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**EEO CO-ORDINATORS AS FEMOCRATS:
FEMINISM AND THE STATE**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between feminist theory and femocrat practice. The central purpose is to examine the way femocrats act within the state and the extent to which they pursue a feminist agenda. This involved focusing on EEO co-ordinators as a case study of femocrats.

The feminist debate about femocrats has raised a series of issues which concern: the structure and activities of the state and the extent to which non-dominant groups can use the state to pursue their political agendas; the ability of individuals to change the nature of the organisational culture and the extent to which those women in femocrat positions pursue the collective interests of women as opposed to their own individual interests.

To explore this issue, this study has focused on the position, practices and networks of EEO co-ordinators working within a range of state organisations. In particular, this study examines the extent to which the strategies and issues which EEO co-ordinators have pursued in the development and implementation of an EEO programme are informed by feminist theory and practice. The central fieldwork component involved conducting indepth interviews with eight EEO co-ordinators.

This study of EEO co-ordinators has revealed that the links between co-ordinators' practice and the agendas of the feminist movement were limited. Rather, an examination of EEO co-ordinators' practices, networks, and issues of priority has suggested that it is more appropriate to view EEO co-ordinators as pursuing a professional project within the field of EEO.

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Chapter One

Femocrat Intervention in the State

This thesis focuses on femocrats: the way femocrats act within the state and the extent to which they pursue a feminist agenda. The emergence of a group of women working in the state in relatively senior levels has created a new focus for feminists in their on-going debate about the state. That debate has involved a series of questions regarding the structure and activities of the state and the extent to which non-dominant groups can use the state in the pursuit of their political agendas. While this thesis focuses on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) co-ordinators, it also contributes to current feminist debates about the state in New Zealand in the 1980s.

New Zealand analysts have tended to present the state as a contradictory institution established in, and manifesting, structural inequalities which create significant inconsistencies and paradoxes within its operation (Saville-Smith, 1987; James, 1986; Koopman-Boyden and Scott, 1986). Those contradictions both foster and constrain the opportunities of various actors who wish to exploit the state's unique ability to appropriate societal resources and monopolise legitimate power (Offe, 1984; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989). If this view of the state is accurate, it suggests that femocrat's could represent a feminist intervention in the state. Equally, femocrats may merely express the ability of the state to co-opt those who challenge the power of dominant elites. This thesis considers those questions through exploring the position, practices and feminist connections of EEO co-ordinators working within state organisations.

EEO co-ordinators and the femocracy

There is considerable diversity in the structural positions of femocrats. However, as Franzway, Court and Connell, (1989:87) argue, "'Equal opportunity' programmes are probably the best known [and] the most politically visible, product of feminism's interaction with the state".

Considering the practices, networks and positions of EEO co-ordinators involves exploring:

- i) the relationship between feminist theory and the feminist movement;
- ii) the state both as an institution of power and as an organisation with interests as an employer;
- iii) the interests of women as employees and as a sex.

In undertaking that task, this study has centred on the strategies EEO co-ordinators adopt in implementing EEO. It considers the type of strategies in which EEO co-ordinators engage, the relationship of these strategies to a feminist agenda and principles of feminist practice as they are articulated through the various strands of feminist thought.

The debate about femocrats

Feminists attempts to influence both the direction of the state and women's place as employees within the state have coincided with the increasing demand for female labour within state bureaucracies (Ehrenreich, 1990). In New Zealand the numbers of women working in the state sector have increased rapidly with the overall increase in women's participation in the paid employment since 1945 (Department of Statistics, 1990:72). It is within this political and economic context that the term 'femocrat' has emerged. It refers to women in positions of relative power within the state, particularly those positions where their holders speak in official contexts on behalf of, or in relation to, women.

Femocrats are not limited to one occupational group. Rather, the term is used almost as a cultural category to set these women apart from other women

who work in the state on the basis of their perception of themselves as feminists. It is a term which can be used both perjoratively and supportively. In its perjorative sense, femocrats are said to use feminism merely as part of professional credentialism. Feminism serves to assist the entrance of these women into, and mobility, within mainstream organisations. In this way the term femocrat constitutes a challenge to women, particularly managerial women, working within state agencies.

Femocrats are presented as representing only the interests of a particular class of women, the middle class¹. They are typified as having an educational and social background which sets them apart from most women. Consequently, femocrats are portrayed as having considerable advantages over most women within the labour market. The feminism they pursue is frequently described as passive, self-interested and individualist. Singh expresses precisely this when she describes the feminism of femocrats as:

" a conformist and uncritical feminism. It seeks to groom and package feminists into the political/corporate world. Profession, success, career, status, investment, marketing strategies, image, targeting goals and politicking represent a language and perspective that has increasingly become part of feminism " (Singh, 1987:38).

This view has largely been articulated within New Zealand by those feminists, particularly radical feminists, within the 'grassroots' movement who work outside the state (Singh, 1987).

Perjorative references to femocrats do not consist merely of a deep scepticism regarding the motivation of femocrats and their representativeness of women's experience. They also manifest a concern that women, irrespective of their commitment to feminism, will be unable to implement a feminist programme in the state because of the inertia of the state itself. Under these circumstances, working in the state is seen as largely futile and feminists who do so are seen as being vulnerable to eventual institutionalisation and co-option.

¹Wright (1978:73) identified the middle class as consisting of managers, adviser managers and supervisors. Three processes central to defining the middle class are: control over physical means of production; control over labour power and control over investments and resources.

Not all feminists accept this view of femocrats. McKinley (1990:93) suggests in her study of femocrats, that feminist bureaucrats recognise the dangers of personal co-optation and seek to protect themselves from this by actively 'recharging' their feminist perspective:

"How often we hear feminist women working in bureaucratic situations talk of coming to women's conferences or gatherings to 'recharge their feminist batteries', that is, to sharpen their feminist critique and find support for their feminist views" (McKinley, 1990:93).

For McKinley the danger of co-optation is that women lose sight of the feminist critique and the support of feminists. Thus, femocrats appeal to feminists outside the state to take account of the organisational constraints and pressures that they must contend with in order to survive within state bureaucracies, and to support them.

That support is portrayed by femocrats as worthwhile because feminist engagement within the state is imperative if sex inequalities are to change. This is because the state is seen as having a unique role in defining the overall direction of society through its legislative power, its control of public finances and its social policy function. For many feminists, any criticism of femocrats needs to be guarded in case femocrats' political credibility is undermined and the decision-making power of the state continues to be dominated by men.

Yeatman (1990), for instance, is not concerned that femocrats 'use' feminism to achieve professional advancement. Indeed, she argues that all access to the state and other complex organisations is governed by the "possession of socially certified claims to knowledge of a technical and/or substantive kind" (Yeatman, 1990:78). A commitment to feminism is one kind of certified knowledge. Femocrats are those who, to access the positions they have, must possess that knowledge. This strategy of credentialism which, according to Parkin (1979:54), is often used to safeguard or enhance market value, is not used by femocrats, argues Yeatman, as an exclusive closure practice. As such, femocrats can justifiably consider themselves feminists who use their positions for women collectively rather than merely benefit from them as individuals.

Franzway et al. (1989) also provide a similarly complex view of the position of femocrats. They reject both arguments that femocrats are merely passive functionaries of the state and that a femocrat's individual will-power is sufficient to effect structural change. Instead they argue that any analysis of femocrats must take into account the contradictions within the strategic concerns of the state. Those contradictions contribute to the construction of femocrat interests and their ability to manoeuvre within the state. Essentially, femocrats are presented as actors within the 'theatre' of the state. They have choices between parts, for instance as role-models or advocates for women, but the state structure ultimately limits their activities (Franzway, et al., 1989:153-4). In the process, Franzway et al. reject simple categorisations of femocrats.

This debate has largely been devoid of any input from men, with the notable exception of Connell (1989). Connell, with co-authors Franzway and Court, has been concerned with the development of a general theory of the state as an actor in sexual politics (Franzway, et al, 1989:33-55). Apart from Connell's contribution, the issue of femocrats appears to be of little importance to men. Rather, it is largely a debate which concerns either, a specific group of women who occupy middle class positions or, conversely, it is of concern to a broader range of feminists attempting to connect the professional life of individual women to the aims and objectives of the feminist movement. Femocrats expose the contradictions between a social movement which is largely dedicated to notions of 'sisterhood' and collectivity, and strategies frequently focused on assuring individual women social mobility within the labour market.

The latter strategies are a reaction to the tendency for the majority of women in paid work to be located within the secondary labour market and for even those women in the primary labour market to be restricted to a narrow set of occupations and to relatively low levels of seniority (Barron and Norris, 1976; NACEW, 1990). In contrast, femocrats, at least for this contemporary period, represent a particularly advantaged group of women within the primary labour market. They are seen to possess qualifications that offer them a 'fast-track' into management levels. Under these conditions, the emergence of femocrats is of critical importance to feminists and women generally because it challenges the notion of women's innate suitability only for subordinate roles.

Feminist conceptions of the state

The debate among feminists about how femocrats should be perceived links into a broader feminist debate about the extent to which the state acts to maintain and/or challenge dominant gender relations. Understanding the state and how it acts has always been an important concern for feminists at both a theoretical and practical level. The different positions adopted with regard to femocrats indicates that feminists are by no means in agreement with one another over the question of the state or interactions which should characterise feminist relations with it.

Feminist conceptions of the state tend to correlate broadly with radical, liberal and socialist feminist traditions respectively. These are now briefly outlined, and a fuller examination is pursued in chapter two. This conception of the state as patriarchal contributes to the use of the term femocrat in its perjorative sense. On the whole, the radical feminist tradition has tended to reject the state as a potential agent of change because of its patriarchal nature. Radical feminist analysis identifies the sexual division of labour and the control of reproductive resources as the fundamental division within society. It is upon that which all other divisions, such as class and 'race', arise. The state is seen as one of the instruments, if not the instrument, by which male dominance is systematically institutionalised within society (Millet, 1970:158; Firestone, 1972; MacKinnon, 1983:644).

More sophisticated analyses within a radical feminist tradition focus on the state as a bureaucratic structure and bureaucracy as a patriarchal organisational form. According to some feminists, the very qualities of the bureaucrat and the structural organization of bureaucracies exposed by Weber, that is, rationality, impersonality and hierarchical order, correspond to the cultural construction of masculinity (Eisenstein, 1985:105, Ferguson, 1984:160). The problem then becomes one of the gendered nature of bureaucracy in terms of the embeddedness of masculinity in the structures of public life.

In contrast, the liberal feminist tradition tends to identify the emergence of femocrats as a positive step for women and an indication that at least in some areas barriers to women are being broken down. This portrayal of femocrats

reflects liberal understandings of the state in which the state is conceived of as a benevolent or at least neutral institution responsible for protecting individual rights of citizenship and guaranteeing individual freedom (Wollstonecraft, 1982). In practice, liberal feminists recognise that women experience a situation of imperfect citizenship to which the state has been party. Nevertheless, because the state has the power of legislation, liberal feminists see the state as a significant agent of social change (Friedan, 1963). In addition, because the state is an employer, the state is seen as providing a role model to other employers in relation to non-discriminatory employment practices which will, in turn, prompt broader attitudinal change.

Unlike liberal feminists, who locate societal power within the state, socialist feminists identify societal power as arising out of relations of control over productive and reproductive resources. The appropriation of those resources by some groups and the exclusion of others give rise to systematic structural inequalities of class, sex and race (McIntosh, 1978; Rowbotham, 1973; Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Barrett, 1980).

Contemporary socialist feminists (James and Saville-Smith, 1989:1-6) suggest that these sets of structural inequalities are not mutually and unproblematically reinforcing as earlier socialist feminists suggested (Eisenstein, 1979:27; Hartmann, 1981:29). Instead, they create contradictions in the relationship between dominant and non-dominant groups. The state is constituted within and manifests these sets of structural inequalities and consequently is in a contradictory institutional position. This results in significant inconsistencies and paradoxes in state operation (Saville-Smith, 1987:197). These contradictions will necessarily impinge upon those who work within the state, conditioning and constraining their actions. This leads socialist feminists to suggest that femocrats may both represent the interests of women and also protect the state's sponsorship of dominant group interests from feminist challenges.

It also suggests that the attitudes and practices of femocrats, and the agendas they pursue may exhibit considerable diversity. That diversity emerges out of different understandings of the basis of women's subordination. It could also emerge out of the specific structural pressures to which femocrats are

vulnerable. Alternatively the diversity may arise out of the possibility that those identified as femocrats simply do not have a feminist agenda.

What is a femocrat?

A conceptual confusion exists around the identity of a femocrat. On the one hand, femocrat appears to refer to a particular set of positions within the state. On the other hand, the term is frequently used to refer to a particular type of person who has adopted a feminist agenda. When femocrat is used as a referent for a particular set of positions within the state, such as EEO co-ordinator, the assumption is made that the duties and responsibilities attached to that position serve feminist interests.

The alternative meaning given to femocrat applies to the person (generally a woman) working within the state bureaucracy who identifies as a feminist. The two meanings applied to femocrat may often be blurred, given that women sometimes work in policy or operational positions ostensibly concerned with women's issues. As Franzway et al. state:

"Verbal debates we have heard tend to confuse programs and people. Where there is hostility it is frequently focused on the EEO practitioners. The issue becomes 'Are they feminists?' For present purposes we will distinguish between equal opportunity as a strategy and EEO practitioners... as people" (Franzway et al., 1989:96).

The distinction is essential to maintain if the relationship between individual actions and the structural forces which shape the social context in which femocrats operate are to be understood.

Femocrats in New Zealand include women working within organisations like the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Policy Units and Equal Employment Opportunity positions (Franzway, 1986; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989). The Ministry of Women's Affairs constitutes a separate state organisation whereas both Women's Policy Units and EEO positions are found within a number of different state organisations. This conditions the functionality and power of femocrats both in terms of the position and as feminists.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs was established as a policy ministry in 1984, with a staff of approximately twenty five employees. The main function of the Ministry is to monitor Government policies for their impact on women and to advise Government on policies which promote equality for women (Ministry of Women's Affairs *Newsletter/Panui*, 1987:4) Included within the Ministry is Te Ohu Whakatupu, the Maori Women's Secretariat which specifically monitors Government policies on Maori women. The Ministry was restructured in 1988 into four units: Te Ohu Whakatupu, Policy Advice; Corporate Services and Information Services. The Chief executive and senior policy advisors represent some of the few women who constitute part of the Senior Executive Service. Despite the individual power and status of its senior officers, the Ministry itself appears to occupy a marginal position in relation to other state organisations as a whole.

Women's Policy Units were established in the Housing Corporation, Health Department, Education Department and the Department of Social Welfare in the late 1980s to provide specific policy advice regarding the impact of social policy on women and girls. Women's policy advisors are located at senior levels of the organisation and work with other senior policy advisors. They are accountable to the Minister and chief executive of their respective government departments.

Inclusion of EEO obligations within the State Sector Act 1988 has conditioned the creation of EEO co-ordinator positions within the forty three government departments which constitute the state sector. EEO co-ordinator positions are located at a middle management level, with co-ordinators accountable to personnel or human resource managers and chief executives.

There are significant differences between these groups. In reality, only the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Policy Units directly advise Government on the impacts of its direction on women. EEO co-ordinators relate to the state as employer. The former tend to have senior positions. EEO co-ordinators are largely restricted to middle management positions. They have relatively little influence in the public service and limited power within departments. Nevertheless, as Eisenstein has pointed out, "One element that

accelerated the progress of femocratization of the bureaucracy was the impact of the EEO programme" (Eisenstein, 1990:90-9).

Given the pivotal role of EEO in feminists' political strategy, it would be logical to expect that feminists would attempt to gain EEO positions. Indeed, it is popularly assumed that EEO practitioners are feminists. This study explores the validity of this assumption. In particular, it focuses upon EEO practitioners and their awareness, understanding and commitment to the practice of a feminist agenda. In short, this study asks whether EEO co-ordinators are feminists. In raising this question a whole set of other questions emerge. For example, how do we know whether EEO co-ordinators are feminist? What sort of practices and agendas do they put into place that suggest that they are feminist or not feminist? It is to these questions that the following chapters now turn.

Chapter Two

Feminists on Femocrats: Issues in the Literature

If one accepts the term femocrats as applying to women principally in positions dealing directly and explicitly with the interests of women, then the issue of whether those positions can be used to effect social change becomes a central problem. It has already been indicated that liberal feminists are more likely to regard femocrats as agents of social change than radical feminists or socialist feminists. But neither radical nor socialist feminists reject entirely the notion that femocrats can be agents of social change. The nature and limits of that agency have consequently become the centre of considerable polemic.

Essentially, that debate can be divided into three central themes. First, the extent to which individuals can change the nature of the organisational process. Second, the extent to which the direction and interests of an organisation can be redirected away from reflecting the interests of dominant elites. This has been of particular concern to those seeking to harness the power of the state. Third, the extent to which those women associated with femocrat positions actually do pursue strategies for the collective benefit of women, as opposed to individual benefits.

Femocrats and the limits of organisational culture

Analyses which assume that femocrats are feminists tend to focus on the issue of whether it is possible for individual feminists to influence the organisation of which they are a part. Radical feminists are particularly pessimistic about the

ability of feminists to survive the conformist expectations placed on organisational members. They argue that certain structures are inherent in the bureaucratic culture of organisations: the hierarchical division of labour; the specialisation of tasks and deference to authority. All contradict radical feminist organising principles of non-hierarchical and collective power sharing.

Perhaps the most developed analysis of organisations arising out of radical feminism is that pursued by Ferguson (1984) in *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*. Ferguson applies Foucault's analysis of discourse to an analysis of bureaucracy and argues that women constitute a 'submerged discourse' within bureaucratic organisations (Ferguson, 1984:23). This is because women's primary association with the home and family, an arena of non-bureaucratic discourse, mean that their experiences are 'institutionally and linguistically structured in a way that is different from that of men'(Ferguson, 1984:23). Men's dominance within the 'public' sphere gives them access and control over bureaucratic discourse which is simultaneously denied to women. As a consequence, when women do enter the public realm, they tend to be marginalised in peripheral and powerless positions (Ferguson, 1984:24).

Moreover, Ferguson argues, that the organisational culture of bureaucracy inevitably subjects members of the organisation to a process of feminisation:

" 'Feminisation' involves the extension of the depoliticising , privatizing aspects of women's traditional role to the sectors of the population that are the victims of bureaucratic organisations, both the administrators and the clientele. Both groups of individuals are placed in institutional situations in which they must function as subordinates, and they must learn skills to cope with that subordinate status, the skills that women have learned as part of their 'femininity' " (Ferguson, 1984:93).

One of the clearest examples of the coping skills of subordinates is that of impression management. Subordinates must learn to present the appropriate image, to anticipate the requirements of superiors and/or of the organisation in general and to comply with those requirements in order to earn approval and promotion (Ferguson, 1984:104). In learning and internalising those skills, the values, practices and understanding of superiors within the organisational culture become hegemonic. That is, subordinates comply with the demands of

managers not because of coercion but because they consent to the existing order (Simon, 1982:21).

Liberal feminists have shown a similar concern with the culture of organisations because organisational culture has been seen as a significant barrier to the advancement of individual women. For liberal feminists, the sex-typing of certain positions, such as secretary, as women's positions, is merely an example of what Friedan (1963:37) called the feminine mystique. Women in organisations are socialised not to compete with men. Consequently they fail to fulfil their individual potentials. The visibility of sexual stratification in the organisation merely helps to reproduce existing gender relations (Kanter, 1977:35-42).

The social reproduction of existing inequalities and power differentials within organisations is assisted by the ability of those in positions of power to define the values of an organisation. Men's historical dominance of organisations has led to the organisational celebration of rationality, competitiveness, instrumentality and task-orientation and the association of such traits with good management (Kanter, 1977:45). Consequently, femininity is typified as inappropriate to managers. Women, associated as they are with femininity, are excluded from management (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1988:62-63) unless they explicitly take on the practices and behaviours of men (Kanter, 1977:66).

There can be three responses to these understandings of the place of women in organisations. First, that existing organisations are not an appropriate place for women. Second, that more women must be placed into senior positions to contest sex stereotyping. Third, that women in organisations must, and can, influence the traits valued in organisations. Eisenstein (1985:115) in her discussion of the gendered bureaucracy, argues that the second strategy will be futile without the latter.

For Eisenstein (1985:113), masculinity is embedded within the nature of the bureaucracy in three ways. That the organisation of the work day is orientated around the requirements of a male breadwinner is one manifestation. The economic power of men within the labour market is another. The protection of men from sexual harassment and the failure of organisations to deal adequately

with those events is the third. These three aspects condition the institutionalisation of unequal access to public power. Eisenstein argues that the liberal feminist formula of getting women into top jobs is insufficient to challenge these processes. What is required is a systematic unpicking of the institutional fabric in which masculinity and femininity are constructed (Eisenstein, 1985:114-115).

Ferguson(1984:196) appears optimistic that changes to the organisational culture can occur. Women can resist the process of subordination within the organisation by drawing upon the values that have structured their experiences as women, nurturance, empathy, caretaking and connectedness, to construct an alternative feminist discourse upon which a non-bureaucratic collective life can be built.

Femocrats and the state

Even if feminists can act to change the internal culture of an organisation, there remains the issue of whether the direction of an organisation can be influenced by its members. This is particularly important in relation to femocrats because the state is recognised as affecting women's lives as an employer and as the institution legitimately setting broader social and economic conditions. The issue is simply whether, and to what extent, femocrats can co-opt the state to pursue the interests of non-dominant groups. This question leads us directly into the continuing debate between feminists over the nature of the state.

Among feminists one can detect three different conceptions of the state. These range from seeing the state as essentially benevolent, to typifying it as malignant and to a view of the state which presents the state as largely a contradictory institution.

(a) The benevolent state

The notion of the benevolent, or at least neutral, state is deeply embedded in liberal feminism. The state is understood as a neutral arbiter of social injustices within a pluralist society where power is diffused among a number of different economic, professional, religious, educational and cultural groups and institutions (Gusfield, 1962:19-30). The state is open to influence from these different groups and institutions and adopts the role of mediating conflicting interests. This plurality of power prevents the state, or any one social group, from dominating society (Kornhauser, 1960; Lipset, 1963). Access to the state and participation within the decision-making process is seen to be ensured through the rights of citizenship (Dahl, 1966:298).

In practice, however, liberal feminists and other feminists have recognised that the state does not act neutrally (Franzway, et al., 1989:14). It appears that men have captured the state. It is their interests which dominate policy-making (Pascall, 1986:3-6). For women the result is an imperfect citizenship perpetuated by discriminatory laws and practices restricting women's access to the state and its decision-making powers. For liberal feminists, this contradicts the basic liberal principles that women as well as men should be free to shape their own future through the pursuit of a career (Friedan, 1963:297).

The liberal feminist solution is to explode stereotypical attitudes and alter the practices that reinforce or embody such discriminatory treatment. Many men cannot be trusted to do this for women, a view that liberal feminists share with radical feminists. Consequently, the aim is to get more women into positions of power. To do so, women are encouraged to acquire the necessary educational and cultural credentials which will legitimate their access to senior administrative and political positions which men currently dominate. Margaret Wilson (1990) suggests two ways in which women can gain political influence over public policy:

"The first is through controlling one of the two major political parties in order to ensure it selects people to stand for Parliament who support policies that reflect the interests of women and or Maori. The second is through having the power to influence whichever Party is the Government to pursue a policy that is in your interests" (Wilson, 1990:2).

Affirmative action policies, equal employment opportunity programmes, childcare provisions and the removal of sexist language are examples of reformist strategies through which liberal feminist attempt to encourage women's access and promotion within the state. Once these discriminatory barriers against women are removed and women have equal access to the political decision making processes, then it is envisaged that the state will be properly neutral in its treatment of men and women.

Franzway, and her colleagues, while not entirely accepting the notion of the benevolent state, recognise that such a concept of the state can be a very powerful political force:

"There is a correspondence between the rhetoric of the democratic state serving the citizens and the liberal-feminist approach to equal rights for women. The state gains legitimacy from showing itself willing to remove obstacles which prevent the inclusion of women in the democratic process" (Franzway, et al. 1989:158).

While accepting that there may be a measure of influence derived from this source, most radical and socialist feminists argue that the leverage arising out of the legitimization of the state is inherently limited. Neither see the state as an arbiter of individual interests. Indeed, society reflects deep struggles between social collectivities. The state, far from being merely a mediator of those struggles, is seen as an instrument of dominant elites. For these groups the state is, at best, contradictory in its impact and, at worst, a malignant force.

(b) The malignant state: patriarchal and class societies.

Radical feminists view the state as patriarchal (Millet, 1977:126). Inherently, a male power structure operates to uphold men's domination of women. For that reason, radical feminists tend not to see the state as an agent of change which can be used to pursue women's interests. Rather, the state is a significant institutional force maintaining women's subordinate position relative to men, men's ownership and control of women's reproduction and women's continued exclusion from their reproductive resources.

Women's exclusion is not a manifestation of stereotypes about their abilities and capacities, but rather men's control of reproductive relations (Firestone, 1972:17). That control places men and women in separate and opposing classes. The state has been one of the major institutions in legitimating current relations of control over reproduction. It is unlikely that it will release that control. Consequently, autonomous political organisation for women, separate from oppressive male institutions, is seen as essential if women are to fulfil their revolutionary potential (Jaggar, 1983:275-83).

Current political and administrative structures are inextricably tied to and shaped by the patriarchy in men's interests. Radical feminists argue that those organisations cannot be instruments of revolutionary social change. It was for this reason that radical feminists split from the male dominated leftist organisations in which they first developed and created the small, non-hierarchical, all-female groups which were to become the organisational hallmark of the women's movement (Sargent, 1981:xii-xxii).

In many ways, radical feminists provide a similar analysis to elite theorists. C. Wright Mills could have been referring to the patriarchy when he wrote:

"The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. they are in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centred the effective means of the power and wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy" (Mills, 1956:4).

According to radical feminists the state is more than an instrument of male control. Its very philosophical base and its organisational framework is suffused by a 'male' mental framework. Just as Ferguson (1984:23) argues that bureaucracies express a male discourse, Pateman (1988:77-115) argues that the liberal theory of social contract on which the modern state is built and

legitimated is founded on notions of fraternity. This, by definition, excludes women.

According to Pateman (1988:78), analyses of liberal political theory has tended to concentrate on the implications of the concepts of liberty and equality rather than that of fraternity. In the process, the specific gender implications which embody a concept of fraternity are obscured. Using an historical analysis of the development of liberal political thought, Pateman is able to demonstrate that the emergence of 'fraternity' represents a significant shift in the basis of patriarchal power (Pateman, 1988:77). A two-tiered system is created within liberal patriarchy whereby men continue to exert their power as fathers and husbands within the home, while exercising power as a fraternity of adult brothers within 'civil society' (Pateman, 1988:113). This imbues the state with a specific cultural dimension that identifies leadership and political power with men and masculinity.

The legal institutions which are the apparatus of the state also enforce a masculinised understanding to legitimacy. According to MacKinnon:

"The law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women. The liberal state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender, through its legitimizing norms, relation to society, and substantive policies. It achieves this through embodying and ensuring male control over women's sexuality at every level, occasionally cushioning, qualifying, or de jure prohibiting its excesses when necessary to its normalization. Substantively, the way the male point of view frames an experience is the way it is framed by state policy" (MacKinnon, 1983:644).

MacKinnon's case against the objectivity of the law and her recommendation for a new jurisprudence maintains the simple categorical opposition between men and women and the separatist strategy for change which characterises radical feminist politics.

These arguments suggest that any transformation of the state will require more than women entering top political or bureaucratic positions or changing sexist attitudes. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that radical feminist analyses of the state do not display any particular enthusiasm for EEO programmes. EEO programmes are viewed as benefiting individual women

rather than challenging the patriarchal structure of the state. Speaking of the American context, Ferguson states:

"Equal opportunity and affirmative action offices all too frequently become a kind of bureaucratic safety valve for organizations, a place where the outsiders - women of all colours, blacks and Hispanics of both genders, and others - fight over the crumbs" (Ferguson, 1984: 195).

In particular, radical feminism challenges the use of the principle of merit by EEO programmes to define organisational employment practices. The objectivity of merit is merely an appearance which ignores the way women and men's work attracts different social values within a patriarchal society.

Despite the apparent differences between radical feminists and liberals, this type of feminist polemic has served to strengthen liberal feminist understandings of discriminatory barriers. Consequently, Eisenstein (1981:346) has suggested that a strand of 'radical' liberal feminism has developed which, while not rejecting the state as a site of struggle, has adopted a more structuralist and collective critique of the state than reformist liberals.

Socialist-feminists have been heavily influenced by marxist analyses of the state. Marxists see the state as a class state playing two important roles within capitalist societies. First, it legitimates the institution of private property (Offe, 1974; Jessop, 1982). It helps to regenerate class relations by fostering capitalist ideology through various societal institutions such as the education system, and the media. Second, the state acts to maintain the conditions conducive to capital accumulation (Gough, 1979; Poulantzas, 1978). This means providing an economic climate favourable to capital investment and the expansion of capitalist production within a secure national or international context. Within marxism there are essentially two views, instrumental and structural, of how this is achieved.

The instrumentalist view identifies the state as serving the interests of the capitalist class by controlling the recruitment of politicians and public servants to the state, such that most members of the state are drawn overwhelmingly from the middle to upper classes (Miliband, 1969:59-64). In effect, the state acts to protect capitalist interests and assures the preservation of the capitalism system.

This corresponds with the class interests of the individuals who occupy powerful positions within the separate agencies of the state.

Miliband (1969:60-63) explains this pattern of recruitment in relation to three factors. First, children from middle to upper class parents have a much greater chance of access to the kind of education and training that is required for the achievement of elite positions in the state system. Second, membership of these classes affords connections of kinship and friendship and enhances a sense of shared values, all of which contribute to a successful career. Third, those who control and determine selection and promotion are themselves members of the upper to middle classes, either by social origin or by their own professional success. They are likely to have a particular image, drawn from the class that they belong to, of how a civil servant should think, speak, behave and react.

The structuralist view argues that the class linkages between members of the state elite and the economic elite identified by Miliband are relatively unimportant (Poulantzas, 1969). Instead, they argue that the structure of political and economic institutions within capitalist society makes it imperative that the state serves the interests of capital. Poulantzas (1978) argues that the viability of the state is dependent upon the health of the economy. The state acts as a collective capitalist, transcending the individual and parochial interests of the various fractions of capital to protect the long term interests of the capitalist class and preserve the capitalist system. As the state acts in the general interests of capital, it is able to maintain relative autonomy from the individual interests of various capitalist fractions (Poulantzas, 1978; Jessop, 1982:247,252). Nevertheless, the state remains a significant mechanism of class reproduction.

One of the problems with the marxist view of the state as capitalist and the radical feminist view of the state as patriarchal is that they both fall into the primacy argument. That is, there is one fundamental division within society, be it class, gender or 'race' to which other forms of oppression are merely secondary manifestations. This has given rise to the tendency to conceptualise the state as a unified and coherent entity. Yet existing policy analyses (Saville-Smith, 1987; James, 1986; Burton, 1985) indicate that this is not the case. Rather state policies are in practice contradictory.

(c) The contradictory state

Throughout the 1970s, socialist-feminists attempted to combine the theoretical insights of radical feminism and marxism. This resulted in a view of the state as an institution involved in the management of both class and gender conflicts. Much of the early analysis concentrated on the way in which the state maintained patriarchal power within the family and attempted to identify different interests of women and men in relation to the development of state policies (Barrett and McIntosh, 1980, Delphy, 1979). Towards the end of that decade, a number of socialist feminists (Wilson, 1977, McIntosh, 1978, and Barrett, 1980) began to develop a broader analysis of the welfare state specifically attempting to explain the subordinate position of women in relation to both the family and capitalist production.

McIntosh (1978:255), for instance, argued that the state sustained the oppression of women by maintaining a specific household form, primarily dependent upon the male wage and in which women provided unpaid domestic services for men. Capitalism benefited from this household form in two ways. First, it ensured the reproduction of labour power relatively cheaply. Second, as married women constituted a reserve army of labour which could be drawn into paid employment when required and conveniently pushed back into the home when their labour was no longer required.

McIntosh recognised that there are significant contradictions in the relationship between the family household and the system of wage labour. Those contradictions have created contradictions in state policy. Despite Parson's analysis of the nuclear family, the family household is not an ideal mechanism supporting capitalist production. First, there is considerable variation in the familial household. Some families simply cannot survive on their earned income. Nor do families necessarily produce the appropriate number of children to meet capital's changing needs for labour power. As McIntosh states:

"... the family household system is an extremely inadequate one; it may be this that explains both state efforts to force the family into a particular mould and the fact that the state itself undertakes some of these tasks of reproduction" (McIntosh, 1978:269).

Zillah Eisenstein (1979) pursued the attempt to combine radical feminism and marxism further by developing a concept of capitalist patriarchy. That is, the "mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring" (Eisenstein, 1979:5). This views capitalism and patriarchy as operating in conjunction to subordinate women, economically, politically and culturally.

The link between these two systems remains problematic. As Hartmann (1981:2) points out, the synthesis of marxism and feminism remains inadequate. It lacks an adequate theory of social change because it attempts to combine a static conception of patriarchy with a dynamic conception of class relations.

Saville-Smith's concepts of reproduction and production and their relationship to some extent resolves that problem. Out of it, she offers a view of society as comprising constantly shifting forces and contradictory relations. The state is presented as both mediating and being impacted upon by those contradictions (Saville-Smith, 1987:209). Saville-Smith (1987:197) suggests that the state operates within a 'contradictory institutional position' which conditions state policies and the effects of those policies upon gender relations. The state is the outcome at any given moment of the relationship between imperatives to maintain social order and legitimate its rule, and the struggles and demands between and within dominant elites and subordinate groups.

Such a perspective appears to be reinforced by the work of Segal (1987), Rowbotham (1989), Burton (1985) and Watson (1990). All identify the state as an important site of struggle in which non-dominant groups engage in strategies to find legislative recognition, redistribute wealth and democratise power. In those analyses, the state is not viewed as an homogeneous, monolithic entity operating in response to preconstituted sets of interests. Instead, it is presented as a complex web of institutional arenas in which various practices and relationships are continuously in a process of creation and contestation. As Burton writes:

"The state is not a thing: it does not exist as a single, monolithic entity. It is a complex of relationships, embodying a certain form of power operating through

various institutional arrangements" (Burton, 1985:104-5).

Overall, then, socialist feminists are increasingly recognising the contradictions in state policies. They attempt to explain these in a way which captures the complexity of political interests and power relations involved. From this perspective, Burton (1985:132-3) argues that equal employment opportunity programmes and equal pay legislation will be limited in their effectiveness, given the structural arrangements of production and reproduction, if they are not connected to the development of policies related to taxation, industrial relations and social security which also act to restructure women's relationship to the labour market and men's relationship to childcare and domestic work.

The approach of socialist feminists to the state overcomes the primacy argument underpinning those analyses which typify the state as malignant. Yet it also avoids any notion of a neutral state. The state is understood to be involved in a complex process that is directed at maintaining its own interests as a legitimate ruling body and upholding public order. At the same time, this leads the state to simultaneously uphold and challenge dominant power relations arising out of the dialectic between production and reproduction and the class, gender and 'race' elites which arise from them (Saville-Smith, 1987:208-9).

In terms of feminist intervention within the state, these arguments suggest that feminist intervention will be fraught with dangers. However, the contradictions which shape the structure and practices of the state should provide opportunities or points of leverage which feminists may be able to exploit to their advantage. As Watson (1990:11) states, it cannot be assumed that there exists outside the state a coherent set of feminist demands which we can measure 'femocrat' interventions against, or that these demands somehow exist prior to and autonomously from feminists' interaction within the state. Rather, it suggests that feminist agendas are likely to be actively shaped by an interaction within the arenas of the state. In terms of femocrats this means that they may adopt a complex set of discourses and practices.

Femocrats as a professional group

Even if one accepts that femocrats can act as agents of social change, there is still considerable debate about whether femocrats will act in such a way or will merely use feminism as a credential for professional self-advancement. That advancement will include the development of strategies which exclude other women from those very positions that femocrats themselves dominate.

Parkin's (1979) concept of modes of social closure allows a closer examination of this process of professionalisation. Parkin defines professionalisation as:

"... a strategy designed, amongst other things, to limit and control the supply of entrants to an occupation in order to safeguard or enhance its market value" (Parkin, 1979:54).

Parkin argues that professions act to create their own rigorous codes of technical competence and ethical standards. They control entry to particular occupations by using a combination of credentialism and legalistic monopoly. Credentialism is the use of educational certificates or other specified forms of expertise as a means of monitoring entry to key positions in the division of labour (Parkin, 1979:54). This is usually accompanied by attempts by dominant groups to gain a monopoly over access to certain occupations through professionalisation (Parkin, 1979:98).

Credentialism is a strategy of exclusion. Strategies of exclusion constitute the predominant mode of closure within all stratified systems. They indicate the attempt by one group to secure a privileged position for itself at the expense of another group through a process of subordination. This 'downward' pressure is not passively received by subordinate groups. They respond by embarking upon their own attempts to appropriate the privileges of the dominant group through employing strategies of usurpation.

Parkin identifies women's attempts to gain equality with men as one example of usurpatory strategies in action. Such strategies usually involve various solidaristic tactics, such as marches, picketing, strikes, and demonstrations, and specific legal strategies. But unlike many groups, Parkin argues social groups such as women and ethnic minorities do not have the same punitive

resources and rely much more heavily upon tactics of moral persuasion, rather than direct action.

"Civil rights movements and feminist groups have tended to lay considerable store on the vulnerability of key sections of the exclusionary groups to moral appeals that articulate the high ideals of the formal ideology - in particular those centred around the flexible notion of equality" (Parkin,1979:85).

Parkin's analysis suggests that both men and women who seek to gain entry and promotion within the state will be engaged in professional struggles to acquire middle and upper class rewards. This would suggest that femocrats as members of the state elite are involved and participate in these closure struggles.

Yeatman (1990:92-3) has argued that femocrats will not use their professional status for personal gain and will of necessity be directed towards a professional strategy that inevitably serves the broader interests of women. Yeatman develops this argument in terms of the contradictory class position of femocrats and their possession of an ideology of feminism which distinguish them from non-femocrat women in professional and managerial positions.

Femocrats enjoy considerable class advantages, in terms of their possession of skill/knowledge and organisational assets, than do the vast majority of women. However, femocrats, have a less established and privileged position than men within the primary labour market. In common with other women, their primary orientation and responsibilities are seen to lie within the home. This means femocrats, like other women, are a disadvantaged class in terms of their gender assets (Yeatman, 1990:91). Yet at the same time, femocrats, as professionals or managers, exploit the labour power of women who are placed under them in clerical positions. Often as members of the dominant culture, they also enjoy considerable ethnic and 'race' assets (Yeatman, 1990:91-92).

Yeatman argues it is that possible femocrats could attempt to facilitate their own upward mobility, by buying freedom from domestic work through the exploitation of other women as domestic servants and childcare workers.

However, she argues that this would only be a partial solution as men continue to exercise power and authority within complex organisations and professional institutions. Furthermore, Yeatman argues that it would be very difficult for a femocrat, whose position is predicated upon her professed commitment to feminism, to be seen to exploit the personal services of other women to improve her career advantages (Yeatman, 1990:93).

Nonetheless, it is possible for femocrats to reduce their own domestic responsibilities by seeking change in the distribution of responsibilities for domestic life in the following ways:

"First, she can seek to restructure how the gender division of labour works in her privatised domestic life by persuading the man to whom she relates to become an equal partner in the domestic work. Second, she can buy goods and services which help diminish her domestic labour. Third, she can work with other feminists to develop the public provision of services, the most important of which is child-care, so that responsibilities for domestic life are valued enough to be supported socially. This option works to redistribute domestic labour from private to public domains, and thereby calls into question the gendered public/private division of labour" (Yeatman, 1990:93).

In effect, Yeatman argues that feminism actually legitimates femocrats striving for career promotion. This links their objectives and policies to the improvement of the life chances of all members of their gender class.

Yeatman clearly identifies femocrats as constituting a particularly privileged section of female employees. Indeed, they constitute a class of their own. In making this argument, Yeatman usefully directs us to ask some important issues about the creation and maintenance of professional groups. However, Yeatman's argument that femocrats will not use their professional status for personal gain seems to suggest that femocrats are somehow able to suspend their involvement from these closure practices. In contrast, Witz (1990), like Parkin, argues that, regardless of femocrats orientation to their professional status, their entry to and maintenance of positions within the state will necessarily be conditioned by various closure strategies.

Witz extends Parkin's analysis of professionalisation by incorporating an analysis of the gendered dimension of professional projects. She does this in relation to outlining three important conditions which will produce a gender neutral sociology of professions. First, is to treat professional projects as concrete, individual and historically located projects. Second, is to conceptualise these projects as strategies of occupational closure. Third, is to gender the agents of professional projects. This involves acknowledging that these agents are not only located within sets of class relations but within sets of gender relations as well (Witz, 1990:676). Witz defines professional projects as:

".. essentially labour market strategies which aim for an occupational monopoly over the provision of certain skills and competencies in a market for services. They consist of strategic courses of action which take the form of occupational closure strategies and which employ distinctive tactical means in pursuit of the strategic aim or goal of closure" (Witz, 1990:675).

Witz identifies four different closure strategies; exclusion, inclusion, demarcation and dual closure. Strategies of inclusion and dual closure tend to characterise the responses of subordinate social and occupational groups. Inclusion constitutes the upwards, countervailing strategy adopted by a subordinate group when it confronts an exclusionary strategy of closure. Dual closure strategies are used when occupational groups encounter demarcationary strategies and involve a more complex response. These entail both an upwards countervailing inclusionary strategy on behalf of the subordinate group to the demarcationary strategy of a dominant group and in turn an internal exclusionary strategy which is used to consolidate the subordinate groups own position within a division of labour (Witz, 1990:679). Alternatively, exclusionary and demarcationary strategies respectively characterise the intra-occupational and inter-occupational strategies that are engaged in by a dominant social or occupational group.

Witz's analysis focuses upon the medical profession but it is possible to extend her analysis to femocrats and their relationship with other occupational groups within the state. Witz (1990:680) argues that men adopt a gendered strategy of exclusionary closure which has the effect of creating a class of ineligibles comprised of women. In the process, men secure privileged access

to rewards and opportunities within the occupational labour market. However, women do not simply acquiesce in this exclusionary strategy of closure but embark on their own gendered strategy of inclusion to challenge men's monopoly to define conditions of competence and to control access to particular occupations. Men's monopoly of specific professional occupations also provides them with a position of dominance from which they may engage in demarcationary strategies with other professional occupations and thereby further exclude women by controlling the range of occupations to which they have access.

At the same time women pursuing specific professional projects will be engaged in their own dual closure and demarcationary strategies. In terms of dual closure strategies we can expect women to be involved in excluding specific groups of women and men from their professional project in an effort to consolidate their own position within the division of labour (Witz, 1990:679). At the same time, women may attempt to control their own labour power by limiting access to it ranks, they may also be involved in attempts to control the labour power related to other occupations in a division of labour.

"Gendered strategies of demarcationary closure, then, describe processes of inter-occupational control concerned with the creation and control of boundaries between gendered occupations in a division of labour. They turn not upon the exclusion, but upon the encirclement of women within a related but distinct sphere of competence in an occupational division of labour and, in addition, their possible subordination to male-dominated occupations. The concept of a gendered strategy of demarcationary closure directs attention to the possibility that the creation and control of occupational boundaries and inter-occupational relations may be crucially mediated by patriarchal power relations" (Witz, 1990:682).

Summary

Whether femocrats can be said to be representative of the feminist movement will depend upon three interrelated factors:

- i) The position of femocrats within the organisation and degree to which the organisation is disposed to femocrat influence.
- ii) The ability and interest of the state to represent the interests of the feminist movement.
- iii) The motivations of those who use femocrat positions within the organisation of the state.

These issues will be explored in the following chapters by considering the position and practices of EEO co-ordinators.

Chapter Three

EEO and EEO Co-ordinators

EEO programmes

Equal employment opportunities have been a central political demand of feminists in their attempts to reform both the organisation of the state and to draw the state into a wider programme of social change. However, the establishment of EEO programmes is not driven solely by feminists. The establishment of EEO programmes occurred in the midst of a profound restructuring of the state during the latter half of the 1980s. A raft of legislative reforms were implemented which reshaped the public service and re-organised the financial management of government departments. Most significant were the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986, Labour Relations Act 1987 and State Sector Act 1988. Through these acts, the management, personnel and industrial relations regimes governing the operations of Government departments were shaped by new conceptions of equity, efficiency and accountability.

The State Sector Act 1988 required departmental chief executives to develop and implement equal employment opportunity programmes as part of the principles of being a 'good employer'. This obligation covered all Government departments with the exception of the defence forces and state-owned enterprises the personnel policies of which are covered by other Acts. Included within the State Sector Act were provisions for the regular monitoring by the State Services Commission of progress made by government departments on the implementation of EEO programmes.

EEO programmes were promoted as a means to improve the efficiency and productivity of the state bureaucracy. Such programmes would do this by ensuring that state employees did not have their potential inhibited by institutional discriminations against certain groups. EEO programmes were aimed at:

"the identification and elimination of all aspects of policies, procedures, and other institutional barriers that cause or perpetuate, or tend to cause or perpetuate, inequality in respect to the employment of any persons or group of persons" (Section 58, State Sector Act 1988).

Women were not the only focus. A variety of groups were designated as disadvantaged. They included women, Maori, people with disabilities, Pacific Island peoples and other ethnic minorities. The rights of the Maori people in the public service were additionally and specifically protected in section 56 clause 2 (d) of the State Sector Act.

The broad focus of EEO which those designations imply has enabled EEO co-ordinators, when necessary, to distance themselves from the agenda articulated by more radical sections of the feminist movement. Nevertheless, EEO programmes have offered women, and potentially feminists, a foothold in the state. EEO co-ordinators are overwhelmingly women. Most are assumed to have close links or commitment to the feminist movement.

Equal employment opportunities within the public service

The establishment of EEO programmes under the State Sector Act was a culmination of a longer debate over employment opportunities and conditions in the public service. In 1982, twelve Government departments produced a statement on equal employment opportunities in which they outlined their opposition to all forms of discrimination whether direct or indirect (SROW,1987:10). 'Traditional attitudes and false assumptions' were identified as the primary source of discrimination for women in employment with several areas being defined as needing improvement: recruitment, training, promotion,

greater flexibility of work structure, education on EEO and the appointment of EEO liaison officers. The Public Service Association also adopted a resolution to promote women's representation within its own organisational structure in 1982.

In 1983 the State Services Commission, the then employer of public servants, indicated its support for equal opportunities by establishing an Equal Employment Opportunities Unit. Significantly, the concern around equal employment opportunities was expanded to include not only the removal of sex discrimination against women but also racial discrimination and discrimination against people with disabilities. The new concern with Maori, in particular, can be linked to the State Services Commission-sponsored hui at Waahi Marae in Huntly in 1982. In that arena the Commission gave a commitment to pursue equity for Maori and minority ethnic groups within the public service (State Services Commission, 1983; Sharp, 1990).

The association of EEO with feminism and women was re-emphasised by the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1984. The Ministry had received a clear mandate from the women's forums, held in late 1984, to monitor and initiate legislation and regulations to promote equality of opportunity for women as one of its central purposes (Women's Forums Policy Priorities, 1984).

The aspirations of women, Maori and minorities for greater opportunity in the public service were recognised in the State Sector Act 1988. In a sense, however, EEO regulations were in opposition to the general tenor of that act which returned the public service to decentralised employment practices. The State Sector Act 1988 replaced the State Services Act 1962 and the State Services Conditions of Employment Act 1977 which had set common conditions of employment for all departments. The labour relations framework established under the Labour Relations Act 1987 was incorporated into the State Sector Act 1988, effectively making each government department an employer in its own right and in charge of discharging personnel functions previously the responsibility of the State Services Commission. It also removed the preference that formerly existed for public service applicants in regard to departmental vacancies.

Indeed, EEO provisions were initially left out of the first draft of the State Sector Act 1988. Their inclusion indicated the pressure the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the State Services Commission EEO unit, already established within the state, were able to bring to bear on the state's employment policies.

Inclusion of Equal Employment Opportunity legislation within the 'good employer' provisions ensured that chief executives develop and make regular reports on EEO programmes to the State Services Commission. Although accountability for EEO ultimately rests with chief executives, the design and implementation of an EEO programme which complies with the aims outlined within the State Sector Act 1988 is generally delegated to an EEO co-ordinator. The department, through the EEO co-ordinator, is required to write regular progress reports on their EEO programme to the State Services Commission.

The location of EEO co-ordinator positions

EEO co-ordinator positions are situated within government departments at management level. All the EEO co-ordinators interviewed had some degree of autonomy over their work and had some budgetary responsibilities in relation to the development and implementation of EEO programmes. In addition to this, some EEO co-ordinators had supervisory power. Two EEO co-ordinator positions had one or more assistants. Another was an EEO manager with supervisory power over seven staff.

Within a number of government departments, the position of EEO co-ordinator is subsumed within the duties and responsibilities of another management position. In most cases this tends to be a personnel related management position, with staff and budgetary responsibilities attached to it.

The work of EEO co-ordinators

In the New Zealand context, equal employment opportunity refers to the selection of the best qualified person for a position without regard to the person's sex, ethnic/racial origin or disability. It does not involve any formal system of preferential selection or positive or 'reverse' discrimination. An EEO plan generally involves:

- reviewing a department's personnel practices including, recruitment, selection, promotion, training and development
- a statistical analysis of the workforce by sex, ethnicity
- training for management and the target groups regarding EEO
- the development of strategies to eliminate explicit and implicit barriers to employment.

Most plans include numerical or percentage targets for the recruitment and promotion of the groups recognised as disadvantaged. Clearly, then, an EEO plan can potentially have wide ranging impacts on the practices of an organisation. This potential, the tendency for EEO co-ordinators to be women and the identification of women as a disadvantaged group to be targetted by EEO programmes have all led to EEO co-ordinators being frequently referred to as femocrats. It was this combination of factors too which made EEO co-ordinators an obvious focus for a study of femocrats.

Research method

There was little existing empirical data related to EEO co-ordinators when the research was initiated. Indeed, EEO programmes had only been recently established in government departments. Consequently, a study focusing on EEO co-ordinators provides both an insight into the practice of EEO within the state and the foundation for further sociological theorizing around the development of a femocracy. The research, of necessity, was exploratory. This

meant constructing a broad-based interview schedule which tapped both attributional and relational aspects of the positions and practices of EEO co-ordinators (see Appendix 1).

The field work component of this research was carried out between 1989 and 1990 in Wellington. It involved a series of indepth interviews with EEO co-ordinators. The interviews were designed to provide information on their background, EEO work, involvement in and knowledge of feminism, strategies of political change and networking. The interviews were designed to give an overview of the similarities and differences between EEO practitioners and to highlight their particular position and relationships within various government organisations.

The Participants

This research was conducted with the participation of eight EEO co-ordinators. They were located within the head offices of a variety of government departments. The organisations in which EEO co-ordinators worked were located in close proximity to one another. At most there was only a ten minute walk between the two departments at greatest distance from each other. This not only eased the fieldwork, but it transpired that the geographical proximity of EEO co-ordinators was a significant factor in maintenance of networks between EEO co-ordinators.

The size of the organisations in which the co-ordinators worked varied. Some organisations had only a few hundred employees and were contained a single building. Others employed between one and two thousand employees. They were distributed across central and regional offices within the Wellington area and in other parts of the country. This in turn created variation in the extent of an EEO co-ordinator's responsibilities and the degree to which they were involved in travel outside the Wellington region.

Setting up the fieldwork

The first entry into the field involved a series of discussions with a number of key people. These were located within the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the State Services Commission. Discussions ranged over general issues related to feminists working within the state. This proved to be an invaluable exercise. It was useful as a start to familiarise myself with the location of government departments and the type of institutional settings in which I could expect to find EEO co-ordinators. It also allowed me to become familiar with the language developed within the culture of the public service. All public servants appeared to be comfortable with it but to the uninitiated the language is only partly comprehensible. It reinforced the different areas in which femocrats may work and the structural relations that condition their location within the state.

It was from these initial discussions that I acquired names of four EEO co-ordinators who were approached to be involved in this study. Generally the names provided were those of the more experienced EEO co-ordinators. That is, those women who had about two years experience in an EEO co-ordinator position. The success of this approach to locate co-ordinators indicated that networks did exist among women within the state. But it also made clear that those networks were not simply a single network. Instead, they constituted a number of specific networks between which links might be made by individuals.

In some instances, I found that the same names were being suggested by two or three different people. This presented the possibility that my informants were either involved in the same network or had similar links to more than one network. To avoid one network selecting itself, I also approached a number of government departments randomly from a list of departments. Four co-ordinators were selected in this way. All the women who had EEO co-ordinator responsibilities in conjunction with another full-time position were selected in this way. One full-time co-ordinator was accessed through this method. It is interesting to note that the three EEO co-ordinators who performed EEO tasks in conjunction with other responsibilities had either developed quite separate networks from the women originally approached or were not actively involved in networks.

The purpose of the research was to provide an exploratory study of EEO co-ordinators as femocrats within the state. There were forty-three Government departments that had obligations under the State Sector Act 1988 to develop an EEO programme and, therefore, likely to delegate responsibilities to an EEO co-ordinator. The small sample used in this study does not allow it to be representative of all EEO co-ordinators. However, it does usefully illustrate a number of issues which could orientate a larger study.

The interviews

The indepth structured interviews were guided by a thematically grouped set of questions (see Appendix 1). Each interview commenced with an explanation of my research interest and an assurance that confidentiality would be respected (see Appendix 2). The co-ordinators were interested to know who was involved in the study and at the same time offered suggestions as to who I should be talking to. The questions covered the following topics: work history, education, family background, personal details, career ambitions, position within department, responsibilities and duties, organisational relationships, view of EEO, identification and views on feminism, feminist involvement, views about political change, the nature of the state and networking. All interviews were taped and transcribed, with a copy of the transcribed interviews sent to the participants.

The sequence of questions was not followed in every case and questions were phrased to fit in with the flow of the participants' responses. Attempts were made to follow up lines of discussion raised by the co-ordinators. These often provided a very useful insight into the context and approach of EEO co-ordinators.

The EEO co-ordinators

All eight EEO co-ordinators were women. All except one were in their forties. Six had been married at some point and two were currently married. The remaining six women were either living with a male or female partner, or were living on their own. Five of the women had children from their marriages. All of these children were at least of secondary school age, usually older. Only

one woman anticipated starting a family in the next few years. These observations show that the co-ordinators were not actively involved in bringing up young children, and some did not have major family responsibilities. Those characteristics both set them apart from many women in the labour force and influenced their identification of EEO priorities. The following discussion provides a brief profile of each of the participants in relation to their career in EEO.

Jane

Jane has worked within the public service for the last three and half years. She spent the first two and a half years working as an advisory officer in the area of community development for a large government department. She also served as a PSA delegate. After more than a year specifically looking for an EEO position, Jane finally obtained such a position in another government department.

She was the first EEO co-ordinator to be employed within a large, and recently formed, government organisation consisting of over fifteen hundred employees. The vast majority of its employees were men. Men also dominated the senior management levels of the organisation. There was also a significant proportion of Maori employees, mainly located at the lower levels within the organisations' regional branches.

The EEO co-ordinator position was located within the human resources section. Jane was accountable to the manager on a day-to-day basis, and to the chief executive on a quarterly basis. Jane described her position as equivalent to the secondary management level. She expected to maintain this position for the next two years. However, if she felt she was not making progress in this job she declared no hesitation in leaving it.

Politically, Jane identified herself as an anarchist who was informed by both socialism and feminism. To achieve EEO, Jane believed changes were required at an organisational level. New procedures and structures had to be put

into place and a new culture developed that would enhance each person's potential.

Morag

Prior to obtaining an EEO co-ordinator position, Morag had been teaching at a local polytechnic for two years. Morag had also been keen to acquire an EEO position and had attended EEO co-ordinator meetings at the State Services Commission. Morag was contracted to develop an EEO programme within a large organisation of employees. This was seen as a management position with a salary in the \$40-50,000 range attached.

This EEO co-ordinator position reports to the manager of the human resource division and the chief executive. Morag had regular contact with other EEO co-ordinators through meetings at the State Services Commission EEO unit, and more recently the EEO Practitioners Association.

Morag aligned herself politically with a Marxist-feminist position. She saw herself as playing an advocacy role as an EEO co-ordinator for the disadvantaged employee groups as well as providing advice to management. In the future Morag wanted to continue in this type of work but had no clear plans as to what she might do next.

Sandra

Sandra's movement into the public service was initially achieved by obtaining a research job for two months within a government department. At the end of this job she applied for a new position as EEO co-ordinator in a large government department. She worked in this position for eighteen months before taking up a position as an EEO manager position within another organisation. This involved developing an EEO unit. Sandra's experience within two EEO positions meant that she was one of the more experienced EEO co-ordinators

within the public service and was often called upon to advise the more inexperienced EEO co-ordinator.

Sandra worked within a large organisation consisting of approximately four thousand employees. Women constituted 48 percent of employees, although men tended to occupy senior positions and predominate in specific functional areas. The EEO manager position was situated in Head office. Sandra reported to the human resource manager. Sandra was one of only a few senior women at this level within the organisation. When fully staffed, the EEO unit which Sandra headed consisted of seven members who worked to develop specific areas of the EEO programme.

For Sandra, EEO was mainly about broadening the representation of the 'power brokers' within the organisation and challenging both the values and culture which these power brokers reinforced. Sandra identified the power brokers as Pakeha men. Sandra stated that her unit worked together as a team using feminist principles of organising. This represented the modelling of EEO principles within the team structure. As the unit developed, most of Sandra's contact with other EEO co-ordinators was limited to those women working within her unit. In addition, Sandra tended to develop networks with other women within senior management. Sandra had personal aspirations to move into a more senior management level.

Sandra identified herself as a radical feminist and stated that this meant that she aligned herself to a lesbian lifestyle. This was reflected in her involvement with the lesbian network operating within the public service. Through EEO Sandra was hoping to open up the organisation to a more diverse group of people and accordingly change the organisational culture.

Fiona

Fiona had been working as a social researcher with two different government departments for several years before obtaining her first EEO co-

ordinator position. She held this position for two years before applying for her current position as an EEO co-ordinator.

Fiona was employed within a large organisation of approximately two thousand employees. Women constituted over half of the organisation's employees although men still predominate senior positions. The department had been restructured into a head office with four autonomous service organisations attached. The EEO co-ordinator position was situated at Head office within the human resource division. This division carried out a overview function for the entire organisation.

The EEO co-ordinator reports to the manager of human resources who in turn reports to a group manager who reports directly to the chief executive. This EEO position had already been in existence for three years before Fiona took up the position. The position offered Fiona the opportunity to manage staff. She had one assistant and was expecting to appoint another to help run the EEO programme.

Fiona had a clear ambition to become a manager. Work as a social researcher had limited her ability to move into management. It had not allowed her to acquire the skills and experience necessary to be a manager. For Fiona, EEO was about organisational change and functioned as a critique of the way an organisation operated. Although Fiona did not align herself with any strand of feminism, she did believe there was a need to alter the culture of organisations, along with efforts to increase the number of women in senior positions. In particular, Fiona was critical of the masculine culture of the organisation and 'game playing and competitiveness' that men brought to their work. In connection with her EEO work, Fiona has been active in the establishment of an EEO Practitioners Association.

Helen

Helen has spent the last eight years working within the public service in industrial relations and liaison work. Helen was employed as the human

resource manager within a small organisation of approximately one hundred employees. EEO representatives were subsumed within the manager position. Women made up 46 percent of employees within this organisation, but tended to be located within the corporate services areas and at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy. Men predominated within the specialist areas and at senior levels. Maori, who made up 10 percent of employees, predominated within the lower levels of corporate services and had a very limited representation among the specialist areas of the organisation. Helen as a manager and EEO co-ordinator, reported to a group manager.

Helen argued that EEO needed to be integrated into personnel management. Emphasis was placed upon education to change management attitudes. Helen identified herself as a liberal feminist, although she suggested that her knowledge of other feminist agendas informed her work in specific ways. Helen had ambitions to move out of human resource management into general management.

Bronwyn

Bronwyn had joined the public service in the early 1970s and had been employed within a number of different government departments and committees, chiefly within personnel or administrative positions. She had worked within the present organisation for three years as a senior administrative officer and EEO co-ordinator. The latter position was largely subsumed within her responsibilities and duties as senior administrative officer. She reported to a senior manager who in turn reported directly to the chief executive.

Bronwyn planned to continue working within her current position, although uncertain for how long. She was prepared to move on if a better and more interesting job came up, but was equally content to stay on until she retired.

Molly

Molly had worked within the regional branch of a government department for fourteen years prior to obtaining the position of EEO co-ordinator located within head office. Her first introduction to this position was as an EEO liaison person within the regional branch where she worked. She was the second EEO co-ordinator the organisation had employed and had held the position for one year.

Molly worked in a large organisation of over two thousand employees. Men constituted the vast majority of the organisations' employees and predominated within the senior and specialised positions. Women tended to predominate within the support services and as technical assistants within specialised areas. The position of EEO co-ordinator was located within the human resource area and was described by Molly as equivalent to the level of a senior administrative officer. Molly reported to the manager of the division and to a general manager.

Molly had not had any contact with feminist groups or organisations and was not familiar with the theoretical underpinnings of each feminist tradition. She was actively involved in the organisation's women's network and was finding the EEO co-ordinators' meetings very stimulating in introducing her to new ideas and approaches to EEO. For Molly, EEO was about attitudinal change on the part of both individual managers and employees. Molly was happy to stay on within this EEO co-ordinator for another couple of years. On the advice of her manager, she intended to work on developing management skills.

Erica

Erica was employed on a contract basis as a manager and she also had responsibilities as the EEO co-ordinator within an organisation of less than four hundred employees. This dual position is located within the human resources section. As EEO co-ordinator, Erica reported to a general manager. Women constituted approximately half the permanent staff within the organisation.

However, men were more likely to occupy senior levels and contract positions within specialist areas. Women were more likely to be concentrated within corporate services.

For Erica, EEO was mainly about career development and concerned attitudinal change. Erica described herself as a 'disillusioned' feminist who rejected the notion of different strands of feminism. She had little to do with other EEO co-ordinators and held the EEO co-ordinators' network in low regard. Erica saw herself working in this position for the next year and a half, after which she expressed an interest in pursuing staff development elsewhere.

Chapter Four

EEO Co-ordinators and Feminism

Over the last decade feminism has become increasingly diffuse, to the extent that it has become virtually reduced to an articulation of 'feminine' values (Segal, 1987:ix-xvi). In that process feminism has become popularised to the point where the majority of women and men support the claims they believe to be made by feminists. According to Gold and Webster's (1990:71) values study, four out of five New Zealanders 'approve' of the women's movement. This stands in marked contrast to feminism in the 1970s. During that period feminism was seen to be a distinct challenge to power relations and the construction of gender differences which those power relations upheld. To identify as a feminist was to place oneself at risk. Feminism placed one outside the mainstream.

The diffusion and popularisation of feminism has made it difficult to distinguish between feminist activity in the state, as opposed to from women's activities. For the most part commentators have preferred, implicitly or explicitly, to avoid the issue. Franzway, Court and Connell, for instance argue:

"that 'Are [EEO co-ordinators] feminists?' is the wrong question. However, we do think it appropriate, indeed essential, to ask about practices and objectives" (Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989:102).

This position fails to recognise, as Yeatman (1990:82) has, that a commitment to feminism and equity is frequently a credential of femocrat positions. Under those circumstances, it is important to understand the nature of feminism, as

recruited by the state, and the extent to which feminism directs the actions of femocrats.

The feminist movement consists of several feminist traditions. Each has distinct intellectual and historical roots which have shaped feminist praxis. Feminist groups, organisations, campaigns and networks constitute tangible evidence of feminist activities within society at particular periods. At the close of the first chapter it was suggested that equal opportunity in the paid labour market was a pivotal part of a feminist political strategy during the 1980s. Under those conditions it would be logical to expect feminists to attempt to secure EEO co-ordinator positions. This study of EEO co-ordinators explores the validity of that assumption. This chapter considers the extent to which EEO co-ordinators connect with the feminist movement, its practices and theoretical traditions.

Accessing EEO co-ordinator positions

While one could expect that feminists would systematically assist other feminists to attain EEO positions, in reality, accessing information about the positions and application for those positions related more to their existing employment. There was little prompting by a feminist network. Six of the eight EEO co-ordinators participating in this study had moved into EEO co-ordinator positions from other positions which they held within the public service. Of the remaining two women, one woman had worked at a local polytechnic and the other had been working in the public service overseas.

Three women had been given responsibility for their position in conjunction with duties and responsibilities associated with existing responsibilities in human resource management and its related administration. These women did not perceive themselves as being directly appointed to an EEO co-ordinator position and certainly were not seeking to be appointed to such positions:

"It would be very frustrating. You would start banging your head against brick walls everyday and as I said I like going to work" (Erica).

Generally, their human resource management responsibilities located them at a higher level, with larger salary packages, than those of full-time EEO co-ordinator positions. These women had applied for their post either through an advertisement in the newspaper or through the public service circular. Some had been 'head-hunted' by the organisation.

"[This organisation] was not my first choice. It was what jobs were available at the time. I could have gone into the private sector or the State Services Commission. [This organisation] had a job going and were very keen to have me" (Helen).

While these co-ordinators had responsibility for developing an EEO plan, that responsibility was subsumed by the duties and responsibilities of their other tasks:

" I am senior administration officer which means I am responsible for personnel and staff and salaries for the department...and general administration....EEO of course fits in there" (Bronwyn).

Tasks relating to EEO were often delegated to an assistant by these three co-ordinators.

Some women had assumed the role of EEO co-ordinator as a result of internal pressure in the organisation in which they already worked. Immediately prior to Molly's appointment, she had been seconded from her usual position in the organisation to maintain the EEO network and make the necessary arrangements for advertising the recently vacated EEO position. Failure to find suitable outside candidates led the members of the organisation to encourage Molly to apply for the position.

"It was after [the first round of applicants] that I was asked [by the director general, the manager of personnel and the women's network] to come out. I was so concerned about where we were at and what we could lose I felt I had no option" (Molly).

The other four EEO co-ordinators actively sought EEO co-ordinator positions because of what they perceived as the personal benefits associated with such positions. It offered more money and better working conditions than their previous jobs:

" it was a move up in terms of salary, [and] in terms of more autonomy on a day to day basis" (Jane).

It also offered the opportunity to develop new skills and experiences:

"I am quite clear ... that I would like to become a manager.... I made the move into this job ... because it gave me one of the skills that I so far didn't have.. and that was managing a budget" (Fiona).

"I [wanted to] get involved in the management of change" (Helen).

Essentially, EEO co-ordinator position's secured more firmly these women's position in a primary, albeit feminised, labour market (Barron and Norris, 1976:64; Game and Pringle, 1983:15).

For some women, their appointment as EEO co-ordinators was assisted by their previous EEO experience. For other women, networks played a key role. Morag had made contact with the other EEO co-ordinators through the regular EEO meetings held at the State Services Commission:

"...it was actually the people in the EEO unit in the State Services Commission who found out about [this position] and passed on my curriculum vitae. I did not actually see the position advertised " (Morag).

None of the EEO co-ordinators had been recruited directly out of the groups or organisations which had close association with the feminist movement. Nor did any of the women suggest that they had been encouraged by any feminist groups, organisations, or individuals to apply for EEO positions. Only Sandra suggested that the initial attraction to an EEO co-ordinator position was related to her personal identity with feminism:

"I looked at this [EEO position] and thought that this is one of the very few jobs I could imagine doing in the public service because it would pull together all my pioneering side ... and be paid to be a feminist" (Sandra).

While co-ordinators, entry to EEO positions did not appear to be through feminist networks, four women were involved in feminist groups and organisations early in their lives. Two of the women knew of each other from their involvement in a women's liberation group formed in 1972. It was a consciousness-raising group attracting a diversity of women who were involved in several campaigns:

"I remember when there was the ACC legislation and we did a bit of a demonstration against that because it did not adequately deal with women. ... We campaigned round sex education [and] childcare. There was [also] a support group for single mothers" (Morag).

From an early involvement within this feminist group, those same women became active within groups connected with other political movements. One became active within the trade union movement and was involved for some time with socialist groups, the Working Women's Alliance and the Marxist-Leninist organisation. The other became involved with Maori and anti-racist groups which were opposing the 1981 Springbok Tour and supporting the Hikoi. She was also involved in a Waitangi Action group.

Another co-ordinator became involved with a radical feminist group while studying in the United States. On her return to New Zealand she joined a variety of feminist groups and campaigns:

"I was involved with the Women's Electoral Lobby.. with helping to establish the Rape Crisis Center... and I was actively involved in the whole Abortion Law Reform area" (Sandra).

It was also in this period that she adopted a lesbian identity and became active in lesbian campaigns. She also played a major role in establishing a feminist bookshop.

University experiences shaped another of the co-ordinator's connections with feminism. In 1978, Helen joined a 'women's action' group on campus and had a brief association with Rape Crisis and Women's Refuge. She was subsequently involved in organising the University Women's Conference and became an active member in the Society for Research on Women between 1982 to 1986. She was also a member of the Labour Party.

It will be recalled that women within the Labour Government and Labour Party were significant forces in the inclusion of EEO in the State Sector Act. Labour women's support for the issue of equal employment opportunities for women had helped justify their own inclusion within the Party structure and Government appointments. At the same time it helped to legitimate the overall

appeal of the Labour Party to many women and men within the electorate, and its election for two terms between 1984-1990 (Wilson, 1990:3-4).

Three other co-ordinators had not joined any feminist groups or organisations. They had come, however, into contact with feminist groups or had focused on issues related to women in their previous paid work. Through her employment in the mid 1980s as a social science researcher, Fiona developed an active interest in women's health issues and joined the women's caucus of a professional health association:

" One of the professional groups I belonged to then was the public health association and I joined the women's caucus...[this] exists as a ginger group to change things for the better" (Fiona).

That network was maintained after she left that position:

"I continue to be involved in the women's caucus and been instrumental in setting up the Women's Health Council" (Fiona).

Erica provided legal advice and training to the women's refuge and a women's information referral exchange workers while employed with a legal aid service overseas in the mid 1980s:

"I spent a lot of time training refuge workers, again in the same sorts of things as the WIRE workers, [in] those legal things that workers would have to deal with" (Erica).

Bronwyn spent a significant proportion of her public service career working as the executive officer for the various quangos related to women between 1975 and 1983:

"I...was the person who opens the mail, answering phones, but much more than that, drafting policies for the committees approval or discussing with groups what they wanted out of something" (Bronwyn).

Molly was not involved with feminist groups. She had become active in the women's network within the government organisation where she was employed and had recently joined the EEO Practitioners' Association.

Networking

Networks were important to the position of co-ordinators within government departments. Networking was actively encouraged by the State Services Commission EEO Unit through the production of a regular newsletter and staging of monthly meetings for EEO co-ordinators. This provided a venue for EEO co-ordinators to meet each other and keep up with one another's activities.

"there's a monthly get together where we share lunch and have a speaker or something and then after that the EEO co-ordinators themselves have a meeting and discuss various things of mutual interest. They are a very supportive lot" (Morag).

In conjunction, full-time co-ordinators tended to develop their own networks with co-ordinators in other EEO positions.

"There are a lot of people who are really good in different areas so what we do is draw on each others strength. [Lisa] is really good... Quite a few of the group at State Services" (Molly).

Many co-ordinators developed mentoring relationships through those networks:

"I have established a co-mentoring relationship with another EEO co-ordinator . We are close friends anyway. " (Morag).

In two instances this led to a situation where co-ordinators moved into, or at least attempted to move into, the same organisations as their co-mentor.

"Sharon and I started an EEO job the same time and worked closely together which is why I applied for this job. I had a good understanding of the extent to which EEO was supported in this organisation. A bit of inside knowledge always helps"(Fiona).

"I had one job 99.9 percent in the bag but a friend of mine was already in the job and they would not create the second position"(Jane).

The transferral of the function of the State Services EEO Unit to the Employment Equity Commission in 1990 led to EEO co-ordinators to establish an EEO Practitioners' Association. The Association has encouraged the

broadening of EEO networks by opening membership to full and part-time practitioners involved with EEO in both the public and private sector.

Two of the co-ordinators who combined their responsibilities for EEO with human resource management did not participate within these formal meetings of EEO co-ordinators, nor did they network with other EEO co-ordinators. The other who attended a few meetings for EEO co-ordinators at the State Services Commission, nevertheless showed little inclination to be a part of these networks:

"...the SSC holds these EEO co-ordinator lunches. I went to a couple of them but I got so pissed off with them that I never went back again. Basically because we were talked down and not with, and that gives me the shits to a high degree" (Erica).

The three co-ordinators involved in human resource management tended to belong to management related networks and professional associations.

"I do .. not [have contact with] EEO Co-ordinators as such because ... EEO is only part of my work. I have a lot of contact with people at my level. The personnel managers who also tend to have responsibility for EEO and we are all accountable for EEO so we have regular meetings. I am supposed to be joining the EEO practitioners group which is an offshoot which the Personnel Managers have established. (Helen).

Others had no network associations and appeared to be committed primarily to partner and family:

"I would have to say that family and partnership have really taken over my life. My kids are good feminists, they are superb and so is my man. I do not actually have time for socialising and doing other things which is perhaps a shame" (Bronwyn).

One co-ordinator was active in a networking beyond the area of EEO. Upon entry to the public service, Sandra had been instrumental in the creation of a lesbian public service network. This was a strategy to overcome at least in part her own feelings of isolation:

"I had been in the public service about four months and I began to feel the need to find out where the other lesbians are" (Sandra).

In accordance with her promotion into EEO, Sandra has sought to develop networks with women within senior management positions.

"... coming to head office here and feeling really isolated as a senior women and seeing that I needed to have networks with other women that are similar to my seniority. We are under similar pressures and can give each other support" (Sandra).

Sandra was the only co-ordinator who spoke explicitly about developing a feminist network within the public service.

"I am beginning to find lots of key women here in the department and they tend to be feminists, who feel really strongly about what is happening to women or what isn't happening for women." (Sandra).

Sandra also sought out other feminists as mentors. These women also tended to be located at senior levels.

"I had a wonderful mentor in [my previous organisation]. She was the only woman director. She was a very strong feminist. ... She gave me incredible support and I would help and assist her as well" (Sandra).

The EEO co-ordinators were concerned to develop networks not only with other co-ordinators across departments but were also engaged in developing networks within the organisation in which they were employed. Five co-ordinators were part of a women's network within their department. The relationship of these co-ordinators to the respective women's networks differed. In some departments a women's networks already existed prior to the co-ordinator's appointment and this network had made approaches to the co-ordinator:

"I felt really well received and supported as soon as I got here. Like the women's group was very strong, active and supportive and ready to pounce as soon as I got here" (Jane).

Others had to initiate women's networks. This extended already existing networks among the EEO target groups:

"The Pacific Island network is very active. The minority networks are going too. The women's network is very weak. ... We called a meeting in Head Office and only four women turned up. ... I had a go at a senior women's network that did not get off the ground" (Morag).

"Women's networking is my next priority because women make up 55 percent of the organisation. ... I am surprised as to how little networking there is amongst women. I plan to have a women's network in the head office" (Fiona).

There is little indication that co-ordinators were seeking to develop feminist networks. Rather, these forms of networking tend to reflect a desire on the part of the co-ordinators, and particularly those co-ordinators in full-time EEO positions, to develop a recognition of themselves as 'experts' in EEO. It also reflected a desire to develop their own professional career. In the immediate context of the organisation, co-ordinators tended to be dependent upon the patronage of the chief executive for this recognition.

At the same time, co-ordinators have attempted to expand this basis of support by developing a conception of themselves as professionals. This has occurred with the co-ordinators identifying themselves as EEO practitioners. This process has been facilitated by the formation of associations with their peers. The establishment of the EEO Practitioners' Association plays a particularly important role. That marks the co-ordinators' efforts towards professional self-control, through attempts to expand and standardise the potential membership of the association and the position of co-ordinators within organisations.

Identification with feminism

All the women identified themselves as feminists. Notwithstanding, their knowledge of feminist theory and their involvement with feminist groups varied considerably. One co-ordinator attempted to distance herself from any connection with feminism. Erica defined herself as a 'disillusioned feminist' and was critical of the conception of different theoretical traditions within feminism:

"You see the problem with those tags [is that] it depends upon your perspective, where you stand as an individual. To me it is all about equality, fair go etc. A radical feminist, a lesbian, is she someone who would tear down all the political institutions we've got? They are nonsense terms to me. They don't mean a thing" (Erica).

Two co-ordinators equated assertiveness with being feminist:

"I think I always had these [feminist] tendencies being a women working in a male-dominated area. I was always very vocal" (Molly).

"Probably a few people were challenged by my being in this job. ... It is quite different for some people to ask for approval from a woman who will turn round and say not bloody likely and will probably use those words too. " (Bronwyn).

Another co-ordinator equated being a feminist with having the choices which she had in her early family experience:

" [feminism] was a way of living, it was the way I was brought up. Probably [feminism had been with me] all my life" (Erica).

Feminism necessarily implies praxis. That is, a practice informed by feminist theory (O'Brien, 1981:4). It involves a conscious identification with a political group or party, that has strong moral commitments to equality for women and has clearly stated political aims. Few of the co-ordinators showed the purposefulness of action embedded in feminist theory that praxis implies. Three co-ordinators, Bronwyn, Erica and Molly, had little knowledge of feminism's theoretical traditions.

"I expect when you get older and you've lived around a bit longer and you have left the books alone you will forget that sort of crap. ... It is really a matter of getting on and doing things rather than hanging things. When you start to hang things...you start to blinker" (Erica).

Nor did they have any involvement in groups and organisations that characterise the feminist movement.

" No, I haven't [had any involvement in feminist groups]. I am exposed to quite a bit through the involvement with the women's network. ... No other women's groups" (Molly).

Other co-ordinators did have some knowledge of the different theoretical traditions and were able to make distinctions concerning the kind of feminism to which they were aligned. Sandra clearly aligned herself to radical feminism:

"I am a radical feminist....radical rather than socialist or marxist [feminist]. Radical as in going to the root. ... What we are up against is patriarchy and [a] male dominated...society which is maybe two or three thousand years old. I also draw on links from some of the ancient herstories and the matriarchal religions"

This identification as a radical feminist defined the types of values and activities which this co-ordinator brought to the unit in which she worked:

"I am now able to work...along feminist principles, making it a participatory style of management and making sure that everyone gets their say. Basically modelling within the team structure itself...[along] the EEO principles. ...the other emphasis has been on having lots of colour and vibrancy...posters that enhance our culture. We have decided that one of our missions in this organisation was to promote an organisational culture that celebrates difference and diversity and that we...model that to make it work. (Sandra).

Other co-ordinators embraced theoretical positions which emerged out of their connections with socialist groups:

"If there's any sort of [feminist] label I would attach [to myself] it would be Marxist-feminist and that's a bit different from a socialist feminist because I find a Marxist analysis pretty powerful" (Morag).

"I do not know if I am a socialist but I am definitely an anarchist. I do not think feminism can survive by itself with the political system as such " (Jane).

The latter tended to distance herself from feminism by defining her primary political identification as that of an anarchist. This theoretical and practical involvement with socialist groups was manifested in these co-ordinators' concern with issues related to the loss of conditions for public servants as a result of the recent introduction of reforms in the state sector:

"Ranges of rates have been introduced in a very crafty way [to produce] a wage freeze because coupled with the ranges of rates has been a restructuring of departments. An absolute cleaning out the financial fat in departments so that there is actually nothing left to pay increases to staff with" (Jane).

One co-ordinator, Helen, defined herself as a liberal feminist:

"I would regard myself as liberal feminist in that my work requires me to concentrate very much on individuals. On getting individual women to achieve within the work place. That's the methodology and obviously my own personal views mean that I find that a quite comfortable philosophy to work in. "

The remaining co-ordinator, Fiona, while not familiar with different theoretical traditions, discerned the different strategies that feminists might use to pursue their aims and her own preference regarding such strategies:

"The strands of feminism I am familiar with...there is a strand of feminism which is concerned to change the way structures operate so they are more acceptable to women if you like. Another strand of feminism which says that's not the issue moving women up the system to kind of take over and changes occur. I don't agree with the idea that you just need more women in jobs. Although I think that is important as so many women in senior positions have to make so many compromises in terms of their feminist views because they are the only one and it is very difficult to hold a different set of values in a decision making context where you stand out so differently that you don't have any credibility with the other people".

Irrespective of their understanding of feminism, co-ordinators clearly identified men and male culture as the fundamental problem for women in organisations:

"Competitiveness which is mostly exhibited by males in the organisation cost us enormous amounts. I see it when I'm sitting on a management board meeting. It's like boys playing games all the time, putting energy into doing each other in" (Fiona).

Another co-ordinator identified the number of men in the organisation as the problem:

" I find it hard to believe that when I look at who runs the structures, the system, that the best and most competent people for the job are always Pakeha men. " (Sandra).

Women were portrayed as having skills and experiences that would be useful to the operation of the organisation and produce a more supportive work environment:

"I think women work in a much more co-operative manner and I think they're much more business-like. They are there for a meeting or there to decide on something so we get down to dealing with it" (Fiona).

Choice was the most basic conception of feminism articulated by the co-ordinators. Most saw feminism as being:

" about choices. [It] is about women achieving because they have control over their lives" (Helen).

To achieve such choices, changes needed to be made mainly in early socialisation practices and in the attitudes concerning women's abilities and attributes. Women needed to be offered opportunities to prove themselves in positions that up to now had largely been dominated by men:

"many girls and women...get all those kinds of messages [that]...there's no point in them getting educated because they will just get married and have babies. They are the second sex, girls are useless. You can't help it if you get that in your family or outside in the wider world. Those messages...shape their beliefs, perceptions and understandings" (Fiona).

The second conception of feminism among co-ordinators was that women embody values and practises which would enhance the culture of the organisation, provide better management and significantly reduce discriminatory practises against groups of employees. In effect, co-ordinators had a conception of women akin to the moral redemptress (James and Saville-Smith, 1989:54) which portrays women as powerful beings able to save the organisation from men's competitive tendencies:

"Competitiveness which is mostly exhibited by males in the organisation also cost us enormous amounts. I see it when I'm sitting on a management board meeting. It's like boys playing games all the time, putting energy into doing each other in, the sort of stuff you see in childrens playgrounds, little boys being physically violent towards each other, except in the management board setting it's refined down a bit into verbal exchanges. " (Fiona).

The views of feminism articulated by the co-ordinators at best represent a popularised feminism rather than a radical or revolutionary perspective. It concentrates on the perceived vices of men and the culture they celebrate (Segal, 1987:3; Cox and James, 1987:13).

Issues of priority

Issues which received priority from the co-ordinators varied. There was a distinct difference between the full-time and those human resource managers involved in EEO. This was most clearly demonstrated by the amount of time which the latter committed to the EEO programme:

"It's probably one full day a week, that's about ten hours" (Erica).

"[It] could be a couple of hours, could be half a day. It is not a regular sort of thing it depends what is brewing at the time. I try to make sure it does not get put down to the bottom of the heap" (Bronwyn).

In contrast, those employed solely as EEO co-ordinators would spend:

"[About] forty to forty five hours. I normally start about eight in the morning and leave about five" (Morag).

"It could be between fifty and sixty hours. Most women I know working in this area tend to work really long hours, seems like we have to" (Sandra).

The co-ordinators had different perceptions of the purpose of EEO programmes within the organisation. Some co-ordinators adhered to the approach of the State Services Commission EEO unit and saw EEO as a critique of employment practices:

"... EEO is about organisational change. It often functions as a critique of the way the organisation functions and it is very difficult to do that if you are also responsible for its operation" (Fiona).

Other co-ordinators were more committed to integrating EEO into the organisation's existing employment policies and practices:

"What I see is to provide workable policies that will get put into place. One of the things with EEO liaison officers that policy has gone through but not happening as quickly as I think it should. ... I guess one of the first goals is in integrating EEO into [the organisation] policy and practice and

when you have succeeded there probably is not EEO. It is just part of Human Resource meshed in" (Molly).

"...you cannot separate EEO from everything else we do. I will sit on an interview panel to interview somebody, that is part of EEO. As part of my brief as the Personnel Manager, [I am] there to ensure the selection procedure is conducted in such a way as to be conducive to promoting EEO. ... We provide a lot of advice to managers and there is often an EEO component there" (Helen).

One of the first priority for all co-ordinators when they started in their positions was the development of an EEO plan. For at least one co-ordinator, the yearly review of the plan and report to the State Services Commission appeared to be the extent of the EEO work conducted within the organisation:

"My desk is a heap at the moment, there are some things in there that have been there for a while... EEO gets fitted in around those. Of course the main thing every year is the revision of the plan, getting that drafted. Every quarter there is a report to go to the State Services Commission" (Bronwyn).

Other managers also responsible for EEO undertook to integrate these into their other tasks and responsibilities:

"A large part of EEO is a developmental issue. Ensuring that people have career paths, that they are promoted. That they go for training and retraining courses. So all the rotation courses, the secondment policies, the performance assessment, staff development, staff training [are] all interwoven with EEO, as part of the EEO management plan" (Erica).

"[When] I do a personnel policy I look at budget implications, I look at EEO implications and that's where [EEO] is. It becomes like your own internal audit. " (Helen).

The process of developing an EEO plan was approached in different ways by the co-ordinators. Most co-ordinators drew up the plan themselves and then would consult the chief executive for approval:

"Last year there was an EEO management plan that was prepared by somebody who was not in EEO. ... The plan was hardly implemented at all because there was not an EEO co-ordinator. I have.. gone through the old plan and used that as a basis...for a new plan" (Jane).

Alternatively one of the co-ordinator consulted with members of the organisation and developed a committee for drawing up the EEO plan:

"They had a bit of a plan here before [I was appointed]. One of the earliest things I did was to go round and visit all the branches and to talk to staff about EEO and explain to them what it was all about and introduce myself to branch managers. Out of that I got together an equal employment committee of people round the country ... and got goals... towards and EEO plan" (Morag).

With the exception of one, all the co-ordinators placed importance on providing training courses for management and other members of staff:

"The focus next year will be on training the managers. But also getting some more money for training people in the designated groups" (Jane).

"Matters central to the EEO unit [are] largely training type activities. One of the things I am running at the moment is a one day course on interviewing and selection. " (Fiona).

This co-ordinator ensured good attendance at training courses by making these courses more or less mandatory for managers:

"[I have been] inundated with applicants. ... When I sent the advertisement out for this course for managers, I added that anyone who had not done this course wouldn't be able to sit on interview panels. That was an incentive for the managers to go on this course" (Fiona).

Training was emphasised by those co-ordinators who identified attitudinal change as being the key to achieving greater equal employment opportunities for employees:

"EEO is primarily about education, it is about putting the triggers in. Saying have you thought about that? That has got an implication for women staff. Or that is going to cause us difficulty in terms of our Maori employees. Or the toilet facilities for women are not good for wheelchair access [and] what are you going to do about it?" (Helen).

One of the central priorities included in these plans was a review of the existing employment policy and practices of the organisation. That is, a review of advertising for positions, the selection process, development and training within positions, promotions, and exits interviews. Part-time EEO co-ordinators tended to incorporate these tasks into their existing duties. Full-time co-ordinators undertook a comprehensive review and provided advice to management as to the changes required:

"The kind of model that I used was to imagine, here's the department and here's someone coming into it. Going from advertising, to staff development and training and maybe exiting. ... That means working on job descriptions, ...advertising, ...selection panels [and] review the department's recruitment consultants... " (Jane).

"The kind of things that I'm working on are looking at broadening the advertising outlets for jobs. For instance, so that a wider group of people, particularly women.. Maori and Pacific Island people will become aware that there are job opportunities here. ... I am also working on changing the way appointments happen here and this is working in conjunction with the cultural unit and the woman manager of personnel policies area " (Sandra).

The formation of networks among target groups was also an integral priority for EEO co-ordinators. However, this was achieved with varying success:

"Since I have been here I have organised an ethnic network. Women's networking is my next priority ... I am surprised as to how little networking there is amongst women" (Fiona).

"We haven't got a network for disabilities as such but that's on the agenda, [as is] a Pacific Island network. Ethnic minorities we may be over represented in this department. ... We identify another target group [for] people in isolated areas" (Molly).

"Initially there was real resistance to even the idea of having target groups" (Morag).

Development of a database was another priority identified by many co-ordinators. The production of a statistical profile of members of the organisation was considered an important tool to monitor staff movement into, within and out, of the organisation. This would also be used to determine how effective the EEO programme was in improving the position of members of the disadvantaged groups within the organisation:

"... data collection in the department [is important]. ... In terms of getting data we just do not get any data [on some of our employees]. ... We need this information because there will be many people out there in those designated groups who will be management material that we do not know anything about" (Jane).

"One of the things we are getting better at is monitoring the impact of EEO programmes on the organisation by use of statistical tools. Who we employ in terms of gender and...where they are in terms of salary. Every staff member has an EEO record that goes on our data base. ... It means our database is useful in that we are measuring change in staff in the organisation" (Fiona).

Fiona also gave specific time to explaining to managers the purpose of EEO and so was able to enhance management receptiveness to EEO:

"With group managers [I] talked for some time about the database, what it was, demonstrating how to use it. I guess that is a form of training them to respond to others about the database as they haven't had that sort of information before. ... They responded well. One manager honestly admitted when the issue first came up [they] didn't really understand it [and] threw the questionnaire at staff [and] said fill this in. Now knowing more about it they will spend more time explaining to staff and helping them fill it in" (Fiona).

One co-ordinator saw little value in a database to measure changes in the position of members within the organisation. At best, it was seen to offer only a partial explanation of changes. This co-ordinator placed more priority on assessing the impact of the EEO programme through identifying goodwill and changes in attitude:

"[The database] is about six months behind where we would like to be. ... Unfortunately until that is finished we can not really deliver [on statistics] ...

But statistics are just one thing. They don't really tell you much. ... It is the atmosphere which is important and attitude...[it] is the feel of the place and how people are actually getting on" (Erica).

The tasks outlined above all served to indicate co-ordinators' technical competency in EEO matters and their professional attitude. Only a few co-ordinators stated a concern with issues which would be expected of feminists, such as the provision of childcare and action against sexual harassment:

"The issues around improving conditions for women tend to pivot on childcare, flexible working hours and condition and a reduction of explicit harassment. In the [previous organisation where I worked] there seemed to be a lot of success in getting childcare facilities available and up and running" (Sandra).

"Sexual harassment and attention to lesbian and gay staff ... is really important" (Jane).

For most of the co-ordinators, the issue of sexual harassment was diffused to a problem of general harassment:

"It's for general harassment... its not just sexual [harassment]. You might get one of the seniors harassing on of the juniors, ... because one person is overloaded" (Molly).

For other co-ordinators, childcare was deemed too difficult to deal with:

"A creche here is just impossible because one we don't have the numbers of staff. The childcare regulations are such it would be really difficult to set up. We do say to staff that if your childcare breaks down, we'd rather you bring the child into the workplace... than lose you for the day ... our childcare policy is really to provide information to staff on what's available" (Helen).

Effectively these issues did not receive the same amount of attention as administrative and organisational components of EEO such as developing a plan, creating a database, or establishing target groups. These coincided with and were reinforced by most co-ordinators' commitment to a policy of encouraging upward mobility for members of the target groups within the organisation:

"The priority should be for staff clerks to be given the training and the ability to progress rapidly and competently within the personnel management division" (Helen).

"If there were no discrimination I would expect them to [members of the target groups] to be promoted. Promotion in the end is the barometer that you use.. " (Morag).

The emphasis on mobility through promotion reflects the meaning of success that is found within hierarchical organisations (Kanter, 1977:129). However, this emphasis would not necessarily alter the factors contributing to the location of women within clerical and related positions, where by far the greatest proportion of women within the organisation consistently tended to be located. It does not challenge existence of the dual labour market (Barron and Norris, 1976). Nor does it address the way in which the hierarchical structure of the organisation leads to some positions having low or blocked opportunities for mobility (Kanter, 1977:136-139). In effect, an emphasis on promotion for measuring the effectiveness of an EEO programme may reinforce the existing organisational culture and its channels for mobility.

Summary

This chapter has examined the relationship between co-ordinators' connections to the feminist movement and their access to the state, networking and practices with regard to EEO. It was apparent that some co-ordinators had very little connection with the aims and practices of the feminist movement. Although some co-ordinators did have connections to feminist groups or organisations in their earlier lives, and may have identified themselves with specific feminist traditions, this did not necessarily extent beyond popular conceptions of feminism. Moreover, these views of feminism did not inform co-ordinators' practice in ways that would make it recognisably feminist. Indeed, the dominant practices and issues of priority that co-ordinators addressed tended to reflect efforts to professionalise EEO work and to secure the position of EEO co-ordinators within the organisation and within the state generally. To assume that

those who occupy femocrat positions, such as EEO co-ordinator positions, are feminists obscures the realities of EEO work and the reasons why women are attracted to such positions. More significantly, it begs the question of how do EEO co-ordinators, given that they are popularly perceived to be feminists, maintain their credibility as feminists.

Chapter Five

EEO co-ordinators: Strategies of legitimation

It appears that EEO co-ordinators are neither uniformly feminists nor is there uniformity of attitude or practice among those who clearly identify as feminists. This raises certain practical issues for EEO co-ordinators. For, if Yeatman is correct in arguing that the

"first characteristic of a femocrat position... is any occupational position for which a central qualification is a commitment to feminism" (Yeatman, 1990:82),

it is imperative for EEO co-ordinators to be seen to be feminists. If they are not seen to be feminists they must construct an alternative set of credentials which allows them to maintain their positions within organisations. Fundamentally then, EEO co-ordinators, like all professional groups, confront the problem of credibility or legitimation.

Legitimacy is the social justification of power. Those professional groups which possess legitimation have established the right to determine policies, make decision and pronouncements which are publicly recognised and accepted by other groups (Vander Zanden, 1986:225). It allows groups to make claims about themselves and act as leaders (Parkin, 1982:77). EEO co-ordinators need to gain legitimacy as individual co-ordinators and as a group to allow them to act within the state and implement their agendas in relation to EEO. However, this may prove problematic for EEO co-ordinators for a number of reasons.

EEO co-ordinators seek to gain legitimacy for positions which supposedly represent the interests of non-dominant groups within state organisations. Yet EEO co-ordinators occupy a labour market position which is significantly different from that of most women. Of the EEO co-ordinators recruited to EEO positions, most were well educated Pakeha women who had access to employment within the primary labour market. Most were relatively free from domestic and childcare responsibilities as a consequence of remaining unmarried, being divorced or no longer having responsibility for the care of young children.

To this extent, co-ordinators do not typify the labour market situation of most women who have primary responsibility to domestic and childcare duties within the home and who tend to have limited access to paid work, particularly within the primary labour market. Co-ordinators may find it difficult to convince feminists, and other women, that they can represent the employment interests of women. Indeed, many of the employment issues which concern women such as the re-organisation of the working day and week, provision of childcare and parental leave, are not directly issues of personal concern for EEO co-ordinators given their current familial status. Co-ordinators may therefore be seen as less committed to pursuing those issues and need to develop strategies to compensate.

The strategies EEO co-ordinators use to maintain their credibility vary according to the audience. With each audience, the extent to which being seen to be a feminist is a significant part of the legitimation process, differs. Essentially, there are potentially four audiences or 'generalised others' (Mead, 1934) for EEO co-ordinators: first, there are the peers of EEO co-ordinators; second, other femocrats working within the state; third, feminists identifying with the feminist movement and working outside the state and fourth, members of the organisation in which they work.

Maintaining credibility with other femocrats.

One could expect that if being seen to be a feminist was of importance to EEO co-ordinators' credibility, then the audiences with which they would seek to have most contact would be other feminist audiences. That is, with other femocrats and other feminists working outside the state. In reality, EEO co-ordinators paid very little attention to pursuing networks with these groups.

In general, little attempt was made by most co-ordinators to develop connections with other femocrats in the state. The only exceptions were two co-ordinators who said that they had attended particular social events which served as a venue for meeting other femocrats:

"It was really interesting going to this launch of this women's book week. I went with a friend... and she said 'gosh you know a lot of people'. You know how it is ... everybody is there. I knew a good half of the people" (Morag).

"They are networks that are reinforced by our common interests and our attendance at certain things, Women's Studies Association conferences. There was a huge celebration this year ...to celebrate the 1975 Women's Convention... Beehive launches like [National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women] just published a book about barriers against women in employment. So lots of different social, but work-related, occasions where we can get together and talk. " (Sandra).

Both co-ordinators made explicit references to contacts which they had with women working in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and State Services Commission.

Maintaining credibility with other feminists

There was little indication that EEO co-ordinators sought to legitimate their positions with feminists outside the state. Where reference was made to links with feminists outside the state, it was often to distance themselves from other feminists:

"Personally I feel I've lost a bit of idealism and energy. I was never really made for being part of fringe society. I'm too security conscious to donate my life to Rape Crisis or Refuge Centers" (Helen).

"There is an awful lot of talk and not much action on behalf of feminists.... You can talk to the cows come home, it does not make a difference" (Erica).

Another response to this issue was to emphasize the links with feminist groups that co-ordinators had in the past, although none of the co-ordinators had any current connection with such feminist groups:

"I used to have a lot. For a whole period of my life I used to be involved. I spent years working with [a] women's liberation group" (Jane).

"I was just thinking during that time [early 1980s] a lot of the political work I was involved in was specifically around lesbian visibility. A lot of my political activities are now in the work area" (Sandra).

In short, co-ordinators did not refer to the feminist movement to legitimate their current EEO practices, although they did attempt to portray themselves as having paid their feminist 'dues'. The lack of contact with both feminists outside the state and femocrats within the state reinforces the notion that the driving dynamic for EEO co-ordinators was not a social movement, but a developing professional niche within the primary labour market. This seems supported by the emphasis that the co-ordinators placed on peer support and peer recognition.

Maintaining credibility with peers

There were essentially two ways that EEO co-ordinators sought to maintain their credibility as feminists with other EEO co-ordinators. First, EEO co-ordinators reduced feminism to a form with which all co-ordinators, including those who had had little to do with the feminist movement, could agree. This primarily entailed defining feminism as women-identification.

Second, co-ordinators embarked on determining the EEO 'field' (Bourdieu, 1985:723-745). According to Bourdieu a field constitutes a site of more or less overt struggle over which the definition of the legitimate principles of division of the field occur (Bourdieu, 1985:734). Within the field of EEO co-ordinators will be involved in defining the type of expertise and standards of practice that are required to be an EEO practitioner. At this stage, the field of EEO is largely open for co-ordinators to make of it what they choose.

Proponents of feminism as women-identification portray women as having special life-giving qualities which give them a particular affinity with nature (Griffin, 1984; Daly, 1979; Morgan, 1978). This idealisation of women is frequently set against a denunciation of men and male biology as inherently violent, destructive and evil (Segal, 1987:12).

Within a separate women's culture these eternal female values can be enhanced and protected from contamination by men (Cox and James, 1987:13). The cultural construction of masculinity and femininity and of separate spheres for men and women is thus maintained within a women-identified perspective, although with emphasis placed on valuing all that is female as opposed to what is male. This represents the contemporary re-creation of the traditional image of women as the 'moral redemptress' able to bring peace, balance and purity to a world made violent and chaotic by male vice (James and Saville-Smith, 1989:54). Implicit in this conception of men and women is a vision of social change that comes from an inner psychological transformation of individuals. Such a vision leaves little scope for engagement with the economic and political structures which condition women's subordination (Segal, 1987:37; Cox and James, 1987:13).

The co-ordinators expressed these ideas in a number of ways. Some of the co-ordinators were familiar with the popular writers who portrayed this conception of a women-identified feminism:

"[Daly] helped me ... think through all the things I had been taught and had believed. [I] realised they all still reflected a male dominant structure of the world with the greatest figure still being male and turned it totally around and made it much more an inner process. ... Mary Daly talks about the verb that god is be-ing... that is within rather than some external [force]" (Sandra).

Others preferred to associate with women:

"I work a lot better with women" (Erica).

"My experience of working in women's groups is that competitiveness isn't really there ... there is a lot more sharing of ... ideas and tasks" (Fiona).

A women-identified perspective can also be realised through a recognition that women share a common socialisation process which defines feminine qualities as inferior to those characteristics usually associated with men. This process is understood to deny women access to similar positions and rewards as men within employment. In response, women's abilities, skills and experiences are given value in an attempt to justify women's suitability and competence in those positions to which they are often denied access:

"it may be early conditioning, [lack of] encouragement for women to enter fields where they don't feel confident." (Molly).

"I believe in the fundamental abilities of women, with the right training, with the right resources allocated to them [they can] achieve anything they want to" (Helen).

An implicit factor helping to construct this feminist credibility is that virtually all EEO co-ordinators are women:

"Men have applied for [EEO] jobs, not very many. ... There are a few Maori women who have EEO jobs and a few Pacific Island women and some men. ... it has been predominantly Pakeha women who have been getting the jobs but that is changing" (Fiona).

It is not only popularly assumed that only women can be feminists, even though some men are recognised as being sympathetic to feminist causes. But there is a struggle for intellectual hegemony over the right to control and define what constitutes 'women's issues' by some feminists.

At the center of this struggle is the privileged position that is assigned to experience, and particularly women's experience, as a basis for generating knowledge about gender relations:

"We had a number of men we also interviewed for the positions but they tended not to have the same kind of commitment or the same kind of insight that came from the heart. An awareness of the issues, and it was like under pressure they wouldn't be able ... to justify or persuade people about the importance of equal opportunities. Whereas all the women who are here have had real experiences of personal discrimination and in many cases of a double basis like work and culture, or a disability and being lesbian as well as being female. So they come in with... experiences of being on the margins because of their identity" (Sandra).

An emphasis on experience is likely to encourage bonding on the basis of shared victimization and exclusion organised around guilt (Briskin, 1990:105).

Assigning priority to women's experience effectively functions to exclude men and can encourage a lapse into the politics of identity (Adams, 1989:34-54; Briskin, 1990:102-108; Sivanandan, 1990:1-30):

"Identity politics, in fact, seems to claim that the struggles of the self over its various personae - social, sexual, gendered - are by their very nature (for one does not struggle alone) social and political struggles: they impinge on how society regards women, blacks, gays, etc. and challenge the prevailing mores and ideology, in a sort of metaphysical dialectic between the personal and the political. The laboratory of social change, it would appear, is the self, but the self is also in the world and so the world changes with the changing of the self and the self with it" (Sivanandan, 1990:12).

Identity politics involves a self-labelling and the labelling of others in accordance with a pre-determined hierarchy of oppression in order to justify or contest a political position (Harriss, 1989:37). For EEO co-ordinators, giving women's experiences primacy provides them with one means of demonstrating their

technical competency in relation to the specific target group of women. At the same time, it serves as a common gender identity and set of experiences upon which alliances between co-ordinators may be developed.

Reducing feminism to women-identification enabled EEO co-ordinators to maintain their feminist credibility with each other. In essence they created an 'in-group', the boundaries of which were drawn by reference to sex. But this was not the only referent. The 'out-group' included not only men but the majority of women working within the state and, particularly, women located at senior levels within state organisations.

This exclusion of senior women was unexpected. Although many co-ordinators attempted to pursue a mentor relationship with senior women on an individual basis, there was no attempt among co-ordinators to develop an association with senior women in terms of feminist networking. Indeed, senior women were, at times, regarded with suspicion and mistrust by co-ordinators. This was demonstrated by one co-ordinator who talked about the problems she had with her senior manager:

"She doesn't understand much about EEO. She knows we have got to have it but I think she's very wary about what EEO limits in terms of her other responsibilities. ... I don't think she wants to be hampered ... by restrictive provisions"

Such difficulties with senior women encouraged the development of exclusive EEO co-ordinator networks. This manifested itself in the creation of a distinction between co-ordinators who perceived themselves as holding 'real female values' and those senior women who are blinded by 'male values' (Segal, 1987:35). These factors combine to maintain and reproduce an assumption that EEO co-ordinators are feminists.

Increasingly in the 1980s, feminism has been increasingly articulated as women-identification through popular fiction and the development of a women's culture. It involves a celebration of women, their bodies and the attributes usually associated with femininity. Attributes conventionally devalued in society and used to legitimate women's subordination and confinement to 'private' spheres, such as nurturance, empathy, intuitiveness, adaptability, emotionality, are all glorified (Jaggar, 1983:95-7).

The priority placed upon experience to demonstrate technical competency also influenced the way that co-ordinators had attempted to deal with employment issues relating to Maori and Pacific Island target groups within organisations. Among many co-ordinators there was a self-conscious and explicit concern to enhance the cultural values and use of protocol relevant to Maori and Pacific Island people within the organisation:

"You just have to have the various cultural values and respect for them alive within the organisation. That involves all the staff being trained, of having their awareness developed in terms of cultural understanding and expanding their narrow focus. So people have a wider outlook and really value the kind of perspectives that Pacific Island [and] Maori [people] have" (Morag).

There is a difficult contradiction for EEO co-ordinators here. The priority which co-ordinators placed upon their own experiences as women to provide credibility as EEO co-ordinators potentially challenged their credibility in relation to other targeted groups. None of the women were 'differently abled', identified as Pacific Island, or had an Asian ethnicity, although one woman did identify as Maori. Their ability to deal with issues specific to the other disadvantaged groups was consequently vulnerable to question.

The second strategy central to EEO co-ordinators in their search for legitimacy with one another was through the development of their own professional project. That is, a labour market strategy designed to acquire occupational monopoly over the provision of certain skills and competencies in a service market. This requires a strategic course of action which involves using occupational closure strategies and distinct tactical means to achieve the strategic goal of closure (Witz, 1990:675).

This is most evident in the formation of an EEO Practitioners' Association towards the end of 1989. The Association tended to attract co-ordinators fully focused on EEO as opposed to those who included EEO among other responsibilities. The latter were more likely to be members of management related and professional associations. One of the EEO co-ordinators summed

up the reasons for the development and purpose of the EEO Practitioners' Association:

"[We established an] EEO Practitioners' group after the [State Services Commission] Unit was disbanded and a lot of its functions [went] to the Employment Equity Commission. We felt we needed our own Association orientated towards our own needs. To be a member you either have to be a...co-ordinator or have EEO work as a main part of your job. We meet once a month and take it in turns to meet in each [members] organisation. ... At the moment we are looking to set up training. We have asked the Equity Commission to fund that" (Molly).

The co-ordinators saw the development of a professional organisation as providing individual co-ordinators with an advocate for rewards and remuneration in the paid labour market:

"We haven't worked through this [before]. Because these jobs are relatively new and there are not a lot of people doing it. The whole issue of what an EEO job is worth and how you determine what was reasonable performance and what was excellent performance" (Fiona).

A professional association would also provide co-ordinators with the means to define the standards which would govern the practices of its members:

"Looking at it round the other way in terms of how an organisation operates and the basics of EEO is another sort of standards area. Central to us is consultation and development of an EEO plan, and particularly [with] target groups so it is not something that is done [to them]. Those sort of principles as to how an EEO should operate within an organisation is something an EEO Practitioners Association should have " (Fiona).

This concern with standards was also reflected in a preoccupation with ensuring that co-ordinators were appropriately qualified. The co-ordinators supported the development of an EEO co-ordinator training course to be run along similar lines to an equivalent training course in Australia.

The establishment of a professional association and the related concern with qualifications and standards represent co-ordinators' engagement in strategies of accreditation and licensure [sic] (Parkin, 1979:57). The formation of

a profession gives formal recognition and further enhances the view that EEO co-ordinators, or practitioners as they now like to be known, have a particular expertise in regard to the development and management of EEO programmes.

The shift in identity from that of EEO co-ordinator to EEO practitioner constitutes a conscious effort on behalf of EEO co-ordinators to gain control over the field of EEO. This involves a struggle over the power to define what EEO programmes are, and who is responsible for their development and implementation. A discernible shift has taken place in the role of EEO co-ordinators as this field has developed.

When the position of EEO co-ordinators was newly established, the development of an EEO programme was considered a process in which a diverse range of department's staff could produce. EEO plans for an organisation were often drawn up prior to the appointment of an EEO co-ordinator. The task of the EEO co-ordinator was to facilitate the implementation of the plan and help the department's management to 'own' equal opportunity employment policies and practices.

The identification of themselves as practitioners suggest that, EEO co-ordinators are seeking to alter that approach. No longer is EEO open for all to define, nor is it possible for anyone to define. Rather, it requires a person with the appropriate skills and qualifications who can instruct members of an organisation in the implementation of an EEO plan. Thus, the field of EEO has become the preserve of a qualified 'expert', the EEO practitioner, who alone can determine what EEO is and how it will be implemented within an organisation.

This conception of co-ordinators as 'experts' had filtered into the public service prior to the establishment of the EEO Practitioners' Association. It could be observed in the tendency for the more experienced EEO co-ordinators to be given EEO positions within Government departments as opposed to those with no EEO experience:

"I spent a long time getting [an EEO position]. [I had] lots of interviews and lots of short-listing. It took a long time to get in because Wellington is very competitive and when I started applying, there were about 60 or 70 women looking for EEO jobs. Then the situation occurred after quite a

while where some women who had had [EEO] experience in departments for a year or more, when new [EEO] jobs came up, they were applying. So women with previous [EEO] experience were starting to get the new EEO jobs. So I...started to think [that] I am never going to get an EEO job" (Jane).

EEO co-ordinators were able to compensate for their diversity, or even their lack, of experience in the feminist groups and organisations operating outside the state by constructing their own bases of expertise inside the state. The meetings with other EEO co-ordinators at the State Services Commission was integral to this process:

"[It was] through meetings at the State Services Commission and now the EEO Practitioners' group [that] I got exposed to ...the cultural differences that I would not have been aware of. Means of adjusting to other peoples needs. Means of identifying with other people, other types of groups. A lot of learning about other peoples needs [and] attitudes. Understanding women's attitudes to things [and the] various discriminations which you may not have recognised earlier that stand out...now" (Molly).

Effectively these meetings served to 'fill in the gaps' of co-ordinators' knowledge about issues relating to the position of disadvantaged groups to which EEO programmes were directed.

EEO co-ordinators also tended to associate with co-ordinators with whom they felt most affinity. In this sense, co-ordinators were able to avoid being put into situations where they would be challenged by other co-ordinators. Rather, the tenor of these networks was supportive. They involved exchanges of information and skills related to the development of an EEO programme:

"We use each other and the expertise that one of us might have that others need. And for support" (Molly).

Any debate regarding feminism is virtually absent from these exchanges. However, the lack of 'feminist credentials' does not necessarily go unnoticed by some co-ordinators:

"There are lots of women in the EEO network which have not come across the women's movement. " (Morag).

There was a tendency for EEO co-ordinators with clear feminist identity to have closer links both through co-mentoring and friendship:

"I have established a co-mentoring relationship with [another] co-ordinator. We are close friends anyway" (Morag).

Maintaining credibility as organisational members

As organisational members, co-ordinators tended to be located in contradictory positions. Although their positions are generally identified as part of the management level, only one co-ordinator, who held the position of EEO manager, and the three women who undertook EEO co-ordination as part of a wider management position, fit the definition of a manager as described by Wilkes (1984:59-61).

Wilkes argues that a managerial position is identified as one which provides a person with real supervisory capacities and recognition in a formal hierarchy by the official title of manager. Erik Olin Wright (1978:78) defines middle-managers as having control over various parts of the labour process. This includes control, not only over immediate subordinates, but over part of the authority hierarchy itself. As EEO and other personnel policies have a direct bearing on the employment policies and practices within state organisations, these co-ordinators can be identified as middle managers.

The position of the four other EEO co-ordinators better corresponds to Wright's (1978:78) definition of technocrats: technicians or professionals within the corporate hierarchy who tend to have a limited degree of autonomy over their own work and a limited control over subordinates, but who are not in command of pieces of the productive apparatus. As co-ordinators, they had relatively little formal or direct power over other organisational members, yet they are required to ensure that management implement an EEO programme. This meant that co-ordinators needed to develop strategies to enhance both their power and credibility within the organisation.

The State Sector Act 1988 has given autonomy to chief executives over the internal recruitment and employment process within state organisations and the ultimate accountability for EEO under the 'good employers' clause. Networking amongst women's networks internal to the organisation was secondary to the co-ordinators' central objective of establishing a 'good working relationship' with the chief executive. The degree of support the chief executive was prepared to give, and how much support they were able to elicit, was considered by the co-ordinators to have a significant bearing upon the status of their own position within the organisation and the support that would be given to the EEO programme by senior managers and other staff. With the exception of two, all the co-ordinators emphasised that the relationship with the chief executive was imperative to the implementation of an EEO programme within the organisation:

"[EEO needs to be located] as close to the chief executive as possible. In a sense of their being fewer barriers to access to the chief executive. Because that is the way to get organisational change and EEO is about changing the organisation. The way to do that is to have the most direct contact with those in senior positions" (Fiona).

"If people know that I am just trying to do my thing and that I do not have [the Chief Executive's] support then no one takes it seriously and they will not do it. If you want to get changes you have to have that direct link to the top" (Jane).

The use of patronage, invariably with the chief executive, was important for the development of a stronger power base for co-ordinators within the organisation. This served the dual function of demonstrating to other members of the organisation that the chief executive supported the EEO programme and the EEO co-ordinator herself.

Kanter (1977:181-2) has provided, in her study of gender relations within large American corporations, a detailed analysis of patronage relations. According to Kanter, patrons or sponsors, are often in the position to fight on behalf of the person being sponsored. Sponsors can by-pass the hierarchy which lower-level members cannot. Sponsors offer a form of reflected power

which signals that the individual in question has the backing of an influential person.

Relationships of patronage are used by co-ordinators to gain generalised influence within the organisation and to achieve specific tasks:

"occasionally I would take individual cases to [the chief executive] where I thought people were being discriminated against and my attempts to deal with managers further down the system had failed. ... When I took those sorts of issues to him he would love interfering and overruling everybody" (Fiona).

Because patronage is a personal relationship that is established with a powerful person on an informal basis, the maintenance of this relationship therefore requires constant attention to ensure that one does not fall out of favour (Kanter 1977:183). Many of the co-ordinators found it difficult to work with the chief executive and it could take only one incident for that patronage to be removed:

"I thought it would be a good idea to put out an article on lesbian and gay staff in the news bulletin. I thought I would get the support of the chief executive if I was to do that. So I mentioned it to him that I had set up informal networks and he went apeshit. He said 'what do you think you are doing. Are you trying to undermine the [organisation]' " (Morag).

Co-ordinators' attempts to gain support were not only confined to gaining the support of the chief executive. Senior managers within different divisions of the respective organisations and members of the human resource division were also targeted as key people whose support for the EEO programme was cultivated.

Summary

This chapter has examined the extent to which EEO co-ordinators maintain credibility as feminists with four potential audiences: their peers, other femocrats in the state, feminists outside the state and other members of the organisations in which they work. Of most immediate importance to EEO co-ordinators was maintaining credibility with their peers and as organisational members. Little attention was paid by co-ordinators to maintaining credibility as feminists with the other two audiences.

These factors suggest that EEO co-ordinators are acting like professionals and pursuing a professional project rather than a feminist agenda. In this process, not only are most men excluded from taking up EEO co-ordinator positions, but also other women pursuing individual career goals. It is likely that this situation will become exacerbated as EEO co-ordinators strengthen their professional status within the state.

The creation of a professional group allows the issue of co-ordinators' credibility as feminists to be redrawn as an issue of credibility as professionals. Within this field of social and professional practice, co-ordinators develop their own set of credentials as what it means to be a feminist. That is quite separate from the agendas and practices of feminists within the feminist movement. This allows co-ordinators to control their relationship to the feminist movement, to distance themselves from feminism, yet approach it when required. In this way, co-ordinators could avoid being challenged by the feminist movement. This raises questions about the assumption that femocrats are feminist and the likelihood that feminists will be recruited into co-ordinator positions within the state, given that their presence would challenge, if not threaten, co-ordinators creation of a credibility as feminists.

Chapter Six

Conclusion: EEO and Femocrat Practice

This thesis has attempted to identify the extent to which femocrats are agents of change in the state. Consequently it represents a contribution to the debate in feminism about the place and nature of the state and its bureaucracy.

The diversity of femocrat positions in the state required some limitation of focus. EEO co-ordinators were chosen because they have been generally acknowledged as a significant site of femocrat activity (Franzway, 1986; Franzway et al., 1989; Yeatman, 1990). The study involved eight EEO co-ordinators. Interviews focused on a range of topics related to the family background, work history, feminism, EEO work, networking and the state.

One of the central issues in relation to femocrats must be whether they are feminists. Whether they represent the agendas that characterise the feminist movement. In general, it must be concluded, on the basis of the evidence presented here, that the links between feminism as a social movement and praxis and practices of EEO co-ordinators are limited. Few of the co-ordinators had any involvement with feminist groups and organisations. Those that did, had had those experiences in earlier periods of their lives. Nonetheless, most of the EEO co-ordinators considered themselves feminists.

Despite this, some of the co-ordinators explicitly distanced themselves from feminism at a theoretical level. Almost all distanced themselves from the social movement. Frequently, co-ordinators implied that the feminist movement was a 'fringe' society, irrelevant or unable to pursue practical action.

For most co-ordinators their feminism consisted of trying to ensure that women had appropriate choices in the workplace. This was accompanied by women-identification and the desire to integrate women's values into their organisation. In this they manifested both liberal and cultural feminist tendencies, although one co-ordinator identified as an anarchist and another as a socialist.

The co-ordinators' analysis of the barriers faced by women in paid employment was heavily experiential. It drew on their shared experience of socialisation processes as women. These experiences also formed the basis for the development of alliances among EEO co-ordinators as a group. This led to the exclusion of men and other women, particularly those located at senior levels in the state.

The reliance on experience however, created problems for co-ordinators. In general, the co-ordinators were well educated, Pakeha brought up in equally advantaged families. Most had grown up with one or both parents working as professionals. All but two co-ordinators had received a university education and had been able to pursue their own professional careers prior to entering EEO co-ordinator positions. In contrast, those groups which they sought to represent, women, Maori, Pacific Island people, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, were most likely to have considerably fewer educational resources and be marginalised within the secondary labour market (Barron and Norris, 1976; NACEW, 1990). An analysis based upon experience was thus more likely to distance co-ordinators from these groups than encourage alliances.

More sense can be made of EEO co-ordinators' practice in relation to the development of a professional project in the field of EEO. EEO co-ordinators appear to be concerned with finding a 'place' within the organisation and a profession within the public service. This was expressed first, in their desire to develop a professional association and second, in their desire to control and define what an EEO practitioners role was in relation to EEO. Essentially the co-ordinators were seeking to develop a basis of power both from chief executives in the organisation through their patronage and in the labour market as a whole.

There is a certain irony in all of this, for there can be little doubt that the feminist movement was a significant driving force in the establishment of EEO programmes. The establishment of these programmes has provided a space for the development of a new occupation in the feminised part of the primary labour market. EEO co-ordinators are aware of those new primary labour market opportunities opened up to them personally. Many of the co-ordinators sought those positions specifically to access higher rates of remuneration and reward. They also saw EEO co-ordination as a route to senior management positions within the public service.

As professionals, EEO co-ordinators find themselves confronted with a problem of legitimisation. Yeatman (1990) recognised legitimisation as an issue for EEO co-ordinators, arguing that the maintenance of feminist credentials by pursuing benefits for all women would be a central strategy in maintaining credibility (Yeatman, 1990:97). This is unsubstantiated within this study of EEO co-ordinators. Indeed, co-ordinators were found to actively pursue their own interests in the state rather than the collective interests of women. In addition, co-ordinators increasingly sought to legitimate their feminist credentials, not in relation to the feminist movement, but in terms of their own culture.

If EEO co-ordinators are not primarily driven by a feminist agenda, can this be generalised to other femocrats? Quite probably not. A focus on EEO co-ordinators tells us little about that group of femocrats who are employed in Women's Policy Units and situations such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Rather, EEO co-ordinators constitute a specific group of femocrats who occupy a particular space in the state which is limited in terms of both its power and focus. EEO co-ordinators are ostensibly concerned with altering the employment policy and practices of Government organisations. In this sense, they have a much narrower and more defined focus than femocrats in other positions and therefore could be expected to have more likelihood of achieving change.

In contrast, femocrats located in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Policy Advisory positions may be involved in attempts to influence the direction of state policy towards meeting the interests of non-dominant groups. These femocrats hold more senior positions and are likely to have far

greater forces, both internal and external to the state, to contend with than EEO co-ordinators.

EEO co-ordinators have the opportunity to develop an occupational group on the basis of the technical nature of the tasks they collectively pursue. This is supported by the tendency for EEO co-ordinators to be placed in similar vertical and horizontal positions in the organisations in which they work. Other femocrats have less basis for a separate occupational identity. Women's Policy Units are situated in a variety of organisational positions. Similarly, the vertical ranking of employees in the Ministry of Women's Affairs makes it unlikely that they, as femocrats, could develop a clearly bounded occupational, as opposed, to institutional identification.

Under these conditions one must ask whether the term femocrat has very much analytic value. It obscures the diversity of femocrat positions and thereby disguises the different structural relationships that different groups of femocrats can be found within. Furthermore its use to describe feminists working within the state, makes assumptions which should in fact be the centre of empirical rather than conceptual study. It is clear that EEO co-ordinators in this study ~~who~~ identified themselves as feminists, but only had attenuated links with the feminist movement.

Finally, what of the state? EEO co-ordinators operate in a state context which has been largely neglected by feminists. Much of the feminist debate related to the state has focused on the state's social and economic policy activities and their impact on maintaining or dismantling dominant gender relations. In so doing, feminist analyses have tended to ignore the state as an employer and therefore failed to develop an analysis of the structural relations and practices which condition the activities of members of the state.

The focus on EEO co-ordinators and the issue of EEO has offered some basis for critique of the state as employer. What this study suggests is that the state acts in a very similar way to other complex organisations. It is different in that it is controlled by legislation regarding its human resource management and hence the inclusion of EEO. However, rather than presenting a challenge to the organisational culture of state organisations, it appears likely from this preliminary

data, that EEO confirms structural relations within the organisational hierarchy. It certainly encourages the development of patronage relationships as an informal mechanism of power.

Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

W o r k H i s t o r y :

What is your job title?

Can you tell me which occupational class you belong to?

How long have you held this position?

I'm interested in your work history. Can you tell me what positions you held prior to this one?

How long did you hold that position for?

What were the reasons/attractions for you in changing jobs?

Was there anyone who may have particularly encouraged you to change jobs?

Who? Why?

What attracted you to work in the Public Service?

The traditional role for women is to work at home, although many women find it necessary to work to support themselves and their families. What were the main reasons for you joining the workforce?

Have you ever had any breaks from work for travel, study, to have children, illness and so forth?

How long?

Did you take paid or unpaid leave?

How did this affect your work?

Have you ever undertaken any training programmes for work in this or previous positions you've held?

How have these been useful?

Was this training recognised in any way?

How long do you see your self staying in your present job?

What do you have envisaged for the future?

Is there a position would you like to be holding in 5 years time?

Family Background :

Can you tell me where you grew up and who is in your family?

What are your parents occupations?

What kind of qualifications, if any, do they have?

Where did you go to School?

How did you get on in School?

What did you want to do at that age with your life?

What sort of things were your friends doing? How influential were they on your choices of things to do?

What aspirations did your parents have for you, perhaps tertiary education?

What about any career ambitions?

What are your current living arrangements?

Do you have children?

How many?

How old were you when you had your first child?

F e m i n i s m :

Do you consider yourself a feminist?

What's your personal definition of feminism?

Do you align yourself with any particular strand of feminism?

Why/Why not?

When did you first become interested in feminism?

What was happening in your life at that time?

What were the significant ideas or insights that feminism gave you at that time?

Can you tell me something about your involvement in the feminist movement.

Were you involved in any feminist groups, organisations, campaigns etc?

What were these?

What did you do - did you perform a particular role?

What issues were and are of concern to you and why?

Are there other social movements or political groups which are important to you, such as the union movement, or peace movement for example that you have been involved in?

Do you have an analysis of women's oppression and how has this been informed?

E E O W o r k :

Can you tell me about your job here, what duties and responsibilities do you have?

What issues are you addressing within the scope of your work?

What policy or programs are you implementing and at what stage of implementation are these?

How do you prioritise issues?

What particular issues are of priority to you?

Do you work with anybody else on these issues?

How is this organised? Why is it like this?

In what way does feminism inform your work?

How does it inform the approach you take to your work?

Why is this the most effective approach?

Are you able to implement programs that you would see as improving the position of women, and which are informed by this analysis?

To what extent are you able to make your own decisions, initiate programs and so forth yourself?

What were your expectations of this job?

Have these been realised? Why/why not?

How many hours a week would you work?

Can you tell me how this department/unit is organised and whether you are working on your own or in a team?

Does your job require you to be on any departmental committees or groups?

Who are you accountable to?

How do you feel about working within a hierarchical structure?

To what extent are you able to change this structure?

Is there an alternative structure you would prefer and what would this look like?

N e t w o r k s :

I understand there are efforts to create informal networks. Are there networks you are involved in? What is the nature of these networks and how are they useful?

Who do you find in this to be particularly helpful to your work? Why? Are there other reasons?

What kind of contact to you have with people in this network?

How long have you known these people?

Are they your personal friends as well?

Are there other people who you would see as being helpful or influential in allowing you to act effectively in your work? How?

Who is they?

How long have you known them?

Where do you know them from?

What kind of contact to you have with them?

How much do you socialise with your colleagues in this department?

Which level of the hierarchy do you usually share morning tea, drinks with?

Does knowing them in this context have any influence on your work, your ability to work? How?

I often hear people refer to the old boys network. Do you see this operating within the Public Service?

It's often said this is one of the ways in which men are able to secure promotions and thus power.

How is this to be challenged? Where does the development of an old girls network fit into this?

How do you keep up with the changes going on within the various departments within the Public Service?

Do you have a conception of what makes a good networker?

Do you have a particular approach to networking?

What is the purpose of having networks?

T h e S t a t e :

What is your understanding of the State, do you have an analysis of the State?
Whose interests do you see it operating in terms of?

What does being a public servant mean to you?
Who does that make you accountable to?

There have been changes in the legislation surrounding women's issues, such as
EEO legislation. How important is legislation for changing women's position?
Do you think legislation enough?

Do you have an ideal vision of how the State should operate?
What would that be?

Have the changes that have come about during the last 6 years or so, with the
restructuring of the State come close or detracted from your own view of how the
State should operate?
In what way? Why?

Do you have a political agenda?
What is that?

Appendix 2

Consent Form

I consent to be a participant in the proposed research given the following conditions.

- 1) I will be free to withdraw at any time from the research.
- 2) I will be ensured confidentiality of information, provided in the following ways;
 - i) The interview tapes will only be listened to by the researcher,
 - ii) The interview tapes will not be released to anyone and will be erased when they have been transcribed,
 - iii) Once the interviews have been transcribed all names will be changed as well as any special identifying characteristics.
- 3) I will be provided with a copy of the interview transcript.
- 4) Consent is given to allow the researcher (Gaye Payze) to use the information gained through interviews in her published and unpublished texts that may result from the research.

Signed

Interviewee:

Researcher:

Date:

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