Shedding Light on the Phenomenon of Supervision Traveling Incognito: A Field's Struggles for Visibility

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Abstract

As a field of study, supervision has gone through a tumultuous history and continues to struggle for visibility. Its principles related to teaching and learning are often discussed, yet the term supervision has been controversial more than once. For a variety of reasons, historically and conceptually, supervision has traveled incognito under several guises. In this article, the history of supervision is explored as it relates to its ties with educational administration, curriculum, and more recently instructional leadership to explain its absence from the research literature, and to present implications for supervision as a field of study. An understanding of this incognito phenomenon and its struggles for visibility will help current and future scholars and practitioners to maintain the use of the term supervision, and to clarify the definition of supervision.

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Dedication

Following in the tradition of Robert Anderson (1987), we dedicate this article to those entering the field so that they might know our understanding of history, as they continue to make their way, and in their own way make history.

Introduction

Supervision, as an important school responsibility (Spears, 1953), has been characterized as an educational concept by Glickman (1992), a field of study by Smyth (1987), a specialty and a practice by Garman and Haggerson (1993), and a community of scholars by Bolin (1988). It began as a responsibility of citizens in colonial America, then as a role within the schools. It soon became associated with teacher rating as its main (but not exclusive) activity. When teacher rating became associated with fault-finding and fell into disfavor among teachers at the height of scientific management in the 1920s, the role of the supervisor was dismantled, disembodied, and "traveled incognito" (Spears, 1953):

> Thirty or forty years ago, when supervision was first settling down in the organizational scheme of things as a service to the classroom teacher, a supervisor was a supervisor. Today, when supervision is attaching itself to almost anything that has to do with furthering learning, a supervisor masquerades under a miscellaneous array of titles. Supervision today often travels incognito. (p. 84)

Supervision continues to travel incognito, sometimes invisible in practice. No single job title identifies those who practice supervision and the work they do. Supervision is also in disguise in some of its writings. According to Mosher and Purpel's (1972) popular book, *Supervision: The Reluctant Profession*, supervision is a subfield or adjunct of administration. Others argue that supervision is a specialty of teacher education (e.g., Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1992). Its territory is claimed by many, but often for different purposes.

Supervision is defined by the authors of this article as a unique field of study in its own right, that is concerned with concepts and techniques that help teachers examine their teaching and student learning. Supervision primarily focuses on the interrelationships of curriculum, professional development, and classroom observation, according to the authors of three dozen popular and representative supervision textbooks published in the past 60 years (Holland, 1994). Consequently, supervision frequently draws on writings in other fields of study such as curriculum, educational administration, cognitive psychology, and teacher education to provide insights into those matters that concern teaching and learning. We take a mid-range view of the field. Supervision neither narrowly and exclusively focuses on teacher evaluation, nor over broadly includes such administrative tasks as budgeting, scheduling, and public relations.

It is important to note that there have been calls from the field to abolish supervision (Starratt, 1992), to find substitutes for it (Sergiovanni, 1992a), to imagine schools where supervision will no longer be needed (Sergiovanni, 1992b), and to move into a new paradigm (Gordon, 1992). Moreover, supervision is nearly absent in the educational administration literature, and has been supplanted by the instructional leadership literature (Glanz, 2018). The purposes of this article

are to examine the historical development of supervision as it relates to its ties with educational administration, curriculum, and more recently instructional leadership, to explain its absence from the research literature, and to present implications for supervision as a field of study.

A Historical Overview of the Field of Supervision

Earliest recorded instances of the word supervision in colonial America, in the mid-1600s, established the process as "general management, direction, control, and oversight" (Grumet, 1979, p. 193). Methods of supervision stressed strict control and close inspection of school facilities. As Spears (1953) explained:

> The early period of school supervision, from the colonization of America on down through at least the first half of the nineteenth century, was based on the idea of maintaining the existing standards of instruction, rather than on the idea of improving them. (p. 41)

Schooling during the better part of the nineteenth century was rural and in the hands of local authorities. The prototypical school was a small one-room school house. According to Tyack and Hansot (1982), teachers were "young, poorly paid, and rarely educated beyond the elementary subjects" (p. 17). Teachers, who were mostly female, were "hired and supervised largely by local lay trustees, they were not members of a self-regulating profession..." (p. 17). These lay trustees were not professionally trained. They were interested in maintaining the status quo (Button, 1961). Yet, dramatic changes were in the offing.

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by unprecedented growth precipitated by the industrial revolution. The struggle for the growth of American education continued and assumed a new dimension in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The schoolmen, specifically superintendents, began shaping schools in large cities into networks. Organization was the rallying cry nationally and locally. There was a firm belief that highly organized and efficient schools would meet the demands of a newly developed industrialized age.

The reform movement in education was reflective of the larger, more encompassing changes that were occurring societally. Although this century was characterized by rapid economic growth, reformers realized that there were serious problems in the schools. In the battle to reorganize the nation's schools, sources of authority and responsibility in education were permanently transformed (Tyack, 1974). Reformers, concerned with undermining inefficiency and corruption, transformed schools into streamlined, central administrative bureaucracies with superintendents as supervisors in charge (Reller, 1935). During this struggle, the superintendent used supervision as an important tool to legitimize his existence in the school system (Glanz, 1991). Supervision, therefore, was a tool of efficiency for superintendents.

Supervision as inspection became the dominant method for administering schools. William H. Payne (1875), author of the first published textbook on supervision, stated that teachers must be held responsible for work performed in the classroom and that supervisors, as expert inspectors, would oversee and ensure harmony and efficiency. A prominent superintendent from Kansas

City, Kansas, James M. Greenwood (1888) said that "very much of my time is devoted to visiting schools and inspecting the work" (p. 521). The skilled superintendent, said Greenwood (1891) emphatically, should simply walk into the classroom and "judge from a compound sensation of the disease at work among the inmates" (p. 227).

A review of the literature of the period indicates that Greenwood's supervisory methods, which relied on inspection based on intuition, rather than technical or scientific knowledge, was widely practiced. The practice of supervision by inspection was very compatible with the emerging bureaucratic school system. Supervision was perceived by many teachers as inspectional, rather than as helping.

This brief examination of early methods of supervision indicates that: 1) amidst the upheavals of late nineteenth century, American supervision emerged as an important function performed by superintendents; 2) autocratic methods dominated its practice; and 3) supervision was a function subsumed under the broader category of school administration. During this period, then, proponents of administrative theory and practice advocated supervision as an important function. For all intents and purposes, supervision was the arm of administration (Lucio & McNeil, 1969).

Scientific Management Influences Administration and Supervision (the 1900s)

We have seen that bureaucracy in education influenced administrative and supervisory practices before 1900. A second influence, after 1900, was the emergence of the principles of scientific management. The efficiency movement, as it is commonly referred to, greatly influenced school administration (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987), which in turn affected supervisory practices in schools. Because of the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911) who published *The Principles of Scientific Management*, efficiency became the watchword of the day. Taylor's book stressed scientific management and efficiency in the workplace. The worker, according to Taylor, was merely a cog in the business machinery, and the main purpose of management was to promote efficiency of the worker, and thus, improvement. Taylor maintained that supervision was an essential function "to coordinate school affairs. . . . Supervisory members must co-ordinate the labors of all…find the best methods of work and enforce the use of these methods on the part of the workers" (p. 7). Within a short time, Taylorism and efficiency became household words and ultimately had a profound impact on administrative and supervisory practices in schools.

Franklin Bobbitt (1913) tried to apply the ideas espoused by Taylor to the problems of educational management and supervision. Bobbitt's work, particularly his discussion of supervision, is significant because his ideas shaped the character and nature of supervision for many years. On the surface these ideas appeared to advance professional supervision but, in reality, they were the antithesis of professionalism. What he called scientific and professional supervisory methods were, in fact, bureaucratic methods aimed not at professionalizing but at finding a legitimate and secure niche for control-oriented supervision within the school organization, in the name of school administration.

Many supervisors were eager to adopt Bobbitt's ideas, but a few were not (Barr & Burton, 1926). One of his more vociferous opponents was James Hosic (1924), a professor of education at

Teachers College, Columbia. Hosic contended that Bobbitt's "analogy is largely false" (p. 283). Hosic continued:

> Teaching cannot be 'directed' in the same way as bricklaying…. In education, the supervisor's function is not to devise all plans and work out all standards and merely inform his co-workers as to what they are… The supervisor should not so much give orders as hold conferences…. His prototype is not a captain, lieutenant, or officer of the guard in industry, but chairman of committee or consulting expert. (p. 283)

Bobbitt's methods stressed disturbing ideas. First and foremost was the ill-conceived notion that education in a school was analogous to production in a factory. Bobbitt (1913) claimed that "education is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails" (p. 12). Supervisors in the early twentieth century were becoming aware of the fallacy of this logic as well as realizing the negative effects of bureaucracy in education. Bobbitt's scientific management and supervision found justification within a school organization that was bureaucratically organized.

Supervision was influenced by developments in educational administration. Just as supervision as inspection reflected the emergence of bureaucracy in administration, so too supervision as social efficiency was largely influenced by scientific management in school administration. In this sense, then, supervision operated as an arm of administration.

The Emergence of Democratic Methods in Supervision (the 1920s)

The movement to alter supervisory theory and practice to a more democratic approach, while at the same time minimizing the evaluative function, occurred in the 1920s as a direct result of growing opposition to autocratic methods. Consequently, supervisors tried to change their image as *snoopervisors* by adopting alternate methods. For instance, supervisors began working with teachers on curriculum development. In this way, they were seen as supportive of instruction.

Many teachers were troubled about the increasing antidemocratic practices in schools associated with supervisors' use of rating scales to measure teacher efficiency. Ava L. Parrott (1915), a teacher in River Falls, Wisconsin speaking before the Department of Classroom Teachers charged that these rating devices were "fundamentally wrong . . . entirely unnecessary, a detriment to good pedagogy" (p. 16). Supervisors during the early decades of the twentieth century found themselves vulnerable in the school hierarchy. On the one hand, they were considered an arm of administration with no positive identity of their own, and on the other hand, they were criticized quite vociferously by teachers. As a result, supervisors in the 1920s began to search for new methods for their work.

As a result of growing teacher opposition to traditional supervisory practices, supervisors realized their vulnerable status within schools. It is understandable that historians and commentators (e.g., Hosic, 1920; Spears, 1953) indicated that supervision, during this time, desperately sought to find legitimacy for its work in schools and. at the same time, secure independence from school administration in order to gain professional acceptance among teachers. Supervisors, as middle managers, began, for the first time, to eschew its historic bureaucratic legacy with an advocacy for enhanced democratic practices.

Influenced in large measure by John Dewey's (1929) theories as well as by James Hosic's (1920) ideas of democratic supervision, supervisors attempted to apply scientific methods and cooperative problem-solving approaches to educational problems outside of the classroom (Pajak, 1993). Supervision during this period reflected efforts to employ both democratic and scientific principles. Democratic supervision implied that educators (including teachers, curriculum specialists, and supervisors) would cooperate in order to improve instruction.

Efforts of prominent superintendent from Denver, Colorado, Jesse Newlon (1923), reinforced democracy in supervision. He maintained that the school organization must be set up to "invite the participation of the teacher in the development of courses...." (p. 406). The ends of supervision can be realized when teacher and supervisor work in a coordinated fashion. Newlon developed the idea of setting up "supervisory councils" to offer "genuine assistance" to teachers. In this way, he continued, "the teacher will be regarded as a fellow-worker rather than a mere cog in a big machine" (pp. 406, 410-411).

Democratic supervision focused on making supervision more palatable and acceptable to teachers. Despite the advancement of a democratic theory and efforts by supervisors to distinguish themselves from administrators, the stigma of supervision as an autocratic and inspectional function was not easily lifted. Nor was the idea that supervision and administration were different entities easily dispelled. Still, attempts by supervisors to disassociate themselves from administrators by advocating democratic supervision can be viewed as the first efforts at mitigating the stigma of traveling incognito.

Supervisors Strive for Professional Autonomy (the 1920s)

In conjunction with the efforts to democratize supervision, supervisors tried to attain professional recognition in their own right through the formation of a new organization and journal, the first of their kind devoted exclusively to supervision. James Hosic (1924) lamented that there was a dearth of literature in the field of supervision, while there was much written about administration. Hosic also charged that there was a growing need for an organization dealing with the concerns of supervisors, especially when teachers had their own. Hence, the National Conference on Educational Method and the *Journal of Educational Method* were born. Its editor proclaimed, "Meanwhile, through every possible agency we shall do well to publish the fact that supervision is a distinct occupation in itself, worthy of life-long devotion and demanding peculiar training and fitness" (Editorial, 1922, p. xx).

A few years later in their desire to become part of the National Educational Association, the supervisory organization changed its name to the Department of Supervisors and the Directors of Instruction (DSDI). An examination of the publications, statements, and activities of this new supervisory organization, consisting primarily of supervisors in local schools and in state departments of education, along with professors of education, indicates a desire to redefine and reconceptualize supervision as a distinct professional enterprise, incorporating democratic methods to improve instruction. Indicative of this shift to recast supervision is the proliferation of articles, either in title or content, mentioning and emphasizing "democracy" in supervision.

One of the major themes of the DSDI was to make a clear distinction between supervision and administration. Administrators were more concerned with administering and attending to the exigencies of the school organization, rather than instructional matters. Perusal of publications throughout the period illustrates the dearth of attention to instruction. Supervisors wanted to isolate themselves from practices that might be perceived by teachers as bureaucratic and fault-finding.

Emphasizing instruction and educational methods, supervisors thought, would provide acceptance and legitimacy in the eyes of teachers and strengthen their professional status. A new emphasis of supervision was aimed at accentuating democratic relationships between teachers and supervisors. Supervisors realized that if they were to become professionals then they needed their own identity. They thought an identity would emerge by establishing unique standards and specialized knowledge distinct from school administration. In short, they argued that supervision was primarily concerned with instruction, not administration.

Curriculum as the New Supervision (1920s-1960s)

Unable to eschew their legacy as an arm of administration, supervisors encountered an unintended obstacle. Forming an alliance with curriculum workers, they thought, would bolster their status in the eyes of teachers. Yet, this alliance provoked intractable problems that, in effect, solidified their status as a field traveling incognito.

Curriculum development in the nineteenth century was minimal, episodic, and controlled by superintendents. Schoolmen were chiefly interested more in structural, administrative reform to achieve their goals of standardization and uniformity of education. However, by the 1920s and the 1930s curriculum became an important focus as evidenced by 1) the widely disseminated work of Thorndike, Strayer, and Terman (Seguel, 1966) in scientific methods of education, 2) Bobbitt's (1924) important book, *How to Make a Curriculum*, 3) curriculum revisions in city systems, such as Denver and Detroit, 4) the formation of curriculum bureaus, and 5) the important role played by national committees and commissions, as well as the growing state curriculum projects (Seguel, 1966). Men such as Kilpatrick (1926), Charters (1923), Harap (1928), and Caswell (1935) were prominent writers concerned with curriculum development. With the administrative structure of schooling now secure, emphasis was placed on more instructional and curricular issues.

In 1929 a group of college professors, under the leadership of Henry Harap, formed the National Society of Curriculum Workers. After a merger with a school curriculum group a few years later, a new association was called the Society for Curriculum Study (SCS). Supervisors tried to gain legitimacy for their work by aligning themselves with this association. Soon, many educators maintained that supervision and curriculum were inextricably interwoven. In fact, many argued that supervision was synonymous with curriculum (Kyte, 1930).

Two prominent educators of the time supported the view that supervision and curriculum were connected. Helen Heffernan of the California State Department of Education, and William H. Burton of the University of Southern California, who were both active in the DSDI, stated that "the supervisor is increasingly the person responsible for the development of curriculum

materials and experience. In fact, the heart of modern supervision is in the curriculum program" (Heffernan & Burton, 1939, p. 325).

Supervisors, represented by the DSDI, and curriculum specialists, represented by the SCS, found it advantageous to merge into one organization. Although opposition to the merger was minimal, those who opposed the merger were very vocal (e.g., Davis, 1978; Saylor, 1976). One opponent Helen Heffernan stated that the supervisory organization was the stronger of the two, due to a more substantial membership, and merger would not aid their efforts toward professionalism.

Most supervisors and curriculum workers welcomed the merger. Many realized that the goal of professionalism could be attained. Thus, the merger took place. The new organization was called the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development. Three years later, the name was changed to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

After the merger, the focus of the field shifted to those functions considered essential in the performance of supervision, rather than on the position known as 'supervisor.' The field focused on function, without regard to the person. The rationale behind this shift was to minimize any negative reactions from teachers. As a result, much confusion occurred in the notion that 'anyone' could perform supervision. Supervision suffered, so to speak, from an identity crisis. Under the circumstances, it was highly unlikely that supervisors would ever achieve the recognition they sorely craved. J. Harlan Shores (1967) president of ASCD at the time explained the problem, "everybody knows what a teacher's and superintendent's roles and duties are -- not so with supervision and curriculum work" (p. v). Indicative of the confusion is that there was no agreement among writers of supervision on who supervisors were and what they did. Supervision lacked a consensus in definition.

A second change concerned the function of supervision itself. Supervision did find a focus largely through its involvement in curriculum revision which was prevalent during the 1950s. Supervisors joined with curriculum workers in a cooperative venture to make and revise curriculum. Supervisors, more so than any time in the past, advocated democratic supervision in definite ways. Glenys G. Unruh (1975) president of ASCD stated that "supervision at its best is an art that can release teachers' initiative, responsibility, creativity, internal commitment and motivation" (p. vii).

Supervision, as a field and practice, was searching to find legitimacy for its work. Alliance with curriculum while eschewing association with administration was the next attempt to attain professional standing within the educational milieu. Vestiges of autocratic supervisory practices continued, coupled with additional pressing questions such as: Is supervision synonymous with curriculum? and What do supervisors do to make them distinct?

Supervision Becomes a Community of Scholars (1970s-1990s)

During the period between 1970 through 1990, scholars continued to assert that supervision was a field of study, independent of administration. Garman (2010) refers to these days as "a golden age of supervision" (p.1). Notable events included the establishment of: a community of professors, a task force, a research community, a journal, a handbook, and standards for

supervisors. This can be considered another turning point for the field whereby a critical mass of supervision scholars took actions which established its identity as a discourse community.

First, in 1975 the Council of Instructional Supervision (COPIS) was formed to provide a professional forum and to promote communications regarding the field. Through the initiative of Robert J. Alfonso, Gerald R. Firth, and Ben M. Harris, its first meeting was convened at the Monteleone Hotel in New Orleans in conjunction with the annual meeting of ASCD. COPIS was limited to professors who taught and wrote about supervision. Charter members include notables such as Robert H. Anderson (non-gradedness), Morris L. Cogan and Noreen B. Garman (clinical supervision), and Thomas J. Sergiovanni (moral leadership). With the founding of COPIS, a critical mass of prominent scholars became visible, began to gather in universities and associations, and produced supervisory practitioners and new scholars who themselves would, in turn, produce the next generation of practitioners and scholars.

Since during this time, COPIS has held an annual fall meeting hosted by one of its members, largely drawing from the eastern part of the U.S. It also advocated for more supervision sessions in the ASCD annual program and in fact, continued to meet in the spring in conjunction with its annual conference. Reoccurring themes of discussion included the definition of supervision, the establishment of a journal, the exclusion of those concerned with preservice supervision, and whether COPIS should engage in advocacy for standards and offer critique of the unintended consequence of school reform (Anderson, 1987). Its connection to ASCD, considered to be the practitioner world and audience for some scholars, would remain into the 1990s, until ASCD shunned the field (more on this development shortly).

In 1978, an ASCD task force was formed to examine the roles and responsibilities of instructional supervisors. This task force was important because of its advocacy for supervisory roles and practice. It reviewed existing certification and preparation programs, conducted phone interviews with heads of the major professional organizations, and reviewed the literature of supervision, which by that time had become substantial with scholars such as Alfonso, Firth, and Neville (1975), Blumberg (1974), Harris (1975), Eye, Netzer, and Krey (1971), Lucio and McNeil (1969), Oliva (1976), Sergiovanni and Starratt (1971), and Wiles and Lovell (1975). An important conclusion of the task force was:

> There is confusion, disagreement, dysfunction, and problems associated with role definitions for supervisors: (a) the title may not reflect the role; (b) the authority structure may not be appropriate for the responsibilities; and (c) there is often conflicting expectations for the supervisor between administration and teachers. (ASCD Working Group on the Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors, 1978, p. ii)

The task force identified the dire state of practice that harkened back to the 1920s when Hosic (1924) recommended a differentiation of supervision from administration. One result of this effort was to develop standards for preparing supervisors (ASCD, 1982-1983; Hazi, 1997).

In 1981, a special interest group (SIG) was established within the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the premier international, educational research association and convened its first meeting in Montreal in 1983. The SIG: Instructional Supervision was founded

by Noreen B. Garman and Helen M. Hazi and financially sponsored in its first year by COPIS. Its purpose was to provide a professional forum for those involved in current research, theory, and practice in supervision. It also included those supervision scholars from teacher education who had been excluded from COPIS. The epicenters of supervision research during these decades were the University of Georgia, the University of Pittsburgh, and The Pennsylvania State University—all institutions that prepared scholars and practitioners and that had more than one scholar on their faculty.

This group continues to be open to all practitioners and researchers. The SIG draws its more than 100 international members from both preservice and in-service supervision communities. The SIG gave visibility to supervision discourse in the larger educational research community and attracted international scholars such as John Smyth (1987) and Peter Grimmett (1987). To the time of this writing, the SIG remains a vibrant forum for research in supervision as an exclusive domain.

Since then, sessions of supervision have regularly appeared on the annual AERA program. In an analysis of papers presented for approximately two decades, Hazi (2001) found the term supervision was included in most titles, but its use began to wane in 1994 to 50 percent. Papers addressed topics such as the pre- and post-observation conferences, diversity, mentoring, reflection, supervision practice, teacher evaluation, cooperating and student teachers, and teacher development. Of the authors, most were one-time-only authors who were students and/or colleagues of supervision scholars. This indicated that transients began to represent the field and that supervision became less visible in titles of scholarly work (Hazi, 2001).

In 1985, a scholarly journal was established by ASCD by O. L. Davis called the *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* (*JCS*) with both curriculum and supervision scholars serving on its editorial board. In a decade, it provided a vehicle for 300 articles published in its 40 issues. Approximately 40% of the research articles focused on supervision. Included were topics such as: conceptions of supervision, theory, legal issues, the work of supervisors, evaluation of practice, the supervisory conference, history, and reflective practice. *JCS* became the primary journal for scholarly work on supervision in North America (Short, 1995) that also gave the field and its scholars a visibility, until ASCD decided it was too costly to maintain and its last issue was published in Winter 2005. Since then, supervision scholars have attempted to establish a journal of their own.

Two books contributed to the continued visibility of the field in these decades. Gerald R. Firth and Edward F. Pajak (1998) published the *Handbook of Research on School Supervision*. Its 48 chapters represented a defining event for the field in its gathering of scholars. Chapters included summaries of research on a wide range of topics related to supervision in schools, educational agencies, and in higher education. Jeffrey Glanz and Richard F. Neville (1997) published their *Educational Supervision: Perspectives, Issues, and Controversies* which also gave visibility to scholars in the field. The book highlighted several issues such as "Can a supervisor serve as a coach?" and "Is clinical supervision a viable model for use in the public schools?" in a debate format.

During this time, supervision scholars found a niche and audiences for their concepts and research to influence educator thinking. However, school reform came onto the scene in the states with competency testing for students and teachers that began to alter educational thinking and practice. The influential federal whitepaper, *A Nation at Risk,* ushered in the accountability movement with initiatives that demanded increased student achievement. Some supervision scholars emerged as critics of reform (Gordon, 1992), while others felt disenfranchised by how promising practices were co-opted into mandates and thus, instruments of the state (Sullivan, 2016). Still others felt they and their ideas were ignored (Glanz, Shulman, & Sullivan, 2005).

The Shunning of Supervision (1990s – present)

Starting in the 1990s, the word supervision was shunned, not only by educators, but also by several prominent supervision scholars, thus, plunging the field back into a state of incognito. Scholars in supervision began to write disparagingly about how supervision had become associated with teacher evaluation. Supervision had become known as and experienced by practitioners as the fault-finding of teacher evaluation. Scholars came to view teacher evaluation as a contaminant of the field (Garman, 2010). A few followed the influence of instruments (e.g., Hazi, 1989, 1994) and entrepreneurs (e.g., Hazi, 2014a). Some called for substitutes for leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992a), or to abolish supervision (Starratt, 1997). Other supervision scholars echoed these sentiments not only in their writings but also in their actions. For example, Carl D. Glickman (1992) in his aptly titled *Supervision in Transition*, describes the field and its various pseudonyms:

> Most activities or programs that I, and others, have clearly articulated in the past as 'supervisory' or 'super vision' are not called by that name by today's risk-taking practitioners. Instead they use terms such as coaching, collegiality, reflective practitioners, professional development, critical inquiry, and study or research groups. Practitioners shun the word "supervision" to describe the what and why of their actions. (p. 2)

Others moved on to more palatable topics such as staff development, teacher leadership, and collaborative teaming, rather than to embrace teacher evaluation (Holland & Garman, 2001). Action research too became a more preferred approach to teacher development (Glanz, 2005).

Another example of shunning was when ASCD explored a name change between 1988 and 2009, when it did change its name (ASCD, 2004), as the number of employed supervisors continued to decline. The name change was initiated by its then new Executive Director, Gene Carter (1997) "to better reflect our Association's identity and values" (n.p.) with the help of one of the leading naming service consulting firms in the U.S. While Carter's letter to members of COPIS enumerated the advantages of keeping the name (i.e., credibility, history since 1945, name recognition over time), he began with a focus on its negative connotation with teachers:

> The 'Supervision' component, for example, causes some teachers to feel excluded. The 'Curriculum Development' component often leads people to believe that ASCD writes curriculums, which we seldom do. The name, as a whole, is cumbersome and difficult to remember—a handicap to ASCD's efforts to become more influential with policymakers

and the public. A new name could more quickly communicate the broad scope of
ASCD's work, which encompass all aspects of K-12 education, as well as better reflect
our long-held values of inclusivity and concern for the success of all learners. (n.p.)

Carter and the ASCD Executive Council wanted a new name that suggested "teaching, learning,
excellence, achievement, information, ideas, and an organization that is visionary, forward-
looking, and progressive" to take advantage of the burgeoning number of teachers who were out-
shadowing principals (30%), supervisors and other central office administrators (12%),
superintendents (9%) and professors (6%) (Carter, 1997, n.p.).

They solicited input and surveyed its membership to learn that 27% recommended that the term
supervision be avoided (Carter, 1998). By 1998, the majority of ASCD's Board was in favor of
exploring a name change. However, in 1999 the Board "decided to have no further discussion of
a name change" (Carter, 1998, n.p.). For the next ten years, the issue of a name change was
dormant.

Then again in 2009, ASCD's leadership revisited the idea because "the full name often led to
misunderstandings of our mission and purpose among educators, policymakers, the media, and
others who were less aware of ASCD's history in the field of education" (Test, 2013, para 4).
Katie Test (2013) of ASCD Communications explained that the focus of ASCD was on advocacy
and "professional development through conferences, books, webinars, courses and more" (para
4.). ASCD rebranded itself simply as ASCD, the acronym. Thus, the word *supervision* had
become so toxic to practitioners, that ASCD dropped it from its title.

Another event, occurring around this same period, concerned the name change of the AERA
Special Interest Group (SIG): Instructional Supervision. In 1995, the SIG used its newsletter to
discuss a name change for the field. In a special issue, nine scholars weighed in on the question:
"Has the field traditionally known as instructional supervision evolved to a point where it should
be called something else?" There was no simple answer to the question. Responses ranged
from: "it is alive and well in pre-service education," "has increasingly split between teacher
evaluation and… teacher professional development," and "it's in an identity crisis;" to: "far too
limiting . . . and misleads," and "carries such negative connotations" ("Time for a Name
Change?" 1995, n.p.).

In a 2000 SIG Session at AERA entitled "Whither Goest Supervision?" Carl Glickman remarked
that the term supervision was outdated and obsolete and advised the term *instructional
leadership* better captured the nature of theory and practice in the field (Waite, 2001). In
opposition, others felt that by losing its name, it would also lose its history (Glanz, 2007). Then
in 2001, the SIG created a task force to study supervision and "its unfortunate connotations"
(n.p.). At the Spring 2002 Business Meeting, its leadership proposed a name change to more
accurately reflect the changes in the field (Waite, 2002) in the hope of being "more inclusive"
and "to attract more members to our group" (Waite, 2003, n.p.). After that meeting, a ballot was
sent by mail to the SIG membership including writings by Gordon (1997) and Glanz (1997)
which captured some of the discourse of the day. In 2003, a name change was announced as
"SIG: Supervision and Instructional Leadership" reported by majority vote.

Garman (1995) reminded us that *instructional leadership* came from the school effectiveness movement of the early 1980s and was associated with the role of principal who was "the critical actor on the school scene, and the effectiveness of instruction and achievement of children can be tied directly to efforts by a strong school principal to lead, manage, and supervise teachers and school programs" (p. 9). However, Garman further analyzed articles in the administration literature in an ERIC search between 1982-1987 only to reveal that such leadership means "improving teachers through more in-class supervision and teacher evaluation" (p. 9) with the message that "principals should exercise strong authority and control to make their schools effective" (p. 11). Ironically, then, instructional leadership had come to have the same connotation that the field of supervision was trying to avoid.

Consequently, around the same time in 1996, leadership standards were developed to guide the design of administrator preparation programs. The criticism about administrator preparation at the time was that teaching, learning, and curriculum were largely absent. The term instructional leadership was (and is still) used to capture these topics in the administration literature. Then in 2014, there appeared revised Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) standards that promised even more of an emphasis on instructional leadership (Superville, 2014). Instructional leadership was defined herein as "leadership for learning" that drives student achievement. Ironically, the developers believed that the standards are "what leaders need to know and be able to do to improve instruction and student learning" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014, n.p.); yet, they did not include much information about students, teachers, teaching, learning, or curriculum.

Discussion and Implications for Supervision's Struggle for Visibility

Our historical review has indicated that supervision, from almost the beginning, has travelled incognito. Supervision has been overshadowed by educational administration. We have documented attempts for supervision to stand apart from educational administration, but to no avail. Later, supervision continued its struggle for identity within ASCD, but supervision became inconsequential when supervision was removed from its title. Still later, supervision remained invisible when the term *instructional leadership* became popular. Despite attempts to seek its own footing, educational administration has ignored supervision scholarship.

Compounding the inattention to supervision as a field of study in its own right were developments in the field among practitioners in the 1990s, that had its antecedents in history (Glanz, 1991). As middle management personnel, supervisors have had to represent school administration, whose duty is to ensure compliance with bureaucratic mandates, yet protect and forge relationships with teachers to work effectively with them. On another front, many numbers of practitioners in supervisory roles dwindled in the midst of competing reform initiatives and tightening budgets. This decline and invisibility seemed to be unsurmountable at the time. Today we realize, however, that the search for professional status was a quest with limited value in a post-modern world (Hazi, 2012). Nevertheless, problems for supervisors and supervision persisted.

The fact that practitioners viewed supervision as teacher evaluation only served to increase its stigma as a concept. Supervision, we maintain, currently travels incognito because, as a term, it

is still disparaged and misunderstood. Moreover, instructional leadership has similarly ignored the fundamentals of supervision by calling supervision anything but what it essentially really is, and that is about working with teachers to improve teaching.

The struggle for visibility is exacerbated because even scholars disagree about some of the aspects under its purview. For instance, some in the field believe that teacher evaluation should be part of the discourse because of its entanglements with supervision (Hazi, 1994; 2014b). Others believe that although evaluation ensures minimal teacher competence, it should have no role in improving teaching because there is no evidence to indicate that evaluation systems improve teaching (Garman, 2010). Opponents maintain that evaluative systems have one purpose, and that is accountability. But this must be a debate left for another time.

Why does supervision continue to be invisible? Sally J. Zepeda (personal communication, 2017) believes that we are to blame because scholars have not devoted sufficient time for more empirical studies in supervision, nor have we encouraged others to do so.   Perhaps had we had a journal singly devoted to supervision, the situation might have been different. With the establishment of the *Journal of Educational Supervision* (JES), founded by Ian M. Mette at the University of Maine in 2018, perhaps there will be increased attention to the importance of supervision, as a distinct field. In sum, we are cautiously optimistic.

Cause for optimism also exists in the discourse communities of COPIS and the SIG, where the term supervision remains, and where ideas are lively and enlivened by others. Although many of the first generation of supervision scholars have retired or passed, supervision remains visible, when scholars use the term supervision (instead of instructional leadership) in their writings and when new scholars enter the field. A field is built one scholar at a time (Hazi, 2014b). The Pennsylvania State University remains the institution that prepares many of them. Each year at COPIS, Bernard J. Badiali and his students present research topics and the second and third generation of scholars comment and challenge their thinking. Its progeny has established footholds in Florida (Diane Yendol-Hoppey, Jennifer Jacobs and Rebecca West Burns) and in Texas (Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz).

In 2016, Jeffrey Glanz and Sally J. Zepeda (2016) published an edited volume that brought fresh perspectives to the field of supervision. The 2018 AERA SIG: Supervision and Instructional Leadership continues to host scholars from Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, and the U.S. on topics in preservice and inservice supervision (including teacher evaluation). Sally J. Zepeda and Judith A. Ponticell (2019) released the *Handbook of Educational Supervision,* and Mary Lynne Derrington and Jim Brandon (forthcoming) will release their *Differentiated Teacher Evaluation and Professional Learning* book. And yes, now supervision scholars are writing about teacher evaluation, understanding the concepts they can contribute to both thought and practice. All of these kinds of activities keep supervision alive.

Supervision has been a field of study since the early 19th century. A *field of study*, according to Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (1995) is "a tradition of language or discourse" (p. 7) that develops over time. All fields of study "have histories, all evolve, all suffer 'paradigm' breaks, and all proceed in directions they might not have, had those who devoted their careers to

these fields not existed" (p. 849). Supervision's history is important and knowing it makes the field stronger.

Writings, like this history, are needed to help scholars and practitioners to understand the field: its scope and its breadth that includes both pre-service and in-service supervision. It helps map discourse communities, that are "grouping[s] of people who share common language norms, characteristics, patterns, or practices as a consequence of their ongoing communications and identification with each other" (Palmquist, 2009, n.p.). According to Elliot Eisner (1991), "there are few terms that do not have *conceptual liabilities* with respect to the ways in which they would be interpreted" (p. 7, emphasis added). Supervision in its past and recent history has had its share of liabilities (e.g., Gordon, 2012). But supervision through its professional associations such as COPIS and the SIG, and now this journal, have an academic home. Writing about supervision keeps the field aliv*e.*

Conclusion

Undertaking this historical journey has helped us contextualize supervision work from its origins as it developed and was influenced by a confluence of factors. Its attempt to find legitimacy in schools was fraught with setbacks; yet, its alliances helped the field shape its destiny as a unique field in its own right. Supervision emerges as a specialty that aims to work with teachers on improving teaching and promoting student learning. An understanding of this incognito phenomenon and its struggles for visibility helps current and future scholars and practitioners to clarify the very purposes of supervision.

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