 participants across three studies of faculty epistemology and ethics. In one longitudinal study of faculty identity that spanned a decade, I conducted multiple interviews with most of the participants; this allowed me to follow evolving experiences of ethics across various career points. Participants in that study represented a range of institutions and disciplines in education across the US. The other studies were case analyses of program or college faculty in education at single institutions. Original participant selection, interview methods, and coding and analysis are discussed in detail in related articles.

2.2 Qualitative Meta-synthesis

Qualitative meta-syntheses, especially those developed through thematic synthesis, draw from the premise of grounded theory (Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jillings, 2001). The term meta-synthesis, though, is imprecise, alluding to triangulation of analyses across data collection events (Banning, n.d.). The general construct includes two related techniques:

•   Meta-syntheses that include "findings from topically related qualitative research reports" (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010, p. 247). Further, "meta-synthesis databases are comprised of findings from fully developed particularized theories, thematic/categorical findings, or a combination of the two" (p. 247). Sandelowski and Barroso (2003a) discussed the challenge of communicating meta-synthesis in the grant proposal process, and (2003b) further discussed the product as "metasummaries" of qualitative findings.

•   Meta-analyses that analyze "the pooled results of several primary studies to provide a quantitative review of existing empirical evidence" (Conn, Valentine, Cooper, & Rantz, 2003, p. 256). McCormick, Rodney, and Varcoe (2003) extended the method to qualitative studies, focusing their efforts on meta-ethography (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

My understanding and application of qualitative meta-synthesis is informed by both concepts, as well as metatheory (Turner, 1991), which connects analysis across studies to existing theory. While Turner's work is much more formal and structural than mine in terms of theoretical associations, I appreciated the connection between my "grounded" theories of faculty ethics and related concepts already well developed in the literature. My original data collection and analysis were framed in terms of grounded theory concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), so my goal became to connect the findings of my inquiry to existing theory in adult and higher education and career development—and especially in relation to social justice issues (Charmaz, 2011). In other words, I chose to present the grounded data in dialogue with the literature (Zimmer, 2006) and professional codes. This technique encourages theorizing beyond individual studies that are not "optimally combined, compared, contrasted, and integrated with other qualitative work" (McCormick et al. 2003, p. 933).

Data across my various studies had been analyzed using constant comparative analysis, often with co-authors, and reported out across several disciplines. For the meta-synthesis, I chose to review all interviews and findings, published and unpublished, related to faculty identity and ethics; studies included a longitudinal qualitative study of faculty ethics and identity development, an unpublished case study of faculty ethics, and a published case study of faculty participation on dissertation committees. Because the findings of these studies pointed to issues related to bias and discrimination, I selected all interviews with women and/or minority faculty for this meta-synthesis, resulting in a total

of 55 participants and 116 interviews; 33 of those participants had interviewed multiple times ranging from two to five interviews. (See Table 1 for participant demographics.

Table 1. Participant Demographics by Race/Ethnicity & Sex

	Female		Male	
	Participants	Interviews	Participants	Interviews
Black/African-American	07	14	00	00
White/European-American	36	86	01	01
Latino/Hispanic-American	01	02	02	02
Other	06	08	02	03
TOTAL	**50**	**110**	**05**	**06**

Note. Black/African-American includes participants who self-identified as African and Caribbean Black. Latino/Hispanic-American includes participants who self-identified as Mexican-American and/or Chicano/a. Other includes participants who self-identified as biracial, multiracial, or non-U.S. citizens.

I chose specific techniques to conduct the meta-synthesis and to more deeply explore the original data and findings through theoretical and critical perspectives: blended elaborative coding (Saldaña, 2009) and analytic generalization (Firestone, 1993). While elaborative coding "builds on a previous study's codes, categories, and themes" (Saldaña, p. 151), analytic generalization is an "associational approach [that] helps the researcher identify broad patterns across a wide variety of cases" (Firestone, p. 20). The data had pointed me to very specific concepts in the literature; the next step in my analysis was to explore how persistent these concepts were across the data.

To be clear, my original research purpose had not focused on sex and gender, race and ethnicity, class, politics, or religion. But this is how most participants framed their experiences as faculty—a positional relationship with personal, structural, and historical roots in bias and discrimination. I could not challenge the data to account for *how many* of my participants did or did not experience isolation, hostility, abuse of time and talent, inequity, or outright discrimination. By using the elaborative coding, I could identify related participant experiences; and with the longitudinal data, I could check for patterns across their professional development.

After a decade of looking for patterns within each study phase, my work culminated in an article on faculty ethics that conceptually connected participant experiences across the studies with the literature on *chilly and alienating climates*, *cultural taxation*, and the *snares of faculty rewards* (Reybold, 2009). Thus began the formal dialogue between my grounded theory inquiry and these higher education constructs using meta-synthesis.

3. Through the Looking Glass of Faculty Ethics: The 'Other' Experience

Participant experiences of ethics in higher education are presented along three dimensions: *chilly and alienating climates*, *cultural taxation*, and the *snare of faculty rewards*. Analysis within each of these constructs resulted in a continuum of experiences, sometimes as a matter of situation, other times as a matter of professional development. Neither the general themes nor the subthemes are mutually exclusive.

3.1 Chilly and Alienating Climates

Aguirre (2000) noted the concepts of "chilly" and "alienating" climates in higher education, arguing that academia is hostile to women and minority faculty members. For example, these faculty members report being less involved in decision-making and having a higher workload; overall, they experience a lower quality of academic life in general. Participants across the studies noted two reactions to this destructive climate: 'real'izing and acting in/out. 'Real'izing is the point of consciousness when general knowledge of bias and discrimination becomes personal. For some, this realization evolves into a plan of action directed as self-discovery and/or social change.

> **'Real'izing.** *'I don't think they play at all fairly,' Alice began, in rather a complaining tone, 'and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak — and they don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them.'*
>
> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

Women and minority faculty members struggle with their research interests being conceptualized as 'alternative' to mainstream agendas (Reybold & Johri, 2011). The reality for these academics is their work may be characterized as limited and narrow in scope; this does not bode well for promotion and tenure, faculty satisfaction, or any other indices of well being in the academy. But the injustice is personal, as well. If peers reject studies of ethnic minorities, women, and gays and lesbian as 'alternative'—how will they treat the faculty members themselves who conduct these studies?

Andrew, an openly gay white male, realized during the job search that he might not be considered for tenure-track positions at certain institutions because of his sexual and intellectual identities as a researcher and community organizer:

> I do know there are a number of places where I applied (as a faculty member) where I happened to know that sexual orientation was an issue. I feel that some of the identity markers—being race and gender, sexual orientation—actually impeded my being hired. Being gay and a somewhat progressive radical in the field had something to do with my not being hired in some instances. (Unpublished)

Similarly, Basil, a white female assistant professor new to the tenure track, realized the unequal treatment of women faculty at her institution when she asked for assistance in completing tenure forms:

> Who are the major players? Who really decides what goes down? See, that's all the political crap that I don't want to get into, but I'm going to have to if I need tenure somewhere…. So you have to know who really matters in this process. It's not equal. People can pretend it is equal; but it's not. (Reybold, 2008a, p. 286)

Others, like Basil, "identified how race and power are structured as ethical issues in the academy" (Reybold, 2008a, p. 291):

> I know this sounds cold….' I asked her to explain that statement, and Basil admitted that she was surprised at her own cynicism. 'I feel like wouldn't be that calculating [referring to her own understanding of tenure].' She blamed the academic system that tolerates and rewards bias: 'There's some sadness for me that I recognize the reality of getting promoted and surviving the system. But it's a horrible, emotional process with race, class, and gender biases. The white boys get—first of all, there's a different standard; secondly, they get the help for the lower standard.'

While some stories conjured stories of explicit racism and sexism, other participants dealt with a more subtle form of narrow-mindedness that silences their lives as women and mothers in the workplace:

> While waiting to hear the outcome of her tenure and promotion decision, Lauren's child died and the memorial service was held the day before her tenure announcement. College administrators virtually ignored her loss, though she did receive a telephone call about her successful tenure bid.

> This life event, Lauren said, 'just strengthened my conviction that people shouldn't let tenure live them.' This event 'put it right in perspective.' (Reybold & Alamia, 2008, p. 117)

Carlos, a Latino associate professor and administrator, discussed his realization that promotion and tenure committees may be political and unjust, favoring faculty members from ethnic majority backgrounds:

> 'I have seen gross miscarriages of justice where undeserving people were promoted and tenured, at least in comparison to people who were judged to be insufficient.' For Carlos, 'there's no consistency in the decision making. I think part of what contributes to that is the culture of silence….

> 'If I'm a senior faculty person and I'm out to get you because of something you did to me, the fact that I can do so in secret facilitates, enables that. Those things are untenable.' (Reybold, 2008a, p. 287)

Each of these faculty members describes his or her experience as overtly political and unfair, thus "failing the litmus test of academic ethicality" (Reybold, 2008a, p. 286). For some faculty members, this realization engendered disillusionment with the academy (Reybold, 2005); while others decided to offer a measured response to this realization through teaching and research, choosing to confront bias and discrimination through their professional identities.

> **Acting out/in.** *The Queen turned crimson with fury, and, after glaring at her for a moment like a wild beast, screamed 'Off with her head! Off— 'Nonsense!' said Alice, very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent.*
>
> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

A number of faculty members, confronted by peers who devalued their scholarship personally and publically, decided to take action to change minds, beginning with their own perception of inequality. Participants knew they were

ill-treated by peers in their doctoral programs and faculty enclaves, but what to do in the face of trying to graduate, establish a faculty career, and progress through the "ranks" of academia? Eve, an African American associate professor at a predominantly White research institution in the South, says her experience as a faculty member has been a harsh reminder of racism and sexism she experienced as a student, dealing "with students who were hostile, and I thought—and still believe—tried to destroy me" (Reybold, 2008a, p. 288). As a Black woman in higher education, Eve says she is seen as deficient academically and intellectually.

> Asked what 'being a professor' means to her, Eve responded emphatically: 'Not a damned thing! I thought there would be status, but it doesn't mean that to me! I'm not treated as a professor! (Reybold, 2005, p. 10)

At one point, Eve "had decided to leave the university because of the racism and gender bias… So much pain… [her voice trails off] (p. 10). Instead, she decided to fight the system. "My maturity has let me understand the place that I'm in, the fact that it can be predatory, it can be isolating, that it is a very political place. So I understand the academy. I love it" (p. 11).

Discrimination seemed part of the everyday work experience for the majority of participants who are women and/or of color. For example, Maggie, in an interview just a "program realignment" that destroyed the master's program she had developed, said: "I got angry, and for the first time I saw how naïve I had been…. I got angry but I got smart" (unpublished). After seeking out mentors for advice, she went into "professional hiding" and reflected on being told she was "programmatically homeless." Maggie came to the conclusion that she needed to confront the person "who has the power to squash me." After telling the person to her face that she was unethical, Maggie waited for the hostility to erupt:

> I just really expected her to come across the table and slap me…. I was really physically afraid. I was shaking and I said you are unethical; I said it with a straight face and I said it calmly…. Conflict scares the hell out of me, and they have no clue how hard it is to stand up and say the things I do. [Interviewer: But your past and your history of abuse gave you the strength and the experience to do that?] It gave me the mandate. Had I not had my history, I might not understand the cost of not speaking up. (unpublished)

Maggie came to the conclusion that "not one of my friends would let me be homeless—but my body, my memories in my body—were evoked by [the phrase 'programmatically homeless]. That was a very vicious term that was meant to evoke that; the person who used that term knows my history and was trying to upend me" (unpublished).

Participants who identified themselves as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer) noted additional pressure related to the intersection of their personal identity and professional productivity; this pressure was felt both in their particular department or college, and as a general university culture where "self-disclosure is not considered viable" (Reybold, 2008b, p. 145). For example, one participant (who asked not to be identified) said his own research on the 'intersection of identity and disenfranchisement' well received in his field of study,[but] he noted his personal concern that the larger "university climate is hostile toward people like me." A friend at the same university was "'thrown out of the lab' after the lead researcher discovered she was a lesbian, [and she] "quietly swallowed the pain, ate the bitterness, and went into another lab where her identity was not known" (p. 145).

3.2 Cultural Taxation

Padilla (1994) pointed out the inordinate service responsibilities of ethnic scholars to mentor students with similar identities. This concept of "cultural taxation" (p. 26) has been extended to other minority and women faculty members (Reybold, 2009) who confront unequal response to these forms of service, especially in terms of faculty rewards (Reybold & Corda, 2011). Participants defined their experiences of cultural taxation in two distinct ways: toiling and serving. Characterizing faculty service as "toiling" erases any sense of these activities as valuable; conversely, portraying these activities as "serving" results in professional fulfillment and awareness of contribution.

> **Toiling.** *The White Queen: Can you do addition? What's one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one? Alice: I don't know. I lost count.*
>
> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

For those academics who struggled with service obligations, every point of service seemed to interfere with professional advancement. The work was described as endless, and the rewards were considered nonexistent: Service for these faculty members was non-stop and to no avail:

> Melinda's 1st year in academe was a miserable transition from her doctoral program and career as a public school teacher. She sat in her office crying, pointing to a desk full of papers:

'It can be extremely frustrating, just the amount of things that we are required to do and keep up with. The paperwork! I'm having to do the annual reports, think about the 3rd-year review, write the proposals, write the papers, put together research, handle e-mail all the time, answer questions from everyone under the sun, go out to the schools, go out to the school districts, talk to district people, set up any kind of extra work for them or whatever. It's just constant… [her voice trailing off].' (Reybold, 2005, p. 8)

In her last year before tenure, Melinda requested an extension on her 'tenure clock' and began considering alternatives to the faculty profession. Of all the participants I have interviewed, Melinda was the most frustrated in terms of faculty service. Ultimately, she chose not to submit her promotion and tenure portfolio and left higher education.

Another participant, Katie, expressed similar disappointment with her service load, especially early in her career. The only female faculty in her department, and she chaired a faculty search committee her first year as an assistant professor. She acknowledged her inability to balance service with the more obvious teaching and research roles:

> Katie accepted every service assignment given her, explaining that she was unsure how to say 'no' to these requests. One consequence was that her advising loads increased. 'I did over-extend myself with teaching in the sense that I was the only tenure track faculty in my department in my area, and so everything fell to me in that area. For a 'baby' faculty member, that's a horrible burden to put on someone.' (Reybold & Corda, 2011, p. 134)

While Melinda chose not to go up for tenure and promotion, opting instead to leave the academy, Katie moved to another institution just after receiving tenure and promotion. Once again, she faced the specter of an unbalanced service load—again on the tenure track. However, mid-way through her probationary appointment, Katie confronted her supervisor about inequitable service and teaching loads. She was promoted and tenured, she then chose to move to another college in the same institution, one that would value her research more definitely.

Other participants, Isabella and Freida, referred to a "black hole of service" that became more problematic with tenure:

> Freida viewed service as political and professionally taxing. She felt overwhelmed by the lack of collegiality and organization, and believe her professional goals (along with the quality of her work) were ignored. This increased her feelings of powerlessness to serve effectively. 'I realize that I have been kind of sucked up into… activities that I don't have a passion for…. I just want to hide.' (Reybold & Corda, 2011, p. 133)

Similarly, Isabella noted that faculty members go "on and on in hours of meetings, and it seems as if nothing was getting accomplished…. It felt like a just a suck up of my time." (Reybold & Corda, 2011, p. 135) She noticed this just after turning in her tenure portfolio; "I got swamped with service and I kept saying yes."

> **Serving.** *The King: Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop.*
>
> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

Isabella, who early in her faculty career described herself as swamped with service and unable to say no to additional duties, realized further into her career that she wanted more from academic service. She "immersed herself in mentoring future teachers, integrating her teaching and service responsibilities, while using internal service to become involved in the academic culture" (Reybold & Corda, p. 133).

Taking on a cause is sometimes seen as an investment, a form of *pointing out* or *being with* a cultural cohort. My conversations with participants in my own research supports this "double-bind situation" (Padilla, 1994, p. 26). For example, when asked about her work with doctoral student dissertations, Helen emphasized her position to her peers and students as a representative of blackness:

> 'I'm going to be very up front. As an African-American, frequently I am the first or the only [Black faculty member] who served [with a particular group of committee members]…I know I am always watched. I am an item of curiosity. I've always felt that some of the anxiety with being the only or the first….
>
> I've been asked to serve on committees with students who wanted to explore race issues. Frequently I would be the only person of color on those committees…. I was interested in having students not over-generalize, not stereotype, and really take an honest look at the design and work. I never turned down a committee of that nature because I just simply had gotten sick and tired of people who are not people of color doing bad research and imposing their will in communities of color. So, at times it has been more of an overseer role.' (Reybold et al., 2012, p. 236)

Lisa, like most women across the studies, believes that "women are more socialized towards service" (Reybold & Corda, 2011, p. 137), and she decided to 'fight fire with fire.' She decided to "play nice with the senior faculty" and compared this to "getting a date." In a later interview, after receiving tenure, she softened the rhetoric of service a bit,

but still expected "more service commitments than her male counterparts" (Reybold, unpublished). The difference was that she had decided to focus "on the most meaningful committees" (Reybold & Corda, 2011, p. 137).

3.3 The Snare of Faculty Rewards

The "snare of faculty rewards" (Reybold, 2009, p. 377) refers to the documented reports that women and minority faculty members have "fewer opportunities to be seen and characterized as leaders and experts" due to the compounding effect of "chilly climates" and "cultural taxation." The result is unequal and inequitable career trajectories. Some participants chose to align their sense of professional reality with their institution; others chose to diverge from the more traditional disciplinary path and sought an interdisciplinary identity (Reybold & Halx, 2012).

> **Aligning.** *'It was much pleasanter at home,' thought poor Alice, 'when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit-hole—and yet—and yet—it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life! I do wonder what can have happened to me! When I used to read fairy-tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one!'*

> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

Institutional fit is a well-known index of faculty success (Lindholm, 2003, 2004; Reybold & Alamia, 2008). Not fitting into an institutional culture might be the most important determinate in faculty advancement; therefore, some participants opted to align their work with their institution. For some faculty members, tenure and promotion is a standard for the value of their work. For others, it is a financial reality; tenure equals economic and professional security.

> Some faculty members, like Emily, believe academic success depends on a negotiated truce for professional survival:

> 'If you don't play along with the rules, you may be ousting yourself from the opportunity to get tenure or to become visible.' That, again, is a struggle…. It is very tricky at times not to just pimp what you're doing for a cheap article or quote the right people in your field so you get published.' (Reybold, 2008b, p. 144)

Emily was concerned that already-marginalized faculty members must acknowledge the 'acceptable research agendas and canons.' Thus she does not feel she has the academic freedom to do research that might be published in alternative or focused journals.

Likewise, Lisa said she "is generally vocal about diversity issues in both her personal and professional lives," but "admitted that she struggled with the boundaries of an ethic of diversity as a white faculty member" (Reybold, 2008a, p. 288). She told the story of a "hiring dilemma" in which she was instructed "by a person in authority to select only non-Anglos and women as candidates" (p. 288). She struggled with her belief in affirmative action being pitted against her belief in ethical practice:

> Lisa has long believed diversity hiring to be just and equitable in the long term, but she also believes the hiring process should not be managed only around race and sex. She chose not to speak up, claiming to have 'weenied on this one.' She personally supported a white male candidate as the 'strongest person' interviewing for the position, but justified her reaction to the diversity mandate on the principle of affirmative action. (p. 288)

For Kelly, the problem was that her mentors refused to write letters of recommendation for her faculty position search unless they were being sent to top-tier research institutions. Kelly said, "Peter [her mentor and chair] and other faculty in her department 'pushed me to go Research 1 because I could do it. Nobody asked me what my ideal job would be" (Reybold, 2003, p. 243). Though she wanted a position at a teaching institution, "she received messages from her dissertation members pressuring her to reconsider." After a year of trying to insist that she wanted a teaching position, "Kelly accepted her first faculty position at a research institution." She divorced soon after and moved to another research institution, and then another.

> **Diverging.** *Alice: I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think. Was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, that's the great puzzle!*

> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865

Just because a faculty member's identity does not seem to 'fit' with an institution or program, that does not signal defeat. Instead, for some participants, this conflict was the opportunity for change. The central question for participants across studies was where to draw the boundary of belonging and separating. While "grooming herself" for a faculty

position in teacher education, Olga also "was earning graduate certificates in research and gender studies to support her research agenda" (Reybold & Alamia, 2008, p. 117). Olga's "view of her professional identity shifted toward these ancillary studies as she recognized this was her core professional identity." She left teacher education and became a faculty member in women's studies. "I wanted [my passion] to be my central focus. That's where I found the most pleasure. I'm doing everything I wanted to do!"

Oddly, the snare for Olga was her disciplinary training and success in a particular field. Her mentors, her peers, and her research were a constant; but Olga was not satisfied in that role. One of the most difficult decisions she made was to "give up" the accomplishments she had already established.

Others also discussed the snare of faculty rewards, but mostly in terms of different levels of support for women and minority faculty members. For these participants, the goal was not to get bogged down in the technical aspects of promotion and tenure. For example, Basil requested assistance from her colleagues as she was preparing her tenure portfolio; she was told there were no templates or examples to follow:

> A male colleague, however, requested and received a template within a week. 'Did I not ask that question last week? I'm standing here like I am *fucking* crazy!' A fellow faculty member, an African American woman, offered Basil her own application as a template. (Reybold, 2008a, p. 286)

Basil did receive tenure but left the institution shortly thereafter. For others, though, there seemed nowhere to go—except out of the academy. Dorothy, for example, reported a faculty member's "fraudulent data analysis" and ended up leaving behind her goal to become a professor:

> I was working on that professor's project, and we were to present a paper at a conference. I ran the statistics on the data. Nothing was coming up significant. She took the data and did some things to it and had some significant results. I went back and checked and realized that she had lied. (Reybold, 2003-2004, p. 26)

Grace did not choose to leave higher education, but she had a similar unethical encounter with a faculty colleague. After working on a manuscript with established authorship boundaries, she was stunned to see the article in print… without her name listed as an author. Grace "tried to confront the offending professor, but to no avail. The professor, she says, was on the editorial board of the journal that published the article" (Reybold, 2003-2004, p. 27). The dilemma was particularly stressful because "these research collaboration must result in references for jobs or tenure applications."

3.4 The Red Queen's Race: How do Faculty Codes of Ethics Measure Up to Experience?

> *'Well, in our country,' said Alice, still panting a little, 'you'd generally get to somewhere else — if you run very fast for a long time, as we've been doing.*
>
> > *'A slow sort of country!' said the Queen. 'Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!'*

<div align="right">Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865</div>

Running and running and running… and getting nowhere all at the same time. Many of the participants across the studies shared their version of the Red Queen's race. They wondered if they mattered in the university, if their work had meaning, if they would be successful in their bid for promotion and tenure. These experiences point out the difference between ethics as codes and regulations, and ethics as lived experience. Consider, for example, a portion of the AAUP's (1967/2009) first ethical principle for faculty members:

> Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it.

Eve and other participants have met this ethical standard by developing serious scholarship and stating "the truth as they see it." Their work and value as faculty members, though, have been rejected by other faculty members—their peers—who apparently disregard that truth.

But this is not just a matter of peers disagreeing with a line of inquiry or researchers of color. Participants described their faculty life as hostile and destructive, mostly in relationship with a mostly white, mostly male university structure. Eve even reported this to her institution and program as a student; her faculty failed to support her as her peers attacked her intellectually and personally, even as they supported scholarly diversity. Turner (2002) described this as 'lived contradiction' asking: "To be a professor is be an *anglo*; to be a *latina* is not be an *anglo*. So how can I be both" (p. 75)? It is a matter of proportions, according to Kanter (1977). Being a "token" (p. 76), Turner said, requires faculty to be on

display, yet remain invisible, isolated, and stressed. For participants across my studies, representation was not just a matter of literal proportion, but of intellectual and emotional presence.

Another AAUP's ethical principle for faculty members focuses on scholars' obligations to one another, especially with regard to freedom of inquiry.

> As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others.

The principle does not define the constructs of common membership, discrimination, and harassment; and in fact the principle assumes the reader, as a general faculty member, knows and understands these concepts. But participants across this research were dismayed and angry with the level of animosity or bigotry they experienced. Again, the participants have fulfilled their duty to this ethical principle, while many of their peers have not. Some participants in these studies directly confronted the bias, and others sought assistance from others experiencing the same bias. "Being" ethical, even in terms of the AAUP standard, is a personal interpretation of the principles (Reybold, 2009), even though "knowledge is not neutral" (Holley, 2013, p. 101).

As such, standards for faculty ethicality are more allegorical than literal. This means that "being" ethical is always juxtaposed to others' sense of ethics, thus it is both subjective and social. This characterization of faculty ethics leads to questions about *how and why* individuals define something as ethical, not just *what* they consider to be ethical, connecting ultimately to professional identity and epistemology.

4. Conclusion

The notion of faculty ethics is portrayed in scholarship as a matter of individual failure to follow codes of conduct. Thus the term takes on a negative connotation and refocuses attention on misconduct. But the experience of ethicality in the academy, and especially for women and minority faculty members, is an intersection of personal identity and the longstanding bias they have encountered in higher education. Being an ethical faculty member is not an objective endeavor; it is a choice to critically engage the context of ethicality.

According to Bray et al. (2012), "any set of standards must pass through the filter of individual constituents before it is accepted, carried out, or enforced" (p. 77). But the filter is not just one of interpretation, but of experience. The most egregious violations of academic ethics reported in this analysis cannot be explained away by any individual lack of knowledge—these experiences are common for women and minority faculty members. Hirshfield and Joseph (2012) used the term 'identity taxation' to describe the "emotional and psychological distress" (p. 213) that results from "the extra burden" of disproportional assignments and expectations.

Faculty codes of ethics certainly are useful, but only to the degree that they inform practice. Cole (2007), for example, reviewed the benefits of campus diversity to students, noting a positive impact on student learning and development, critical thinking, and openness to others' diversity. Likewise, a report published by AAUP (2006) stated specifically that a diverse faculty and student body positively affects the education of all students, but reminded us that "higher education faculty remain one of the least integrated professions; only about 5% of faculty are African American, and many of those are at HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities]" (Section 1a).

The reality of bias and discrimination is low morale, disillusionment, and turnover; it is unethical. I agree with Alice; the world is topsy-turvy and not at all right:

> *'It would be so nice if something made sense for a change.'*

<div align="right">Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll, 1865</div>

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