EEO AND THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR: LEGISLATING FOR CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways in which two co-educational secondary schools in Aotearoa-New Zealand responded to the requirement under the State Sector Amendment Act (1989) to develop and implement an equal employment opportunities (EEO) policy that would enable women to move into senior administrative positions. The period covered is the May 1989-July 1992 term of office of the new Boards of Trustees established under the Tomorrow's Schools reforms. The study presents, examines and theorises the social, political and educational contexts in which the policy evolved. In the attempt to locate significant sites of struggle in the EEO debate and assess their implications for the promotion of women teachers to senior positions in educational administration, a political model of policy is employed based on a theory of discourse inherent in feminist post-structuralist perspectives.

The focus of the research study is on the EEO policy implementation process as it was occuring in two historically specific settings. That process consisted of ongoing struggles between contenders of rival and competing interests. These interests construed in and through discourses specific identities, roles and attributes which were seen to compose our subjectivities, shape decisions and affect appointment practices and outcomes.

Interviews were held during 1992 with eighteen personnel in a range of teaching and administrative positions in the two schools. The transcripts were then used to produce a view of the discursive constructions within the field of EEO and place these alongside existing written reports and records, official policy documents and literature analyses.

The study found evidence of an internal struggle between competing models of EEO. As well, EEO was discursively constructed as a unified concept through a discourse which competed for allegiances against other discourses within the power networks. Specifically, attention was paid to mapping the links between "teachers, gender and careers" (Acker, 1989) and to the complex positioning of multiple discourses within merit as an ideological construct. This thesis opens up to scrutiny particular discursive constructions and uses, and argues the need to recognise and assume responsibility for each of our own discursive practices and positionings. This necessitates working towards coherence between the discourses of EEO and the discourses of secondary education sector employers' personal and broader professional lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research study results largely from the goodwill, co-operation and participation of many people, from its inception through to its final production in 1995. I wish to thank my colleagues Andrew, Lynnaire and Geraldine for their help in enabling me to practise and develop my interview procedures; the participating personnel in the two schools selected for case-study research; the contacts in agencies for the way they responded so promptly and willingly to my requests for assistance and information; my teaching colleagues who suffered for so long my vacant stare, weird ramblings and near exhaustion; Sandy Anderson for her thoughtful and careful typing when I lost my battle with the computer; and not least Richard Spence, my husband, whose impatience with my hesitations and generosity of spirit provoked and gave me strength to complete. I am deeply grateful.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to the Massey University Master of Educational Administration programme and to my supervisors: Marian Court, whose unfailing support and sensitive yet challenging care spurred me on through some very difficult times, and Wayne Edwards, who watched carefully over my form of presentation. As a part-time student for over five years I have pursued a course of study that has both reshaped and revitalised my thinking. Completing this thesis, with its focus on Equal Employment Opportunities, has played a major part in that "reshaping", in that as a woman, and a teacher in the secondary system holding a position of responsibility, my own participation was inevitable. I found I had my own feelings to contend with through each phase of the research study. It has been for me a difficult, anxiety-producing and often painful process. The nature of the topic proved sensitive to me, in ways that I never anticipated. The angry feelings which spawned this study remain with me still, though in more powerful, energetic and focused form.

Whaia te iti kahurangi, ki to tuohuu koe, me maunga teitei

Pursue excellence, and if you must bow down your head,
let it only be to the highest mountain.

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INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this research study came from a combination of certain pressures and events. My decision to complete my degree by thesis provided fertile ground for curiosity. Three strands interconnected to provide an area of focus: my exposure to the literature on girls and women in schools along with a range of feminist theoretical perspectives; the heavily promoted 1993 New Zealand Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebrations; and my direct access to Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) information as PPTA Women's Contact in my own school. Yet an even more powerful force came from within myself.

That force was the strength of my own feelings. As a non-Maori middle-class married woman in her late forties holding a position of responsibility level two in a state co-educational school in New Zealand, I had been aspiring, unsuccessfully, to a senior administrative position. My lack of success left me, to my surprise, angry and resentful. Such feelings were prompted, at times by the management of the interview process, at other times by reasons given for my non-appointment: that I did not *smile enough* (principal); that I showed that I had *no actual experience* (principal); that my response to the question from the student representative on the interview panel had been rather *bureaucratic* (principal); and, in a case where no appointment was made, that I had *a lot of potential* (board of trustees chairperson). Considering my age at the time, I found the latter comment insulting.

I believed I was competent, qualified and deserving. An enquiry into issues relating to the promotion of women into senior positions in educational administration became inevitable. My focus was the secondary education sector.

There is persistent evidence that teaching is a feminised profession, and that educational administration is not, and that this dichotomy continues to be reproduced both in this country and others.

In Aotearoa-New Zealand, as far back as 1978, Malcolm identified barriers of structural discrimination and social attitudes as particular causes of women's disadvantage. The low numbers of women in educational management (TEACAPS 1982 onwards; Watson, 1989a, 1989b; Korndörffer, 1990, 1992; O'Neill, 1990, 1992; Slyfield, 1992, 1993; Court, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994) would seem to testify to little progress in advancing gender equality within educational institutions. The Position of Women in the Education Services 1991 and 1992 (Slyfield, 1993) showed a tendency for women to hold a higher proportion of part-time and relieving positions than would be expected, and to be less likely to hold senior positions than would be expected, given their proportion in the respective branches of teaching. Notably the percentage of women in positions of responsibility in secondary schools has increased from 17 per cent to 25 per cent in the past five years (page 9). However there has been little change in the proportion of each gender holding principal, deputy

and assistant principal positions. Three times as many men as women held principals positions and nearly twice as many men held deputy and assistant principal positions (page 9).

Within Aotearoa-New Zealand the Tomorrow's School's document (August 7, 1988:25) gave equity concerns consideration in the section "National Issues Impinging at Local Level", which included these objectives:

* *to ensure that equity issues are integrated into all aspects of changes in educational administration and not treated as an optional extra;*
* *to recognise that equity is best achieved through systems which combine enabling legislation with awareness and education;*
* *to ensure the systems which are put in place enable the monitoring or progress towards equity goals*

The enabling legislation followed in the State Sector Act Education Amendment 1989, which introduced Equal Employment Opportunities as a mandatory requirement in all state sector organisations.

Since 1989, a board of trustees is responsible for the recruitment, selection and appointment of its staff, with a statutory duty to act independently when making an appointment, and to act as a "good employer." Preference is to be given to the person best suited to the position. Although the board is nominally responsible for all staff appointments, the actual processing of the appointment may be delegated to the principal or to a sub-committee of the board, who determine the qualifications and experience preferred and the duties to be performed. Slyfield (1993:37) identified the principal as having a key role in the recruitment, selection and appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff, since the principal is responsible to the board for the performance of each staff member.

Court (1994:230) points to a particular difficulty in implementing equal employment opportunities in the education sector because of the scattered nature of the work sites and the lack of EEO knowledge among boards of trustees and those in top management positions. These problems are seen to have been exacerbated by massive reform in the educational and industrial areas which is impacting on the ways that inequality is created and maintained. The Waikato Monitoring Today's Schools Project (Ramsay & Oliver, 1992 in Court, 1994:225) found that there had been little evaluation of the implementation of the equity requirements of the school charters. Middleton's (1990:72) board members were unconvinced of the need for EEO targeted funding or special measures such as affirmative action, considered incompatible with the liberal presumption of an individual's rights of entry to fair competition in the marketplace. Gordon et. al (1994) undertook their research into the decision-making processes by which boards of trustees govern schools through a concern at the sparse amount of research in this area. Moffat's (1991) research into equity policies in primary schools concluded, on the basis of forty interviews of board members, four in each of ten schools, that compulsory equity policies became meaningless where the understanding

of board members was not complete, the language used inhibiting, or the purposes of the policies were in conflict with some of the personal beliefs of those who write them.

Internationally, Edson's (1988:120) longitudinal study of 142 aspiring women administrators in the United States concluded that women had made few, if any, inroads into the male world of administration despite affirmative action regulations. Barriers to advancement continued to be derived from the combination of gender bias, lack of mentors, traditional hiring practices, inadequate advertising of job opportunities, perpetuation of role stereotypes, few opportunities to gain practical experience, and limited job opportunity in a period of enrolment decline.

Apart from those cited above, where the focus is on boards of trustees and processes by which they govern, research studies in education with EEO as a specific focus in Aotearoa-New Zealand are few in number. McPherson's (1992) study Approaching Equity through a School Language Policy addressed EEO issues indirectly. Of particular significance is her analysis of policy development and implementation processes in the secondary education sector. Court (1994:211) suggests that, within education, EEO has been difficult to advance "in an environment which ignores or sidelines equity issues as being tainted with the evils of 'social engineering' and where equity in education is expected to arise out of natural market forces." In the tertiary sector the work of Korndörffer (1990, 1992) and Matheson (1993) contributes to our understanding in the field.

While providing a comprehensive view of EEO in the education sector through annual reporting to Parliament, the Education Review Office (ERO) EEO Reports were spoken of as "very sparse" and therefore unhelpful in presenting a "real picture" of what was actually happening in schools (ERO EEO Reviewer, 1992: Personal communication). How much equity considerations in the form of EEO principles had impacted on school organisation and practices would be revealed, in the ERO EEO Reviewer's view, by attending to documented issues of EEO training, co-ordination and monitoring, along with consideration of the processes involved in staff selection.

Weiler (1988) in the U.K. and Strachan (1991) both demonstrated an attempt to unravel the complex ways in which structural forces were shaping the subjective experiences of individual women teachers at the secondary school level. These studies recognised that it is on the terrain of everyday life that social relationships are reproduced and contested. They revealed employment processes as less uniform and more disparate than previous theoretical understandings indicated (O'Neill, 1991:18). In accounting for the complexity of both the individual and the educational institutions in which they work, the studies illustrated that certain practices are not inevitable, that procedures are changeable, and that points of opposition and intervention can be identified (Walker & Barton, 1983:14; Payne, 1988:34).

With this present study, then, I set out to add to the limited number of gender-specific EEO case studies in the education sector. I open up new terrain within the field of equity research by attempting to describe EEO at the secondary school site level through a conceptual foundation which links teachers, gender and careers (Acker, 1989:7) and a form of discursive analysis framed within Weedon's (1989) account of feminist poststructuralisms.

A motivating force, one that was amply nourished by the paucity of EEO research in the secondary education sector, and a desire to satisfy my own curiosity, was the hope that, in privileging women's interests, whatever I discovered would be of use in some way to some other women. Who knows, by including "men's voices" (Kramarae, 1988:253), it may even bring men "back in to this scenario to assess the prospects of change" (Acker, 1989:17).

This research study set out then, to investigate to what extent the mandatory requirement under the State Sector Amendment Act 1989 for state schools to develop and implement an EEO policy was enabling women teachers to move into senior administrative positions during the 1989-1992 term of office of boards of trustees, reconstituted through government-led reform in educational administration.

Chapter One begins with recent statistics that show the current positioning of women in the secondary education sector. Improved statistics for women are linked with voluntary affirmative action policies that require explanation in a wider context. I therefore discuss education sector reforms, describe the development and nature of EEO legislation, its resourcing and its monitoring. I then review actual EEO questionnaire responses made by secondary schools in their 1989-1992 annual reports to a regional Education Review Office (ERO).

I begin Chapter Two with a discussion of the policy implementation process and factors that could affect EEO. I introduce feminism as the theoretical perspective within which to "locate the practice of EEO" (Sayers, 1994:114). Within feminism recent formulations of poststructuralist perspectives focus on discourse theory as the means to open up a range of questions concerning subjectivity and identity, and place language at the centre of the analysis. Conceptualising EEO as a discourse leads to a discussion of various theoretical formulations of EEO drawn from the literature, and ends in a reformulation.

I then discuss the link between individual consciousness and possible resistances to forms of EEO. I raise questions surrounding the authority and identity of the EEO practitioner, and the principle of merit. This chapter concludes with redefining the perceived potential of the theoretical framework to locate key themes.

Chapter Three includes a discussion on the nature of research, and the necessity to shape the research methodology according to the relevant theoretical and practical understandings. I identify and discuss the methods used in my research, and provide reasons for selecting them. I also endeavour to explicate my own positioning as researcher in presenting each phase of the

research process, by attending to the manner in which each research experience and my own reflections continually shaped the research practices.

Analysis of the school-based EEO ERO Questionnaires, the BOT 1989-1992 minutes and related policy documents in Chapter Four surfaced key issues, which enabled me to restructure the questions planned for the interview schedule in order to gather the required data. My focus was on collecting examples of language to provide texts which would enable me to analyse, as Weedon (1987:173) argues, the "range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strength of the interests which they represent" in these two historically specific contexts.

Within the three areas of concern identified in Chapter Three: the social power of EEO; beliefs about "techers, gender, and careers" (Acker, 1989:1); and the concept of merit and the appointment process, I was able to identify a range of discursive constructions in the field of EEO from the responses to the interview questions. I created in Chapter Five an account from the School A interview data of a "range of voices articulating their positions" (Jones, 1994:173), and identified particular discursive constructions as significant to the aims of this study. In Chapter Six I presented and discussed in similar format the interview data from School B.

I needed, however, to tease out the complexity of three interconnected strands: "the peculiar structuring of schools, with its mesh of bureaucratic and professional patterns of organisation" (Wheatley, 1981:259), the concept of opportunity, and the manner in which senior administrative posts are assigned. This enabled me to determine factors which could be seen to impact on the effectiveness of equal employment opportunities legislation. This required me to draw some tentative conclusions from a perspective of those characteristics shared by the two schools. As a result, I attempted in Chapter Seven to draw out several common themes from the data. The themes identified relate to discursive constructions of EEO; relations of power; women's place within school bureaucracies; the social construction of merit; and opportunities for resistances and change. Locating these themes within the context of the existing literature was useful in exploring some of the ways in which gender factors' and value distinctions were constructing career opportunities for women teachers (Court, 1994:218).

Ultimately, this research study calls into question particular discursive constructions and uses, and argues the need to recognise and to assume responsibility for each of our own discursive practices and positionings. This necessitates working towards establishing coherence between the discourses of EEO and the discourses of education employers' personal and broader professional lives. I therefore offer the learnings from this research study as a means towards "conscientization" (Freire, 1973 in Collins, 1982:56) and as a basis for possible action.

To conclude, I make recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

Women Wanting - Equal Employment Opportunities And The Secondary Education Sector

The fact of the matter is there is very little concern about the fact that so few women are appointed to principal positions in co-educational schools.

(Watson, now Pearce, April 1992)

1.1   Introduction

Watson's (op. cit.) statement encapsulates the historical evidence of women's continuing exclusion from senior administrative positions in the state secondary education sector. This evidence, coupled with my own interest, concern and positioning referred to in the Introduction, has led me to investigate to what extent the mandatory requirement under the State Sector Amendment Act 1989 for state schools to develop and implement an Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) policy was enabling women to move into senior administrative positions. The specific research focus became the 1989-1992 term of office of boards of trustees, reconstituted through government-led reform in educational administration.

Chapter One, then, details my search for explanations that have led to the rationale for this study. I begin with recent statistics that show the current positioning of women in the secondary education sector. Improved statistics for women are linked with voluntary affirmative action policies that require explanation in a wider context. I therefore discuss education sector reforms and describe the nature of EEO legislation, its resourcing and its monitoring. Following a review of actual EEO questionnaire responses made by secondary schools in their 1989-1992 annual reports to a regional Education Review Office (ERO), I conclude by pointing to the need for a theoretical perspective that will help to "locate the practice of EEO within a framework which appreciates the complexities of its practice" (Sayers, 1994:114).

1.2   What is the Current Position of Women in the Secondary Education Sector?

The persisting low numbers of women in senior positions in educational administration (Teacher Career and Promotion Studies (TEACAPS), 1982 onwards; Neville, 1988; Korndörffer 1990, 1992; O'Neill, 1990, 1992; Slyfield, 1992, 1993; Dunn et al. 1992; Court, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994) would seem to testify to little progress in advancing gender equality within educational institutions in Aotearoa - New Zealand.

The Position of Women in the Education Services 1991 and 1992 (Slyfield, 1993) report shows a continuing increase in the proportion of teaching staff who are women. They now comprise 78% of the primary service, 51% of teachers in secondary schools and 60% in area schools. However, women tend to hold a higher proportion of part-time (76%) and relieving positions (64%),

and are less likely to hold senior positions than would be expected, given their proportion in the respective branches of teaching, with only 52% of primary school senior positions held by women, 38% in area schools and 39% in secondary.

Within the secondary sector the proportion of women has been shown to decrease as the level of responsibility increases. Over five years the proportion of each gender holding principal, deputy and senior master/mistress positions has changed little. In 1992 three times as many men as women held principal positions and nearly twice as many men held deputy and assistant principal positions (Slyfield, op.cit.:9) (See Table One).
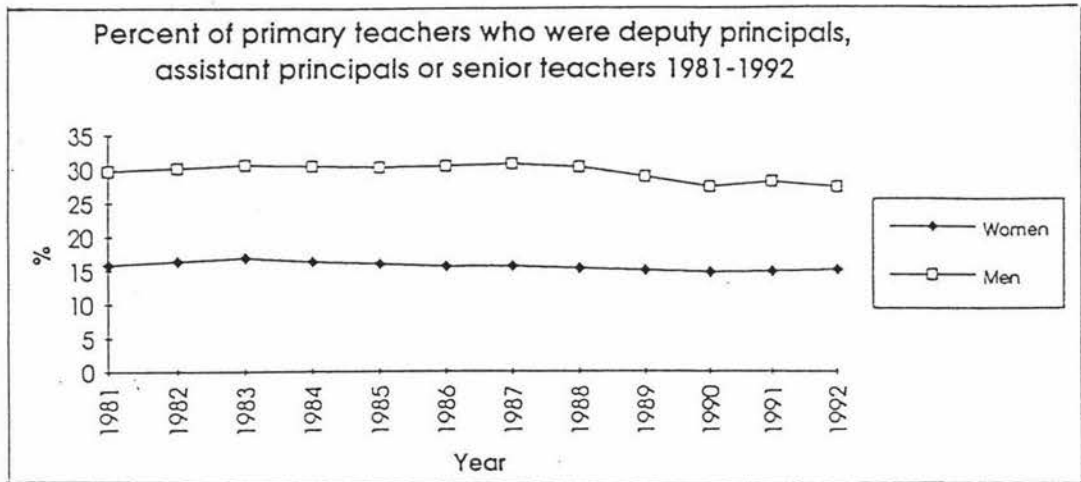
Table One. Source: Slyfield, 1993, p. 9.

Some reduction was noted by Slyfield, however, between the proportions of women and men holding positions of responsibility (PR), significantly in level one positions. The 1992 statistics showed an increase of 184 at level one, 15 at level two and 31 at level three since 1990. The only decrease was in the number of level four positions held by women: from 24 in 1990 to 19 in 1992. In comparison, the number of level one positions of responsibility held by men increased by 112, while the numbers at other levels decreased by 60 for level two, 50 for level three and 18 for level four positions. The report noted significantly an increase since 1990 of the overall proportion of positions of responsibility at level one (from 29% to 33%), and a decrease in the proportion of positions at higher levels (ibid.:10). Since higher level positions are traditionally the access route to senior administrative positions the decrease must, in my view, signal not only reduced opportunity but increased competitiveness. (See Table Two).

Percent of secondary teachers who held positions of responsibility 1981-1992
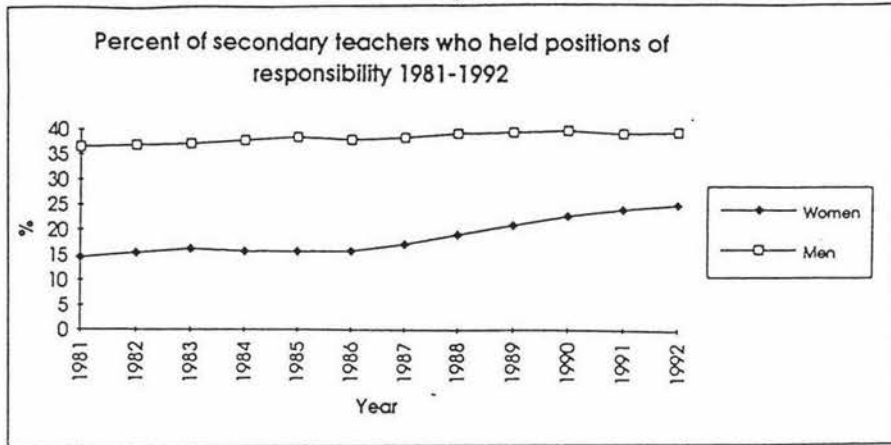
Table Two. Source: Slyfield, 1993, p. 10.

Comparisons by gender were also given for mean salary levels and age. Salaries for secondary women teachers were 94% of those for men secondary teachers, a less significant difference than in the primary service (84%). By age 35 to 39, half the men and one third of the women held positions of responsibility, the gap decreasing with age. Yet the percentage of women in the youngest age group, under 30, was greater than the percentage for men, in each branch of the service. (See Table Three).

Percentage of women and men holding positions of responsibility by age 1992
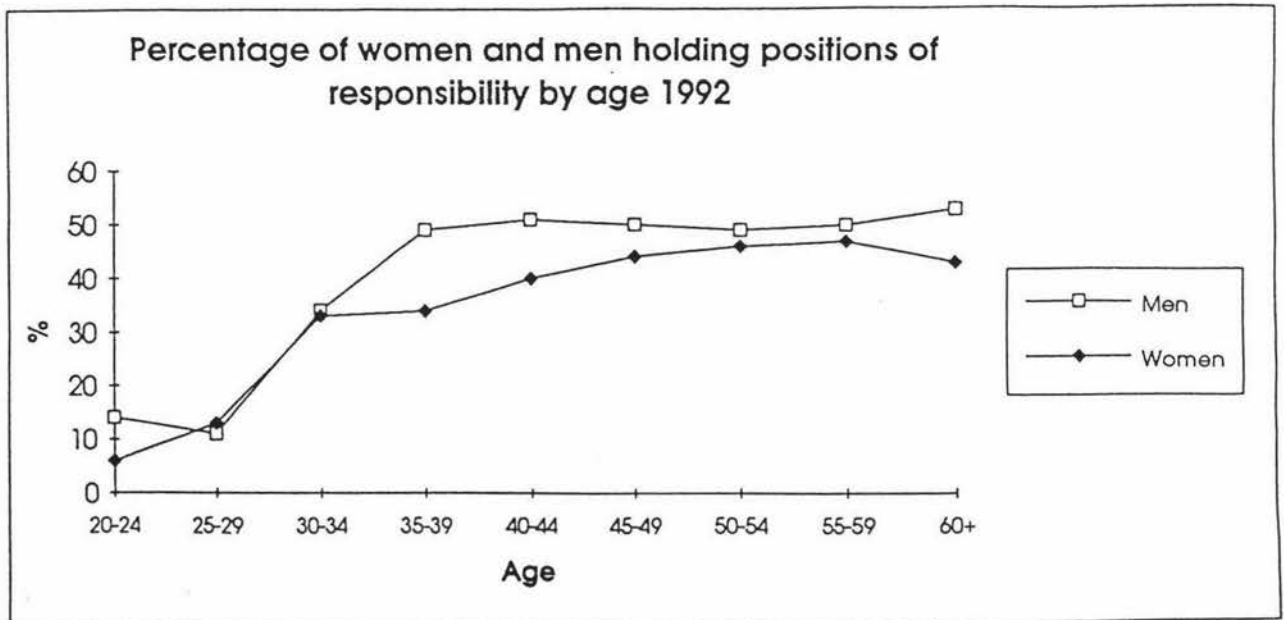
Table Three. Source: Slyfield, 1993, p. 12.

Despite evidence of an increase in the number of PR's held by women, the general pattern for the proportion of women to decrease as the level of the position increased, and the persistence of a sizeable difference between men and women in the proportion of each group who hold principal, deputy and assistant principal positions raised for me important questions: Do women apply for higher positions? Do we have only ourselves to blame?

I turned to the same Report (Slyfield, op.cit.:13-37) for information on applications for senior positions in 1992. Here too, I noted a similar decrease as the level of the position increased. Women made 51% of the applications for PR1 positions, 33% of PR4 positions, 26% of deputy principal positions and 20% of principal positions. The main exception was the assistant principal or senior master/mistress position. Here 53% of the applications came from women.

What appeared significant to me was evidence of an increase since 1990 in the proportion of applications from women for deputy principal and senior master/mistress positions: women made 14% of the applications for deputy principal positions in 1990 and 26% in 1992; and 42% of applications for senior master/mistress positions in 1990 and 53% in 1992. (See Table Four).

Secondary Applications and Appointees 1992 and 1990

	% Applications from Women		% Women Appointed	
	1992	1990	1992	1990
PR1	51	49	58	59
PR2	44	43	53	49
PR3	46	37	52	53
PR4	33	29	57	11
SM	53	42	61	60
DP	26	14	48	27
P	20	19	40	20

Table Four. Source: Slyfield, 1993, p. 19.

With more women applying, was there a corresponding increase in the numbers being appointed? While analysis shows the proportion of women appointees was lowest for principal (40%) and deputy principal positions (48%), and highest for PR1 (58%) and senior master/mistress positions (61%), a pattern consistent over several years was the overall higher success rate of women compared with men (30% and 18% respectively). Success rates for women were higher than for men in each type of position. Yet the picture was not so positive when I looked at the figures for 20 principal positions filled during 1992. Applications were received from 65 women and 254 men, giving an average of 3 applications from women and 13 from men for each position. There were only three principal positions with a larger number of women applying than men, all in state integrated girls' schools (page 19). (See Table Five).

	Applications by Women (%)	% Women Appointed	Success Rates	
			Women	Men
1986	30	37	43	34
1988	37	45	44	34
1990	38	52	33	19
1992	43	56	30	18

Table Five. Source: Slyfield, 1993, p. 20.

I saw several points of significance in this Report. Firstly a pattern of decrease in the numbers of women as the level of each position increased appeared in analyses of positioning, application and appointment. This pattern, in my view, echoed other findings where women are seen to be confined to the lower echelons in organisational hierarchies (CEDAW Report, 1992:38).

An anomaly however was the number of applications and appointments made for the senior master/mistress position where the percentage rate for women appeared disproportionately high. However the sizeable difference in the proportions between men and women remained unchanged compared with that of previous years.

An increase in the number of level one positions noted alongside a decrease in the number of available level four positions seemed to me to be indicative of changing structural patterns. Access to level one positions would seem to be enhanced through increased availability. However entry through to the senior administrative positions appeared to have become more constricted.

An increase in numbers of women in positions of responsibility at level one, in applications made for senior administrative positions, and in appointment success would seem to me to indicate changing patterns in the field. The increase noted since 1986 in the proportion of women holding positions of responsibility has, in Slyfield's (op.cit.:9) opinion, possible links with The Promotion of Women Review which began in that year. To examine the significance of this Review, I need to locate it in a wider context.

1.3   Background

Renewed vigour in the women's movement in the 1970's saw a re-emergence of concern for the reproducing of inequalities. Agencies supporting the Race Relations Act 1972 and the Human Rights Commission Act 1977 began to

address cases of individual discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, ethnic origin, and religious or ethical belief (Briar, 1994:34). However there was no provision for identification and elimination of discriminatory practices in employment (Wilson Report, 1988:19).

Within the public service a move was made in mid 1984 to formalise equality of opportunity policy for women through legislation, in response to internal and external pressures over the inadequacies of equal pay legislation, the changing nature of the workforce, and as a corollary to antidiscrimination laws for women (Tremaine, 1991:346; Briar, 1994:28) The State Sector Commission (SSC), with over-arching statutory power as employer of all public servants, brought together the twelve government employing authorities to draft and ratify a policy statement. This policy statement launched the systemic development of equal employment opportunities in New Zealand.

The Human Rights Commission's paper on Affirmative Action for Women in Employment (1987:2) concluded that legislation was an imperative in both public and private sector employing organisations, which should be required to undertake affirmative action, demonstrate commitment, be subject to review and imposition of remedies if failing to demonstrate genuine effort and reasonable outcome. Affirmative action is defined as "a systematic, results-oriented set of activities designed to address and dismantle the discriminatory barriers that unfairly and adversely affect women in employment; to redress the effects of past discrimination so as to bring those thus disadvantaged to the level of the advantaged; ultimately to achieve true equality of employment opportunity" (ibid:32). Meanwhile the Labour Relations Act (1987) outlawed discrimination based on colour, race and ethnicity or national origin, sex, marital status, religious or ethical belief and trade union involvement.

EEO was first given legislative intent in the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986. This required the SOE's to be *good employers* with an EEO programme. An SSC directive (April 1987) required departments to have an EEO plan in place by April 1988. When the State Sector Act became law on April 1 1988, this request became a mandatory requirement. The Education Amendment Act 1989 extended the requirement to the education sector. The repeal by the incoming National government of the Employment Equity Act 1990, which had introduced EEO into the private sector, and provided structures for pay equity assessments and gender neutral job evaluations, signalled other forces were at work however.

Meanwhile, in response to similar pressures within the secondary education sector, the teacher union, The Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), had become a powerful advocate on behalf of women teachers. The PPTA set up the Sex Equality Committee (SEAC) in 1976, and placed a spokesperson for equality on their executive. There followed The New Zealand Teacher Career and Promotion Study (TEACAPS), a 1982 affirmative action venture between the Department of Education, the PPTA and the Secondary Schools Boards Association, (SSBA) to monitor the number of women in positions of

responsibility in schools. A network of women's positions, that included a national Women's Officer, regional Women's Coordinators and Branch Women's Contacts, was established in 1986 on the recommendation of the 1985 PPTA Conference paper Women in Secondary Education. The paper also established policy that the PPTA negotiate an affirmative action policy in appointments. The Promotion of Women Review in 1986 was the outcome.

This Review required schools to analyse the position of women on their staff and to determine actions required to improve their status. In an interview in 1989, Watson (1989a), the first PPTA Women's Officer, described a focus on promotion of women as an essential activity in regional women's organisations, and claimed that PPTA activity in this area, coupled with the Promotion of Women Review had been directly responsible not only for increasing participation by women in branch activities, but also for the improvement of statistics in the appointment of women to promotion positions especially with its mandatory requirement for at least one woman in the top position (1989b:10-12). Watson's latter claim appears to be substantiated in the Slyfield Report (1993:19).

1.4   Education Sector Reforms

Within the context of state sector reform, deregulation and "free-market economic policies and industrial relations" (Court, 1994:212), 1988 saw the beginning of a massive restructuring in educational administration which raised new concerns about whether any future gains for women would be possible.

Fuelled by the Treasury briefing document Government Management Vol. 2 1987, the government commissioned report Administering for Excellence (Picot Report April 1988) framed the new educational structures to be put in place in October 1989. An "industrial model of management" (Codd, 1990b:20) which aimed to bring the education sector into the developing free-market economy of contestability and consumer choice, co-existed with expressions of democratic concern and commitment to equity (McPherson, 1991:27).

Since it can be argued that the free market principle is flawed if significant social groupings have not historically had equal access to all benefits and status positions, some "minimal guidance by the State might be necessary for equity conditions to be achieved" (Treasury document, 1987:93 cited in Jones et al. 1990:96).

That "guidance" became the identification of significant social groups in the Tomorrow's Schools document (Minister of Education, 1988). While not its primary focus, educational administration reform was to include the means to promote and progressively achieve greater equity for women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, and other groups with minority status; and for working class, rural and disabled students, teachers and communities. The document suggested that equity would be best achieved through "systems which combine enabling

legislation with awareness and education, and the monitoring of progress towards the goal" (ibid:25).

Enabling legislation came in the form of the aforementioned State Sector Amendment Act 1989. Reconstituted boards of trustees, supposedly representative of and answerable to the community they served are required to meet their statutory EEO obligations as employers in the education service. The Ministry of Education has statutory duty to develop, promote and monitor EEO policies and programmes in the education service.

However other forces were at work. In May 1990 appeared Today's Schools (Lough Report) which reviewed the education reform implementation process. The report highlighted management and, for Codd (1990b:22), defined an organisational culture that was "hierarchical, competitive, individualistic and highly task-oriented ... the culture of managerialism." This culture, predicted Codd (ibid.:23), would ensure that "the school remains an instrument for social control committed to the dominant social and political values and the perpetuation of the existing economic order." If state intervention and political commitment to equity concerns in the education sector had become secondary to an emphasis on competition, individualism and efficiency, what hope did the 1989 Education Amendment Act hold?

1.5   Equal Employment Opportunities - What Does It Promise?

The Education Amendment Act defined an EEO programme as one that is "aimed at the identification and the 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 person or group of persons" (1989, Section 77D:5).

Boards of Trustees are required to be "good employers" and to put into place employment practices which recognise the employment requirements of what are referred to as target groups, namely, women, Maori, Pacific Island peoples, people with disabilities and people from other minority ethnic groups who might have been disadvantaged by past employment practices. Opportunities are also to be provided for the "enhancement" of the abilities of individual employees. The "aims and aspirations" of Maori people are to be recognised.   That notwithstanding, the legal criterion underpinning employment decisions is that a "chief executive ..."shall give preference to the person best suited to the position" (State Sector Amendment Act 1989 s.77Gs.77J(4)).

The Act also requires an annual report summarising the EEO programme and detailing the extent to which the objectives of the plan have been attained. Reporting annually to Parliament on EEO progress and achievements in the education sector becomes the responsibility of the newly established Review and Audit Agency, translated into the Education Review Office (ERO).

The ERO Policy Document 1991[1] restated the Government's aims quite simply as "to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment and to redress both direct and indirect discrimination. Drawing on the definition in the Commission for Employment Equity Report (1991, Appendix 6:2) direct discrimination was said to occur when "someone is treated differently because of some personal characteristic, such as marital status, religions or political beliefs, gender, race, country of origin or disability."

The ERO document quoted from the Human Rights Commission EEO Manual (1989:14) making it clear that equal employment opportunities are neither a quota system, nor the unfair selection of people, and do not operate to put people out of jobs to make way for target group members. It was clearly stated that "EEO recognises membership of a target group **in addition to** not **rather than** competence or merit."

So what then was the promise of EEO? There appeared to be three main strands.

Firstly, anti-discrimination measures "to remove any formal barriers against the selection and promotion of individuals" (Briar, 1994:33) forms a major component, with a strong message for employers "many of whom had previously believed that occupational stereotyping was normal and acceptable" (Briar, ibid.:36). Secondly, a more proactive affirmative action principle seeks to improve the overall position of identified disadvantaged groups through temporary additional assistance and goal setting. The focus here is on greater equality of outcomes. Yet the notion of merit, the third strand, remains the core principle "firmly based upon the notion of equality of opportunity to compete" (Briar, ibid:32).

EEO, then, in general terms is a complex construct that promises access to a wider range of occupations, employer commitment to fair appointment practices and provision of training opportunities for specified EEO target groups, that would result in "room at the top" (Armstrong, 1994:188) of organisational hierarchies. In education, monitoring systems provide for systematic goal-setting and reporting practices. A complaints-based system for individual redress operates through the PPTA Field Service, the Human Rights Commission and Equal Employment Opportunities Tribunal.[2]

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[1]   This document comprised a set of papers, unnumbered and untitled, supplied to me by the Regional Education Review Office in 1992.

[2]   The principle of freedom from discrimination on the basis of gender is embodied in The Human Rights Commission Act 1977, the Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Employment Contracts Act 1991. For further details see Status of New Zealand Women 1992 - Second Periodic Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1992, pp. 6-13.

The Labour Relations Act (1987) also contained a section on discrimination, which "covered colour, race and ethnicity or national origin, sex, marital status, religious or ethical belief and trade union involvement" (Briar, 1994:36). These elements were maintained, and grievance procedures provided for, in the Employment Contracts Act (1991). This Act has, however, ushered in a new era of labour relations, characterised by individual negotiation.

Problematic is the reactive nature of the legislation with the burden of proof that discrimination has occurred shifted to the victim, considered "usually relatively powerless compared with the perpetrator" (Briar, 1994:36). Lee (1987:201) argues that the fear of initiating proceedings as an individual, the fear of exposure to reprisals, the inaccessibility of relevant information as proof, and the possibilities of penalties for the employer, these among other reasons are seen to reduce the effectiveness of such systems. These fears would seem to be justified by the Chadwick case in Britain (Chadwick, 1989:97-109).

The asymmetry of power between male and female renders sexuality itself a factor in women's subordination and lays the foundations that permit patronising behaviours and sexual harassment to become a normal part of the working environment (Backhouse & Cowan, 1981:45; Edson, 1988:126; Al-Khalifa, 1989:90; Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992:13). That this has arisen through a differential in power relations is implicit in the requirement to include in charters objectives aimed at preventing and redressing sexual harassment.[3]

More proactive approaches were PPTA concerns (Newsletter, September 5 1989) about the fairness of senior administrative appointment processes which echoed other concerns documented in the literature that included critiques of the composition of the interviewing panels; failure to interview for senior appointments other than the principal; questions being asked that were irrelevant to the professional position advertised; and questions to women applicants which were not asked of men, (Edson, 1988:44) e.g. childcare arrangements, spouse's opinion of job application, future living arrangements if appointment is made.

Documented also is a persistent tendency to see women exclusively in family role terms, with career "interruptions useless or irrelevant experience" (Paddock, 1981:194). Mobility, marriage and motherhood form a career contingency subject to gender bias (Edson, 1988). Not only do teacher-mothers have a double workload (Martin, 1987:439), women appeared to have to work doubly hard to get half the distance (Edson, 1988:229), with mentoring from male colleagues advantageous (Schmuck, 1981:229; Morgan et al. 1983:34).

[3]   The charter objective required schools to:
        "*enhance learning by developing policies and procedures which aim to eliminate any sexual harassment of students, parents, or staff members in the school and to provide appropriate and proper grievance procedures to handle complaints of sexual harassment.*"

Practices seen to constitute and reflect the hegemonic retention of power by men are associated with the manner of advertising of job opportunities (Edson, 1988 in Glazer, 1991:335), delineating the internal sexual division of labour (O'Neill, 1992:65), appointing men as disciplinarians and authority figures (Schmuck, 1981:228; Martin, 1987:439), along with considerations of age (Al-Khalifa, 1989:89; Hearn & Parkin, 1989:153). Problematic also is a male-defined organisational style. Women who do not believe in the preferred style are not deemed suitable material for promotion, while women who *do* behave this way are denigrated as not behaving appropriately for their sex (Martin, 1987:439).

The reduction of behaviours, skills and knowledge seen as critical to effective headship to a small range of personal characteristics is seen by Al-Khalifa (1989:85) as part of a wider mythology about the nature of leadership. Leadership theories hegemonically link authority, strength and masculinity to justify patriarchal dominance in education (Tyack & Hansot, 1982:81 in Glazer, 1991:328; Blackmore, 1989:107; Court, 1992:181-196). Informal practices, excessive reliance on intuition or "feel" (Morgan et al. 1983:145; Sampson, 1987:4) and loosely written job descriptions (Schmuck & Wyant, 1981:74) make it difficult to monitor sex bias or prove discriminatory intent (Migniuolo & De Lyon, 1989:55). The devolving of decision-making to elected representatives of each community allows for considerable discretion in local definitions of the "proper" personal attributes (Carlson & Schmuck, 1981:120; Edson, 1988:163; Court, 1994:230).

The organisational culture itself constitutes a powerful barrier in marginalising women, thereby limiting women's access to the structures and networks crucial to the informal processes which influence organisational life (James & Saville-Smith, 1989:98). It is argued that the micropolitical aspect of organisations is undertheorised and underresearched in that overt and covert mechanisms maintain or intensify stereotypic attitudes, and continue to suppress behaviours in access to leadership positions (Wheatley, 1981:258; Hoyle, 1986:125; Yeakey et al. 1986:140; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991:145; Marshall, 1991:139).

Watson (now Pearce, 1992) also commented on "prejudice against women who have any taint of feminism," and claimed that prejudice shifts:

> ..."it might begin with the belief women can't manage or administer so they prove they can, then it shifts to the need for role models for boys without fathers, then the need to promote family men, then to unreasoned preference for men and fear of strong women and so only men still continue to be the "best person" for Principal and Deputy Principal jobs in co-ed schools."

In Watson's opinion, many of the factors shown by the Teacher Career and Promotion Study as leading to promotion still held - self-confidence, mentors, career planning, mobility, visibility. Men were more likely to have access to

them. It is concerns of this kind that equal employment opportunities legislation was designed to address.

Watson (1989b:10-12) suggested the challenge lay with newly established boards of trustees to build on the foundations of the Promotion of Women Review to develop truly "gender neutral" professional criteria and procedures for all appointments, and to continue to recognise the need to have women at all levels of responsibility in secondary schools. The Review, in her opinion, provided an excellent basis for the development of an EEO programme in schools. On a continuing note of optimism the PPTA 1990-91 Annual Report wrote of EEO policies in many schools "absorbing" (p.14) the Review: "This means that annual reviews of the position of women in schools will happen each year"

However the same Report expressed disappointment in the "lack of support to boards by both the Ministry and the School Trustees Association" compared with PPTA's "major" contribution to resource and policy development (p. 14). It is argued that a disjuncture between avowed intentions and the lack of practical support through inadequate resourcing has the potential to reduce genuine commitment and action (Beeby, 1974:34; Aitken & Noonan, 1981:122-146; Coles & Maynard, 1990:305). From my reading it became apparent to me that I needed to investigate the nature and extent of government commitment to develop, promote and monitor the implementation of EEO policy in the education sector.

1.6   Implementation Stages: Resourcing

The assumption that if the employers are taught the advantage of EEO practice, then they will *necessarily* institute practices that counter discrimination, is not supported by historical evidence (Briar, 1994:31). However, the actions of the agencies documented in this section mainly targeted "the employer", principally the boards of trustees, but also the principal in recognition of the latter's professional and advisory role in appointments. PPTA, on the other hand, used its own networks for a more ground-level approach to "politicise" its members, to raise member consciousness as a prelude to action, and to promote affirmative action policies.

The State Sector Act 1988 requires the State Services Commission (SSC) to promote, develop and monitor EEO policies and programmes in government departments. The SSC publication Employment for Education - A Guide for School Trustees and Principals, directly emphasised employer commitment:

> "The most critical factor for the success of an EEO programme is the genuine commitment of the employer to equality in the workplace. For changes within your school to be effective and lasting, employees must be able to observe you endorsing the required policy. If you introduce a policy which you are not seen to be following personally, employees can lose respect and

commitment to the implementation of the policy." (SSC, 1989:40)

The "employer" in the deregulated education sector was the newly created boards of trustees, now legally responsible for meeting all legal requirements and newly imposed charter objectives. A commitment to equal educational opportunities, equal employment opportunities, and specifically to gender equity, were among the mandatory requirements of the charter.

The restructured Ministry of Education had a statutory role to "promote, develop and monitor equal employment opportunities in the education service (Section 77(D), State Sector Amendment Act 1989). Yet it was not until 1991, following release of the Commission for Employment Equity Working Party Report (Recommendation six, January 1991) that the Ministry established an EEO Unit (Education Services) to operate initially for a two-year period.[4]

The unit's dual function was to create and implement effective and practical strategies for EEO development in "the education sector" and "monitor EEO in all educational institutions."

This latter function, with broadened focus to include all designated EEO target groups, built on the Department of Education's ongoing participatory role in monitoring the position of women teachers in the education service alongside PPTA and SSBA.[5] With the demise of SSBA in 1989 a new alliance was formed by the Ministry with the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA). This alliance involved the use of Ministry liaison officers to assist NZSTA towards independence in "frontline training and advice to boards of trustees" (1991, op.cit.) A full time salary equivalent contracted to NZSTA for delivery of an EEO output was consistent with this agenda.

Other agencies in the public sector were producing and disseminating EEO information packages.[6] Despite mention of Ministry, SSC and NZSTA activity,

[4]   The Ministry Operations group provided two full-time salary equivalents, a budget for contract work and the use of five Ministry liaison officers whose role was "to facilitate and disseminate information on EEO to assist in the development of EEO programmes within schools" (Role of Ministry Liaison Officers in the Promotion of Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) in the Education Service, Ministry of Education, 1991).

[5]   These reviews are the Teacher Career and Promotion Study (1982 onwards), and the Position of Women in Education 1987 (1988). The joint participation of PPTA and SSBA has already been referred to p. 8. The restructured Ministry of Education's recent publications include The Position of Women in Education 1990, An Overview of Equal Employment Opportunities in the Teaching Services, March 1992, and The Position of Women in the Education Services 1991 and 1992, which became available in August 1993.

[6]   A full list is contained in the 1991 Report of the Commission for Employment Equity Into the 90's - Equal Employment Opportunities in New Zealand, Appendix 3:1-18.

the Commission for Employment Equity Report (1991:68) described resources in the education sector as "scarce and in the early stages of development." Associated problems were the "complexity" of the sector, the lack of a central co-ordinating body for advice and support, and the "need for PEOPLE (sic) resources", networking and senior management training. However PPTA response to the demand for EEO support training and resources warranted special mention as "the Education Review Office, the district offices of the Ministry of Education and ... the School Trustees Association have been slow to pick up any of the EEO training and resource functions needed to promote EEO through the sector" (ibid:69). PPTA initiatives listed included the Promotion of Women Review, described as "a memorandum to the Secondary Teachers' Award and part of EEO strategies in co-educational and girls' schools (ibid:70).

The repeal of the Employment Equity Act 1991 coincided with other reforms that appeared to both blunt the edge of EEO legislation and create uncertainty. These included the demise of the New Zealand Planning Council (NSPC), the Women's Advisory Committee on Education (WACE), the disestablishment of the Girls and Women's Section within the Policy Division of the Ministry of Education, the phasing out of the Ministry of Women's Affairs Project Fund and their newsletter Panui, and the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act in 1991. Amid the confusion new allegiances had to be formed.

A concern for co-ordination of effort and unnecessary duplication (Commission for Employment Equity Report, op.cit.:70) prompted the formation of an Interagency Education Group in 1991. This group, comprised representation from the Ministry, NZSTA, the teacher unions, principals' associations, and ERO. Minuted concerns over a period of six months (September 1991-March 1992) were firstly networking. Women's networks were believed to facilitate opportunities for support, confidence-building, information sharing.

The second concern was for "wider" leadership and organisational commitment, since gender equity appeared to have a low profile in government circles, among employers and within the education sector. More visibility to the position of women teachers in the service was required to counteract gatekeeping, a practice commented on by Cross when she spoke of the 1990 Position of Women in Education document: *I wave it around in seminars. Most people haven't seen it. It went to the board chair, didn't it?* (Personal communication/PPTA Women's Officer, September 1992)

The actions of ERO reviewers in carrying out their monitoring function were also seen to be helpful in stimulating employer action:

> "I am very pleased to get reports that the Education Review Office reviewers are looking very closely at all these (EEO policies and programmes, sexual harassment policy and programmes, gender inclusive education) in the schools they visit and talking to all teachers about them, not just those in

authority. It is a powerful lever to use to be able to assert that schools should be moving on these issues to ensure a good report from ERO." (PPTA Newsletter March 20, 1991)

However personnel restructuring within the Education Review Office within two periods of staffing cutbacks saw the original thirteen specialist EEO Review Officers appointed in 1989 change their titles to Personnel Reviewers in 1991, and lose their positions in 1993. This downsizing was accompanied by a shift in reviewer stance from the "collegial model of co-operative review and assistance" to one of external objective reporters to their primary client, the Minister of Education (Court, 1994:224). This occurred against a background of government fiscal cutbacks, diminished state intervention in the labour market, removal of compulsion in charter requirements and a changing political climate that favoured a voluntary approach to EEO.

The need to convince employers is arguably a strategy undertaken when compliance is voluntary. The EEO Trust's[7] publication Making the Most of a Diverse Workforce - emphasised the benefits to the organisation of a diverse range of employees, a stance also adopted by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW) "that the only real solution to discrimination in the labour market is through teaching employers the advantage of EEO practice." (NACEW Annual Report 1st July 1990/30th June 1991:9)

It would appear then that the force of the EEO legislation had considerably weakened between 1989-1992 despite the considerable investment in publicity, resource development and training provision. Employers needed convincing. Changes in the political climate have meant that government organisations themselves "have increasingly used the language of a private sector human resource management model, that of managing diversity." (Jones, 1994:181)

Yet there is no direct evidence that co-operative and successful EEO implementation would be direct outcomes of board of trustee training and resourcing (Briar, 1994:31) as suggested. Thompson (undated/unpublished: 11) cited boards dominated by Pakeha men who attempted to capture the decision-making process. In co-educational secondary schools women made up only 35 per cent of board members (Garden, 1989 in Jones et al. 1990:97). Travers (1989:34) expressed the concern that even when boards of trustees appear to represent a cross section of society, with decentralisation "the values which are dominant in society and which perpetuate inequalities will be left unchecked."

Doubting the existence of an "integrated single 'community' in a class and ethnically divided social formation," Codd et al. (1990b:19) considers it "pointless to press the state for actual educational equality between social groups if the instrument to achieve that, the school, is in the hands of the

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[7]   The EEO trust was an agency set up following the repeal of the Employment Equity Act 1991 to promote good management practice.

'community.' Codd et al. predict "intensified popular struggle" as a result.Equity in the decision-making process cannot be assumed since the major complexity of the problem is in determining what is the "community's standard of fairness" (McMahon, 1982:16 in Thompson, op. cit.:2).

School board members surveyed in The Monitoring Today's Schools Project (Middleton, 1992:10) were generally supportive of the idea of equal opportunities, but researchers found them unconvinced of the need for targeted funding or affirmative action measures, considered incompatible with the liberal presumption of the individual's rights of entry to fair competition in the marketplace. In a study of ten boards of trustees in Canterbury schools, both the developing and implementing of policies addressing equity issues were found to be poorly addressed by boards (Gordon, 1993). Moffat's study (1992:47) of ten contributing primary schools found that, within boards, no consensus view of equity had emerged. With no shared understanding and consensus about basic values she predicted a resistance to policies which are about changes and improvements.

Tremaine (1991:361) suggests that published departmental reviews may contain the most accessible information for evaluating the effectiveness of EEO. In my attempt to discover the extent to which secondary schools had developed, promoted and monitored an EEO policy, it was to departmental reviews that I next turned.

1.7   Implementation Stages: Monitoring

Two ERO Parliamentary Reports summarised information collected from education institutions in the form of questionnaire responses, which were part of the compulsory annual reporting of progress in EEO. The questionnaires were developed and distributed "to assist institutions with an understanding of the new requirements, and to help them to supply information to satisfy the provisions of the new law" (ERO document, 1991).

The first Report (ERO, 1990-1991) documented a 68 per cent national response rate, considered low given the legislative requirement to supply information. Not all sections of the questionnaire were completed. Primary and secondary schools were not separately reported.

The Report indicated wide variations in progress in advancing EEO, with competing work priorities, time pressure constraints, poor understanding of EEO and inadequate or insufficient training opportunities commonly identified as barriers. Some rural schools with difficulties in attracting applicants to positions and others with a stable staff considered EEO irrelevant.

Positive benefits to staff relationships, increased awareness of EEO matters, completion of policy statements and inclusion of EEO elements in the curriculum were some achievements acknowledged. However, EEO as a political issue was seen by some to have engendered negative attitudes, and

weakened or finished with the repeal of employment equity legislation, and the pressures on schools to adopt self-management policies and practices (p. 3).

The Report (p. 5) also recorded a lack of knowledge or understanding of EEO principles or its relevance in the educational context. Some schools resisted data collection through the questionnaire, perceiving it as a bureaucratically imposed workload and an intrusion into their affairs. Many advocated a common-sense approach to EEO. Confusion between equity, equal educational opportunities (EEdO) and EEO coupled with lack of EEO co-ordinator role definition elicited an ERO call for more training, proof of causal links between good employment practices and effective education, and increased resourcing and assistance from educational agencies, such as Principals' Taskforce, NZSTA and the MOE EEO Unit. The Report identified the need for an overall strategy to further progress in EEO. The nature of the strategy was not specified.

The second Report[8] (1991-1992) identified a need to develop a better informed and more strategic approach to EEO. Failure to comply with the mandatory requirement to report annually on progress would result in name publication in subsequent Reports. This is however far from the serious sanctions for non-compliance Chen (1989:28) recommends as necessary to effect structural change. The Report noted (page 16) that the preparation and monitoring of EEO programmes continued to be regarded by some as "an often unwelcome legislative duty".

Progress, however, was noted in the following areas: a 50% increase in the establishment/review of personnel policies relating to teaching staff conditions of service; an 18% increase in policy development; an 8% increase in the provision of a written list of responsibilities and duties for the EEO co-ordinator; and a 9% increase in consultation with Maori.

It was reported that there was more support available to schools from MOE, NZSTA and Principals' Taskforce material and MOE funded training opportunities. However there was little recorded progress towards implementation of policy through an EEO programme. With new boards of trustees it was felt that extra training opportunities were required if progress was to continue in the schools sector.

Notably missing from the list given were the Human Rights Commission (HRC), from whose material ERO itself had drawn and to whom complaints of discrimination can be addressed, and significantly the PPTA, with its proven support of women teachers (see page 12).

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[8] The schools response rate rose from 68 per cent in 1990 to 85 per cent, yet with a large number only partially completed.

For my research focus on co-educational secondary schools there were a number of problems associated with these Reports. An independent analysis of the secondary sector did not exist. Evidence of competing priorities, absence and ineffectiveness of training, and the confusion surrounding EEO principles made me determined to get closer to the issue. I therefore searched actual questionnaire responses made by secondary schools in a selected ERO district.

1.8 Secondary Sector Response in a Selected ERO District

(a)   1990 Regional Questionnaire Survey
The 1990 questionnaire asked for specific responses to questions organised in the following sections: awareness and training; person with responsibility for EEO; appointment policy; employee data base; and sexual harassment. Mentioned twice was the MoE EEO video sent to schools in Term 3 1989.

Other resources were cited.[9] Included also were questions concerning the keeping of data relating to appointment procedures, and the development of sexual harassment policies and procedures.

Of the 133 schools that responded to the 1990 questionnaire, only 6 replies were from state Form 3-7 co-educational schools. Therefore the results of the Regional Questionnaire Survey 1990 are of comparatively little use as an information base for this study. However it is significant in itself that so few schools responded. I concluded that the questionnaire was not considered important, and that accordingly EEO was not held to be a matter of importance either.

(b)   Regional Questionnaire Surveys 1991 and 1992
The ERO EEO questionnaire was changed from that used in 1990, but used consistently over 1991 and 1992. It therefore produced data that allowed me to make a comparative study of the two Reports.

The questionnaire form contained three parts. Part A asked for specific information about the institution, address, name (but not position) of person completing the questionnaire and size of the institution. Part B asked for specific information on EEO issues. The twelve questions each had a specific focus, with preformed boxes/categories to identify. Additions included questions targeting EEO provisions for non-teaching as well as teaching staff. Further questions targeted policy development, not only for appointments, but also for recruitment, promotion and career development, staff training and development, and conditions of service not covered or beyond those in current employment contracts. Omitted is any reference to

9   These resources specifically included: Industrial Awards, Employment for Education Document (SSC); NZEI Guidelines, College of Education Guidelines.

sexual harassment, nor was there reference to any specific resources. Part C contained five open-ended questions for comment on progress in EEO, with spaces for written responses to be made. Institutions were asked to identify their most important achievements in EEO; the impact of these on their organisation; the key tasks that had not been achieved; what had prevented the achievement of these key tasks, and their anticipated programme for the following year.

In 1992 there were 22 responses from secondary schools, surprisingly two fewer than the previous year.

Names were filled in, but the position of the person completing the Report could not easily be identified. I therefore researched the information myself by asking colleagues and ERO personnel. In 1992 fewer responses were completed by the principal (11 and 17 in 1991) and four responses were made by personnel/EEO committee chairpersons/co-ordinators for the first time. Of the total responses that could be gender identified, in 1992 13 were made by men and 6 by women, hardly a significant increase in women's involvement on the previous year (1991: male - 67%; female - 25%; unknown - 8%; 1992: male - 59%; female - 27%; unknown - 14%). Of the eleven state co-educational schools in 1991, 11 responses were made by men, 10 of whom were principals and one deputy principal. However in 1992, of the 10 state co-educational schools, 6 responses only were made by men, of whom five were principals.

According to the 1992 returns there was a 31% increase in claims to have completed the EEO policy, with more schools claiming to have appointed an EEO co-ordinator (82% compared with 67% in 1991). Significantly only 2 schools in 1992 claimed to have provided the co-ordinator with a written list of responsibilities and duties. What therefore was the function of the co-ordinator was open to question. The co-ordinators were said to have access to decision-making in appointments in 16 schools, in interviews in 15 schools and in personnel policy making in 19 schools, a slight increase on the previous year. Two of the four schools which responded negatively to all three areas were co-educational schools.

Surprisingly in 1992 data collection procedures to build an employee profile had been put in place in only 6 of the schools, 4 co-educational and two single-sex (one boys and one girls). This contrasted sharply with the 1991 claim of 13 schools. What is of interest is that the responses for the co-educational schools had been filled out by the chairperson of an EEO Committee, the personnel sub-committee, and two women assistant principals.

The training issue was more variable. In 1991, most training had been received by some teaching staff (14 schools), and the principal (13 schools), followed by boards of trustees (10 schools) then the EEO co-ordinator. No schools recorded training provision for all staff. In 1992, the ranking remained the same, but with a significant drop in numbers. However 2 schools

recorded training for all teaching staff. The nature of the training was not specified.

With regard to questions relating to the incorporation of EEO principles into personnel policies for teaching staff, there were no significant differences between the two years. However in 1991 it was considered that the staff development programme contained elements that met the needs of women in 21 schools (88%), with 19 (79%) claiming that women were now receiving adequate training opportunities. The figures for 1992 were 18 (82%) and 14 (64%) respectively. In both Reports only 5 schools claimed to have procedures for reporting EEO progress to local committees and the community. "Local committees" was undefined.

Important achievements were for 1992 the promotion of women, whereas in 1991 EEO policy development featured ahead of women's promotion. This comment offered an interesting insight:

"Women and Maori now hold 3 of the top 7 positions. By not focusing on it at staff level, but by working 1:1 we have overcome much of the damage and negative attitudes created by the legislation and surrounding publicity" (co-ed)

In 1991 the impact on the school of the achievement(s) noted were: increased awareness (5 schools), and comments like none (4 schools), very little (1 school), no-one cares (1 school). Two co-ed schools, referred positively to role-models. One comment included boys in the role model sphere of influence:

(Appointment of a woman DP). Excellent role model for both female and male students and staff. Encouragement of female staff to seek further professional development and promotion (co-ed)

The role model comments were echoed in the 1992 return, along with the security of tenure afforded by permanent part time positions. Some comments confused EEO with the charter-related objective of equal educational opportunities (EEdO).

One school in 1991, referred to the <u>Promotion of Women Review</u>:

Staff are more aware of EEO requirements and this has reinforced The Promotion of Women Review. Would seem to have flowed into attitudes for promotion and the taking of higher responsibilities within the school.

Policy development and implementation along with training needs were identified in both years as key tasks not achieved. Also mentioned was raising awareness of the importance of EEO issues, in one case to dispel negativity:

Developing a positive attitude - much of the work is seen as separatist/racist/sexist (female in co-ed school). Time, workload and higher priorities were consistently identified as barriers to EEO achievement with some comment on lack of opportunity: Many PR

positions are held by long-serving males and the jobs are not becoming available.

Falling rolls and limited fields of applicants were also identified. In 1992, low prioritising of EEO was excused: *Confident (sic) that the spirit of our EEO policy is being adhered to has placed these key tasks low on our list of priorities so far:* (boys' school) and *staff appear satisfied with the present procedures within the school* (rural co-ed) which leads me to question: Which staff?

Responses in 1991 to the question on future planning varied. The word "review" occurred frequently. What was meant by this was not made clear. The vagueness of the replies is a consistent thread, also expressions of impatience: *quality of commitment and learning, rather than mediocrity, tokenism and hypocrisy, which is an outcome of so many "paper" undertakings to fulfil the previous Government's Act* (co-ed). In 1992 establishing a database and training were top priorities for planning - a much more specific focus, which would appear to me to indicate a better grasp of EEO policy requirements.

In general terms, what has emerged is a word picture that may or may not accurately represent what is actually happening in schools. The picture, taken at face value, shows little real movement in the two years. Problematic, in particular, are issues surrounding training, and the role and responsibilities of the EEO co-ordinator. Lack of staff movement is a particular issue. With the terms used in the questionnaire undefined, the respondents have been free to compose their replies based on their own interpretations, and their own politics. What has emerged however is the low priority accorded to EEO as a recipe for action, a relegation of EEO to common sense action, and a sense of impatience at having to fill out a questionnaire. Considering that reporting on EEO is a legal requirement, many schools appeared not to have taken their requirements very seriously.

In 1992, the adjusted 1991 questionnaire format seemed to me to be linked with the moves to downsize ERO personnel and remove from reviewers their specialist EEO designation (see page 20). This in my view paralleled the shift in focus of the questionnaire analysis from regional to national level through instituting a practice of regional encodement. These moves would seem to constitute part of the multi-faceted approach towards diminished state intervention, in reducing ERO's EEO monitoring role to one of simply monitoring the institution's compliance to report annually.

In addition, the persons who filled out the questionnaires, in presenting a unity of perspective, may not have accurately and fairly represented the views of all school personnel. Position, gender, ethnicity, source of information, commitment, work pressures - these are among a range of variables that can influence the nature of the responses. Further, the same person did not always fill out the questionnaire each year. Neither could I assume that the responses genuinely described current EEO practice when the form was required by ERO, who had the power to audit and report on the school.

Problematic also was the way the questions themselves were structured. When boxes simply had to be ticked there was no guarantee that the same meaning was attached to the term by all respondents, a point made in the Reports. Also evidenced were varying interpretations of EEO and terms used in other parts of the questionnaire.

This raises very serious questions as to the reliability, both of a questionnaire as an information-gathering instrument and of the data gathered in presenting a realistic picture of EEO implementation in schools. Evidence of competing priorities and lack of progress corroborates anecdotal evidence of the cynicism and disillusionment felt by female staff, who perceived EEO "to be at the bottom of the pile" (Tremaine, 1991:365). A 1992 questionnaire response illustrates this perfectly:

> 1.   *You cannot bully or legislate changes in attitudes. Hopefully people will be so bothered by other issues that I can continue to allow women to be seen as*
> (a)   *competent*
> (b)   *effective*
> (c)   *hard-working*
> *and persuade them to go for promotion*
> 2.   *To get promoted out of here*

A comment had been added in brackets in different handwriting: *(Good, then I'll be able to appoint a man)*.

The reviewer had pencilled an addition: *The DP (female) must have written this.* This was all the more interesting as the school was not only clearly identified, but contained other comments and repartee in similar vein as responses/comments to other questions.

1.9   Discussion

It is argued that the implementation of EEO has been "unable to create any overall changes in long-standing patterns of structural inequality in the workplace" (Briar, 1994:25), has "little visibility in education" (Court, 1994:223) and "has provided a useful appearance of reformist activity while masking the reality of reactionary conservatism and inaction" (Tremaine, 1991:365). The persistence of a sizeable difference between men and women in the proportion of each group holding senior administrative positions (Slyfield, 1993:13-37) would appear to substantiate these claims, and points to a continuing and complex problem:

> "The implementation of EEO has been particularly difficult in the education sector because of the scattered nature of work sites and the lack of EEO knowledge amongst Boards of Trustees and those in top management positions. These problems have been exacerbated by massive reform in the education and industrial areas which is impacting on the ways that inequality is created and maintained" (Court, 1994:230).

Yet increased numbers of women in assistant principal positions, and an increase in numbers of women applicants and appointees to PR's have been linked to PPTA instigated voluntary affirmative action initiatives. These initiatives have been assumed to have an established base within each secondary institution upon which to build an effective EEO programme.

A number of recent theoretical analyses of the framing of EEO legislation point to an internal tension within EEO between fundamentally opposing principles (Jewson & Mason, 1986 in Walsh & Dickson, 1994:45-54; Armstrong, 1994:188-199; Sayers, 1994:113-128). This tension has surfaced in particular responses in the ERO questionnaires that indicated to me not only an internal struggle between and within competing models of EEO, but also resistances to the imposition of EEO as a legislative requirement. Explanations of these contradictions and conflicts must be sought within a wider social context where gender discrimination in employment has been seen to persist through patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation (Armstrong, 1994:188-9; Briar, 1994:28) and through practices of sexual harassment (Briar, ibid.). It is argued that legislation and subsequent policy is unable to influence more diffuse mechanisms through which inequality occurs, unconscious ways of thinking and acting which underpin practices (Lee, 1987:201; Coles & Maynard, 1990:304). Problematic, then, is whether the principle of occupational equity can be realised by legislating against employment discrimination. What is needed is research to "locate the ambiguities" (Schmuck & Wyant, 1981:96).

To make sense of the confused picture that has emerged I therefore needed to engage with the "evolving body of EEO theory" in my attempt to "clarify the analyses we work with, to avoid *isolation* from other issues ... and to avoid the distorting effects of operating with an *implicit* theoretical perspective" that would help to "locate the practice of EEO within a framework which appreciates the complexities of its practice (Sayers, 1994:113). I needed a grounded study to "provide the webs, the textures, to ascertain who was chosen for the tap on the shoulder" (Regional ERO EEO Reviewer, personal communication, 1992). The manner in which I developed a theoretical perspective, the way in which I was to ground my study, form the substance of Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Perspectives

"Feminism is a politics. It is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between men and women in society" (Weedon, 1987:1).

2.1 Introduction

Following the review of literature in Chapter One relating to the positioning of women in the secondary education sector and the development of EEO as a legislative requirement in the public sector, I begin Chapter Two with a discussion of the policy implementation process and factors that could affect EEO. I then introduce feminism as the theoretical perspective within which to "locate the practice of EEO" (Sayers, 1994:114). Within feminism recent formulations of poststructuralist perspectives focus on discourse theory as the means to open up a range of questions concerning subjectivity and identity, and place language at the centre of the analysis. Conceptualising EEO as a discourse leads to a discussion of various theoretical formulations of EEO drawn from the literature, and ends in a reformulation.

I then discuss the link between individual consciousness and possible resistances to forms of EEO. I raise questions surrounding the authority and identity of the EEO practitioner, and the principle of merit. I conclude by redefining the perceived potential of the theoretical framework to locate key themes within the field of EEO in the secondary education sector, and to assist an appreciation of "the complexities of its practice" (Sayers, op. cit.:114).

2.2 Policy Implementation - Factors for Consideration

Harman (1982 in Corson, 1986:5) views policy as a process: "a course of action or inaction towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired end; on this account policy embraces both what is actually intended and what occurs as a result of the intention."

An EEO policy may be classified as "redistributive" (Anderson, 1979:127-31) in that it involves a politically expressed intention to redress inequalities that arise from the nature of society. Based on notions of equity and social justice, it is argued that redistributive policies are harder to implement than other types.

Firstly, such a policy may be symbolic, merely a political response to satisfy certain pressures. To take it for granted that interventions in social policy from central government are motivated by a concern to advance equality may build a misleading assumption into the analysis (Ham & Hill, 1984:109).

It is suggested that the adoption of EEO policies may simply entail the empty acceptance of equal opportunities rhetoric, particularly if there is a disjuncture between avowed intentions and the lack of practical support through

inadequate resourcing and underfunding of training and special projects (Coles & Maynard, 1990:305). It has been shown in Chapter One (page 19) that the Ministry of Education does not have a policy for EEO spending in any substantive sense. Indirect funding blurs the relationship between policy and implementation. Walsh (1991:75) identifies the need to "guard against the substitution of symbol for changed management practices", in the sense that promoting the presence of women in a male-defined world does not necessarily achieve the "integration of the female" (Branson, 1988:109).

Part of most equal opportunities (gender) programmes involves training staff in both the recognition of gender issues and in the practical day-to-day implications of the policy for their own work. According to Coles & Maynard (1990:302) a well-designed, targeted, in-service training programme for *all* staff is a critical indicator of the degree of seriousness with which the issue is being addressed. Monitoring, too, is critically important for identifying the nature of inequalities and the particular ways in which disadvantage is taking place, as well as assessing the effectiveness of any special measures introduced to remedy inequalities. Chen (1989:17-32) further warns that where there are no strict sanctions for non-compliance, it may be deduced that the intentions are not serious.

Secondly, in a system where policy-making and implementation practices are clearly separated, the tension between the normative assumptions of government - about what ought to be done and how it should happen - and the struggles and conflicts between interests, the need to bargain and compromise (Easton, 1953:129-30; Foucault, 1980:60; Ham & Hill, 1984:112; Prunty, 1984:60) opens up the possibility of resistances and subversion and may result in little change. "Local level actors" are able then to do their own separate priority exercises (Moffat, 1992:50). Corson's (1986:8-14) analysis of a major policy initiative in Tasmania revealed social context factors as crucial to its success or failure. There, different interpretations of key terms, a network of organisational problems, and a time of economic recession and subsequent financial constraint made conflict inevitable.

Thirdly, Easton's (1953) claim that application of policy is a value-laden activity (in that it consists of "a web of decisions and actions that allocate values") requires an analysis of the mechanisms by which policies are decided upon and implemented. This highlights the need to "map backwards" (Elmore, 1981 in Ham & Hill, 1984:106) to focus on individual actions, the basic assumptions, beliefs and values underlying the policy process.

Jewson & Mason (1986:327) argue that conceptions of EEO policies cannot be understood simply as organisational blueprints and that the conceptions of fairness that they embody cannot be comprehended simply as bodies of knowledge or belief. They are to be seen as social practices. The lack of consistency and the confusions are evidence that groups formulating and implementing policies do so in social contexts characterised by struggles for power, historically contextualised. Therefore, in order to be able to evaluate

the implementation of an EEO policy, it is necessary to study its effects in practice (Foucault, 1980:60).

To be able to study the effects of policy in practice, a theory is required, therefore, that embraces all spheres of society (Codd et al. 1990a:28). This theory would not only be critical of the social construction of meanings which have come to be accepted as natural and commonsense (Leach & Davies, 1990:324), it would also be capable of offering an alternative as an adequate basis for social change. Such a theory is feminism.

2.3   Feminism as Politics

Methodologies which ignore how the division of social experience along gender lines tends to give men and women different conceptions of themselves, their activities and beliefs, and the world around them (Harding, 1986:31 in Glazer, 1991:323) are charged with being ideological (Roberts, 1981; Spender, 1981; Gilligan, 1982; Acker, 1983, 1989; Farnham, 1987 in Glazer, 1991).

Feminist method, in affirming the interests of women, is both consciousness raising and a form of political practice (MacKinnon, 1982:29), although itself charged with being ideological (Capper, 1992:123). The authority that is claimed for such research, however, is its relevance "to the ongoing struggle to create a material and cultural context in women's diverse interests" (Flax, 1990:56-57) through "constant and creative interaction between theory and practice" (Branson, 1988:92-93).

Feminist writing takes as axiomatic the patriarchal nature of society. The term "patriarchal" refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations are expressed through an ideology of gender premised on social meanings given to biological sexual difference (Weedon, 1987:2) arising from the binary opposing of male/female, where 'male' is high and 'female' is low (Branson, 1988:84). It is claimed that these power relations "structure all areas of life, the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure" (Weedon, ibid.:1) in ways that create a gendered culture (James & Saville-Smith, 1989:54) sustained in everyday thought and practice.

Feminist theorising involves the search for explanations, both of gender construction and the discriminatory practices based in gender distinctions (Branson, 1988:92-93). The politics is directed at changing the existing power relations between men and women in society. This involves considering the means by which sexism can be confronted and destroyed (Branson, ibid.). It would also involve evaluations of interventions that can offer some challenge to the "embeddedness of masculine power" (Eisenstein in Goodnow & Pateman, 1985:111). Furthermore, mobilising theory on behalf of women's interests in order to develop strategies for change, must be accountable to the oppressed interests which divide women as well as those which all women

share (Weedon, 1987:11) through "constant and creative interaction between theory and practice" (Branson, 1988:92-93).

There is a range of ways of understanding the meanings and implications of patriarchy within feminism. These ways result in different forms of feminist politics and interests. Three common classifications are presented here, with an indication of their views of EEO.

Liberal feminists aim to achieve full equality of opportunity with equal numbers of men and women in every sphere without radically transforming the social and political structures and systems, considered legitimate and valid (Sayers, 1992:145). In a perspective said to be dominated by the sex-role socialisation paradigm (Stromquist, 1990:143), the basic structure of the nuclear family is taken for granted, and state benevolence is unquestioned. Outcomes consistent with stated goals would, however, transform currently accepted norms in the sexual division of labour, divisions of masculinity and femininity, domestic labour and childcare arrangements (Weedon, 1987:4). Open to question however are explanations that do not distinguish between symbolic and substantial acts by the state and ignore material causes that might be leading the State and other institutions in society to permit the subordination and oppression of women (Stromquist, op.cit.:144-5). It is also argued (Sayers, 1992:145) that liberal feminist perspectives often focus on issues associated with the individual rather than looking for structural reasons for inequality. Weedon (1987:132) claims that liberal feminists do not have the resources or the institutional positions and backing to make much impact on the discursive hierarchy of existing writing and research, backed as it is by capitalist and patriarchal interests.

Radical feminists require a complete social restructuring and redistribution of power (Weineke, 1991 in Sayers, 1992:147) in order to achieve a society in which "femininity and femaleness will not be debased and devalued" (Weedon, 1987:4). In defending the family as a core unit of society, the State is held to be a key agent in the perpetuation of women's subordination, through patriarchy as the paradigm that works to confine women to a "private" realm of domestic responsibilities as mothers and housekeepers with men released for "public" sphere activity (West & Zimmerman, 1985:115; O'Neill, 1990:90). Radical feminists therefore seek to recapture an essential women's culture beyond and apart from the structures of the patriarchal family. The State's benevolence is refuted.

Radical feminism therefore assumes that providing equal opportunity for all women will produce the necessary changes (Harding, 1986 in Dundas Todd & Fisher, 1988:4). Essentialist critiques that speak for all women as a universal group with a specified nature effectively limit and prescribe femininity and hence the possibilities of historical change. Missing in these critiques is an analysis of difference - difference in race, class, ethnicity, sexual difference, and individual experience. Furthermore the stance of radical feminists rejects the need to engage politically with complex power relations of particular patriarchal societies, thus constituting a discourse without the social and

institutional power to effect change (Weedon, 1987:35). Radical feminism therefore would appear not to offer a useful point of political challenge and resistance to patriarchal discourses and gendered subject positions.

Thirdly, a patriarchal social system is linked with class and racial oppressions by socialist feminists, who conceive of gender as "socially produced and historically changing" (Weedon, 1987:4). Making explicit the interconnection between ideological and economic forces, in which patriarchy and capitalism reinforce each other, socialist feminists link the State to the mode of production where women represent part of the reserve labour force (Stromquist, 1990:146) and its reproduction. For these oppressions to be discontinued, the social system needs complete transformation, opening up "all social ways of being to all people" (Weedon, 1987:18).

Although there is no overarching theory, feminism unites in seeking new paradigms of social criticism through questioning the assumptions, beliefs, and values of traditional disciplinary knowledge, claimed to generalise from the experience of men (Roberts, 1981:15; Fraser & Nicholson, 1990:26), and pointing to its irrelevance to women's experience or highlighting the absence of women.

Every form of feminist politics implies a particular way of understanding patriarchy and the possibilities of change, resulting from the conflict and contradictions between dominant institutionalised definition of women's nature and social role, and our experience of these institutions in the context of the dominant liberal discourse of the free and self-determining individual (Weedon, 1987:5). In order to make sense of these contradictions we need new theoretical perspectives which challenge individualism, and attempt to illuminate a reflexive relationship among social structure, social interaction, and the social construction of gender (Connell, 1987:140).

A way of conceptualising this reflexive relationship places language at the centre of the enquiry (Weedon, 1987:21; Dundas Todd & Fisher, 1988:12; Jones, 1994:172). Language is the connecting factor in certain theoretical formulations that have become known as poststructuralism(s). Although the differences between forms of poststructuralism are important, the specific version produced by Weedon (1987:20) and identified as "feminist poststructuralism", is able, "in detailed historically specific analysis, to explain the working of power on behalf of specific interests and to analyse the opportunities, for resistance to it" (Weedon, 1987:41). This is achieved by "creating an account which presents a range of voices articulating their positions on EEO" (Jones, 1994:173). The analysis derives from a conception of language use as discourses. These discourses display the ways language both reflects and sustains institutional and cultural arrangements as it accomplishes social action (Dundas Todd & Fisher, 1988:11).

2.4   Language as Discourses

The term "discourse" has acquired a specific meaning in the literature deriving from the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault.

Foucault (1980:119) suggests that discourse refers not only to the actual words and statements themselves, but to their connection with the complexities of social and power relations which prevail in a given context, and which constrain what is said. Discourse viewed in this manner suggests that meaning results not from language itself, but from institutionalised discursive practices which constrain its use, and pre-empt alternative uses and meanings. It privileges certain concepts, viewpoints, perspectives and values and "marginalises viewpoints and values central to other discourses" (Gee, 1991:5 in Lankshear, 1994:64) in "regulating what is known and can be known, what is done and said and what can be done and said, our sense of self, and the particular identities that it takes the form of, and the power issues that permeate all these social practices" (Jones, 1994:174).

Language, then, is seen to both constitute and be constituted by and through discourses which are historically and socially located and represent political interests vying for status and power. Language, in this view, is neither an abstract system, nor transparent, and does not describe a pre-existing reality. Language is held to create or construct our reality, hence the "distinction between 'reality' and the representation of reality is collapsed" (Jones, 1994:174). Since it is argued (Jones, 1994:174; Weedon, 1987:29-31) that power relations are always implicated in the way that we construct our reality in language, the way key issues are represented has political implications. In this sense the concept of discourse is seen as a structuring principle of society, i.e. not only a set of communication acts and strategies, but "a process of creating social meaning (Eagleton, 1983:115 in Jones op. cit.: 174) through "a set of statements formulated on particular institutional sites of language use" (Cameron, 1985:152). These statements are recognised as "having a material force, a capacity to constrain, shape, coerce, as well as to potentiate individual action" (Davies, 1989:xi).

It is claimed that through the use of language sufficiently ambiguous to engineer public consent, policy documents themselves are effective in becoming hegemonic (Codd, 1988:235-247). This view considers that language itself constitutes differing cultural interpretations that effectively set limits upon what is held to be possible and appropriate within particular spheres. This consideration has two implications.

Firstly, Codd (1988:235) argues that the meanings and values of dominant groups saturate society, in order to maintain the conditions for their own dominance. Any statement, spoken or written, is already "saturated with meaning ... carrying the accumulated weight of history and convention" (Litvaks, 1985:10 in Dundas Todd & Fisher, 1988:6). It is this saturation which is problematic. Where dominant definitions come into conflict with non-dominant meanings, the struggle between social groupings is revealed.

Secondly, Feinberg (1973 in Lankshear, 1994:61) presents the view that concepts such as "freedom" and "equality" that are offered as a social ideal, are elliptical or abbreviated. These everyday terms are relational in that they have multiple meanings when used in organisational power networks (Derrida, 1978 in Hassard & Parker, 1993:21), since they have been used in many contexts over time and thus bear the "trace" of many other terms. Thus a speaker may signify, but a supplement, in the form of a listener, is required to determine meaning.

Derrida (in Norris, 1982:32) introduces the concept of *différence* to explain the ambiguity. The sense of a term remains suspended between the two French verbs "to differ" and "to defer", both of which contribute to its textual force, but neither of which can fully capture its meaning. It therefore follows that definitions are neither static nor closed. Since definitions depend on the distribution of social power in the discursive context (Weedon, 1987:105), they are only temporarily fixed, and are therefore open to redefinition and challenge. From this point of view particular versions or definitions of femininity or masculinity are never inevitable (Weedon, 1987:106).

For this same reason it is argued that the same discourses, the same category, through the realisation of multiple meaning can be both dangerous and liberating (Cameron, 1985:43; Weedon, 1987:167-8; Hartsock, 1990:170; Nicholson, 1990:16) due to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society (Gee, 1993:4-5 in Lankshear, 1994:62). Power is therefore a matter of social interdependence; it is effected through the co-ordination of actions around specified definitions (Hassard & Parker, 1993:21). Attempting change within organisations without questioning the impact of the "discriminatory" construction of persons into "men" and "women" becomes problematic (Mills, 1993:145). The ideology of innate sexual difference for example is premised on the belief that men and women have separate and unique values, skills, and abilities. Radical feminists argue the need for women's special talents to be socially mobilised. Tennant (1992:29) concludes, however, that ideas of sexual difference can also be used against women to prevent them from using their talents outside the home or beyond any sphere of activity seen as appropriately "female."

To the problematic of multiple meaning is added that of meaning in general (Ricoeur, 1976:78). As stated above, meaning can only occur in a specific textual location and in a relation of difference from all other textual locations. Our experiences shape our behaviour, but it is the way we describe and interpret our experiences that matters. To encode our experiences we use language as it has been modelled to us (Horgan, 1990:21). The discourses that constitute language can therefore be said to be "historically specific sets of meanings and practices which *offer* various positions to us" (Middleton & Jones, 1992:x), embodying both the formal system of signs and the social practices which govern their use (Codd, 1990a:137). In this sense, discourse refers not only to meanings in language, but also to the real effects of language use, i.e. the production of knowledge.

Foucault (1978/1990:92-93) has advanced the view that all knowledge is the product of power relations. The power that is exercised through discourse is a form of a power "which permeates the deepest recesses of civil society and provides the material conditions in which individuals are produced as subjects and objects" (Codd, 1990a:139). To show how discourse can mediate the exercise of power, we must go beyond the meaning of what is said to the act of saying it, argues Codd (1990a:138). In other words we cannot understand the construction of consciousness without understanding the reflexive relationship between language and context (Coward & Ellis, 1977:92 in Dundas Todd & Fisher, 1988:6).

This view sees the individual constantly subjected to and affected by discourse, conscious of previous interaction when faced, at a conscious or unconscious level, by a choice of conflicting subject positions (Mills, 1989:xvi). Out of these often contradictory positions, each person struggles to achieve a separate existence for themselves and to interpret the positioning of others, selecting and using the discursive practices sustained by the society they are in (Weedon, 1987:3; Davies, 1989:14). Therefore "oppression isn't seen as any once and for all event, explained by events back there" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:202). It is an open-ended, ongoing social process (Flax, 1990:44; Middleton & Jones, 1992:x), hence open to change.

Mills (1993:142) quotes recent studies that have indicated ways in which people's sense of self becomes shaped by organisational discourse. In particular Wetherall et al. (1987 in Mills, 1993:143) argue that notions of career are imbued with intersecting and contradictory discourses concerning gender and employment opportunities. In their research two themes relating to women in the workplace, careers and children, emerged as dominant. Significantly, these two themes often co-existed within the speech of the same individual.

The "equal opportunities" theme was a form of talk that endorsed liberal values of egalitarianism, freedom of choice for the individual, equally shared responsibilities. The "practical considerations" theme combined notions of the reproductive role and the maternal urges of females with supposed understandable employer reluctance to risk hiring females over males. It is argued (Wetherall et al. ibid.; Thompson, 1984:5) that it is perhaps the contradictions and instabilities in our thoughts and practices that may be responsible for the force and continuity of the ideology that continues to maintain discriminatory practices between men and women, despite equity struggles and laws. These contradictions need to be probed (Capper, 1992:123).

Theorising the instability of identities and a conception of knowledge as inherently unstable and entwined with power relations" (Armstrong, 1994:195) questions what is natural and taken-for-granted in our common-sense understandings (Leach & Davies, 1990:324) and challenges the dominant liberal-humanist discourse of interdependent binary oppositions which

privilege one presence and marginalise its opposite (Young, 1981:8 in Brodribb, 1992:7; Weedon, 1987:112).

Society thus becomes the site of many competing discourses (Armstrong, 1994:195). To be powerful a discourse has at least to be in circulation. The degree to which marginal discourses can increase their social power is governed by the wider context of social interests and power within which challenges to the dominant are made, the sites of discursive struggle over meaning (Capper, 1992:123), and the difficulty of creating alternatives (Hartsock, 1990:172).

The strength of discourse analysis lies in its use as a strategy that attends to the social and institutional context in order to bring into question all that is *natural* and address the political implications of particular ways of fixing identity and meaning (Weedon, 1987:174; Linstead, 1993:69). The aim is *both* to recognise the oppression of women and its "endless variety and monotonous similarity" (Leach & Davies, 1990:324) and to enable a determination of the extent to which women's oppression has differed historically in different societies, social groups and individually.

Foucault (1980:96 in Ferguson, 1984:157) conceptualises a *reverse discourse* which enables the "subjected subject" of a discourse to speak in her own right. Reverse discourse has important implications for the power of the discourse which it seeks to subvert, and enables the production of new, resistant discourses (Weedon, 1987:110). The rhetoric of EEO constitutes in theory such a reverse discourse, which seeks to resist and displace dominant discourses, and to locate itself in concrete social practices.

Conceptualising EEO as a discourse enables us to offer an account of what is going on "by marking off its relations to other texts, its contexts, its sub-texts" (Silverman, 1989:14). Analysis of the discourses at school site level, what Marshall (1991:141) calls *micropolitical analysis*, is needed to discover whether or not EEO understandings have permeated the rhetoric to the extent of being matched by corresponding behaviours of acceptance.

However recent analyses of the theory and practice of EEO not only identify it as a key work-force issue (Sayers & Tremaine, 1994:15), but highlight its conceptual confusion and complexity. These analyses describe limitations on the liberal/radical framework previously conceptualised by Jewson & Mason (1986).

2.5 EEO - Theoretical Perspectives

(a) EEO - The Liberal Agenda

The twin doctrines of equality of opportunity and equal need (Renwick, 1986:29) are encapsulated in education in Peter Fraser's 1939 statement of policy:

"The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his (sic) level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted, and to the fullest extent of his powers" (AJHR, 1939:2-3 in Renwick, 1986:29)

This statement enshrines the spirit of egalitarianism, the myth of equal access, that has been an essential part of the liberal ideology underpinning the development of New Zealand as a nation (O'Neill, 1992:69; Shuker, 1987). It is argued that this dominant notion of equality is deeply embedded in educational philosophy and social practices. With its implication of equal educational outcomes, it has perpetuated inequalities by "rendering unproblematic schooling processes and structures", (Apple, 1979:27), assumed to be value-free and serving a common good (Codd et al. 1990b:7; O'Neill, 1992:69). Yet the myth is itself value-laden, legitimating an ideology of deficit in terms of an individual's experience and performance, by reifying the individual as the problem.

Also assumed to be neutral is the relationship between education and wider society. Yet it is claimed that the ideology underlying practices of access, allocation and award have far-reaching effects in terms of the distribution of power, income, status and prestige in wider society (Aitken & Noonan, 1981:122; Ham & Hill, 1984:1-21). That such practices are value-laden is exemplified in data presented in Chapter One that testifies to women's continued lack of access to senior administrative positions in the secondary education sector (pages 6-10).

Thirdly, it is argued that the liberal rhetoric constitutes a hegemonic discourse which has had the effect of a material force within education, permeating commonsense assumptions, to exercise power through consent (Gramsci in Codd, 1988:242) and conceal the conflicts, inequalities and forms of domination and control (Codd et al. 1990b:10). The commonsense assumptions and theoretical frameworks of liberal individualism which constitute the discourse of equal opportunity have, O'Neill (1992:69) claims, effectively marginalised research on the position and experiences of girls and women in education, and omitted gender considerations from mainstream educational research. The taken-for-granted gender roles and divisions were unproblematic and "of no real consequence to personal education performance or functioning" (O'Neill, 1992:70). Eisenstein (in Middleton, 1990:82) identified a crisis for liberalism: "an ideology of (liberal) equality, and a contradictory reality of patriarchal inequality."

Historically, with the emergence of a concern for the reproducing of inequalities in the 1970s, individuals were cast as victims of a social system seen to be selective in the distribution of public goods. In the 1980's the rhetoric of the Curriculum Review (Dept. of Education, 1987) evidenced a commitment to the guiding principles of fairness, intended to be understood as equality of outcomes, along with diversity and more traditional notions of

equality of opportunity (McPherson, 1992:24). The concept of equity, acknowledged as centrally important, was defined vaguely as "fair treatment for all and equality of opportunity and outcomes."

The Picot Report (Department of Education, 1988:3) evidenced a shift in philosophy, formulated in rhetoric of bulk-funding, local management and charter contracts, but still with expressions of democratic concern and commitment to equity. Devolved responsibility for non-sexist and non-racist education obliged Boards of Trustees to provide a curriculum that would take account of the needs and experiences of all students and of the diverse character of the community (ibid:111).

The political imperatives of egalitarianism are dealt with within the "functionalist framework of equity" (Middleton, 1990:86) in the Tomorrow's Schools document (Ministry of Education, 1988) which targeted educational administration reform as a means to promote and progressively achieve greater equity for particular disadvantaged groups: women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, and other groups with minority status; and for working class, rural and disabled students, teachers and communities. The document, in suggesting that equity will be best achieved through "systems which combine enabling legislation with awareness and education," and the monitoring of progress towards the goal (page 30), sustains, in Middleton's view (1990:86), a deficit model.

The guiding principle of "fairness" structuring educational policy and action has thus seen shifts of interpretation over time, from equality of opportunity to equality of results and latterly equity, vaguely defined, with the sense of parity between groups in a pluralist society (Middleton, 1990:86). In the late 1980s - early 1990's the traditional liberal egalitarian ethos came into direct conflict with the competitive market culture of the New Right, subsuming in the term "equity" two opposing principles and conflicting definitions. This tension finds its expression in practices which see the demand for equality justified on moral as well as economic grounds (Jones et al. 1990:95).

Against this background and framed within the State Sector Amendment Act (1989) a "liberal" model of EEO can be detected that contains an internal tension.

On moral grounds the "liberal left" conceptualise "free and open operation of a competitive labour market which allows for maximum opportunity for all individuals, regardless of their gender (or ethnicity or class) to develop and exercise their abilities" (Jones et al., 1990:88). This perspective envisages equal representation of men and women at all organisational levels, and implies (Sayers, 1994:121)that existing structures are legitimate and valid, hence need no alteration. An EEO policy therefore functions through positive action to identify and remove any barriers to advancement. Positive action policies would include, for example, readjusted personnel policies, child-care provisions, EEO awareness training, so that all are free to compete.

Advancement is dependent solely on merit, seen as an objective and individual attribute.

The conception of merit in this paradigm would appear to pivot "on a notion of self-interested individuals competing in the public world" (Armstrong, 1994:190) free of domestic responsibilities, borne out by Middleton's (1990 in Armstrong, ibid.:191) commentary on Treasury briefing documents. What is not made explicit is that women are compelled to adapt to a male pattern to succeed, and the organisational context they enter remains the same (Chase, 1988:284). Hence those that step outside their conventional roles as wife and mother may "distance" themselves from aspects of their identities that align their interests with particular groups, suggests Martin (1987:439). They may risk alienation. Alternatively they may risk blame for not exercising their choice as an individual seeking opportunities.

In economic terms, the liberal right position sees self-interested individuals pursuing free choice (Codd, 1990c:201) and competing in a free-market economy since "the self-steering ability inherent in society" will ensure that everyone will benefit (The New Zealand Treasury, 1987a:41 in Jones et al. 1990:95). However, as Armstrong (1994:190) points out, the successful would appear to be "those who can best mimic the full-time continuous service model of employment usually associated with professional men who have the support of a full-time partner at home."

Merit as a selection principle, then, is a flawed construct built on a faulty neutrality. There is evidence of a "gendered" career path. This path is male-biased, and women have to adapt to the male model if they wish to have the same opportunities. An ideology of deficit is sustained. If women have to adapt, then might it not be argued that women need to be valued on their own terms, for their difference?

(b)   EEO - The Radical Agenda

In Jewson & Mason's (1986) discussion the radical model of EEO shifts the emphasis from the liberal view of individual responsibility and self-interest to group membership. Current inequalities in labour market distribution of identified groups are recognised as evidence of historical discrimination and a sufficient justification for labour market intervention. Intervention is through positive discrimination, which entails "the deliberate manipulation of employment practices so as to obtain a fair distribution of the deprived or disadvantaged population within the workforce (Jewson & Mason, 1986:322 in Walsh & Dickson, 1994:46). Positive discrimination policies would include setting employment quotas, varying entry requirements, identifying different criteria for performance assessments. "Difference" is to be recognised and accommodated.

The focus here is on equality of effects or outcomes, no longer on the equality of opportunity of the liberal model. In recognising difference and its impact on the group's ability to compete, the radical model may be seen to be

antithetical to the liberal model in attacking the fundamental principle of liberalism that "like should be treated alike" (Fuss, 1977 in Armstrong, 1994:194).

A discourse of "difference", however, emerges as problematic, a viewpoint expressed by Tennant (page 35). Armstrong (1994:194) cites the now famous USA <u>Sears, Roebuck and Co versus The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission 1986</u> case, to illustrate the danger of arguing for 'difference' or 'women's culture' within a conservative political climate. The argument for women's 'difference' from men underscored the 'stigma of deviance' (Scott, 1988:39) from the male norm. Webb & Liff (1988:539) cite case studies where EEO policy is seen by employers as an artificial, illegitimate means of appointing and promoting women who are not there "on their merits", but because of their gender.

It has been shown that the liberal model of EEO cannot be sustained either as a unitary phenomenon nor distinct from the radical model. Furthermore the spirit of egalitarianism, so enshrined in principles of liberal humanism, is widely assumed to produce the equality of outcomes of the radical approach. Another perspective, however, emerges as significant and adds to the complexity of the issue. The moral and economic imperatives, rooted in liberal theory, and referred to above appear to have found their expression in current EEO policy initiative and practices which fracture the liberal model through the framing of these justifications in terms of rival and competing interests. A reformulation of EEO in economic terms is currently being forged between EEO and management, particularly human resource management (HRM) and integrated into the educational culture.

(c)   EEO-Human Resource Management

A conceptualisation of EEO has emerged in the managerial discourses of the late 1980's and 1990's that it is in the employers' economic interests to promote EEO and enjoy the benefits of a diverse work force (Briar, 1994:31). The language of private sector human resource management models (Jones, 1994:181) is increasingly being used to build an alternative model of EEO that has come to be known as "managing diversity." The concept of "managing diversity" is linked historically with changing demographic patterns and predictions. It is argued that managers "have no choice but to respond positively to the challenge of effectively managing this new workforce (Jones, 1994:182).

According to Jones (1994:182), the "managing diversity" model represents a significant ideological shift in addressing "difference" from the point of view of the "needs of managers, not of the groups traditionally marginalised by difference." This perspective separates notions of difference, argues Jones, from the personal political agenda of the liberal model and avoids fixing rigid identity categories of the "disadvantaged" into discussions of difference. The issue of difference is reconceptualised from a management-centred

perspective, with the implication that all are "equally entitled to be included and all differences are equivalent" (Jones, ibid.).

The theme of the EEO Trust, and the managerialist agenda in official state educational administration policy documents outlined in Chapter One attest to the existence of the Human Resource Management model. The demand for corporate/strategic plans in educational organisations may be interpreted as a move "to incorporate the subjectivity of all members in the identity of the organisation" (Jones, 1994:180). Interests between groups are erased and subsumed in corporate outcomes through consensual decision-making practices under bureaucratic control represented as being in the interests of all. Jones questions whether a perspective in which workers are viewed as "human resources" can be reconciled with one from which marginalised individuals and groups seek equal power and participation. The fact that the managers have traditionally been white, middle class males raises important questions concerning EEO, gender bias and the application of the merit principle (Lee, 1987:201; Coles & Maynard, 1990:304).

The three models described above are all about change. A politically expressed intention to redress recognised inequalities that arise from the nature of society, based on notions of equity and social justice, and to be achieved through a redistribution of goods, claims Anderson (1979:127-31), is bound to be contentious. Problematic therefore is any conceptualisation of EEO that does not acknowledge and incorporate resistances. The above EEO models reflect views of the complex relationships that exist between employment, social institutions and society, and the lack of social consensus over the principles of desert and need subsumed in the notion of merit. This raises other important considerations.

2.6   EEO - Other Considerations

(a)   The Conservative Agenda

The first consideration is what I will call the "conservative" agenda. This agenda "attempts to conserve women's traditional domestic and maternal role as their *primary* role, and endorses traditional and distinct roles for men and women: men as breadwinners, leaders and protectors of their families; women as wives, mothers, nurturers" (Jones et al. 1990:90). Feminists such as James & Saville-Smith (1989), O'Neill (1990), Middleton (1990), argue that this is held to be the natural order premised on biological sexual difference, where women and men perform distinct and particular roles equally valued by both genders. Within the conservative perspective, notions of equality are built on the valuing of each role.

Problematic, however, is the constitution of the roles as oppositional constructs, that create "public and private worlds as separate spheres of social and economic life" (O'Neill, 1990:91). While, as Armstrong (1994:195) insists, "such dualities would be rejected from a poststructuralist position as inherently unhelpful categories which do not acknowledge the *interdependence*

of the two positions, and which ignore the power invested in each term, where one is usually dominant and one subordinate", it is clear that these patterns of dichotomised thinking are embedded in all social structures and practices, in "common-sense" arrangements, and in patterns of thought at the level of individual consciousness.

Not only must there therefore be a resistance to the "operation of categorical difference" (Scott, 1988:48 in Armstrong, 1994:195). It must also be acknowledged that incumbent ideologies pose a considerable threat (Hartsock, 1990:37) to the possibility of creating alternatives. Any challenge to the "natural order" and common-sense arrangements and practices is likely to be more than unwelcome (Ferguson, 1984:195).

It is argued that dominant ideologies produce "particular strategies of marginalisation to deal with alternative critical discourses" (Weedon, 1987:140). While Walsh (1991:68) claims as fruitful the public debate over the introduction of the State Sector Act 1988 which was to clarify the connection between personnel procedures and EEO policies, such strategies define what counts as merit, what it is said to mean and who is recognised as an agent. Resistance to the dominant, however, implies not only the production of alternative forms of knowledge, but "winning individuals over to these discourses and gradually increasing their social power" (Weedon, 1987:111). This requires human agency, and raises the question of the EEO practitioner.

(b)   The EEO Practitioner

The second consideration, then, relates to the EEO Practitioner. Theorising EEO as an "alternative" or "reverse" discourse assumes the existence of persons prepared to challenge traditional arrangements, through working actively to establish its social power. Chapter One describes agency-led EEO resource packages and training provision targeting the employer, mainly board of trustee members: "the fundamental decision for boards of trustees to make is the recruitment of their principal" (Lough Report, 1992:22) but also the principal in terms of the latter's role and authority: "to ensure decisions on major personnel questions follow the agreed policies of the school - it would be, for instance, inappropriate for a board of trustees not to support the recommendations of the principal on senior staff appointments if these are consistent with the school's policy guidelines" (Lough Report, op. cit.:23-24). The principal's role also includes teacher support in "identifying areas of skill deficiency and making available appropriate training to correct these deficiencies" (ibid.). Education sector EEO Practitioners, are located within the Ministry of Education, NZSTA, the PPTA and the Interagency Education Group, cited in Chapter One (pages 18-20). It may therefore be inferred that boards of trustees and the principal, in being targeted for EEO training and resourcing are deemed to be or to become, EEO Practitioners, on the assumption that they will take action on behalf of EEO interests.

This, however, raises the question of the role of the EEO co-ordinator, as labelled in the ERO EEO questionnaires (page 24). Presumably with

delegated responsibility for EEO, that person would supposedly have a brief wider than, (though inclusive of) women's interests. This is, they should represent the interests of all targeted groups. It is suggested that one of the critical problems within EEO is the diversity of groups that EEO tries to represent. The "categories of difference are reduced to a kind of equivalence" (Jones, 1994:184) in that all groups are assumed to have equal claims. Furthermore the construction of these categories, while recognising a type of difference, may conceal others. Jones (1994:185) claims that each EEO group has its own discourses "which may be more or less compatible with the discourse of EEO as a regulating concept." This is illustrated in Maori claims for both participation and autonomy within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi and of recognition of tangata whenua status that draw from a "radically different discourse than that of EEO."

Problematic therefore, is the positioning of women across the identified EEO categories and the conflicts of interest between these categories.

We cannot assume then, that all women teachers are active EEO agents simply through their gender positioning and their presumed self-interest. Nor can we assume that all EEO agents are active in the same ways, and for the same reasons. Jones (1994:180) points to a strategic use of managerialist rhetoric where some practitioners argue that EEO outcomes will be best achieved or only achieved if EEO is seen as a management function rather than as "empowering" of EEO groups. One such outcome may be the "capture of EEO by senior managers."

While we cannot assume that through PPTA activity all "workers", i.e. teachers, become EEO practitioners, we have evidence in Chapter One (page 12) that EEO as a female concern is promoted through the women's networks, the link person being the PPTA Branch Women's Contact. With the link between EEO and personnel practices, can we safely assume that each BOT staff representative is actively engaged in and protective of EEO interests? Furthermore "to the extent that feminist discourse defines its problematic as "woman", it also ironically, claims Flax (1990:45), "privileges the man as unproblematic, as not determined by gender relations." Since men as well as women internalise conceptions of masculinity and femininity, any discussion of continuing power asymmetries in any situation requires the continuing evaluation also of "men's voices" (Kramarae, 1988:253).

While EEO practitioners must themselves acknowledge and negotiate these difficult questions, feminist poststructuralist theory as described in this chapter (pages 34-37) can also assist us to examine the identity, role and activity of the EEO practitioner. Such an analysis requires contextualisation.

(c)   Social Context Factors

It is argued that the promotion and consolidation of EEO depends upon a particular and favourable alliance of political, bureaucratic and industrial coalitions (Walsh & Dickson, 1994:52). The last decade has seen massive

structural, organisational and management changes in the public sector grounded in public choice theory, managerialism and the economics of organisations, most notably, according to Boston (1991:2) agency theory and transaction cost analysis. Middleton (1990:76) coheres these theories under the rubric of "market-liberal", a discourse which sees a centralised state apparatus as inhibiting individual's abilities and rights to engage in free competition, and consequently needing dismantling. State minimalism, the lack of serious sanctions for non-compliance, and the decentralising of EEO responsibility have considerably weakened the political impetus of EEO.

Further, bureaucratic constraints on EEO practitioners arise from their positioning within persisting hierarchical structures, their perceived status within the organisation, and the boundaries of their authority. Public sector union officials, their time and energy absorbed in ongoing restructuring and the increased need to negotiate financial constraints, have found it difficult to accord EEO high priority. The EEO co-ordinators in particular are described as caught in the middle of demands for EEO and expectations from senior management of compliance with wider organisation objectives:

> "If they do the job to the benefit of their constituency, they incur
> the wrath of their employers. If they satisfy their managers they
> will certainly be blamed for treachery by those they hope to
> assist. Both jobs attract progressives, and both jobs destroy
> them."   Cockburn (1989:218 in Walsh & Dickson, 1994:53)

Problematic therefore is the amount of congruence between the demand for EEO and the expressed aims of the organisation. The perceived originating problem, "that of inequality in access to jobs and promotion between social groups, is translated into a new one: that of how to achieve fair procedures (Webb & Liff, 1988:536). This raises the whole question of merit.

2.7   The Merit Principle

The Collins Dictionary (1979) defines merit as (1) "worth or superior quality; excellence" and (2) "the fact or state of deserving; desert." Within liberalism, merit is persistently used as though it were an objective, value-free absolute, some kind of impartial and objective "gold standard" (Burton, 1988:3 in Korndörffer, 1990:226; Hunt, 1991:302) which, devoid of a social context, confirms the morality of the open market and fair competition, where emphasis is on individual responsibility for one's success in life (Thornton, 1985:37). For Walsh & Dickson (1994:32) the merit principle "assumes that free competition between individuals will ensure that the most able and deserving will move into the top decision-making positions irrespective of attributes such as ethnicity, being able-bodied or gender." It therefore contains an implicit assumption that if the target groups do not then move up the organisational hierarchy, this is because they lack the aptitude (Jewson & Mason, 1986:33). The merit principle therefore acts as a distributive mechanism: it prevents massive social upheaval and maintains the appearance of fairness.

In the context of employment a tension is seen to exist between the meaning of merit as individual excellence and its meaning as desert. This occurs in two ways. Firstly, while the "best" candidate may, in one sense, deserve the job, that person may not be the most deserving in the sense of being the most needy (Thornton, 1985:29). Intervention is required to overcome historically unequal distribution patterns of recognised groups. In this respect application of EEO measures render irrelevant individual characteristics, and become a moral imperative "permitting correction of a moral wrong" (Davis, 1981:77 in Thornton, 1985:29). Secondly, a person appointed on merits is assessed more likely on qualities perceived or believed, whereas a person appointed on desert has earned the position on the basis of past performance (Lucas, 1980:166 in Thornton, 1985:29).

Martin (1987:437) argues that a fundamental flaw in the merit principle lies in its acceptance of occupational hierarchies where the decisions of few control the work of many. From a poststructuralist perspective merit is a social construction, constantly created through discursive practices within a specific context of power relations. Individuals and groups with the greatest power are in the best position to shape the concept of merit to their own ends. O'Neill (1990:90) maintains that the concept of skill, as a socially constructed category, has historically been used in ways that devalues women's work. The management of skill definitions is therefore a political process where certain competencies and qualities are defined as desirable and others, by implication, are marginalised. Since the same evaluation of excellence does not operate in respect of all positions, matching the most able to the jobs they are deemed best able to perform allows considerable scope for arbitrariness.

It is suggested the higher one goes in the hierarchy to those relatively scarce jobs which possess status and influence the more significant is the concept of merit in that the scope for arbitrariness is magnified (Thornton, 1985:30). Aside from technical requirements to match credentials and relevant specialised knowledge, there is a descriptive element which is likely to include notions of "experience", considered difficult to define and quantify. Thornton also cites the "assessment of personality, standing in the community, political and family connections" as important but unlikely to be enumerated in any job description.

With merit criteria more elusive, the emphasis on *intuitive judgement* (Morgan et al. 1983:144) makes the evaluative process less visible, and reliant on factors outside the skill and knowledge requirements for performance in a position (Martin, 1987:446; Burton, 1988:2), such as, for example, assessments of "loyalty" and "fitting in." Thornton (1985:31) considers the evaluative component essential "in order to invest the descriptive data with meaning in the light of the institution's value system, despite the fact that it is bound to perpetuate homogeneity in the work place." Performing successfully means adapting to the organisational culture, i.e. the patterns, practices and priorities promulgated by the most powerful figures and groups. Those who benefit from those informal aspects of recruitment, however, work to safeguard the mechanisms which perpetuate their advantage. Judgements of merit may

therefore partly depend on how central an individual's contribution is to what is centrally recognised (Morgan, 1983:144).

The division of labour presents a particular problem. Women who have "broken career patterns" resulting from child bearing and child raising are negatively perceived "which leads to an inference that in deviating from the norm a woman demonstrates a lack of commitment to a career and is necessarily a poor prospective employee" (Alford, 1981 in Thornton, 1985:31). Where merit is constructed on an experience criterion that is premised on an "unbroken" pattern of service, the women described above, continue to be discriminated against. It is also argued that there is higher value placed on men's work, with men evaluated on what is perceived as ability and more likely to be rewarded with promotion, and women on what is judged as the greater effort put into the task. The latter is commonly not interpreted as a reliable indicator of future performance (Edson, 1981:178; Burton, 1988:3; Hunt, 1991:305).

The merit principle may also depend on factors over which the individual may have had little control, e.g. access to resources that provide for the requisite education and training from which certain groups may have traditionally been excluded. Thomson (1977 in Thornton, 1985:30) suggests it is this traditional exclusion "which has served the myth of intellectual inferiority and given rise to the view that the appointment of women or non-whites is synonymous with a decline in efficiency." Thus, argues Thornton, while merit purports to maximise social utility, rewards are not disbursed in ways which are sex, race and class neutral. However those who have benefited from the system, have an interest in defending merit as a neutral principle, comprising clearly discernible and objective criteria "to persuade each other, and the rest of us that they have never received anything but their own "just, individual deserts" (Green, 1981:80 in Thornton, 1985:33).

In this respect merit as the cornerstone of EEO practice is understood as something dynamic, continually created, debated and negotiated through the social processes of organisation (Stanton, 1978 in Martin, 1987:445; Burton, 1991:445). It has been argued that merit, as a "formulature of language" is a relational concept (Feinberg, 1973 in Lankshear, 1994:61) through being "saturated with meaning ... carrying the accumulated weight of history and convention (Litvaks, 1985:10 in Dundas Todd & Fisher, 1988:6) and bearing the "trace" of many other terms within a context of historically specific power relations (Derrida, 1978 in Hassard & Parker, 1993:21). It is this saturation which is problematic.

Martin (1987:436) argues that, paradoxically, the concept of merit has become a catchphrase of both supporters and opponents of legislated equal employment opportunity. On the one hand, advocates of women's and minority rights support the application of the merit principle underpinned by affirmative action to remove unfair starting handicaps to provide real equal employment opportunity. On the other hand the merit principle can be used

to oppose what is alleged to be reverse discrimination against white, middle class males (Thornton, 1985:30). The concept of merit is itself a site of struggle.

Attending to the social and institutional context is therefore vital in addressing the particular co-ordination of actions around specified definitions (Hassard & Parker, 1993:21) and the political implications of particular ways of fixing identity and meaning (Weedon, 1987:174; Linstead, 1993:69).

Summary

Following a discussion of factors which are held to impact on the policy implementation process, feminism is presented as the broad field of enquiry within which this research study is to be located. Within feminism there exists a range of positions. These are described in order to assess their potential to expose relations of power through which women's interests are subordinated to those of men. From within forms of feminist poststructuralist theory, a conception of language as constituted through discourses competing for the allegiance of the individual emerges as the most productive framework for examining the patriarchal structure, the "material conditions in which individuals are produced as subjects and objects" (Codd, 1990a:139) and the power relations implicated in the competing ways of giving meaning to the world.

The conception of language as constituted by and through discourses enables hypothesising EEO as a discourse competing with others in the attempt to extend its social power. A discussion of EEO as a discursive field, however, attests to its own internal complexity, tension and ambiguities, compounded by plurality of meaning. Critical, therefore, is the identity and agency of the EEO practitioner within the field of constraining power relations and public sector reform, in terms of being able to extend the social power of the EEO discourse(s).

The concept of merit, which forges the link between EEO and personnel practices, is exposed as a social construct "through which forms of class, race and gender power are exercised" (Weedon, 1987:173) and thus becomes in itself a site of political contest over meaning.

Since it is argued that discourses exist both in written and oral forms and in the "social practices of everyday life" (Weedon, 1987:111) discourse analysis as a research method must encompass a sample of these forms and practices in order to expose the multiplicity of meanings, values and power relations and to demonstrate "where they come from, whose interests they support, how they maintain sovereignty and where they are susceptible to specific pressure for change" (Weedon, 1987:174).

This requires methodology that will enquire into the "lived-out reality of gender" (MacKinnon, 1989 in Glazer, 1991:322) in historically specific locations to "reveal the subtle differences from setting to setting and the unique cultural responses people struggle to create" (Walker & Barton,

1983:16) in the attempt to illustrate that certain practices are not inevitable, that procedures can be changed, and that resistance is possible. What emerges is a "partial" view: partial in terms of the researcher's politics, and partial in terms of its specificity, tentativeness and incompleteness.

The methodology that these perspectives form is outlined in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

The Research Process

"A liberating aspect of poststructuralist thought is that it allows me to recognise the multiple discourses in which I participate and to see myself differently constituted through each of them."

(Davies, 1989:139)

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three I describe the methodology I used to investigate the research topic: the extent to which mandatory EEO policies were assisting the movement of women into senior administrative positions in the secondary education sector during the 1989-1992 term of office of boards of trustees, reconstituted through government-led reform in educational administration. In Chapter Two I explored the link between theory and feminist research and practice and the ways that feminist poststructuralist thought places language at the centre of enquiry. Discourse analysis emerged as the most productive framework through which to expose the "problems of the relationship between experience and theory, access to knowledge and the patriarchal structure and content of knowledge" (Weedon, 1987:7). I therefore needed to focus exclusively on "talk and writing itself and how it can be read ... how is discourse put together, and what is gained by this construction" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:159).

Chapter Three extends the link to include a discussion on the nature of research, and the necessity to shape the research methodology according to the relevant theoretical and practical understandings. I identify and discuss the methods used in my research, and provide reasons for selecting them. I also endeavour to explicate my own positioning as researcher in presenting each phase of the research process. I attend to the manner in which each research experience and my own reflections continually shaped the research practices. A major concern has been to "integrate a feminist theory, methodology and practice and to avoid that type of academic discourse which renders research findings inaccessible to those who do not have a background in sociology" (Roberts, 1981:26).

3.2 Research Topic

In Chapter One I described how completion requirements for the degree of Master of Educational Administration (Massey) not only introduced me to the relevant literature on the position of women in education, but also required me to complete a research component. I acknowledged that I came to this research study also in part as an outcome of my position as a woman in middle management in the secondary education sector, aspiring to a more senior position. However in choosing the topic of the present study: achieving gender equity, or fairness, in employment in the secondary

education sector through EEO legislation, I have also a wider concern for the welfare and advancement of my professional colleagues.

These reasons along with my consideration of certain theoretical perspectives within feminist poststructuralisms outlined in Chapter Two, caused me to review the research process, in the attempt to seek a research design that most adequately reflected and supported them. There appeared to be two major concerns: the subjective presence of the observer/researcher, and the constructedness and partiality of the accounts.

3.3   Research Models: Issues of Power and Method

In my quest for appropriate research models, I found that the article by Alison Jones "Writing Feminist Educational Research" (1992) crystallised for me the problems that I was encountering, and enabled me to understand why I had intuitively rejected more "acceptable" mainstream models. For there are contradictions and tensions involved in simultaneously reporting and framing/shaping (Jones, 1992:19), of being an observer and an interpreter, in endeavouring to construct a reality in terms of a research account. Hence it is essential to openly acknowledge the constructedness and partiality of the account, the subjective presence of the observer, and the reasons for writing up the research report in the first person.

As has been explained in Chapter Two, the feminist poststructuralist perspective insists on exposing human action through tying in explications to a detailed analysis of the *contexts* in which such knowledge is generated (Stanley & Wise, 1980:197).

The social system is the context in which language in the form of discourses is produced or interpreted. Discourses supply us with the historically specific sets of concepts to understand a topic; to place limits on what can/cannot be said or thought about. Discourses also shape how we are, or in other words, how we understand ourselves (Middleton & Jones, 1992:ix) and social phenomena. Women are no longer to be viewed simply as victims of an oppressive system, but "as living within it, shaping it and being shaped by it in myriad, often contradictory ways" (Middleton & Jones, 1992:ix).

I, too, exist within the system. Both as a Pakeha, middle class, university educated, (still) married woman and mother, and in my dual role as researcher and education employee, I am also myself one who shapes and is shaped. This necessarily influenced the questions I asked, and the ways in which I tried to find answers. As a researcher I cannot take it for granted that I know or recognise exactly what a social phenomenon or event is when I see it, without reference to my own understanding of what I am doing. This highlights the problem that social reality is not transparent to the observer, but is dependent on the observer's own understandings, background and experience (Cameron et al. 1992:10). An objective, disinterested stance is just not possible: the knowledge and the "knower" are interconnected. Therefore

I am present in the text (Jones, 1992:19). I, too, recognise the "multiple discourses in which I participate" (Davies, 1989:139).

Furthermore the relations between researcher and researched shape the data. The research participants, too, are active social and reflexive beings, who have insights into their situations and experiences, and interact and react in different ways. The context of the interview, the presence and interaction of the researcher in the data-gathering process, and the construal of the researcher by the research participant, all structurate the data that are collected. Hence it is necessary to problematise the data-gathering process and to make absolutely explicit the centrality and the subjectivity of researchers (Oakley, 1981:31; Stanley & Wise; 1980:206).

The recognition that knowledge is socially constituted, historically embedded, and valuationally based leads to research designs which are contextualised. The personal, the "fabric of our everyday lives" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:193) becomes the focus. Challenging the "naturalness" of social arrangements becomes the politics (Weedon, 1987:1). Understanding our experience of everyday lives is critical to understanding gender-based oppressions, and locating points of intervention where it is possible to work for change. The research therefore has a moral imperative.

The perspectives outlined above cast doubt on the claimed objective and scientific status of mainstream empirical research. Such research denies the pursuit of moral aims, affirms a basic logical unity between natural and social sciences, and claims that the observer must be objective or value-neutral (Smith & Noble-Spruell, 1986:134-135 in Hunt, 1991:51; Cameron et al. 1992:6). What is important is that feminist critique has penetrated the constructed nature of so-called "facts" (Cameron et al. 1992:95). Hence, it is argued, the process by which "facts" are constructed must be attended to. To acknowledge the patriarchal construction of social science means that the study of women's lives and the relationships between the sexes cannot be placed on an equal footing merely by adding women to the existing conceptual framework. To do this, argues Pateman (1985:x), is to attempt to incorporate matters into social science that give meaning to the *social* through their very exclusion, without rendering the concept of the social problematic.

Therefore, as part of an emancipatory movement, feminists have attempted to reconstruct women, not as subjects of research, but as collaborators and authors, actively participating in finding and expressing their own specifically female voice. The contention is that many women may approach particular activities *differently* (Middleton, 1992:16).

Yet it is argued (Davies, 1989:138) that these accounts are insufficient in themselves to produce a means by which the female voice can be heard, valued and fairly accommodated. The male-female dualism, where power resides in the male who is considered as the norm against which the female is measured and found wanting, increases the risk of an "essential" female voice

being marginalised as "different", hence "deficient", or supporting the reintroduction of stereotyping (Middleton, 1992:16).

In addition it is considered that the participatory model tends to constitute women as a unitary category in "abstracting and so reifying particular viewpoints" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:193). It can thus deny differences that are seen to exist among women, and obscures, according to Weedon (1987:41) "the ongoing nature of the processes of the constituting and reconstituting of gender relations in everyday social interactive practices, and the workings of power on behalf of specific interests."

In claiming that feminist research is almost exclusively carried out by women, about women and for women, Middleton & Jones (1992:viii) and Stanley (1984:194-5) suggest that in order to be able to understand female experiences and the workings of power in everyday interactions, it is also necessary to acknowledge and include male perspectives, especially men's attitudes and behaviours towards women. If, as Weedon (1987:173) suggests, it is crucial that women speak out "for ourselves and occupy resistant subject positions, while men work to deconstruct masculinity and its part in the exercising of patriarchal power", then it was necessary for me to select a research method which enabled the "evaluation of women's and *men's* voices in *any* situation" (Kramarae, 1988:252). What then becomes crucial is the focus on the ongoing nature of process" (Weedon, 1987:41), the continuing power asymmetries, and attending to the difficulty of creating alternatives (Flax, 1990:45; Hartsock, 1990:172. This requires, as I have argued in Chapter Two, theoretical perspectives that include the notion of a historically specific and contextualised study through textual analysis in order to expose the "political implications of particular ways of fixing identity and meaning" (Weedon, 1987:173).

Reinharz (1983:176) asserts that it is necessary in problem formulation for the research question to be of sincere concern to the participants so that they will collaborate in uncovering the phenomenon. But this is not a simple matter in relations of inequality. Chase & Bell's (1990) study reveals that although most of their gatekeepers expressed acceptance of women in leadership positions, this frequently co-existed with explanations and descriptions of women's actions and situations in terms of individual achievement and gender neutrality.

My study is grounded in the notion that everyday talk is one essential site through which ideologies are represented, reproduced and resisted, since "it is primarily within language that meaning is mobilised in the interests of particular individuals and groups (Thompson, 1984:73 in Chase & Bell (1990:163). Hence by refuting gender as an entrenched and simple dichotomy between men and women to attend to speech as a kind of action between humans of varying situational identities, an attempt is made to develop an understanding of the ways in which discourse helps "construct the fabric of social life" (West & Zimmerman, 1985) and "what is gained by this construction" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:161).

There is also the question of representation and its control. However the data is collected, and however negotiated the agendas might have been, when the researcher produces representations of the research for an outside audience, control of the data and its meanings shift very much towards the researcher (Cameron et al. op. cit.:111).

Therefore in constructing these accounts it is necessary to take into consideration the uses to which the findings might be put, or the effect that they might have both for and contrary to the interests of those involved.

3.4   Ethics, Advocacy and Empowerment

Cameron et al. (op. cit.:12) argue that there are three positions that researchers take up vis-à-vis their subjects: ethics, advocacy and empowerment.

It is suggested that ethics committees balance as fairly as possible the needs of a discipline in its pursuit of knowledge and truth with the interests of the people on whom the research is conducted. But the underlying model is still one of research on social subjects, albeit subject to their consent. However it is possible to make oneself more directly accountable to the researched and move to an advocacy position.

The advocacy position is generally characterised by a commitment on the part of the researcher to do research on and for subjects. This extends the expert position by speaking in their defence. However it may be argued that if the experts are under an obligation to defend the powerless should they not be under the further obligation to empower them to defend themselves? (Cameron et al., op. cit.:17).

The very notion of advocacy however has political implications in that new understandings generated through involvement in and reflection on the research process may empower women and lead to transformation of patriarchal social institutions (Hunt, 1991:57). This means that empowering research needs to encompass a vision of the future as well as a structural picture of the present (Cook & Fonow, 1986:13 in Hunt, 1991:57).

However, the terms "empowerment" and "power" are not transparent or straightforward terms. How do we know who needs or wants to be empowered?

A commonly expressed view is that there is an economy of power, that power is the sort of thing that individuals and groups can have more or less of. Foucault (1980:98 in Cameron et al. op. cit.:19) however does not agree. For him power is a force and an effect which exists and circulates in a web of social interaction. Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application.

Power, therefore, is a multiple relation. Empowering, then, cannot be a simple matter of transferring power from one group to the other, or giving people

power when before they had none. Since power operates across many social divisions, any individual becomes a complex site of differing power potentials in different social relations. And there is increasing evidence (Cameron et al., op.cit.:120) that those who are dominated in particular social relations can and do develop powerful oppositional discourses of resistance - feminism, black power, gay pride, etc. to which people respond in a variety of ways. Thus, as Cameron argues, we find ourselves not with absolutes - power versus powerlessness - but with the complex positionings of real individuals.

There is, therefore, the question of how to integrate educational and knowledge-sharing aims into the broader scope of the research project.

If we accept, as I do, that people can be brought to greater critical consciousness through *conscientisation* (Freire in Collins, 1982:49), then empowering research must be directed as much at the political consciousness of the powerful as of the powerless (Cameron et al. op. cit.:49; Collins, 1982:49). In this respect, participation in the research study will contribute to conscientisation, a form of empowerment. And that goes for the researcher as well.

I do not believe that all the participants share the same concern for the issue. Therefore it cannot be assumed that all will "benefit" equally from their participation in the study. By the use of the term "benefit" I intend to imply a process of reflection, understanding or action as an outcome of participation in the study. Likewise it must be acknowledged that benefit may also be applied to those participants, who reflect, gain understandings and act in ways that continue to maintain asymmetrical power relationships, both deliberately or, as seen in the Chase & Bell (1990:163-177) study, seemingly unconsciously. Cameron et al. (1992:134) maintain that "any social relation in which an expert tells a group about itself is interactionally hazardous." It may increase the resistance to change.

The key issue, according to Lather (1986:269), becomes a question of how to maximise the researcher's mediation between people's self-understandings and transformative social action to advance a more equal world sensitively and without becoming impositional. I propose to mediate "by starting from my experiences as a person in a situation ... I have to find out what's going on and how to behave appropriately" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:203). The ways in which I find out, the reasoning procedures which I use, and the forms of knowledge which I produce as an outcome of these processes, I make available to others. I open up for public scrutiny my experience of the research process, my self-understandings. Since feminism, according to Stanley (1984:203), argues that "social structures can and must be understood through a rigorous exploration of relationships, experiences and interactions within the realm of social life" then feminist research derived from "feminism" must start from and make explicit the experiences of the researcher as a person in a situation, as the researcher attempts to find out what's going on and how to behave appropriately.

3.5   The Research Method

My own positioning; my research into and reflection on the positioning of EEO as both relevant to women's interests and a compulsory requirement within the public sector; EEO's theoretical formulation as a discursive field constituted by and through differing and rival EEO formulations; and the politicisation of the "state" as a scene of rival and competing interests led me to conceptualise the school site not as a unified patriarchal entity but as sets of processes, which involve struggles and tensions rather than a consistent pursuit of well-defined interest (Branson, 1988:93; O'Neill, 1990:84; Du Plessis, 1992:220). Investigating the processes would enable the more ground level approach advocated by the ERO EEO Reviewer (1992) "to provide the webs, the textures, to ascertain who was chosen for the tap on the shoulder." This same Reviewer also was of the opinion that document analysis would be a reliable indicator of progress.

(a)   Case Study Research

I therefore planned case study research of two secondary schools within this educational district.[10] I chose two schools to enable reflection on understandings gained through two particular instances rather than one. Case study is here defined as "a systematic investigation of a specific instance", the shorter definition adopted in the 1976 Cambridge Conference on the topic (Adelman et al., 1977 in Bell et al., 1984:72). In this respect the case study seeks to identify the unique features of interaction within that instance. This is allied to Connell's concept of "practice", which is for him of the moment. What persists is the organisation or structure of practice, and the effects that it has on subsequent practice (Connell, 1987:141).

Barrett (1980:144) argues that the processes of stereotyping are more marked in schools where the divisions between boys and girls are daily confronted and the pupils are constantly exposed to differentiation by gender. Reasoning that similar processes operate among the staff, I made a deliberate choice to limit my study to state secondary co-educational schools.

The two schools studied were Form 3 to 7 state co-educational secondary schools: they were chosen for their difference in location and size, but principally for their willingness to co-operate. School A was rural-urban and School B urban; School A had approximately half the population size of School B.

For the case study research I chose the interview, and analysis of documentation, as recommended by the Education Review Office EEO Reviewer (page 3) as data from which to conduct the analysis. I considered, then rejected, direct on-site observation, as a means of data collection. This

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10   District is here defined according to the Education Review Office's subdivisions. The particular district is not named for reasons of confidentiality.

decision was made due to the serious possibility of disruption that could occur within a particular institution, contingent on the sensitive nature of the enquiry. EEO issues, involving as they do gender relations, are fraught with tensions that necessarily impact on the workplace. Since most of the case study work involves the exploration of attitudes, intrusion into the organisational setting would make the research a public issue. I would therefore be unable to control for confidentiality of the research site. This, I felt, would adversely affect some or all of the participants, and even the school itself, during the research, but particularly when the research report became available. and therefore had the potential to affect attitudes in ways that could be harmful, both in the short term and in the long term. I also felt that I would be less likely to obtain consent to my research if I asked for permission for on-site observation, since it could be inferred that I was making judgements on professional conduct. In this respect the case study research will be missing an essential ingredient: that of observation of the *instance*.

However, it must be noted at this point that my research in itself, with its involvement of school personnel, will effect changes, whether I am on site or not. My gender and behaviour as researcher, my research into EEO as politically positioned to promote women's interests, and the interaction with personnel throughout the interview process made EEO for women the point of focus, opinion and reflection.

(b)   Selection of Research Participants

Mindful of the cautionary words that if we are to understand female experiences, it is also necessary to understand male perspectives, and convinced of the need to focus on the discursive construction of subjectivity by "humans of varying situational identities" (see page 44), I used position not gender as the rationale for choice of interview participants to include some males in the sample.

Position was also seen as critical by the ERO EEO Reviewer (1992). For her the *"real key"* was the BOT, in particular the Chairperson of the Appointments Committee. The Reviewer also identified as a key figure the principal, who was seen *"to take notice of NZSTA"*, a body she considered influential.

Slyfield (1993:37) also identified the principal as having a key role in the recruitment, selection and appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff, since the principal is responsible to the board for the performance of each staff member. As noted in Chapter One (page 17), board of trustees members and the principal have been targets for EEO developed materials and training within the context of mandatory policies and employer accountability. They can therefore be assumed to be knowledgeable about EEO and active in its implementation.

An assumption of an EEO knowledge base can also be made about the EEO Co-ordinator, although without the same level of accountability. All the aforementioned, however, are charged with a concern for all defined EEO

groups. The PPTA Womens Contact, on the other hand, is positioned through her network to be informed about and to act solely in women's interests, hence to be representative of other groups only where women's interests are paramount. Therefore her role and agency is powerful.

I selected the middle management position to include both male and female, theorising that the holders, having already earned a promotion, would have more immediate access to, and possibly want, a more senior position. When I requested from each school the names of holders of these positions to include in my study, I asked for holders who were, in the school's view, likely to be a candidate for future promotion.

The Education Review Office EEO Reviewer (op. cit.) considered it imperative to have in my research study "fringe people" as well, "to see if EEO was a central issue." This could include assistant teachers, for example, especially those in their early years of teaching.

In summary the positions I chose were:

1   BOT Chairperson
2   Appointments Committee chairperson
3   BOT staff representative
4   Principal
5   EEO Co-ordinator
6   PPTA Women's Contact
7   PR2 female
8   PR2 male
9   Assistant teacher female
10   Assistant teacher male, in the first five years of teaching. (See Table Six)

In practice, however, the distinction between the BOT chairperson and the Appointments Committee chairperson collapsed. In each school both positions were held by the same person. Therefore nine interviews were conducted for each school, not ten as originally planned.

There is however an implicit assumption in this selection, an assumption consistent with Marshall's (1991:146) findings that "teaching normally leads into administration." Court (1994:218), however, presents a more complex picture of gendered dichotomies and value distinctions that influence women's applications, and structure a teaching/administration divide. I needed to tease out this complexity.

TABLE SIX
TABLE OF THE EIGHTEEN PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED IN 1992

SCHOOL A (RURAL-URBAN)

Designation	Gender	Other Positions Held
BOT chairperson	male	Chairperson of Appointments Committee
Principal	male	
BOT staff rep	female	Retired, Ex HOD PR3
PR2	male	HOD
PR1	female	Assistant HOD
EEO Co-ordinator	male	HOD, PR3, PPTA Chairperson, Chairperson Professional Development Committee
PPTA Women's Contact	female	Assistant teacher, to be PR1 in 1993, HOD
Assistant Teacher	female	
Assistant Teacher	male	Chairperson of school's PPTA Branch

SCHOOL B (URBAN)

Position	Gender	Other
BOT chairperson	male	Chairperson of Appointments Committee
Principal	male	
BOT staff rep	female	PR1, Assistant HOD
PR2	female	Assistant HOD
PR2	male	Chairperson BOT another school, HOD
EEO Co-ordinator	female	Assistant Principal
PPTA Women's Contact	female	Assistant teacher
Assistant Teacher	female	
Assistant Teacher	male	

Note: I have not included information on age or race for reasons of confidentiality.

(c)   Document Analysis

Initially I had planned to analyse a comprehensive range of documents. However my first letter to a school principal requesting permission to conduct research and detailing my exact requirements was ignored. The letter asked for access to the specified personnel, and in addition detailed the documents to which I requested access: job descriptions; person specifications and performance appraisal documents; school policies relating to personnel; EEO policy; Committee membership; action plan and reports; list of all staff including part-timers with their roles and responsibilities; EEO database statistics over the previous three years; Professional Development programmes and attendance 1989-1992; Sexual Harassment Policy; and the Board minutes for the same period.

In a follow-up telephone call, permission was refused. The reasons given were (noted down during the telephone conversation):

I'm concerned about the amount of interruption in the school ... the taking up of staff time ... working under pressure of time ... looking at new courses ... got a new Board

This principal's manner was very defensive, and showed an unwillingness to be either persuaded or to continue the conversation.

I, therefore, decided to be less specific in my next initial letter of approach, then to follow the letter with a telephone call giving verbal details of my requirements. This strategy evoked a positive response in the next two schools I chose to approach. A follow-up letter detailed my exact requirements, and requested assistance in accessing both personnel and documents. However this time I limited my request to the Board's Appointments Policy; the Board minutes for the period designated; the EEO policy, action plans and reports; and the Sexual Harassment policy. My first experience had given me the impression that my request was perceived as threatening; that I could be perceived as scrutinising professional conduct. For this reason the methodology does not include an extensive document analysis.

As requested in my letter of introduction, I was permitted in both schools to study the minutes that were the official records of the meetings held by the boards of trustees in each of the two schools for the period May 1989 until June 1992. In each case the school response was friendly and helpful.

In School A, I searched the minutes on site, in the school office, where the secretary who had recorded the minutes was working. I was aware of an air of disquiet. This caused me to read rather quickly and to scribble notes, rather than more accurately record word for word. I later reconstituted the notes. The principal, with whom I had an appointment to interview, was also around, at times, hovering. This, in my view, led to what I felt to be hostility

in the interview situation. I was however able to take with me photocopies of the policies requested.

My search of the minutes in School B was made easier through being permitted to remove them from the school site. I was thus able to devote my full attention to the task. This was helpful since the minutes and attached documentation were not in any particular order, and I had to spend some time sifting through the file. A return trip to the school enabled me to request and receive those minutes that were missing. Photocopies of other documents were supplied.

Having had access to the ERO EEO questionnaire responses from both schools, I decided to use these as a base from which to make sense of the documents. From the questionnaire responses I was able to note statements made by each school concerning the extent of EEO implementation and measure these claims against regional and national reporting, as described in Chapter One.

Verifying the existence of policies is one thing, but more important is "whether they have been translated into action" (McNaughton, 1994:307). Chapter One (pages 17-18) details the agency-led EEO information packages and training provisions targeting boards of trustees. Yet Court's (1994:223) contention that EEO has little visibility in education and that "ambivalent messages about government's commitment to equity concerns must have influenced boards' prioritising of their efforts within what must have been enormous work demands" guided my search of the board minutes. First I wanted to search out any reference to EEO, since that would testify to EEO existence. Secondly, I wished to analyse the discursive construction of EEO and the statements made in the EEO ERO questionnaire return to test for similarities and differences. Finally, I needed to look at the documents as "social texts" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:160) to consider their construction in relation to function. Each school is therefore treated separately.

(d)   Preparation for the Interview

Since the document analysis was not extensive, the interview became the cornerstone of my research. I devised an interview schedule (Appendix A), containing loosely-structured, open-ended questions. The questions had initially been structured around issues significant in the literature. Adopting the view that "the researcher should try to generate interpretive contexts in the interview in such a way that the connections between the interviewee's accounting practices and variations in functional context become clear" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:164) and having gained further insights into the issues surrounding EEO from the document analysis in Chapter Four, I regrouped and extended the questions in order to tackle the same issue more than once. In identifying EEO as relevant to the interests of women in the secondary education sector, my questions aimed to link teaching, gender and careers. This would, in Acker's (1989:7) words, serve "multiple purposes." My intention was, firstly, to open up the concept of teacher career to

considerations of gender. Secondly, I wanted to call into question existing opportunity structures and practices, and the political implications of particular ways of fixing identity and meaning. This would include looking at the concept of merit. Thirdly, I would attempt to elicit understandings of and attitudes towards EEO. That would eventually enable me to construct its form(s) and consider its potential as a strategy to effect social change.

I tested the interview schedule on three of my colleagues, both to gain experience in interviewing, and to perfect the instrument that was to gather my data. Through discussion with my supervisors, my own reflections on the interview process, analysis of the responses and the helpful comments of those who trialled the schedule, I was able to adjust the order of the questions and to extend their scope in a way that I felt would enable me to gain the responses that would be most relevant to my research study.

(e)   Participant Approach

The initial selection of those to be interviewed was made by staff within each of the two schools. In School A my first approach letter was passed on by the principal to the assistant principal, a woman, who, following a telephone conversation, responded in writing with a list of names of staff that matched the positions indicated in the letter, with their private phone numbers. I was thus able to contact these people by phone, to establish their willingness to participate in the study, and to set up a time and place for an interview.

In School B the matter was dealt with by the principal. He and I together, in his office, established the personnel who would participate. I was provided with names and phone numbers, and given an assurance that he personally would consult with these members of staff, inform them of the research project and seek their consent. Once again I was able to ring each personally, and make the necessary arrangements. The one hitch that occurred was when I rang the person whose name had been given to me as the EEO co-ordinator. She, actually the assistant principal, denied that she held such a position, so I had to inform her that her name had been given to me by the principal. In a later telephone conversation, after she had talked to the principal, she agreed to participate, saying that EEO was handled by senior management so she guessed that she could be interviewed on those terms. All the others agreed in the first instance.

With the required information to hand I set about contacting by phone the personnel listed, in order to seek their consent and to set up a date, time and place for interview. Although I had at times to be pleasantly persuasive, I received, to my surprise, total co-operation.

Both schools were very willing to co-operate. I perceived no hesitancy or reluctance. In fact I was given assurances that my project was a very worthwhile and important piece of research. It must be noted however that it was the schools themselves that had screened the personnel who would be participating in the study. They had the power to choose.

(f)   Location of Interviews

In School A the interviews were conducted in the homes of the relevant personnel, except for the BOT chairman and the principal who chose their place of work.

Those to be interviewed in School B found it more convenient to come to my premises. The exceptions were the BOT chairperson who preferred his own home and the assistant principal and principal, who chose their own offices.

(g)   Management of the Interview

Oakley (1981:31) points out that very few sociologists who employ interview data "actually bother to describe in detail the process of interviewing itself", where the relationship between researcher and researched is problematic. Yet management of the interview was an important consideration. The problem of establishing rapport between me as interviewer and each individual respondent was clearly crucial, as Oakley (1981:33) reminds us, in motivating the respondent to co-operate and come up with the desired information. Those being interviewed are "active and reflexive beings who have insights into their situations and experiences ... they have to be interacted with" (Cameron et al. 1992:5)

At each interview I endeavoured to follow the same procedures. First I explained the focus of the research study. I then produced an Information Sheet (Appendix B) which outlined the topic of study, what they as participants were being asked to do, and what they could expect from me as the researcher. I also produced a Consent Form (Appendix C) for signing, and sought permission to record the interview.

In only one case was I refused permission to record, and that was by the principal of School A. This required me to write down as much as I could in the attempt to get the comments verbatim, a process I found very difficult, especially as I had to conduct the interview at the same time, and there was a palpable tension in the atmosphere (see page 60).

On average the interviews lasted for an hour. I was guided in my questioning by the aforementioned Interview Schedule which provided the structure for the talk that emerged. As the interview cycle progressed, I became more conscious of the guarded nature of some responses, in particular from those who held the most senior positions. Although I had attempted to minimise tape recorder impact by using a dictaphone, I gained a strong impression that all respondents were very conscious of being recorded. This became apparent from the different nature of their talk once I had concluded the interview and switched off the tape recorder. I felt that this directly affected the nature of the replies, especially where comments made outside the framework of the agreed-to research were more revealing than those made "officially". I did not write down these comments, since they were "off the record". I regretted being unable to use them.

Before each session officially concluded, the opportunity was offered for comments on any other aspects that respondents felt had not been covered within the terms of the interview questions. There were significant attempts by respondents to use me as a source of information. There were two identifiable concerns. Firstly questions were asked by some as to who else was being interviewed, and what had been said. Secondly I was asked to give my reasons for undertaking this particular piece of research. Then it was my turn to be guarded in response, particularly in protecting confidentiality. However I did attempt to be honest in my replies where I felt I was able to be.

(h)   The Interview as a Process

In most of the interviews there was a comfortable and co-operative atmosphere. However, both during the process of interviewing, and upon reflection, I had become increasingly aware of a distinction between those interviews that were conducted on work site and those that were conducted off-site. Those interviews conducted on site involved three persons in senior administrative positions in the schools, two male and one female, and the fourth a male BOT member. I felt that there was an assertion and imposition of power in the choice of setting, whether conscious or unconscious I couldn't tell.   In two interviews in particular, by respondents who held similar positions in each of the two schools, I was made to feel very conscious both of being a woman and of the asymmetry of the relationship.

According to Stanley (1984:200), feminist research that involves men, however tangentially, almost inevitably involves the feminist researcher in experiences of sexism, in sometimes gross and sometimes subtle ways. I experienced strong discomfort in one interview with a male in a position of power. Not only did I find his comments at times rather disparaging of females: *Status of women is in need of a change. I try to give girls a boost. The women are stroppy enough to take care of themselves."* But there was a strong sense of impatience throughout the interview, which produced a palpable tension. When I asked if there was an EEO Policy in the school, the reply was: *Yes. Have you talked to ... (woman assistant principal) about this?* And when I asked how the policy was actioned, he got up somewhat impatiently, located the policy in a cupboard, and again asked, this time very abruptly, if I had talked with the assistant principal. When I said I hadn't, he asked if I was going to. I felt pressured to say yes to relieve the tension, although the latter was not on my list to be interviewed. When I returned to the question, he responded: *I'm not sure what you mean. It's administered by common sense ... we don't go overboard for it. The Affirmative Action request from PPTA we regarded as an affront.* He did not explain what he meant by this latter statement, nor did I ask.

The pressure I felt during the interview was reinforced by his unsmiling manner, and the fact that I had to scribble down his responses while interviewing, having been refused permission to record. This I know had an effect on the questions I asked, the manner in which I asked them and the questions which I felt unable to ask. I felt pressured and harassed.

In another interview with a male in a similar position in the other school, the final comment: *I think you've done very well* was for me the equivalent to a fatherly nod of approval; sexism of a different kind, that of paternalism. It has been argued that paternal control techniques exercised through the "good girl" discourse can powerfully influence women's agency through sanctions on certain behaviours: "to not express anger or cause conflict, to put other's feelings and needs before their own" (Court, 1995:8).

In School A, located some distance away, the BOT Chairman chose to be interviewed at his place of work, despite the fact that it was a weekend. His lateness meant that I had to make a phone call to find out his whereabouts. Eventually he came. But the responses were, I felt, particularly guarded and reserved, and his manner wary. This became evident when the recorder was switched off, and the respondent stated that he now realised that I hadn't come to investigate a particular instance in the past history of the school, which is what he had in fact surmised. He became much friendlier at that point, and was obviously relieved. He had found the topic of my research study very sensitive, and relating to a past situation that he had been involved with. This clearly had affected the interview, and I had not found it easy to manage.

Another interview that got off to a delayed start was that arranged with a female, also in a senior position, who was to be interviewed in her school office. She arrived twenty minutes late, with a perfunctory apology. Again I felt that I was being given a somewhat guarded, response. I could sense the reserve. I therefore became very cautious in the way I asked the questions.

Problematic, also, as Woodward & Chisholm (1981:176) acknowledge, was the presentation of myself to the interview respondents. I was open to relatively accurate categorisation as a woman with an axe to grind, or feminist - an emotionally charged word. I was also employed in the secondary education sector, in a middle management position, although I did not openly acknowledge this. The very nature of the questions about promotion served to reveal my preoccupation with women's supposed oppression, and presumably, my self-interest.

(i)   Managing the Interview Data

The interviews were all completed during the third school term of 1992. I then transcribed the interviews. This was an extremely time-consuming task, and one that proved far more difficult than anticipated. Firstly I had recorded on the slow dictaphone setting, partly to economise, partly to minimise attention to the recording process by avoiding having to turn over the tape. Since I was unable to use a foot control and earphone to play back the tape from the slow setting, I laboriously word processed the recording juggling the two machines.

A second difficulty was the differences that emerged between the male and the female recorded responses. Transcribing the male responses was

somewhat easier, since the speech was slower, more distinct, with not so many hesitations or repetitions. Transcribing female speech, on the other hand, was more difficult, due mainly to the rapidity of speech, quantity of words and indistinctness. At times that I had to leave gaps in the transcription. The repetitions were tedious to transcribe. I had been unaware of this during the actual interview. This led me to reflect on the impact to the hearer of these speech patterns, and whether I needed to adjust my own.

When the transcriptions were all complete, I sent a copy to each respondent with a letter which asked them to read through the transcript, verify their responses, and agree to my using all the material as data for my research study, or if not to indicate which data they would prefer me not to use. I also enclosed a copy of the Interview Schedule. I received replies from 10 out of the 18 recorded interviews. There were some comments made, some clarifications of intent, but the only really significant alteration, from my point of view, was the withdrawal of some rather frank comments by the Board of Trustees chairperson in School A relating to other school personnel.

I also produced a second set of transcripts, which I bound school by school to produce two booklets. The transcripts now existed as "social texts" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:160), available for me to read and reread, as the research study progressed.

With these processes complete, and the assurance that I had sought permission to use the material collected, and so authenticated, I felt I could begin the process of analysis.

(j)   Data Analysis

Analysis seeks to identify critical instances and evidence for refuting, strengthening, or reformulating hypotheses (Adelman et al., 1984:99). My mode of analysis emerged through the changes in my thinking that occurred during the process of conducting this research study. I decided on discourse analysis framed within feminist poststructuralist thought only after I had framed the research study and had become increasingly disturbed at what was not being revealed through the research data that was available. I was worried that the extremely sensitive nature of the enquiry appeared to be severely restricting my efforts to carry out research that could be called comprehensive in its scope. Also I became very aware that the interviews themselves were not just a means to an end, but in themselves were to become a focus of enquiry, in terms of atmosphere, setting, and the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent, the comfort and the discomfort of either party in terms of generating information, and also in consideration of the conviction that "all research necessarily comes to us through the active and central involvement of researchers, who necessarily interpret and construct what's going on" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:198).

Conscious of my positioning as researcher, and my conception of the interviews as discursively constructed texts, I planned the analysis of the

interview transcripts in the following ways. I used my rationale for the compilation of the interview schedule as the first step towards the identification of relevant themes. On a third set of transcripts, I colour coded sections that emerged as being in some way themes, topics, comments, or perspectives that had either emerged in the literature as being related to my research interest, or which in my opinion were emerging as significant information or fresh perspectives.

This meant that I initially established the following three broad groupings: firstly, understanding of and attitudes towards EEO; secondly, gender-specific beliefs about promotion and teacher careers; and finally, attitudes towards promotion practices and processes. Since, however, it is not possible in social science research to arbitrarily make distinctions between social phenomena without acknowledging their interconnectedness, I found it necessary to undergo a "scanning and refining process, moving backwards and forward between the raw evidence of the transcript and the developing analyses" (Powney & Watts, 1987:105) following the classic constant comparison method of qualitative analysis first proposed by Glaser & Strauss (1967). A sample page is included in Appendix D.

Then it was a case of teasing out from what had been said a set of categories under which I could classify the themes, meanings and values which emerged as relevant to the organising concepts.

I created a grouping of issues which related to the following fields: the discursive construction of EEO; beliefs about promotion; appointment practices; women's place within the school; and responsibility for EEO. These I also coded in different colours. I then cut the transcripts and placed the colour coded pieces into envelopes "to produce a body of instances" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:167). This analysis was undertaken to reveal the nature and location of the discourses in circulation which would enable me to attempt to "recognise the political implications of particular ways of fixing identity and meaning" (Weedon, 1987:173) was the analysis proper. Within each grouping, I followed the steps of analysis outlined by Potter & Wetherell (1987:168-169), and searched for patterns in the data considering both variability and consistency in my attempts to form hypotheses about the functions and effects of the participants' talk and search for linguistic evidence.

As a third step, I continued throughout to relate my research findings to the themes, meanings and perspectives which I had drawn from the relevant literature and documented in Chapter One.

Following all these phases of analysis, emergent themes were discussed and directions for future research identified.

Within the terms of the case study research definition (page 56) as a "systematic investigation of a specific instance", I present the analysis of data for each school separately.

(k)   Reporting

I resolved to write up my research study in language that is more easily understood by a wider readership, to add a human dimension (Adelman et al., op.cit.:96) and to produce a document that is "readable and useable" (Reinharz, 1983:183).   I wished to draw the reader in by appealing to the reader's own experience and knowledge of human situations.   Therefore I needed to draw heavily on the language of the persons studied, to provide a grounded study. I have explained my use of the first person (page 52).   Since research according to Reinharz (1983:183), "addresses a second audience with the intention of fostering a dialogue ... if it succeeds it will be a "felt response" (Gendlin, 1965-6 in Reinharz, 1983:183), an encounter with the reader."

(l)   Consequences of the Research

It is argued (Adelman et al., op.cit.:99) that case study research and evaluation, "because it is rooted in the practicalities and politics of real life situations, is more likely to expose those studied to critical appraisal, censure or condemnation."

Decisions therfore have to be made in weighing up the potentiality of the harm and/or benefit of the research undertaken. The extreme is to put an embargo on the research study for a defined period of time, if it is felt that the findings would cause harm, despite steps taken to protect anonymity. But as the research study itself had taken longer than originally planned for, I felt that it was considerably removed in distance of time for this no longer to be a real issue.   In addition many staff had, over that period, moved to new positions.

(m)   Observations

By this time I had myself undergone considerable reshaping as a result of the experiences outlined above. The collection of all data had not been a simple matter, and had involved considerable skills in negotiation, persuasion and assertion. I emerged with different perspectives on my own research that were to impact on the manner in which I would approach the analysis of my data. I have already presented the process of interviewing as critical also to the interpretations placed on the interview data (pages 64-65). What I have paid attention to in the final analysis has inevitably reflected and been constructed by my own feminist understandings, research experience and interactions. In this respect my text "is forged in both senses of the term 'partial' - a political partiality (taking sides) *and* a self-conscious incompleteness and tentativeness" (Jones, 1992:29).

Throughout the research process I was identifying three strands, that appeared to me to be related:

*   attitudes towards EEO;
*   attitudes towards the promotion of women and women in leadership positions;
*   attitudes towards merit and the appointment process

My research aims to present these strands as they became evident in a grounded case study, while managing the evidence in ways which protect the confidentiality of the research participants.

3.6   Writing Up

The writing up of my data became a lengthy process, for a number of interconnected reasons.

Firstly my job. The administrative tasks performed by secondary sector middle managers such as myself have continued to increase in number, and complexity, unmatched by equivalent resourcing. Radical curriculum changes and reforms in the curriculum and qualification structures necessitate ongoing management under pressure. I found part-time rigorous intellectual data analysis difficult to sustain. Also undertaking research at a distance isolated me from the regular, ongoing and casual support that comes through chat and discussion with other educators working in the same field, and encountering similar problems.

I had another life as well. Family matters, and at a particular point in time a serious illness, absorbed their share of my attention and care.

Yet more powerful, and unexpected, was the strength of my own reactions to what my data was revealing. These reactions can be qualified in three ways.
My first reaction was one of empathy. The voices that spoke through the data, firstly in the interview, once more through my transcribing and yet again through my repeated readings of the transcribed texts, surfaced in me emotions at times so intense that I could not continue. I felt anger at injustices that I perceived, but also a deep sorrow for what I felt to be lost opportunities for women. My anger and sorrow, uneven in their timing and intensity, became however a force that was directed at myself, for what I felt were injustices and my own lost opportunities. I found it difficult to separate myself from my data. I could not produce a "detached" view. I could not begin to separate key issues.

My second reaction was one of reflection. Reflection is, I believe, underestimated as a component in the research process. Through the interconnectedness of my job, my gender, my life and work experiences, my reading, my research and the data it produced, and myriads of other encounters at the unconscious level, I have had occasion to think, to reflect, to analyse, to synthesise. My reflections, ever creating new syntheses, heightened my awareness of my own attitudes, my own expectations and my own "confinement." These reflections, in part fuelled by my anger and sorrow-driven empathy, became a tangible force that propelled me to act and

commit myself to tasks and people in ways that have added considerably to my administrative and personnel experience. This increased my visibility, and attracted opportunities for leadership in unexpected arenas. I have been able to accept with a new confidence, calmness, and purpose. It was, however, the undertaking of these tasks that further delayed the process of writing up my data and completing my research report.

My third reaction was one of "vulnerability" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:196). The writing up lasted over several years, years in which I was to undergo new experiences that would reshape me. As I reworked all my research material in 1995, with the pressure of a deadline, emerging research in the field of EEO within New Zealand gave me a clearer route to follow. My earlier attempts at writing were confused and muddled, with substance, but lacking coherence in shape or form. The major struggle was within myself. I had to find a form of expression that would allow me to speak with my own voice, and validate the ways I interacted with my own data. I had to make explicit my confusion, my emotions, my feminism. This I now have the confidence to do. It has been a rather painful process.

The writing up process has therefore been framed in a particular way, encompassing researcher participation, subjectivity and self-reflexivity. This links into recent theoretical formulations and analyses, typified by Reinharz (1983:174) as "experiential" and described as having a trifold purpose: to "represent growth and understanding in the arena of *the problem* investigated, *the person(s)* doing the investigation, and *the method* utilised."

3.7   Summary

However, I acknowledge Lather's (1986:272) contention that "efforts to produce social knowledge that will advance the struggle for a more equitable world must pursue rigour as well as relevance." In openly acknowledging the constructedness and partiality of the account, and the subjective presence of the observer/researcher, I provide a detailed account of the process by which I carried out the research. This opening up to scrutiny of the process of research reveals the sources of my knowledge, the ways I have come to know and understand what I have been doing within this research. Stanley & Wise (1980:196) make explicit this centrality of the researcher, and argue that all research necessarily comes to us through the active and central involvement of researchers, who are actively interpreting and constructing what's going on. Therefore the "rigour" in the research process involves us in a "disciplined, scholarly and rigorous explication of the bases of our knowledge by tying in such an explication to a detailed analysis of the *contexts* in which such knowledge is generated" (ibid.). In Chapter Three, therefore, I have made available my experiences as researcher in constructing knowledge "grounded in living experience" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:201) to establish the contexts.

I turn now to discussing my search of the documentation gathered as part of the research data. The analysis of this documentation is presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Document Analysis

"Poststructuralist feminist analysis is involved in the discursive battle for the meaning of texts which is a constant feature of the literary and educational institutions, as well as the everyday practice of reading"

(Weedon, 1987:168)

4.1   Introduction

In Chapter Three I explained my methodology which arose from the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter Two, and presented each phase of the research process.   In acknowledging my view as partial and framed "through the lens of women's experience" (Bell & Chase, 1989), I exposed both my centrality and partiality as researcher in the research process.

I had become convinced that the social reality that we call school is a constituted reality (Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992:13), constructed through a range of competing and often contradictory discourses (Weedon, 1987, 35-42). This view displaces and reveals as hegemonic (Gramsci in Codd, 1988:242) the myth of equal access, based on the twin doctrines of equality of opportunity and equal need (Renwick, 1986:29).   Many argue that this myth, with its liberal rhetoric and its implication of equal educational outcomes, has perpetuated assumptions of a value-free system serving a common good (Apple, 1979:26-42; Codd, Harker & Nash, 1990b:7; O'Neill, 1992:69) which have concealed conflicts, inequalities and forms of domination and control (Codd, Harker & Nash, op. cit.:10).

It therefore was a logical step for me to move beyond what was officially reported *from* and *in the name of* schools, to a closer, albeit partial view of the ways in which particular discourses are actively constructing a school's organisational reality from *within* and *for* a particular context, that is, I wanted to focus on a "micropolitical analysis" (Marshall, 1991:141).   I wanted to find out if EEO discourses were in circulation, in what ways and in what forms.

Chapter Four begins the "micropolitical analysis."   This involved case study research at the school-site level in the two chosen state co-educational secondary schools where transcripts of recorded interviews and the selected documents furnished data for closer analysis and interpretation.   This chapter limits itself to the document analysis, my "discursive battle for the meaning of texts" (Weedon, op. cit.:168).

First I researched the official ERO EEO questionnaire responses made by each school.   The BOT minutes for the period May 1989-April 1992 were then searched, along with a range of policy documents. Initially I looked specifically for references to EEO, and attempted to analyse their discursive construction.   Then I investigated the relationship between minuted documentation, policy documents, and statements made in the EEO ERO questionnaire returns, in order to "search for pattern in the data" (Potter &

Wetherell, 1987:168) and "recognise the political implications of particular ways of fixing identity and meaning" (Weedon, 1987:173). I conclude this chapter by pointing to the need for the kind of inquiry "that will attempt to unravel the ways in which structural forces shape the subjective experiences of individual subjects" (Weiler, 1988:75). The interviews furnish data for further inquiry.

4.2   School Responses to the ERO EEO Questionnaires

Each school's response to the ERO EEO Questionnaire Returns 1991 and 1992 is considered separately. This separation is consistent with the view of the school as a "micropolitical context ... where the work of administrators includes projecting the legitimised social construction of reality" (Marshall, 1991:155), and the definition of case study research as "a systematic investigation of the specific instance" (page 56). However, within each separate school reporting, I present a comparative view of the two annual reports to reveal the changes that are reported to have taken place.

School A

The 1992 Questionnaire responses revealed the appointment of an EEO Co-ordinator, (unidentified), a step taken since 1991, but still with no written list of responsibilities and duties, although the co-ordinator was said to have access to decision-making on appointments, interviews and personnel policy making. No target groups had been consulted in 1991, whereas the 1992 Report claimed women had been consulted. Data collection procedures to build an employee profile had in 1992 still not been established. Over the two years no-one had received any training. This was particularly surprising considering the amount of education agency activity in providing EEO resources and training opportunities documented in Chapter One.

Although it was affirmed that policies for appointment, promotion and career development, staff training and development and conditions of service had been reviewed for non-teaching staff, this was not affirmed in 1992. In both years similar policies that related to teaching staff had not been reviewed. In both reports the staff development programme was identified as providing support for women and meeting their needs. Procedures for reporting EEO progress to local committees and the community had still not been established in 1992.

The questionnaire responses had, in both years, been made by the principal, a male. In the open response section he had not made an entry. While some of the EEO questionnaire responses from other schools had been typed, these ones were handwritten. The marked consistency of wording between the two responses led me to assume that perhaps the 1992 questionnaire may have been filled out with the 1991 one alongside. Whether this was so or not, from the principal's reporting there appeared to be a lack of obvious EEO development. That the open response section had been ignored on two

occasions raised for me important questions concerning the principal's representation of EEO, and his attitude towards EEO. Since in both years the questionnaire was returned only partially completed, questions are also raised concerning attitudes towards the mandatory reporting of EEO and indeed the role of ERO itself.

School B

Similarly in School B both returns were handwritten by the male principal. The responses to the 1992 questionnaire indicated, as in 1991, an EEO policy and co-ordinator in place, but surprisingly no written list of responsibilities and duties, despite being confirmed to exist in 1991. As before, the co-ordinator was stated to have access to decision-making in appointments and interviews; however access to personnel policy making was indicated only in the 1992 return. In both years it was claimed women as a target group had been consulted.

However in 1992 it was stated that no data collection procedures were in place to build an employee profile. This was very surprising as this had been affirmed in the previous year, with "PPTA" written into the section. That entry was, in my view, a possible link to the PPTA joint initiative The Promotion of Women Review cited in Chapter One. There was a shift from no training documented in 1991, to some training for teaching staff in 1992. The establishment of an appointments policy for teaching staff was noted in 1991. In 1992 policies were said to have been established/reviewed for recruitment, appointment, promotion and career development, and staff training and development for both teaching and non-teaching staff. The staff development programme was said, in both years, to meet women's needs and provide opportunities that procedures were in place for reporting EEO progress to local committees and to the community was affirmed in both years. What that meant, however, was not clear.

In 1991 the principal wrote in some sections of the open response section, commenting on the school's EEO progress as *"further recognition of its importance"* and declaring its impact by writing *"equity is a key aspect of the management of this school."* No entry was made in the sections that required comment on what had not been achieved, and the barriers met. Regarding the next year's programme, the principal wrote:

> *"Confirmation of the school "way" - quality, commitment and learning, rather than mediocrity, tokenism and hypocrisy, which is an outcome of so many "paper" undertakings to fulfil the previous Government's Act."*

I am left to assume that the 1991 EEO return itself was considered to be included in the *"paper"* undertakings. Set apart from a particular context, the language of the comments was so vague as to have no particular meaning, hence open to a range of interpretation. Although there seemed to be more

obvious development of EEO as reported over the two years, the lack of comment other than *"further recognition of its importance"* in the 1992 open response section, raised once more in my mind questions of the principal's commitment and the exact ways in which EEO was being "recognised", and by whom.

My summarising at this point identifies four separate yet interconnected issues: the effectiveness of the questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument, the representativeness of the principal's view, questions about monitoring, and the function of the questionnaire itself.

As described in Chapter One (page 21), ERO developed the questionnaire form in part "to help (institutions) to supply information to satisfy the provisions of the new law." However I found the questionnaire-led data yield incomplete in two ways. Firstly not all the questions were responded to. Nor were the data presented in a form detailed enough for me to be able to determine, in any material sense, the extent to which the objectives of the EEO programme had been attained, as required by the Act (page 13).

The incompleteness is consistent with the analysis of the Regional Questionnaire Surveys 1991 and 1992 documented in Chapter One (page 26) where I described the vagueness of the replies as forming a "consistent thread." With terms used in the questionnaire open to a range of definitions, the language itself becomes central and a site of struggle and contestation over meaning. These various levels of incompleteness lead me to question the validity of the EEO ERO questionnaire form as a data-gathering instrument on EEO practice.

In addition, the representativeness of the principal's view of the actual EEO situation in each school is also open to question. I could not determine whether the principal was reporting on actual practice, or what ERO, as auditors *should* know. With no evidence required, in that "you might like to attach a copy of your EEO programme" (ERO Explanatory Statement, attached to EEO questionnaire, 1992) the link between what is claimed and what is actually happening in practice becomes suspect. Furthermore with only partially completed returns from School A, and the inconsistencies noted between the 1991 and 1992 returns for School B, the reliability of this form of reporting becomes more problematic still.

As a monitoring device, the questionnaire responses cannot therefore be accepted as prima facie evidence of the actual practice of EEO and its material base in the school. Therefore it may be argued, as suggested in Chapter One (page 26) that the questionnaire, instead of gathering valid and reliable information on established EEO practice, may simply function to monitor the institution's compliance to report annually.

A more productive perspective, however, rooted in feminist poststructuralist thought, as explained in Chapter Two, conceptualises the questionnaire, not as a transparent medium through which to glean factual information, but in itself

a site of discursive struggle over meaning. The questionnaire form becomes a material force in "constructing" a particular version of EEO, in creating and composing its reality. The Education Review Office itself argued that it was a means "to assist institutions with an understanding of the new requirements" (page 21) by providing a model. Responses not given may therefore be interpreted as a form of resistance, in Foucault's terms (page 37) not only to EEO per se, but also, as evidenced in Chapter One, to the questionnaire "as a bureaucratically imposed workload and an intrusion into their affairs" (page 22). The tension between State intervention and local-based autonomy, realised in discourses of compulsion and voluntarism, produce power struggles which complicate the picture.

I felt that I had not yet been able to determine what particular EEO practices had actually been established. Since it was the EEO Reviewer's (1992, op. cit.) opinion that principals took notice of NZSTA, and boards of trustees were supposed to apportion some Ministry funding to their own equity training, she considered that a search of the BOT minutes of the specified period would reveal what notice had been taken of education agency activity and the priority actually accorded to EEO. I therefore searched the minutes in order to investigate the discursive construction of EEO, by whom, for which reasons and with what outcomes.

4.3 BOT Minutes May 1989-April 1992

School A

(a)   Trustees

It is argued that "it is pointless to press the state for actual educational equality between social groups if the instrument to achieve that, the school, is in the hands of the community" (Codd et al. 1990b:19). It therefore becomes necessary to examine the actual trustee membership of each school. The newly elected board of five men (which included the principal, male) and three women elected a male chairperson, replaced by another male in July 1991. The chairperson and principal were designated official speakers and ex officio on all committees. It was moved to co-opt two Maori representatives as well as two more men as *"members are conscious of maintaining continuity with management of finances."* Finance was, apparently, a male concern, with three men constituting the committee.

There was also a property committee of two men and one woman; a personnel committee comprising the male chairperson, female staff representative; and two co-opted members.

(b)   Training

Within the literature on EEO the genuine commitment of the employer to equality in the workplace is highlighted by the State Services Commission

(1989:40) as critical to the success of an EEO programme (see page 17). The extent to which training is provided/taken up is one measure of employer commitment. Despite notification in May 1989 of a forthcoming budget of $1,050 from the Implementation Unit for board and principal training, and minuting (June 1989; August 1989) of incoming correspondence on the School Management Development Project (SMDP) support and training, and the Ministry of Education seminars and training video, I was unable to detect from the minutes what budget, if any, had been set aside for specific EEO training needs, or if any trustee EEO training had in fact taken place. Neither had EEO itself been identified as a specific issue for training, despite the official appointment of the chairman as training co-ordinator. This information, however, matches the negative response to the question on training in the school's EEO questionnaire returns.

(c)   Personnel

A survey of minuted statements relating to personnel and relevant to this study revealed three clear strands. Firstly, much of the business relating to personnel was conducted in committee, thereby reducing the available data. Secondly there was a clear focus on, and concern with, personnel movement, detailed in one specific case, and also expressed as a general concern. Finally, there was documentation of discussion relating to the appointment process.

Personnel movement involved the resignation of the assistant principal (October 1989). With a sub-committee established to "manage the appointment" three married women were shortlisted. An extraordinary meeting recorded nine board members present, the principal as secretary, and two apologies (November 1989). A PR2 holder in the same school was appointed.

Of that same person the February 1990 minutes record "(name) is thriving in her new role of Assistant Principal." Yet the next related entry (April 1990) documented her resignation. A month later (May 1990) assistant principal applicants were to be informed that the position would be readvertised, yet in July 1990, the minutes reported the resuming of duties of the former assistant principal. The circumstances of these events were not minuted.

The general concern relating to personnel movement was the limited applicant pool. The principal reported (February 1990) "readvertising the PR3 HOD Science position with no tag", minuted in May 1990 as the broader concern of the size of the applicant field. Since "several advertisements in the past year or so have drawn no response," it was resolved to write to MP's regarding incentives. In similar vein, the advertised English position had received very few applicants, resulting in no appointment (June 1990).

In appointments authority was delegated to the principal to employ staff up to PR2 level. That this was already happening was evidenced in the principal's report (February, 1990): "I will be making recommendations to the Board concerning PR1 HOD Music and PR1 Assistant HOD English." Policy to cover

staff discipline, misconduct and dismissal, and the need to have current job descriptions and to adhere to them, were itemised as necessary.

In April 1991 the female staff representative who had chaired the personnel committee retired and was replaced by a male. From this point on, personnel concerns centred on redeployment and the disestablishment of PR units, necessitated by a falling roll, to be re-established seven months later.

EEO had had no specific mention in any of the contexts discussed. As a discourse it was not in circulation. Therefore it could be assumed it was having no social effect (Weedon, 1987:110). Nor was it evident from the minutes that the EEO co-ordinator, whoever that person was, "had access to decision-making on appointments and interviews" as described in the ERO EEO questionnaire form. The process of appointment was at principal discretion up to PR2. How, then, was the EEO co-ordinator involved? How did that involvement differ with PR3 positions and above? I felt I might gain some answers by seeing what policy had developed that could be relevant.

(d)   Policy Development Process

From the composition of the policy sub-committees:

Role model - AP (chair), women BOT, staff rep, student rep, women HOD's;
Sexual harassment - same as for role models;
EEO - principal, board chair, deputy principal and the assistant principal.

I observed that policy on role-models and harassment were deemed to be both safe in the hands of women and a matter of their concern, while the EEO policy was not. In addition the three male members of the EEO committee had higher status positions than the only female in the group, producing both a gender and a power imbalance.

With regard to the policy development process, it appeared, from the wording in the principal's report (August, 1990) recording staff vetting of policies on equity, EEO, etc: *"others I have written include discipline, harassment and leave of absence"*, that the principal was the main author of these policies. The EEO committee's role was unclear.

There was, however, evidence of struggle over meaning (August 1990). The staff representative required a clause change, though unspecified, in the Harassment policy (August 1990) before ratification.

In October 1990 the draft policy on appointments from the principal was amended to read: *"The most suitable person will be appointed to each position, but the Board reserves the right to make no appointment."* Further amendments (February 1991) were:
> *Guidelines clause 2 shall now read "Senior PR holders (PR3, PR4) will be selected by an ad hoc staffing committee, appointed by the board, and*

including the principal" Guideline clause 6 shall have "fulltime"
inserted to read: "All fulltime positions will be advertised as follows:...

The insertion of the word *"fulltime"* is a concern in the light of evidence in Chapter One (page 6) of the full-time/part-time dichotomy in the teaching services which appears to also structure a gender imbalance. This appears to me inconsistent with EEO concerns to remove discriminatory barriers. Since further amendments to the Appointments policy (September 1991) were unspecified I could not determine their significance. In the development of policy there is evidence of struggle. The forms of language to be used is a site of struggle in the attempt to control definitions. Secondly, there are boundaries being established over who has the power to make appointment decisions. To further investigate these "boundaries" analysis of the documents is required.

(e)   Policy Documents

(i)   Appointments Policy

The policy document contained guidelines which defined those involved in appointment decisions:

1.   *The principal will appoint all non-teaching staff, as well as teachers up to and including PR2.*
2.   *Senior PR holders (PR3, PR4) will be elected by an ad hoc staffing committee appointed by the board and including the principal.*
      Designated staff (Principal, Deputy Principal, and Assistant Principal) will be selected following an interview with the whole board.
3.   *The principal will discuss appointments with senior staff as appropriate.*
4.   *Appointments will be discussed if appropriate with the Maori community.*

The principal, included in the decision-making for the more senior positions, has, however, sole responsibility for teacher appointment up to and including PR2. The principal is therefore the linchpin in this school in teaching appointment decisions. Whereas there may be consultation or discussion *as appropriate,* whatever that may mean, the principal has the sole power to appoint to those positions forming the pool from which more senior appointments are drawn.

Although Guideline no.5 draws attention to the need to consider EEO in that *"The school has an EEO policy which should be read in conjunction with the policy on appointments,"* Guideline no.8 which reads: "The most suitable person will be appointed to each position, but the board reserves the right to make no appointment" links with the need for *"appropriately qualified and trained"* teaching staff as expressed in the rationale. Within the literature on EEO it is clear that it is the definition and meaning given to these terms, and by whom, (Thornton, 1985:28-40) which is the problem to be addressed. I was, however, unable to locate this information in the minutes.

(ii)   Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity

The EEO policy document rationale specified five potential sources of discrimination, *"race, marital status, creed, age, sexual preference, or any other factor not relevant to employment conditions"*, yet surprisingly omitted gender.

Merit, the basis of appointment decisions, was given this definition: *"Merit should be interpreted as including experience and personal qualities as well as formal qualifications."* I needed therefore to find out whether defined criteria existed for *experience* and *personal qualities,* since none existed in the policy document.

The policy document also stated: *"... staff should be selected in as open and non-discriminatory a manner as can be achieved. Efforts will be made to identify and eliminate any practices which unwittingly place any group at a disadvantage in selection and career opportunities."* Hence I felt I could assume that steps had been taken within the school to establish practices that were fair. This I also needed to verify.

In the Guidelines, clause 4 makes explicit reference to harassment: *"that the school's working environment be free from all forms of harassment (see Policy on Harassment)"* and thus links practices of harassment as discriminatory and disadvantaging in employment considerations.

(iii)   Policy on Harassment

The policy statement defined harassment as: *"when the receiver feels uncomfortable regarding another's words or actions towards them"*

There is an emphasis, throughout the document, of measures to be put in place for the person harassed to be able to cope. The policy also included a Guideline indicating that it is the board's task to provide appropriate resources to enable listed objectives to be met. The ongoing development of staff awareness, skills and knowledge were to be met through the provision of appropriate in-service. I therefore needed to find out whether practices were operating which were consistent with these specified in the guidelines.

School B

(a)   Trustees

The June 1989 minutes record board committees set up among the six male (including the student representative) and four female trustees as follows:

*   charter: all board members
*   finance: 3 males and 2 females
*   uniform: 3 females, student rep and 1 male
*   buildings and grounds: 3 males and 2 females

*   appointments and staff welfare: 3 males and 2 females
*   student welfare and community education: 3 males and 3 females

with the chairperson (male), and principal ex officio on all committees. The deputy chairperson, a female, was appointed for one year. Significant here is the range of committees. Apart from uniform, each committee had a reasonably balanced representation in gender terms.

(b)   Training

Attendance at a BOT Training Seminar by the female staff representative and two female BOT members was minuted (October 1989), but not identified as EEO inclusive. Female trustee attendance was highlighted when a further training opportunity became available. *"The staff representative noted that so far only female Board members have attended courses"* (May 1990). This gender distinction in trustee training course participants was all the more significant when I read later in the June 1990 minutes that two female board members, attended that seminar.

A BOT budget of $8,500 for "fees, training, consultation, charter requirements" was minuted in December 1989, with a review of in-service training and staff development by senior teachers (HOD's): *"to formulate a fair and adequate policy in areas of staff training; priorities for spending the budget allocated from the bulk grant."* I therefore needed to find out what EEO-related staff training and budgetary provision had been made. This was not indicated in the minutes.

In October 1990 Ministry of Education training sessions were itemised but not discussed. However, the minuted item (May 1990) referencing a Training Course for Trustees which stated "details are available from the secretary" raised the question of the level of priority accorded by the board to the concept of training itself in the first instance, and secondly by male members in particular.

(c)   Personnel

(i)   Position of Women

The position of women, and senior appointments were the two main areas of focus.

Noted as inward correspondence in October 1989 was The Promotion of Women Review. The topic resurfaced in the May 1990 minutes: *"PPTA Promotion of Women: Appointments and Staff Welfare Committee to undertake the task of meeting with the PPTA regarding the Promotion of Women. A date in July will be set."* Attached to the July 1990 minutes was a comprehensive Ministry of Education document entitled Review of the 1989 School Year: Objectives for 1990. Section 2 of the draft objectives included equity and personnel development as compulsory charter goals:

"Compulsory goals relate to enhancing children's learning, community partnership, equity, Treaty of Waitangi, personnel development, finance and property".

Presented at the same meeting was the school's <u>Annual Promotion of Women Review 1985-1989</u>, a data collection base of statistics dating back at least to 1985. No resolutions or discussion were minuted. An analysis completed on March 1 (in each of the five years represented), is presented in Table Seven.

1985	Fulltime staff Male 68%		Female 32%
	PR 3 2 1	Male 94.5% (4/7/5)	Female 5.5% (0/1/0)
1986	Fulltime staff	Male 60%	Female 40%
	PR 3 2 1	Male 78% (3/6/5)	Female 22% (1/2/0)
1987	Fulltime staff	Male 59%	Female 41%
	PR 3 2 1	Male 81% (4/7/4)	Female 19% (1/2/0)
1988	Fulltime staff	Male 56%	Female 44%
	PR 3 2 1	Male 80% (4/8/4)	Female 20% (1/2/1)
1989	Fulltime staff	Male 53%	Female 47%
	PR 3 2 1	Male 77% (4/9/3)	Female 23% (1/3/1)

Table Seven. Distribution of PR's by gender 1985-1989

While the gender representation in the full time staff was more balanced in numbers in 1989, there remained a vast difference between male and female representation in PR's, heavily weighted still in favour of males. Subject area distribution was not part of the analysis.

"Top" administrative positions (See Table Eight) were detailed by gender.

Male (9)	Female (7)
principal	senior mistress
deputy principal	careers adviser
guidance counsellor	
PR admin	
5 deans (3 with PR units)	5 deans (2 with PR units)

Table Eight. Analysis by gender of the "top" administrative positions.

Significant here is the absence of any reference to HOD positions, or their composition by gender. I am led to conclude that the latter are not included in "top" administrative positions, whereas guidance personnel (the ten deans) are. A consideration of the Committees that were not "open", i.e. the meetings were held in class time, revealed a School Tomorrow Committee and an Administration Committee, heavily weighted in favour of males (see Table Nine), although omitting the deans, referenced in Table Eight as among the "top" administrative positions. The Guidance Committee, surprisingly, in my view, does not contain the deans either, although shows a gender balance (ibid.).

(a)	**Administration Committee**			
	5 males -	principal deputy principal guidance counsellor PR admin HOD	2 females -	senior mistress careers adviser
(b)	**Guidance Committee**			
	3 males -	principal deputy principal guidance counsellor	3 females -	senior mistress HOD assistant teacher
(c)	**School Tomorrow Committee**			
	4 males -	deputy principal PPTA rep HOD assistant teacher	2 females -	assistant teacher assistant teacher

Table Nine. Analysis of Committee Composition by Gender and Position.

The school-based Promotion of Women Review and its data base was, it seems, the link made by the principal in writing "PPTA" in his ERO EEO return (page 73).

(ii)   Senior Appointments

With regard to the appointment process, the staff representative, on another's behalf, raised:

> "that if an interviewee for a position request help to aid their interview techniques they should be given guidance. The BOT discussed the matter and agrees with positive assistance with future interviewees. Mr (principal) already has a procedure for internal interview."

Following the female assistant principal's resignation minuted in February 1990, (March 1990) there were 16 applicants (6 male, 10 female) with the interviews to be held (later that month) on a Wednesday from 3.00 to 7.00 p.m. All Board members were invited to be present. The principal also asked for the deputy principal be present. This not only created a gender ratio of 2:1 in favour of male (8 males - 4 females), but, in my view, gave the principal a powerful ally. A married woman was appointed (April 1990). In July 1990, the staff representative, female, advised the board that the assistant principal "is doing a superb job of uniform control."

With regard to the resignation of the deputy principal, it was documented (June 1990) that "applications would be available for BOT members to peruse from (date) onwards. A shortlist meeting to be held on (date - six days later) at 8.00 a.m." In July it was:

1. *noted that the Board advised the principal of particular aspects to be passed onto unsuccessful candidates, for their professional development.*
2. *noted that the Board requested the chairperson to discuss with the successful applicant of particular duties and requirements.*

There seemed in this school, to be significant attempts to provide assistance and feedback to applicants for senior positions, and to involve the full board.

(d)   Policy Development Process

EEO matters were foregrounded quite specifically in a number of meetings. The November 1989 minutes acknowledged the presentation of *a report on Equal Employment Opportunities by the staff representative: "Although there had been an improvement since 1985, the principle of EEO must be continually addressed."* Exactly how EEO was to be addressed was not specified.

The Staff BOT report April/May 1990 detailed task groups to formulate school policy, to be presented to the Board in Term 3 for their consideration.

Under a specific EEO heading, the Board, in July 1990, endorsed a positive direction towards EEO and recognised that there has been an imbalance. Discussion on a policy paper circulated by the principal was deferred to the next meeting, since staff opinion was to be solicited.   A motion was passed that: "the Board endorses the preparation of a programme being maintained in the school of EEO and to encourage women actively to seek promotion."

The September 4 1990 minutes detailed receipt of the ERO EEO questionnaire. The staff representative apologised at the cancellation of the previous EEO meeting, and rescheduled a meeting in September to discuss adopting the policy as circulated.

A staff report (December 1990) was minuted as expressing PPTA concerns relating to equity issues. The concerns were not specified.

The employment policy was given the following consideration in November 1991: *"The person best suited to the position shall be appointed having regard to the experience, training, registration, qualifications and abilities relevant to the position",* and was amended in March 1991, following a meeting between some Board members and staff representatives to produce a statement which *"embodies what the Board intended but is more acceptable to the teachers:"*
> *"The persons best suited to the position shall be appointed. The Board will endeavour to employ registered teachers or trained teachers who qualify for and subsequently receive registration. Other factors to be considered are experience, training, qualifications and abilities relevant to the position. This shall apply to all positions, full-time permanent, part-time and long-term relieving".*

Policy decisions thus appeared to be an outcome of a process of negotiation between teaching staff and board members to achieve a document that was

acceptable to both parties. The ratified employment policy (March 1991) evidences concerns to safeguard teachers' rights and teaching as a profession, and to establish fair procedures in appointments. The construction of policy documents has a wider base in School B.

(e)   Policy Documents

(i)   Staff Appointments Policy

In relating specifically to teaching staff, the aims outlined are:

*   *to select the most suitable candidates from those offered;*
*   *to ensure that all selections are impartial;*
*   *to adhere to the guidelines of the appropriate award, which sets out conditions of employment;*
*   *to be an equal opportunity employer.*

thus incorporating *good employer* principles into appointments procedures. However, consistent with what we have already seen in policy documents, key words eg *"suitable"*, *"impartial"* are open to a range of interpretation. More important therefore is to know who is involved in the selection process. This information is contained in the following guidelines:

> *The Principal, in consultation with the Head of Department, shall make recommendations to the Board on all teacher appointments.*
>
> *The Principal and the Board Appointments Sub-committee shall make recommendations to the Board on all PR and senior positions, apart from that of the Principal.*
>
> *The Board Appointments Sub-committee shall interview final applicants for all PR and senior positions; a short-list of applicants shall be drawn up in advance, in consultation with the Principal (and HOD where this is a relevant factor).*

Once again the principal emerges as the key figure, being involved in all appointment decisions. However the board has, unlike School A, an involvement in appointments at all levels. The authority for decision-making on appointments has a wider base in School B, and therefore becomes more negotiable.

(ii)   Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Interestingly the same definition of merit is given in School B's EEO policy document as for School A, with the same provision for non-discriminatory selection practices. Different, however, is the aim to provide *appropriate role models* outlined in this manner: *"Appointments, including Positions of Responsibility, shall be made with a view to ensuring that the composition of the staff reflects that of the community with regard to gender and race."*

To me this implies a quota, which once met, would simply have to be maintained. Is this in effect the definition of the *most suitable applicant?* Gender and race have been singled out specifically as the targets for attention and annual review: *"The composition of staff structures in relation to gender and race shall be reviewed annually by a group which includes representatives of the Board and the PPTA."*

The intention therefore appears serious in that there is to be annual monitoring. There is also a statement in the policy to assure the equitable allocation of non-PR responsibilities, and equitable access to staff training, professional development and career planning. Whether this was actually occurring I could not determine.

(iii)   Harassment Policy

Despite my requests, I did not receive a copy of any policy on harassment. There is no reference to harassment in the two documents cited.

4.4   Emergent Themes

There are multiple strands that emerge as a result of the document analyses. These strands may be highlighted through looking at the discursive constructions of EEO and determining their social power.

(a)   Training

Within the literature, training is identified as a "critical indicator" of genuine commitment to EEO (Coles & Maynard, 1990:302) and contributing to the promise of "room at the top" (Armstrong, 1993:188) of organisational hierarchies. Chapter One documents education agency input into EEO information, resourcing and training which aim to support boards of trustees to meet their statutory requirement to be a *good* employer. The board of trustees in School A had not taken up any EEO-specific training. In School B, while female trustee attendance at training seminars was evidenced, it was not clear whether the training included EEO, nor why male trustees had not participated. The provision of principal and staff training was not clear for either school. Training provision that would validate EEO and award it social meaning was not evidenced. It seemed that EEO had been severely constrained, perhaps effectively silenced.

(b)   Data base

However, in School B, data collection procedures to build an employee profile were already in place, as a direct outcome of the school's Promotion of Women Review, with data spanning the years from 1985. The link, surmised by Watson (see page 17) between the actions undertaken through the PPTA instigated Review and the actions required for EEO implementation is here established and grounded in practices of consultation, struggle and

negotiation involving the trustees, the principal, the BOT staff representative and further unidentified staff members. The struggle is EEO-specific.

(c)   Definitions

A further consideration is that of ambiguity, the disavowal of the notion that words have fixed, intrinsic meanings. In Derridean terms words have multiple meanings (see page 35) and become sites of struggle for control. This is evidenced in the struggle over policy definitions in School B, where some staff are attempting to constrain the notion of merit. In prescribing the adherence to nationally approved teacher registration criteria, the production of job descriptions and parity in the appointment process for groups of people historically treated differently (see pages 83-84), limits are being placed on the decision-makers. The concept of merit, in School B, can thus be detected as a site of struggle between the various interest groups for control over meaning. My analysis had shown EEO stakeholders to be actively engaged in the constitution of the policy documents themselves, negotiating meaning and setting boundaries through definitions which would, in their terms, pre-empt alternative uses and meanings.

(d)   Policy

In School A, however, a picture emerged of the principal as the main author of the policy documents. This appeared to be mostly uncontested. Secondly, the policy documents for the most part, have a separate existence and do not therefore produce an integrated perspective. In School A, however, EEO is directly linked to the school's harassment policy, which broadens the field of application of EEO in this school. However, since it is argued that meaning is always political, the "plurality of meaning continues to pose a problem" (Weedon, 1987:142). As I have argued in Chapter Two (page 37), in order to be able to evaluate the implementation of an EEO policy, it is necessary to study its effects in practice (Foucault, 1980:60).

(e)   Decision-making

Control over dominant meanings and definitions is allied with another form of power, that of decision-making. There are two aspects to be considered here. However both aspects illustrate the tension between the amount of discretion and control.

The extent to which "local-level actors" are able to do their own separate priority exercises (Moffat, 1992:50) within the concept of self-managing schools, free of centralised control, is clearly illustrated above. Training specific to EEO has not featured as a BOT priority in either school. The second aspect of decision-making is its locus within each school. Already we have seen in School B EEO given a clear voice in the struggle over language in the EEO policy definitions through the consultative decision-making practice. Also in School B there appears to be a gender balance in the committee

structures established by the board of trustees (see page 79) and wider involvement in appointment decisions at all levels.

However, School A's minutes construct a picture of greater authority residing in the principal, who emerges as the key determinant in policy construction, and in teacher selection processes. It is the principal's appointments at entry level which create the pool from which applicants for more senior positions may be drawn. So this initial selection process is critical, yet, apparently, unmonitored. Although appointment procedures are outlined in the policy documents, with actual cases minuted to a varying degree, the exact nature of the selection processes, and the existence of specific criteria to reduce the amount of discretionary judgement is not detectable. The positioning of the principal as a key figure in selection processes at all levels in each school raises the question of control also in considering the extent of board of trustee, i.e. "lay" involvement in senior appointment decisions. How much involvement is open to question. However, in the case of an appointment to the principalship, it appears that the board has the sole responsibility.

There appeared from the minutes to be a tension between applying EEO principles and the constraints imposed by lack of suitable applicants for advertised positions, particularly in School A, from which to make appointments. Once again EEO legitimacy is in doubt.

(f)   The EEO Practitioner

In neither school is it made clear through the minutes if a position of EEO co-ordinator has been officially established. This may be interpreted as denying the legitimacy of EEO, not giving it social power. Whether this is the case in actual practice, however, cannot be determined. The nature and extent of the attention accorded to EEO and related issues appears not only to have varied substantially over the three-year term, but to have been driven mostly by the BOT woman staff representative, in each particular case. Both women held PR positions in their own school: in School A a PR3 HOD position, and in School B a PR1 subject responsibility position. Whether this was through personal conviction, an outcome of their positioning, a function of their gender, or an expectation laid on them by others I was not able to determine. Nor could I find out if there were individual staff members who were actively promoting the interests of women through EEO.

4.5   Summary

In summary, only a partial, in fact very restricted, view of EEO can be gleaned through a consideration of the 1987-1992 BOT minutes and relevant policy documents for each school. It is difficult to determine both the nature and extent of EEO's social power, which is seen to differ in each school. However, the particular strands outlined above emerged as concerns significant to the focus of the research question. Particular issues have been identified as critical to the development of EEO within a complex field of power relations. I have argued the necessity to examine further the ways in which meanings are

discursively constructed "in the actual lived reality of teachers in schools" (Weiler, 1988:53). Informed by these concerns I was able to restructure my interview schedule to provide more focus and move to the next phase of my research, the interviews themselves. These interviews provided the data for a textual analysis which enabled me to open up to inquiry the political implications of particular ways of representing key issues, "the sites where they are articulated, and the institutionally legitimated forms of knowledge to which they look for their justification" (Weedon, 1987:26). The interview data which constitute the field of enquiry, and the manner in which I made sense of their complexities, provide the focus of Chapters Five and Six.

CHAPTER FIVE

Defining Discourses - School A

"How we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects, and how we give meaning to the material social relations under which we live and which structure our everyday lives depends on the range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strength of the interests which they represent"

Weedon (1987:26)

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of the school-based EEO ERO Questionnaires, the BOT 1989-1992 minutes and related policy documents in Chapter Four surfaced key issues, which were identified as requiring further explanation from "a detailed analysis of the contexts in which such knowledge is generated" (Stanley & Wise, 1980:197). This identification of key issues enabled me to restructure the questions planned for the interview schedule in order to gather the required data. My focus was on collecting examples of language to provide texts which would enable me to analyse, as Weedon (op. cit.) argues, the "range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strength of the interests which they represent" in historically specific contexts.

Within the three areas of concern identified in Chapter Three (page 69): the social power of EEO: beliefs about "teachers, gender, and careers" (Acker, 1989:1), the concept of merit and the appointment process, I was able to identify a range of discursive constructions in the field of EEO from the responses to the interview questions. The separation into discursive constructions does not in any way deny their interconnectedness. The categorisations into discursive constructions are simply a means of opening up to inquiry "their range and social power" in order to examine them in a more coherent manner and with restricted focus.

Since the interviews carried out in the two schools yielded a wealth of information, and since I wished to continue presenting data from each school as separate "instances" in order to create an account "which presents a range of voices articulating their position on EEO" (Jones, 1994:173) within a complex field of power relations, Chapter Five restricts itself to an analysis of the interviews conducted in 1992 with the nine personnel in School A.

5.2 Discursive Constructions of EEO

Analysis of the discursive constructions of EEO in the School A data, revealed that EEO had "no essential definition ... its meanings, often conflicting, are constructed in our language and power relations" (Jones, 1994:175). These constructions I now discuss.

(a)   Discourses of voluntarism and compulsion

A construction of EEO which was significant in the School A interview data formed EEO as a discourse of "compulsion", negatively perceived and standing in opposition to a "voluntarism" discourse, which was more positively valued. The state's intervention in providing legislation to ensure that individuals are given equal opportunity to enable them to compete equitably as self-interested individuals (Jones et al. 1990:96) was resisted by the principal and construed as irrelevant: *"a further imposition on my busy time."* The resistance is corroborated by a lack of any specific references to EEO in the School A document analyses in Chapter Four. In similar vein he considered the affirmative action request from PPTA *"an affront ... not a valid thing"*, presumably tainted with the evils of "social engineering" (Court, 1994:211).

The male assistant teacher commented on voluntarist attitudes among *"the older sort of PR members"* evidenced in staff discussion of a PPTA Conference Paper on women and girls in education: ... *"there is a resistance to anything which people feel is obviously imposed on them ... they feel that they run things pretty well themselves anyway."* The BOT chairman also constructed his explanations within a voluntarist discourse: *"I guess we all like to think that we have our own standards, and we want to have some personal freewill choice of who we think is best for a situation and the community ... and especially when there's an outsider coming in."* The chairman did not want to be *"dominated by legislation to the extent that we can't have the person, intuition if you like, that that person is the right person for the job."* Further, the chairman was *"averse to the thought of EEO used by applicants as a sort of battering ram against employers"*, using battlefield terminology to create discourses of voluntarism and compulsion standing in opposition, the latter aggressive, and devalued as infringing freedom of choice.

(b)   Discourses of compulsion and merit

A shift in discursive position was evidenced in the principal's comment that: *"some of the crustier men feel it is too easy for women to be promoted."* EEO as an interventionist strategy is delegitimated, this time in opposition to a liberal left discourse, identified in Chapter Two (page 39) and construed as free and open operation of a competitive labour market (Jones et al. 1990:88).

Less forceful in expression, but still significant in devaluing EEO, was a construction of EEO as arousing *"unrealistic"* expectations. The principal cited the example of a redeployed woman with *"broken English"* as unrealistic in expecting a PR. Considered unrealistic also by the BOT staff rep were *"women who thought they should have the inside running."* She herself had *"suffered under very bad senior staff who were very lacking in skills, and I would not be part and parcel to appointing somebody to a position who was going to do the same to somebody else."*

The negative attitudes engendered by the conception of EEO as an illegitimate interventionist strategy and captured within a "compulsion" discourse, were also transferred to the women being appointed. An assumption was that they got there as women, because of EEO, and not because they were the best person for the job, chosen on merit. Whether EEO criteria were applied or not, EEO is necessarily implicated. A male staff member had recently been unsuccessful to a woman in his application for a DP position, because of two men occupying the other two senior positions, causing the female who was appointed to the PR1 to wonder *"was she better than him, or was it just because she was female that she got the position?"* The PR2 male considered that a woman appointed from a small applicant field *"didn't have the skills for the job. She couldn't fit into a large co-educational school coming from a school, I think, of about three hundred into a school of seventy staff ... she wasn't up to the standard."*

The male assistant teacher, picking up the meritocratic discourse, framed obvious positive discrimination as a discourse of compulsion attracting negative attitudes: *"people feel that you know that the best person isn't getting the job, they're just getting a job because that position was allocated for their particular group you know, whether they be women or Maori or whatever .."* As a consequence, through a gender discourse, all women's promotions become suspect, the competence of all women is in doubt, and EEO is stigmatised as illegitimate, invalid, running counter to the ideology of individual achievement and the meritocratic discourse. The discursive linking of gender to the compulsion discourse, negatively perceived can, argues Flax (1990:230), reinforce the gender division in ways which actually contribute to the essentialist notion of women. Women can be categorised and opposed to men as the key concept in relation to which they are defined negatively (Weedon, 1987:164).

(c)   Discourses of EEO Maori and merit

The "concept of 'EEO Maori' is used in reference to the good employer provisions" (Jones, 1994:185). An 'EEO Maori' discourse, illustrated above in the words of the male assistant teacher, constituted Maori as a group, illicitly advantaged through EEO as mandatory. The EEO co-ordinator's comment that *"to get teachers into teaching Maori, often you've got to offer PR positions, and it's a department that should have, but sometimes you get people in there that have not been trained properly"* discursively constructs Maori through a deficit discourse as sometimes lacking in required skills, therefore undeserving. It can be argued that Maori women suffer a double disadvantage through both gender and race positioning.

The chairman of the board's use of the EEO Maori discourse appeared to me to be signalling the board's role as a 'good employer' (Jones, 1994:85):

> *"we did something unusual two years ago in that we appointed a woman head of Maori. She was sixty, and her husband was one of the paramount chiefs of (area), so her situation overall, her family situation gave her the mana to be able to be a woman in that position ... and basically she has done what we expected of her, and age wasn't a barrier*

there ... we didn't expect it to be more than two or three years ... the community haven't reacted."

This woman, was still constituted, however, through a deficit discourse, since there were sufficient 'control' factors: she had been ratified by her age and in her standing, position and performance by others outside of the organisation. This also included taking into account her husband's community positioning.

(d)   Discourses of equality

Prominent within School A participants' responses were conceptualisations of EEO expressed in terms such as *"equal treatment", "equal footing"* and *"equal opportunities/access."* These conceptualisations constructed a discourse rooted in liberal humanist thought and expressive of dominant notions of equality in education (see page 39). This was not surprising since EEO "is central to the pursuit of equal citizenship and fair competition in a civil society based on merit" (Armstrong, 1994:190). What was meant by "equal" was specifically defined by the PPTA Women's Contact: *"I'd hate to see it go to the point where women take over to make the point but just fifty-fifty, the equality would be neat"* and the male assistant teacher: *"An equal representation of people from different cultural backgrounds and women etc throughout schools ... Then perhaps you can change it"* as a numerical balance. The internal tension existing within the construction of EEO as the pursuit of equal citizenship and fair competition was resolved in favour of the latter by the male PR2 holder: *"it should be really the best person for the job and it shouldn't be because we've employed twenty males so we have to employ twenty females"* and the female PR1 holder: *... there's going to be a point that is is it the best person for the job or is it just because they are female ..."*

In defining and valuing merit as fair competition, EEO was in their speech discursively gendered and constructed as unfair, hence an illicit interventionary practice. EEO is more explicitly constituted as a conscience, a form of moral control in the interests of equality as a form of social justice in that *"we all need to be kept on the straight and narrow ... just a nudge you know to remind us that these positions are open to everyone"* (BOT chairman). More pragmatically EEO becomes a constraint, but only to the extent to which management actions can be challenged: *"I guess with several applicants we looked at, if we don't take that person are they going to be able to say, well, they are better than the person that's been appointed"* (BOT chairman). EEO is constituted as the guarantor of fair practices by the female assistant teacher *"because people can be discriminating without realising they are discriminating."*

A more critical construction of individual boards as *"not terribly concerned with the sort of broader picture of promoting women in education in general unless it's going to benefit their school"* (EEO co-ordinator) appeared, in my view to constitute a discourse of human resource management in addressing "difference" from the viewpoint of the "needs of managers, not of the groups traditionally marginalised by difference" (Jones, 1994:182). The interpretations of *"benefit"* are, however, open to question.

A view emerged of EEO as "symbolic" that is where the discourse is used but is unmatched by evidence of action. The BOT staff rep considered EEO as a *"smoke screen"* since *"boards were still taking the people they were going to take under the old system."* The EEO co-ordinator spoke of senior administrators as *"very much aware of the need to be saying the right things, not always doing them, but at least sounding like they're aware of them."* The PR2 male saw the principal as *"more aware of being seen to have a sort of situation where there is EEO."* With a recent judicial action bringing EEO matters *"a little bit closer than people would have thought, in a small rural place"* the female assistant teacher felt *"they're coming round."*

What appears to be taking shape, here too, is a discourse of human resource management (HRM), where employers need to be convinced of EEO benefits (see page 17). The HRM discourse was evidenced in further comment by the EEO co-ordinator on an approach of *"encouragement rather than quotas at certain levels."* He referred to EEO principles being applied in the redeployment process, appointment of part-time staff and internal distribution of responsibilities, yet claimed that since the economic climate reduced staff mobility, *"the question isn't arising very often anyway."* In the broad field of competing discourses, EEO had, and needed, lesser allegiance.

5.3   Discursive Constructions of Merit

(a)   Discourses of deficit

As we have seen, a fundamental tenet of liberal theory is the "notion of self-interested *individuals* competing in the public world" (Armstrong, ibid.) free from interference. Hence when women do not "compete", it is a sign of their personal inadequacy. A construction of their inadequacy is held to be their lack of self-esteem in comparison to men: *"one of the particularly good women that I work quite closely with in my school suffers from that, she sort of doesn't rate herself that highly, and men doing exactly the same job half as well would think themselves brilliant you know."* (EEO co-ordinator - male).

The male PR2 holder, in considering *"women are now becoming more prepared to take management positions, that's my perception is that in the past a lot of women who would make good managers weren't prepared, and I think probably that might still be the case, they're not really prepared to do the job"* constituted women as deficient in ambition. He felt they needed convincing: *"I have suggested to women that they should think about working for promotion. I don't know whether I've been taken seriously to tell you the truth."* He felt that women were *"every bit as good as men, if not better,"* but to succeed they needed to be *"outgoing, competitive."* Drawing a sporting analogy, with *"many more males involved in aggressive competitive sort of sport than women"* he extended the analogy to some male principals who had *"sort of forced their way to the top regardless of anything."*

Women's unwillingness to apply for and take on management positions was discursively constructed within a deficit discourse. The fault lies with women

in contrast to which male competitiveness is valued and rewarded. Implicit, however, is an equality discourse which assumes a level playing field. The Equal Educational Opportunities discourse is picked up by the principal through which gender and deficit are also discursively linked: *"Girls will tend to submit to the boys, regard it as par for the course. It worries me. I'm always on at them about their image. We tune up the boys from time to time as well, naturally. The girls wouldn't have problems if they had higher esteem."*

(b)   Discourses of heterosexuality and family-role

This construction of women as lacking in self-esteem is broadened as a wider socialisation issue which constitutes women in family-role terms (Paddock, 1981:194). Women *"haven't been brought up in an environment that was conducive to self-confidence and believing in oneself"* (assistant teacher male). The principal comments that *"lots of mothers are happy to take a back seat. It's difficult to broaden their horizons and get girls into physics, for example."* Women were happy *"as long as they get out of the house and work and do something they are enjoying"* (BOT staff rep); *"they remain not submissive, but they don't want to threaten what they see as the family hierarchy ... women prefer the maternal role"* (BOT chairman).

The consistent thread is a depiction which constructs women's supposed lack of interest in career self-development as their own choice. This construction of women's free-will choice obscures patterns of socialisation which, it is argued, reinforce gender divisions in the labour market premised on a public/private dichotomy (O'Neill, 1992:65). The extent of women's choice may be gauged, in one instance, from the BOT chairman's twin concerns as employer and parent over women taking time off to have a family. Firstly, women's absence from the workplace was *"still a financial cost on the organisation"* and secondly, changes of teachers were seen to disrupt children's learning, factors which were considered to both disadvantage the school and demonstrate lack of commitment:

> *"if I was paying somebody in a senior management position, I would expect that they would be able to give their all to the career ... what I meant was had she already had her family, because I see the only compulsory time that people need to be away for the family is actually to have children."*

A young married woman would therefore be asked in interview ... *"how she would feel that she was going to cope with the situation if she's going to have a family"* but not a man *"because he's not going to have to take time off to have children."* The PR2 female testified to similar views voiced by private sector employers of her acquaintance: *"that as an employer you've got to offer to employ a male because you're not going to waste money ... that it's not worth employing a female she's going to have children and is it fair to ask for maternity leave ..."*

The notion of career is not only male-defined (Armstrong, 1994:191) as "full-time continuous service." It also constitutes career interruptions as "useless or irrelevant experience" (Paddock, 1981:194).

The discourse that constituted women in family-role terms (Cox & James, 1989:58), and evidenced within the literature (Edson, 1988:44), was taken up by others. This "makes sexuality an important site for the analysis of power" (Foucault, 1979:103 in Weedon, 1987:124) The principal constructed the chances of having a family high for a "young, bouncy female." For the male assistant teacher women were probably "not going to be around for very long because they're going to have some more children, or if the children are little, they are going to be off school looking after them. I guess at the interview they might ask her if she was planning on having any children." A man would not be asked that question, "being part of a woman's role." The female assistant teacher was certain that if she got married and applied for promotion "it would be entering their minds now when is she going to have children, now when is she thinking of leaving" The power relations focused in sexuality confined women to their reproductive function, assumed their heterosexuality, privileged the nuclear family, and within the family women's primary role as child minder.

Within the heterosexual discourse, marriage, for women, imposed further constraints, but was in participants' discourse constructed as the natural order. An issue here was mobility. As the male EEO co-ordinator pointed out, gaining a promotion for him meant "my family will pick up and come, it's never really considered the other way." Married women who decided "right, it's time to move up here, and ship out and go back for promotion" (PR1 female) had to weigh up their husband's employment opportunities. These attitudes were seen to inform appointment decisions. "I know on our Board that I've sat in on a discussion where a woman was applying for a job, and her husband was going to give up his job and come and live in the area and then worry about getting a job at that stage. I do know that some of our board of trustees did not think that that was right. They felt that you know, why isn't she looking for a job where he doesn't have to do that." (BOT staff rep). Part of the acceptability seemed also to include the nature of the marriage partner's job: "I know of a woman, principal, whose husband has retired from teaching ... and you know it's socially acceptable" (EEO co-ordinator).

The male EEO co-ordinator considered boards reluctant to appoint to a "prominent" position someone who was not in a "traditionally socially acceptable" sort of relationship: "an unmarried woman or a divorced woman or a separated woman. I think they'd sort of say: is this person going to settle reasonably into our community?"

However when the PR1 female spoke of "a few deputy AP's and they're all either been through a marriage and maybe into a second one, or they are split or splitting from their family", and the principal spoke of "only one woman with a failed marriage ... she's SM", these latter comments appeared to be premised on a view of marriage, hence heterosexuality, as the "natural order", against which other states were being measured as deficient.

With PR1's and PR2's insufficient to attract applicants, coupled with mobility restrictions, the principal saw himself positioned to provide new challenges

and focus to the several women *"potential high flyers"* on his staff *"buried on the farm."* The constraints were accepted, premised on a norm of hetero-relations, sexual activity, marriage and childcare, as the social role and responsibility of women, and the one that legitimately occupies their time and energy. Edson's (1988) view that mobility, marriage and motherhood form a career contingency subject to gender bias (page 15) is supported by this evidence.

The attendant norm is one of full and continuing employment, and thus productivity for the employer through uninterrupted service. To compete, on equal terms women needed to adopt "the full-time, continuous service model of employment usually associated with professional men who have a full-time partner at home" (Armstrong, 1994:191). The male pattern is constructed as the norm against which to measure the female. The divided role of professional and homemaker which constitutes a double workload for women (Martin, 1987:439) is seen to be one of the biggest barriers to women's career development (Cox & James, 1987; Court, 1990), here evidenced by the EEO co-ordinator: *"When you're doing two or three papers and holding down a job and looking after the family"* aspirations are necessarily limited to *"securing a permanent position."*

Yet other comments appeared to be critical of women for "accepting" their social construction in family role terms and the attendant constraints: *"they don't sort of push themselves ... don't apply to move for jobs ... a lot come back into the teaching force and just stay as assistant because of the family commitments"* (PR1 female). This perspective was echoed by the PPTA Women's Contact: *"there is an age break about say in the forties who look at themselves and go, I'm here and this is where I'm staying."*

(c)   Discursive constructions of experience

Analysis of the discursive construction of experience exposed a range of definitions. The EEO co-ordinator saw *"the big jump"* as taking on the PR role, the "first step on the career ladder into senior administrative positions" (Court, 1994:219). The type of PR was mentioned by the PR2 male as significant, in composition and size; *"most of the female PR holders are in the Home Economics department which is typical. Usually the department has one or two staff. Now unfortunately in that sort of position you can't really pick up management skills at all you know ... you're not really in charge of a whole lot of other staff, and it's a big jump then sort of from there up to the senior positions."* This view, coupled with the importance attached to experience in finance by the principal, *"an area women shy away from"* would seem to be expressions of attitudes which perpetuate "gendered dichotomies and value distinctions" which work against women teachers (Court, 1994:218-219).

However, despite references within the literature to the lower value given to the work of nurturing (Neville, 1988; Court, 1994:219), experience in the dean's area/guidance work was consistently mentioned as requisite experience.

A construction of experience by the BOT chairman which encompassed moving around different schools, as community involvement, sporting affiliations ahead of cultural, and extra-curricular activities was deemed necessary since *"the more diverse the experience, the more we know the person's prepared."* Yet he denied any *"deliberate"* or *"subconscious"* discrimination in appointments that he was party to: *"everybody's got their own natural bias one way or the other."* Since the kinds of experience he identified have been demonstrated to be difficult for women to access, (Martin, 1987:439) his *"natural bias"* is an illustration of male hegemony.

Occupying a leadership position *"other than just their teaching area, and every day have shown that they have expertise and leadership qualities and confidence to hold that position"* were experiences considered necessary for the principalship by the PPTA Women's Contact. The EEO co-ordinator also indicated "proven" competence as an appointment rationale: *"if they can sort of see she's been DP somewhere else, or AP somewhere else, and been competent."* The PR1 female constructed a notion of merit premised on desert:

> *"for a female you have to have gone through the ladder you know, done the PR's, done the HOD's, done the admin type tasks where maybe as a male you might not have to have done all that ... because a lot is taken for granted, oh he shows potential, or he's dabbled in this, oh well he'll be able to do the job sort of thing where women have to prove that they can do it."*

Implicit in this perspective is the hegemonic view that men are more naturally suited to leadership than women (Court, 1992:182), whereas women have to prove themselves (Edson, 1988:229).

The advantage of paper qualifications specific to management/educational administration was highlighted by four male participants. Evetts (1989:196) foresees "post-entry qualifications" as "an increasingly important way of getting oneself known as wanting promotion, an increasingly necessary requirement for headteacher posts for both men and women." Whether women have the same access and conditions in order to gain these qualifications needs to be researched.

(d)   Discourses of age

The suitability of women for leadership positions was constructed also through an "age" discourse (Al-Khalifa, 1989:89; Hearn & Parkin, 1989:153). This discourse encompassed notions of sexuality for women, which seems to tie women's reproductive function to their labour market productivity. The male assistant teacher spoke of perceptions of women, *"once they get beyond a certain age, around forty ... because women lose their if you like fertility or whatever ... I think they're regarded in sort of lower esteem than the man of the equivalent age"* echoed in the PR1 female's words: *"I think we're perceived as running out earlier than a man."*

What discriminates against women, according to the EEO co-ordinator, *"is that first stage of the career path, normally because it's interrupted you know if they've had children, whereas my career hasn't been."* He described himself as at the right age group now *"so people tell me, sort of 35 to 40 age group, whereby you know that's the time to get an AP or DP's job. Once you're sort of over 41, 42 you're starting to get a bit old."* He called this the *"unwritten things that people talk about."* The limit was set at age 47-48 by the principal *"or you will never make it, haven't got the drive."* Women with children would appear, by this criterion, as doubly disadvantaged through their "career interruption as irrelevant experience" (Paddock, 1981:194) and presumably perceptions of *"running out earlier than a man"* (PR1 female, op. cit.).

Using age as a criterion was rationalised by the board chairman as a means to have appointees in a position *"for a useful period of time if they are too old then you are no longer going to have them finetuned to your school or to your way of doings things. To make a position worthwhile you'd want five years of work you know left in the person."* sentiments that the BOT staff representative had also heard expressed: *"that it's not worthwhile appointing somebody who's 56 ... they probably will only be with us four years and they will hardly know how we operate before they have retired."*

If age is a matter that boards consider as these participants suggest, then broken service denies women *"the link of time, the teaching experience, the number of years behind them"* (PR2 male). It becomes another means to justify the exclusion of women, and reinforce the male career pattern as the norm.

(e)   Discourses of authority and leadership

Another consistent thread was resistance to the appointment of a woman. The data revealed examples of "hegemonic processes which support beliefs that men are more suited to leadership than women" (Court, 1992:182). A PR1 female thought that some of the staff would go out of their way not to help: *"the 45-50 plus age group and who have been at the school for ten plus years ... you know the male that makes the decisions and the female just sort of trundles along."* The female assistant teacher saw it as *"very tough being at the top"* unless *"you've got those people on your side."* Even some women were critical, she felt, of a woman *"because she's doing a man's job ... a leadership job."*

A "hegemonic linking of physical force and masculinity, which has worked to create commonsense beliefs that schools need principals who are strong men able to control disruptive boys" (Court, 1992:183) is also evidenced in comments made by the BOT staff rep. Women were disadvantaged through not having *"the same sort of loud voice"* and *"strong iron discipline"* as men (Schmuck, 1981:228; Martin, 1987:439). She further commented in matters of discipline *"the father'll come in and maybe feel threatened that the principal who is telling him that his son's been suspended is a female."*

Further discursive constructions added to the complexity surrounding notions of authority and leadership. The EEO co-ordinator saw homosociability

perpetuated by *"the old school who, regardless, they're not going to employ a female or take the responsibility of a female in management"* (Thornton, 1985:36). The BOT staff representative constituted a discourse of bureaucratic rationality which "requires that all situations need to be treated according to a set of rules that leaves out the particular and ignores feelings" (Court, 1992:184) in describing the trustees as *"still having the old-fashioned ideas about women not being able to carry responsibility as they're not emotionally suitable for it."*

The BOT chairman's view that the top three administrative positions should not all be of one gender is a further illustration of the discursive linking of discipline and masculinity, (Martin, 1987:439) since he constitutes discipline as *"traditionally a male role."* Women are discursively constructed as *"more empathetic than men"* emotionally and in dealing with *"confidential girls'/women's problems"*, therefore relegated to the female and nurturing sphere.

The BOT chairman saw as normal *"restrictions for certain positions."* He cited physical lifting requirements and said he was aware of most women's physical abilities: *"if they would have the skills required for that sort of thing I see no problems there. Usually they can find someone to give them a hand"* thereby linking physical force and masculinity to construct a stereotypical gender distinction of men as physically capable, with women defined against the male-based norm as being physically less capable, therefore deficient, not self-reliant. These *"restrictions for certain positions"* which the BOT saw as normal not only call into question the nature of the criteria in the first instance, but also the claimed impartiality of the processes by which gatekeepers in general interpret and apply such criteria to determine applicant suitability (Chase & Bell, 1990).

The board chairman spoke enthusiastically of the internal promotion to HOD Science, of a woman often seconded to advisory positions: *"and she gave a presentation to the board just a couple of meetings' ago. I was certainly impressed with, if you like we made the right decision. I suppose that was an ego trip type of ... but she is a very switched on woman."*

The speaker was clearly aware that the position was traditionally male held. Her successful performance in the position reflected back on the board, and became the board's success, which a member was proud to report. Yet there was little risk-taking on the board's part. In pointing out that the woman's performance had been ratified by others in highly visible arenas outside the school, and that she was already a known quantity on the staff, her performance was in effect guaranteed.

The successful performance of a local primary school woman principal was similarly constructed as evidence of support for a woman principal. The principal spoke of her as *"very professional, articulate, forthright, supportive of the kids, proud of the school."* The BOT chairman viewed community acceptance as *"a test reaction on the community."* The successful performance reinforces

meritocracy, the ideology of individual achievement. The underlying argument is that if this woman has made it, so can others.

These speakers are acknowledging not only the unusualness of a woman in that position, but also her visibility and the pressure on her to perform, to prove herself competent. It may be argued that both the principal and the BOT chairman use the woman's successful performance to counter curiosity about how a woman will perform and to debunk others' gendered assumptions (Chase & Bell, 1990:166).

Ferguson (1984:121) suggests that the successful performance is also used to confirm the organisation as a democratic structure rationally making choices in appointing a woman to such a senior position. The EEO co-ordinator, male, at the same school commented on the board's intervention in the selection of board members: *"a lot of BOT's have got strong women um people on them um I know we've got two good women on ours both of them co-opted not elected"* supposedly to create the democratic structure.

Women aspirants to the principalship would need extra strength to deal with people *"that believe you shouldn't be doing the job you're doing"* (BOT staff rep). The BOT chairman's statement that a woman would automatically command more respect if appointed, since *"the public perception is that they must have been very good to get there"*, expressed a similar view.

Despite following on from: *"a guy who was fairly weak, obviously working towards retirement for a number of years before he left"* which meant *"it should have been relatively easy for anybody to take over there"*, the woman principal's visibility pressured her, according to the BOT staff representative, to: *"work twice as hard, make more of an effort with the parents, and make more of an effort to get to know the community."* Does women's performance in leadership positions therefore have a gendered meaning? It would appear so in the BOT staff representative's claim: *"the whole community would still, when one female principal fails, would immediately use that as a reason for saying therefore women shouldn't be doing those jobs."*

Personality featured strongly as one of the qualities required for principalship. Qualities were held to be "inbred" rather than learned or acquired, part of one's biological makeup and socialisation. Yet women were constituted as needing strong support to be able to succeed. Men already had this support, therefore women needed extra *"coaxing"* (PPTA Women's Contact) through mentoring role models, a *"school climate of encouragement from above"* where delegated responsibilities would allow these qualities to show (BOT staff rep), *"personal encouragement"* (PR1 female).

Voiced by women as significant, mentoring could be constituted as running counter to the liberal humanist ideology of self-interested individuals in competition for desired but scarce goods. Mentoring, however, within a discourse of human resource management as already voiced by the principal (page 93), constitutes a process through which women's abilities may be

developed and utilised in ways that are seen not only to challenge the individual but to benefit the organisation. Problematic is, according to Evetts (1989:197), is "how promotable characteristics come to be identified, and how the individuals who possess such characteristics are encouraged and backed in their attempts to secure promotion."

5.4   Power, Practices and Practitioners

It is argued (Weedon, 1987:109) that the most powerful discourses in our society govern the organisation and practices of social institutions. Their hegemonic assumptions and the practices which they guarantee hierarchise the significance and value of certain meanings in ways which work to discredit alternative and oppositional versions of meaning. In addition, the interests which a discourse serves may be far removed from those interests which the discourse appears, on the surface, to represent (Foucault, 1981:102 in Weedon, 1987:122). Power is exercised within discourses through the identification by the individual with particular subject positions. Since meaning is "always political" (Weedon, 1987:138) this discursive constitution of subjects is part of a wider social play for power.

(a)   Discourse of bureaucratic neutrality

The conceptions of EEO as a "moral guardian" fail to problematise its role as a redistributive mechanism, viewing as "automatic" the production of equal outcomes. They are framed in a discourse of bureaucratic neutrality: *"there's a balance you know of viewpoint, of those that are doing the interviewing. It is a shared responsibility."* (BOT chairman).

In saying that *"we don't go overboard for it ... it's present at the back of my mind"* the principal affirms EEO as common sense by pointing out the improved gender balance on the staff: Ten years ago, *"out of a staff of forty-two, twenty-eight were men and fourteen women, the SM and a PR1 women. Now sixty per cent are women, and half a dozen now PR's with an HOD PR3, and two assistant HOD's."*

EEO training had not been *"a high priority of the board to be further involved or to be further informed about it."* For him *"most members of the board are in a management position, and have an employment responsibility outside of the school and are kept aware of their EEO responsibility."* EEO was *"really only just putting in black and white" board appointment policies."* Codd et al. (1990b:19), however, render problematic the standard of "fairness" when decision-making practices are in the hands of local community representatives, the boards of trustees.

For the PR2 male the practices were unfair. Problematic were the lack of formalised appointment criteria (Morgan et al. 1983:145; Sampson, 1987:4), and lay involvement in principal selection allowing for considerable discretion of the "proper" personal attributes (Carlson & Schmuck, 1981:120; Edson, 1988:163; Court, 1994:230):

be appointed, no matter what the board of trustees feel." Since she could not see the present principal favouring a woman, and *"the incumbent principal still has a big say on who becomes his successor"* then a woman was not likely to be appointed.

(b)   The principal

It is claimed (Evetts, 1989:199) that "men teachers have for a long time benefited from the operation of gender-specific promotional networks." The principal's power in shaping promotional decisions was recognised. Promotional chances were dependant *"on whether or not you are in with the principal"* (male assistant teacher); *"principals ring other principals and they sort of find out where they've been or done"* (PR1 female). The male principal has a *"buddy group"* (PPTA Women's Contact):

> *"you can see now at the moment when there's a male principal, you've got a buddy buddy little buddy group, and I don't think there are any women among that buddy buddy group ... It's the people who are at the type of the job they don't make it inviting. It's like an elect little group that can apply for it and there's only a certain amount of people and especially women who have that confidence that they belong to that elect group ... You've got your PR3 holders who would take offence sometimes being told what to do by a woman ... if if she was fair I mean there again if she's not fair or if she's very discriminative or very one-sided she wouldn't get the support, but I think everybody likes to see a woman up in a position of power. It's a nice change actually refreshing."*

There is an interesting shift in perspective from the exclusion of women to power over women. By commenting on those who would take offence, the speaker identifies an occupational community which accepts that "the *masculine* man is one who achieves, who is masterful, the *feminine* woman is one who underachieves, who defers" (Court; 1992:183). Hartmann (1981 in James & Saville-Smith, 1989:37) argues that control of women in itself becomes an instrument by which men can position themselves advantageously in the status battles they have with other men. The speaker identifies a form of power that distances women and reinforces the "natural" order by commenting that a woman would be *"refreshing" and" a nice change."* What is now suppressed is the problematic aspect of the natural order, the hegemonic linking of leadership and masculinity (Court, 1992:182).

The principal's power in appointment decisions was also reinforced by the male PR2:

> *"when I was on the board of trustees they had this principle that you'd support the principal at all costs ... it was very difficult for me, especially when the staff were telling me what they wanted as staff rep, and I had to go up against the principal."*

A view of position and in-group relationships with the principal as a promotional opportunity determinant (James & Saville-Smith, 1989:98) is presented by the female assistant teacher:

"if she has a principal who has control of the ship, a woman who is outspoken, and a woman who is forthcoming, probably is going to have a harder battle ... once you get into that position you've got the right to actually say things, whereas if you are an assistant teacher then you don't really have that strength and that power."

The power relationships which inhere in the hierarchical structure of schools continue the "man as masterful/woman defers" dichotomy (Court, 1992:183) until such time as the "occupational community" (Evetts, 1989:198) is shared.

The principal voiced concerns about women not making their intentions clear for then he would *"personally mentor her, give her challenging and various jobs to boost her profile."* He told of hearing from the friend of a woman on the staff that the latter was not interested in a certain PR position, so he, as principal, gave the job to someone else. The woman ended up in tears. Hence women needed to make their intentions clear, so as to be given encouragement and opportunities. What was reinforced was a discourse of individualism, and a paternalistic role for the principal (Court, 1992:191).

Paternalism, however, is constructed on asymmetrical power relationships where the legitimation of particular practices and the exclusion of others represent quite specific interests (Weedon, 1987:168). The EEO co-ordinator commented that *"women staff having difficulty speaking to a powerful man in the school on a one to one situation, especially if they are in a position of where their own job is somewhat insecure."* The same person, according to the female assistant teacher made women *"feel inferior ... they can complain or fight it, but it ends up with them losing out, because if they want something ... he's liable to hold grudges."* The PR1 female, however, related how she resisted certain practices which were meant to keep her in her place: *"he picks on somebody and it happened to be me, because he couldn't cope with the fact that I have my own opinions, and I didn't just bow and scrape to him. And he just took it upon himself to just keep having a go at me, so I ended up taking him to the board of trustees."* Yet since his behaviour was accepted she found support not forthcoming: *"I know I'm a very loud person, and I talk a lot, and I laugh, and he makes quite pointed comments about it in the staffroom you know, that loud new person ..."*

In this school sexuality emerged as a factor in women's subordination (Backhouse & Cowan, 1981:45, Edson, 1988:126; Al-Khalifa, 1989:90; Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992:13) in that more covert forms of sexual harassment were part of the culture, in the PR1 female's opinion: *"he says things like oh a nice little girl you know to the students ... but he talks about the boys often as men ... The sort of comment you know well it's probably just that time of the month, or as brushing aside a female staff member's complaints about something"*, supported by the male assistant teacher *"the netball team had been away to Australia and the comment was ah, and they didn't even put on any weight."* Sexual joking in the staffroom identified as a means by which women are kept in a subordinate position (Cunnison, 1989:152), was a daily practice: *"There's quite a lot of ... sexual innuendos and talk in a humorous sense in our staff meetings which I sometimes find*

distasteful ... well some women are involved in it, and stimulate it, and encourage it almost." (EEO co-ordinator).

The board chairman acknowledged *"some sexual harassment of various forms at the school"* but since he was *"not aware of any complaints"* he didn't *"see any place to act without real grounds for suspicion."* The onus was on the individual.

Brodribb (1992:143) argues that power is based on sex, not gender. A "multiplicity of power relations focused in sexuality" (Weedon, 1987:124) regulate the "body, mind and emotions according to the needs of hierarchical forms of power" (Foucault, 1979 in Weedon, op. cit.:121). The sexuality discourse narrows sex to its reproductive function, defines heterosexual relations as the norm and legitimates matrimony, and suppresses all alternatives. Therefore the discourse supports in multiple and diffuse ways the nexus of power relations that guarantee patriarchal social structures. In commenting that a woman principal would have to be *"very strong"* and *"fair",* and that *"if she hid behind being a woman she would go down very quickly,"* the principal essentialises women as the "other", different and therefore deficient. Stepping outside the "natural order" takes courage and does not win approval. The natural order is male defined.

Perhaps recognitions of the social construction of sexuality are a first stage in intervening in order to effect change:

> *"I've been guilty of this too ... sometimes calling boys that are wimps girls, I must admit just to get a laugh ... you know I think it's important that we don't put girls down and I think unconsciously we tend to."* (PR2 male)

(c)   EEO Practitioners

The BOT chairman invested the assistant principal with formal responsibility for EEO: *"our principal ... if there's anything comes across his desk about EEO it would go to our assistant principal who is a woman, ... and to see that he and the other managers of the school, the heads of department particularly are actively up to the mark with EEO",* a discourse which it is argued associates femininity with moral authority and leadership embodied in the motif of Moral Redemptress (James & Saville Smith, 1989:59).

The assistant principal's position in senior management was construed by others as critical to monitoring the decision-making processes, through membership of the "occupational community" (Evetts, 1989:198) from which others are excluded:

> *"if the top women in the schools aren't prepared to fight ... then not a lot's going to happen and then probably they're the only person in the position to do it, because as soon as decisions are made autocratically by principals maybe the top corridor might know about it. Just to take for instance a lot of appointment of staff is done. We're not consulted, even as HOD I'm not likely to be consulted sometimes."* (PR male).

This woman's involvement in appointment decisions was considered critical:

> *"if (name) isn't or wasn't as active as she has been, a lot of the women*
> *especially on the staff wouldn't be where they are today, a lot of them*
> *would not still be holding their job. I think there probably wouldn't be*
> *head of of department next year, because I know that if you haven't got*
> *the guts to go out and say right I'm really annoyed because of this,*
> *she'll go and do it for you or she'll build up your confidence. She really*
> *is a powerhouse on the staff as far as that's concerned."* (PPTA
> Women's Contact).

Two or three *"career women"* board members kept the board up to the mark, with watchdogs on the staff if the school slipped at managerial level, as well as the board itself adopting a watchdog role through the annual performance review of the principal:

> *"we ask of the principal specifically ... are you maintaining your*
> *awareness of EEO policy, has it continued to be implemented ... it's*
> *part of our checklist of him, and he's our manager, so hopefully he takes*
> *it down the line as well."* (BOT chairman)

Responsibility for EEO is therefore distributed. Some is placed with the principal in his position at the top of the hierarchy as manager. Staff and certain trustees are supposedly to act in a monitoring capacity which will place limits on board discretion. Principal discretion is constrained by the *"hopefully he takes it down the line as well."* If "hopefully" is the sole monitoring mechanism, there is room for doubt.

PPTA activity in terms of the Women's Contact position and network, the field service, targeted EEO material and regular meetings constituted a range of practices which were seen not only to benefit, but to act as a constraint in CAPNA analyses and redeployment situations, part-time positions, etc. The EEO co-ordinator claimed PPTA and the staff were the only effective control: *"and in most cases the two are pretty much the same."* PPTA was seen to reach all levels; *"well that's the only outfit doing it I would think"* (PR2 male) with EEO information, support, negotiation and protection.

Monitoring by the Education Review Office would probably, in the EEO co-ordinator's opinion *"pull a few schools up"*, but *"a lot of schools were a little bit cynical of ERO. It seems that ERO doesn't have a great deal of clout really, even though their reports can be published."* Who then did have that clout? No-one, it appeared.

5.5   Discourses of Empowerment and Change

The PPTA Women's Contact constructed EEO as a discourse of empowerment: *"A lot of it is, I think we don't have the guts to do it, because we think we may not have the chance. So that's why I think it's quite a good support system if EEO did come in, so that right I have, I know that I have equal opportunity, and there's no way that discrimination can occur."* This Women's Contact commented further on the attitudes of younger women teachers: *"they're qualified. They've had equal*

opportunity at gaining the qualifications, so they have the confidence. They know that they have just as much right to the job as anybody next to them and they'll go for it."

The BOT staff representative considered that males heading for promotion *"now found that they had a much wider field to compete against"*, a view corroborated by the female assistant teacher who spoke of later meeting an applicant for a position to which she was appointed: *"He was 43, a guy who had a lot of experience. He's married with a family and he didn't get the job, and I sort of thought, oh, how did I manage that one? It's probably got a little bit to do with the fact that I was young, I was female."*

In referring to a young woman's recent promotion, the female assistant teacher seemingly contradicted the "naturalness" of the male pattern described above: *another female staff is going to be HOD next year, and she's only 29, and only been teaching in secondary school for two years. She's been a primary school teacher up until then ... I think it's quite impressive because she's quite young really to be a head of department."*

Although she considered study was necessary for women *"to build up their confidence and find out what can be achieved and who has achieved what in education"*, the PPTA Women's Contact felt *"they're almost waiting to use that as their tool."* Women needed in her opinion, to persist in applying for jobs as if they already held the degree: *"all too often we leave it to the people further up, somebody else to push. If it doesn't come from yourself it's not going to come from anybody else."* Primary trained, she had been appointed to an HOD position for the following year at age twenty-nine. She had succeeded, so could others. They had obviously not tried hard enough: *"I mean, you'd have to be a pretty weak person to sort of not be able to do it, you know, it's all in yourself."* Her words reflect the ideology of individual achievement, where effort is generally rewarded with success. The problem lies with women; they are not achievers.

> *I mean you can be told perhaps in a roundabout fashion that you won't get the job because you might leave, just because you get married or you might have a child. I think if you have the confidence to stand up and say you know too bad, I've got three months, I've got six months whatever, and just have the guts to get up and do it, I think you do get there. But I think a lot of women think that OK I might stop and have a family and that ... then I won't bother trying and it is the fault of the individual"*

But her resistance was short term. In saying *"children definitely to me make a difference. That's why I've chosen not to have any yet, because I know when I do want them that's when I will have to put my career on a hold"* she clearly accepted traditional child care patterns.

The PR2 male, however, reflected as he spoke on changing male attitudes: *"women are not happy to uproot their husbands from their jobs especially in today's economic climate, and move on ... and possibly the husbands wouldn't be that keen, although I think nowadays a lot of men would be quite happy."*

Similarly changing patterns in childcare, in both attitude and practice, were signalled by two male staff: *"partly because it's sometimes now being done by males as well as females we quite often have youngish children brought into the school for the day when they are sick"* (EEO co-ordinator - male); *"there's a lot more situations where men are prepared for instance to stop work and look after the children, especially if the man's on a lowly paid job, and his wife's in a higher paid position."* (PR male). The female BOT staff rep drew from her own experience to also evidence changes in attitudes. Some twenty years earlier she had applied for a guidance counsellor position and

> *"was not even given an interview despite the fact it was on the same staff. I was doing the work anyway. And when I queried it I was told that I had young children therefore there was no way that I should be leaving them during the week and and going to to study and coming home, and leaving my husband to look after the children, despite the fact that my husband and I had discussed it and and considered that we could cope quite easily with that situation. They made the judgement that because I had a young family I shouldn't be doing that."*

She now saw women in exactly the same situation being appointed to positions by the same board.

Perhaps it is significant that the only time a radical discourse of structural change was evidenced, was in comments made by a male. The PR2 male saw limited tenure as a way of getting women into management positions: *"the job I'm doing, I'm sure that others can do it every bit as good as I can do it, and I wouldn't mind somebody else coming and having a go, it would be good for them too."* Limited tenure, allied to EEO, is thus constituted as a social practice which would open up opportunity. At the same time, the discourse reflects bureaucratic neutrality. The processes by which women would be admitted are not questioned.

However, the PR1 female showed resistance to socialisation processes whereby it was "normal" for roles and jobs to attract sex-typing (O'Neill, 1991:15). For her, women didn't help their cause by continuing to accept some of the jobs *"dished out"*: *"like making the tea and coffee for sports day. It was given to a woman and she accepted it. Now this year we created and one of the guys on the staff said oh, I'll do that job."* (PR1 female).

Despite conflicts of opinion, the PPTA Women's Contact saw discussion on EEO as productive constituting a discourse in circulation and therefore "a means to have a social effect" (Weedon, 1987:110), *"I suppose that's still heading somewhere, because you're talking about what you think."* She cited an incident whereby the PPTA branch called a women's meeting to discuss the effect on women of the proposed changes in the contract. The men were very upset: *"because it was like we were saying this is a woman's issue, after we'd said all the time that it's everybody's issue, and then we removed ourselves so we didn't have to have the meeting in front of them."* She deduced that men don't want to be locked out, don't want to be considered to be bad. For her, it was an across the gender consideration, since everybody's support was needed *"like it can't be*

seen as you know achieving equal opportunity, it can't be seen as a separate group.
Unless everybody accepts it, I think that's the way it should be ..." In suppressing
the gender dichotomy, the PPTA Women's Contact considered that using the
EEO discourse in open forum, beyond the confines of the target group
membership, had greater potential for capturing allegiances and thereby
extending its social power.

5.6   Summary

Chapter Five has presented my analysis of the interview data from School A.
From the texts of the interviews I selected examples of language which
enabled me to identify a range of discourses.   I have examined the links
between EEO, the promotion of women, and the principle of merit through "a
detailed analysis of the contexts in which such knowledge is generated"
(Stanley & Wise, 1987:197).

What I have created through my analysis is, as I explained in Chapter Two
(page 34), an attempt to expose "the processes of creating social meaning"
(Eagleton, 1983:115 in Jones, 1994:174) through "sets of statements formulated
on particular institutional sites of language use" (McCabe in Cameron,
1985:152).   Where dominant definitions come into conflict with non-dominant
meanings, the struggle between groupings is revealed.

By restricting my analysis to School A, I have revealed the "unique cultural
responses people struggle to create" (Walker & Barton, 1983:16).   Creating a
separation into discursive constructions enabled me to present these responses
coherently and with specificity.   However the overall lack of consistency and
multiple positionings are evidence that groups formulating and implementing
policies do so in social contexts characterised by struggles for power.
Evidenced are internal struggles and resistances to EEO.   What I also came to
realise, however, was the extent to which each person takes up "multiple
subject positions" (Leach & Davies, 1990:325) and inhabits, in different ways,
the differing and often contradictory discourses.   The principle of self-
reflection is important here (see page 69).

I considered it most helpful at this stage, before attempting further synthesis,
to proceed with the analysis of data from School B.   This analysis would, I felt,
offer me a wider scope for reflection and further identification of issues.
Chapter Six therefore replicates the format of Chapter Five, and presents the
analysis of the interview data of School B.

CHAPTER SIX

Defining Discourses - School B

6.1 Introduction

In order to investigate, and report on, the case study "as a systematic investigation of a specific instance", I created in Chapter Five an account from the School A interview data of a "range of voices articulating their positions on EEO" (Jones, 1994:173). I also identified particular discursive constructions as significant to the aims of this study, and offered some explanations of the political strength of the interests which they represent (Weedon, 1987:26). In Chapter Six I present and discuss in similar format the interview data from School B.

6.2 Discursive Constructions of EEO

(a)   Discourses of equality

The BOT chairman framed EEO within the liberal humanist discourse of *"equal opportunity for people to pursue what they want."* The PR2 male used a liberal egalitarian discourse in that *"all have an equal right to all parts of working life."* The more radical perspective of the female EEO co-ordinator considered identified target groups should *"all have equal consideration."* Human resource management considerations were highlighted in the comment by the PPTA Women's Contact *"looking at what they can do, not what they are."* Phrased in terms of all groups being *"equally represented"*, the female BOT staff rep constructed EEO as a process leading directly to equal outcomes in terms of proportional representation, hence, by implication, a view of EEO as an automatic and unproblematic process.

Other participants, however, framed EEO as a "reverse" discourse, in Foucault's (1980:96) terms, which problematised and rendered suspect bureaucratic neutrality. EEO legislation was seen to have the strength to *"force management's hand"* (EEO co-ordinator), to make them *"address the situation they would have to do something about"* (PPTA Women's Contact), to make them *"change direction"* (BOT chairman). How was not made clear, although the PR2 female constituted EEO in radical terms as prevailing over discrimination in appointments, through considerations of race and religion, *"so that those things are taken into consideration as well as qualifications and experience, education, that sort of thing. To me it doesn't mean that the best person doesn't get the job, but it's people who are more or less equal in standing than probably someone from a minority group or a less represented group would be selected."*

The power of the legislation to effect change was thus framed in ethical terms to form a discourse of social justice (Jones, 1994:179). Furthermore the male assistant teacher spoke of EEO as a force in terms of making an appeal *"against unfair decisions."* This moral perspective of EEO was highlighted also by the female assistant teacher in its protective function as a guardian of justice,

from her perception of women "having to work doubly hard to get half the distance" (Edson, 1988:229).

> *"because perhaps I see males as being naturally dominant and females ... if they want to be on the same level they have to work damn hard they do. And I feel that I have worked really hard in the last five years, have got myself a good standing. But I also feel like if I was male I might not have had to work so hard ... I'm just thinking of people who have been there not quite so long as me are perhaps on the equal grounding I am."*

Whether EEO had sufficient moral force in terms of social power to affect the appointment process was, for some participants, open to question. The PR2 male felt that a personal grievance or a negative EEO inspection report would be needed to stimulate action *"because otherwise it's pushed to the back ... there hasn't been the teeth to it, the sort of monitoring of schools to see that it has happened."* For him positive action was needed to effect more rapid change. His explanation, however, constructed identified groups as deficient, constituted within a discourse of liberal humanism, which validated existing structural arrangements and practices (Sayers, 1994:121): *"I think there needs to be more training given to groups that have been pushed down before that haven't been given equal opportunity"*

If they still could not make it on their own, then further assistance was needed. *"if there's still that imbalance you probably need to go further and say look, we have to get groups around women that we see as competent and push them through."* Here this speaker, in also accepting the validity of EEO as a moral construct, reconciles the two discursive positions (Jones, 1994:179) of bureaucratic neutrality and social justice, previously perceived as in conflict.

The EEO co-ordinator, however, problematised the decision-making process and identified constraints on EEO's social power more concretely *"it just depends on who the person is who makes the final decision. If they prefer working with men, then they might say, oh well, you know, I can't judge between them."* Interestingly, in identifying *"the person ... who makes the final decision"*, she appeared to counter the notion of appointment decisions being the outcome of a group decision-making process.

(b)   Discourses of voluntarism and compulsion

Discourses of voluntarism and compulsion were evidenced in the data as competing for legitimacy, and revealed ongoing struggles and resistances between contending groups.

The power of the voluntarism discourse in constraining EEO appeared to be recognised by the PPTA Women's Contact in describing the absence of an EEO action plan, *"no-one's actually sat down and said, right, OK, this is our policy."* In similar vein, while EEO *"sort of raised the level of consciousness especially at the time when the policy was written"* the female BOT staff rep felt

"the matter's closed now", limited to considerations of gender *"for role-modelling situations, like when you're appointing deans or timetablers."*

With regard to EEO policy formulation, the female BOT staff rep revealed power struggles when she spoke of strategic handling of board resistance at the time, requiring *"a lot of manipulative skill on the staff rep to get a satisfactory policy, because they targeted the board members who were sympathetic towards EEO to be on that sub-committee."* The PR2 male identified PPTA as the motivating force for women who *"had some teeth, and that they went through PPTA with the equity thing."* That the initiative was staff generated was rationalised by the board chairman in terms of the board being *"such a disparate body ... unless there was a member of the board who happened to be deeply involved in it"*, nothing would be done. It was purely voluntary, a personal conviction. He put it down to the board's *"luck"* in that *"we had a system whereby they felt it easy to bring things to the board ... we were constantly saying to the teacher's rep: if you've got a committee out there doing something, get them to come along, produce a paper for us."*

The female BOT staff rep testified to similar pressure exerted by staff on the board over permanent part-time positions, reinforced by the *"EEO statement, and we reminded them of what it was"*, and which engendered similar resistances: *"They were actually saying at the time we didn't know whether teachers would be going on individual contracts, that the whole thing was up in the air and I know the present staff rep is bringing up the issue again, and they're trying to hedge."* Shaped within a discourse of voluntarism, the legal force of EEO was being resisted by the board.

The board chairman acknowledged long-standing staff pressure and involvement in reviewing and improving opportunities for women, which was also documented in board minutes in Chapter Four (page 80-81). *"I've got a feeling that someone from the staff triggered it ... but I can't understand in what position, whether she was just a teacher or whether she was acting as head of a committee or whatever."*

The female BOT staff rep described the pressure as an outcome of sustained PPTA ground-level activity: *"by bringing up policies and drawing it to people's attention, sort of yearly, annually, as they do their review of the PR units ... because it keeps getting done. It's so easy to ignore otherwise."* The evidence accrued underpinned the school's practice in appointments, in the EEO co-ordinator's view *"If we have any PR units going, we talk about the numbers of women of PR1's 2's 3's and the numbers of men. In fact we draw up a sheet with all the PR's on it and what they're for and who held them, and usually we give that sheet out and we update it every time an appointment is made."* The <u>Promotion of Women Review</u> is corroborated through these data as a basis for the schol's EEO activity, a link hypothesised by Watson (1989b:10-12).

The principal framed EEO negatively within a discourse of compulsion as opposed to a "common-sense" discourse of the status quo. He spoke of attitudes to EEO shaped by government intervention and charter requirements. For him EEO had become tainted through getting *"caught in the*

anti-charter thing", and as *"social engineering"* rendered suspect (Court, 1994:222).

> *"There were things that the school felt it owned and there were things that were imposed ... I have always felt that with EEO ... the focus on it has had some negative factors because of this oh ministry and compulsory in the charter, and oh here we've got to do this, whereas I would have liked it more if people thought well, this is a normal process, and yeah, we should have something about that in the charter you know."*

The principal would seem to be excluding EEO from consideration as a normal social process, which in his terms would see it become part of the culture as a movement from within, 'naturally' evolving. The principal chose to ignore, however, that the move towards establishing an EEO policy did in fact arise from pressure within the school, some years before legislation made it mandatory, as evidenced in the BOT minutes (pages 81). The legitimacy of EEO is denied on the grounds that it is a strategy for organisational change that has outside agency and authority since this runs counter to the belief that such authority, is voluntary and is invested in the institution. The constraints imposed by the economic downturn engendered similar resistances to EEO in the principal's view. EEO's legitimacy is denied through an opposing market liberal discourse:

> *"they start to focus on protecting themselves and wider philosophical issues that are of importance to them in their heart, that's taken over by ... I've got to ... keep my job. We're into that now, self-preservation ... and it's equally strong in both men and women."*

However the voluntarism discourse did not extend to automatically recognising "the benefits of EEO to employers ... through the successful management of diversity" (McNaughton 1994:300). On the contrary through constructing a 'quota' requirement, the principal stigmatised EEO as an illegitimate interventionary practice: *"they had to have so many men and so many women, or yes, well, we need to have an ethnic input."* It would appear that appointing target group members in this contextualisation reduces the legitimacy of their claims and attributes essentially to target group membership, and underscores the stigma of deviance from the male norm (Armstrong, 1994:194).

The principal further discredited EEO as invalid, reconstituting a deficit discourse: *"instead of looking at yourself, and saying that perhaps you weren't really the best person, you didn't perhaps convince the group strongly enough."* The principal also reduced EEO to female concern in that more women had *"personal reasons to support it more strongly than others."* EEO is thus seen as an "artificial, illegitimate means of appointing and promoting women who are not there on their merits but because of their gender" (Webb & Liff, 1988:539), a discourse picked up by the EEO co-ordinator who further translated female concern into feminist action negatively perceived (Watson, 1992), in that women had *"gone into it, with a vengeance to the point I think of almost going the"*

opposite way, reversing the discrimination to a certain extent" in a *"feminist way ... almost to the point of persecuting the men."*

6.3   Discursive Constructions of Merit

(a)   Discourses of deficit

Part of the problem of women's lack of movement into senior administrative positions was constructed within the deficit model of the liberal discourse by the PR2 male as *"women's own or their thinking about themselves"* in that *"they've been told so often they aren't good enough, or have missed out so many times that they just don't bother to apply."* This construction of women as underachievers, the ones who defer (Court, 1992:183) is a powerful stereotype in the femininity discourse. Since women *"don't have some driving need to prove themselves"* and therefore *"aren't recognised so much"*, many did not reach the PR1 position, that *"initial recognition"* whereby women *"have then been able to go on and build more of a career"* (PR2 female). Within the literature, however, evidence of a rise in the percentage of applications from women (Slyfield, 1993:19) would counter this construction.

Women constituted within a deficit discourse therefore needed assistance to develop confidence *"either through being told that they can do it and getting that message across, or else having it demonstrated that other people achieve it"* (BOT chairman). The EEO co-ordinator spoke of male principal mentoring as important in forming her own aspirations (Schmuck, 1981:229; Morgan et al. 1983:34):

> *"he actually made me realise that I was quite capable of doing far more than I ever thought I was capable of doing ... I never really thought promotion myself ... he made me head of department even when my husband was in hospital hundreds of kilometres away for over a year and I was never around to do anything extra. But he saw something in me that he wanted, and he didn't care that I wouldn't be able to put in a hundred per cent or even fifty per cent the first year."*

Similarly the PR2 female described active mentoring from the *"acting DP"* who *"obviously recognised something that he encouraged and that was really important for me."* Significantly, both examples given involved male mentors. The question needs to be asked why some men mentor women.

Mentoring could also solve the problem, formulated by the female BOT staff rep, of *"getting people in their mid-thirties who've had the AP experience to apply for the principal's job."* Within a human resource management discourse the principal described this kind of encouragement as best fostered through the appraisal process as part of good management practice. He himself was encouraged to go for promotion through the appraisal process: *"a lot of it is in the mind. I had never thought of myself until I was told to go."* This experience led him to institute in his own school a *"two-fold system"* of open application and personal approach. The latter could be conceptualised as a form of mentoring. Court (1994:229), however, warns that gender issues related to performance

appraisal require more research in terms of precluding further disadvantage to women teachers.

Mentoring, as constituted above, does not appear to be gender specific. It does however fit within the liberal model of EEO as a practice within an organisation that would "assist talented individuals in their career advancement" (Armstrong, 1994:191). In this formulation it is also open to contestation as opposed to the rational self-interest motive of the "abstract individual who lies at the heart of liberal theory" (Armstrong, 1994:193) encapsulated in the PPTA Women's Contact's presumption *"if someone wants to be principal then they're going to sort of have a bit of an action plan organised for themselves."*

The female BOT staff rep considered it was imperative for women to aspire *"because men are over-represented in those top positions and you can't sort of have the belief that it's important for women to be in those positions and not put yourself forward for them."* Target group membership, central to the radical model of EEO, is framed within the liberal discourse to constitute an obligation on women to aspire as a means to overcome views of women's deficiency.

(b)   Discourses of heterosexuality and family role

A discourse which constitutes men and women in family role terms premised on the social entrenched public/private dichotomy (Cox & James, 1987), whereby women are confined to a sphere of home, child bearing and child-care, which is different and separate from the one that men inhabit (Paddock, 1981:194), surfaced in the data. The PR2 female claimed the existence of the stereotype of the male as breadwinner as an appointment rationale: *"there's some sort of a feeling that a man, particularly a man with a family sort of needs a job more than a woman does, among the powers that be."*

The BOT chairman spoke of a *"perception at the back of people's minds, particularly the older generation and not necessarily men or women, that if you employ a man he's likely to make that a career path."* He spoke of *"a sort of a hesitation"* in appointing women in their *"late twenties, early thirties, if there is even a hint that that person may then want time off for starting a family, care of a family or have a young family that's likely to be calling that person away for a time."* Within this stereotype of women as primary caregivers, a woman who had children and who went for promotion *"would be seen as being less responsible,"* and the male the 'natural' choice (Armstrong, 1994:191).

This stereotype constructed a view of women as *"happy"* to remain assistant teachers, being *"family-orientated"* (PPTA Women's Contact) with local women with a double workload (Martin, 1987:439), *"the extra burden to cope with"* relegated to part-time and non-permanent tenure: *"the principal knows oh well, you're always going to be in this area. I can call on you if I need you, so we don't have to sort of give you any commitment whatsoever"* (BOT staff representative). Women *"getting up through the ranks and being able to hit the top note"* were *"often single or do not have any children or partners"* (female assistant teacher),

competing therefore as a "rational individual" within the liberal model of EEO (Armstrong, 1994:191), that is, one without children (Middleton, 1990:82). As evidenced in the literature (Edson, 1988), mobility, marriage and motherhood form a career contingency subject to gender bias.

The same family role socialisation discourse used by the BOT chairman constructed women's child care responsibilities as their choice and essentialised the difference in priorities between the *"male drive to get to the top"* and women's *"conscious effort to stop at a certain level even though the promotion is available"* since *"they'd rather devote it to the other sides of their family or their partner or perhaps even to pursue other things."* Since it was their choice, women were not subject to any *"deliberate unfairness in our current system."*

This picture consistently drawn of women's construction in family role terms that was seen to place limits on their promotional opportunities (Marshall, 1991:139) was allied with a perception of women's greater visibility as occupiers of senior posts in the public sphere. Women's construction as primary caregiver of children may be interpreted as lack of commitment to her employment. *"I think that at that level women are more scrutinised than they should be. It's because she's a female and you know she has to pick up her daughter. But it's OK for the a male in that position to go off and pick up his son or take his son to cricket. It's what's acceptable and what's not I think that needs to be changed"* (female assistant teacher).

Also within the family role discourse the female assistant teacher spoke of the husband's ocupational positioning as an influence on considerations of a woman's merit:
> *"perhaps they are in an unsteady job ... if a husband was working full time in a very high ranking top influential job, you sort of think he's going places, she should be going places too, you sort of think well two like people, whereas if the husband was sort of a bus driver or cleaning the roads, people have this feeling that ... it degenerates the person, makes them less employable, that they weren't destined for bigger things, and you sort of think well that's all he can get, well he's not very intelligent, maybe she's not very intelligent for marrying him."*

There were also suggestions that women in the public sphere (O'Neill, 1990, 1992) in principalship positions would experience problems. Women's visibility was heightened through low numbers of women in senior positions which made an individual woman symbolic, her appointment suspect, and her performance critical. The *"inefficiency"* of a woman appointed to a senior position was, for the PR2 female, a personal embarrassment: *"it's just embarrassing you know for someone who likes to feel they're competent in their job to have someone there because she's a woman ... I don't think men find it embarrassing if the men in power aren't very good."* When a senior woman's health failed under the impact of her new job, this affected the way the female assistant teacher herself looked at those positions: *"now I've seen the cost of her doing that job well; she couldn't sustain it."*

The exercise of patriarchal power (Weedon, 1987:168) could be seen to affect working relationships where a woman principal would have to work closely with board members: *"they may well make it more difficult in that they would be watching closely for the father sort of saying, 'I'll look after you', sort of thing, making it very difficult, patronising stuff"* (male PR2).

(c)   Discursive constructions of experience

Prioritisations of values are embodied in the concepts of "experience" and "qualities" which underpin merit-based selection practices. Opinions on what constituted the forms of experience and qualities valued by their organisation differed among the participants. *"A woman applying for a position in an unfamiliar school it could be as soon as she walked in the door, she could not fulfil those criteria. You have to research that school very, very thoroughly to know whether you had a chance or not"* (PPTA Women's Contact). Conditions for promotion depend on a range of factors both internal and external to the occupation (Evetts, 1989:201) as well as the particular expectations of certain attributes unique to the school's cultural context.

In this school, coming from the one subject area was seen by the PR2 male as *"a very narrow perspective."* Staff wide leadership responsibilities, moving schools, guidance responsibilities, curriculum administration, heading a large department, and people skills were consistently cited as experience prerequisites.   Management skills, with *"administrative organisational qualifications"* (BOT chairman) and attendance at *"as many professional management courses, because I think today education is moving almost against as educational leaders, but almost like a consulting, a management type, a business manager"* (EEO co-ordinator) were articulated as important, These comments frame a managerialist discourse and shaped a teaching-administration divide Court, 1994:216). Computer literacy was constituted as valuable experience but exclusive of women in *"a field where women aren't really up to. There are a lot of males involved in that area"* (BOT staff rep).

(d)   Discourses of authority and leadership

As for qualities, leadership skills and personality factors were considered essential but were less well defined in the data (Morgan, 1983:145; Sampson, 1987:4), often conceptualised as "inbred", what "they're born with." The BOT chairman, for example spoke of personality as *"the whole range of ability in the teaching field to cope with children or students."* Yet oddly, a liberal humanist formulation of advice by the principal urged women to compete, to *"seek promotion themselves in their job, so that they get an opportunity to show their skills, and practise those skills, like you know when an opportunity comes up they say yes I would like to be the teacher responsible for the school magazine, or I would like to be the teacher responsible for administering the sports, why should it be the man ... and they gather those skills and confidence as part of that."* in order to overcome negative indicators of women's commitment through social pressures to run the home, not seeing the job as a priority, little or no aspirations and lack of strength of personality.   That appointment panels needed to have this

evidence of women's abilities directly opposes a construction of leadership skills as 'natural'.

The BOT chairman recognised male hegemonic practice as having a powerful base within the school: *"because there's been men before it could be harder"* for a woman to be appointed. With *"men intimidated more by other men than women"*, the predominantly male boards *"felt no pressure to select women"* was the view of the female assistant teacher. The male assistant teacher spoke of boards that would *"feel more comfortable by appointing a man to do the job"*, thus perpetuating homosocial reproduction (Thornton, 1985:36).

Connell (1982:73 in Court, 1992:183) describes culturally produced dominant stereotypes of masculinity as competitive, confident and "able to dominate others and face down opponents in situations of conflict." The hegemonic linking of these qualities within a meritocratic discourse to notions of leadership, ability and authority works to exclude women. What the best person will get the job means, in the male PR2's opinion, was not giving the job to a woman *"just because women have less PR's when there's a suitably qualified man around."* So the *"best person"* became in his view a *"justification for not addressing an imbalance"* since a woman is seen *"as not having the same control, power, ability."* The male assistant teacher commented on authority as identifiably a male property in that *"people still perceive that it's a man's job being the boss. Well, there aren't many co-ed schools around that have a female where you have a co-ed environment."* This hegemonic linking of authority and control is also seen within the literature (Court, 1992:183) to involve "a split between predominantly male administrators and female teachers." Therefore in multiple ways women are constituted as the other, therefore deficient.

Competing values with different prioritisations whether at the conscious or unconscious level can therefore have a discriminatory effect within the meritocratic discourse, for they are based on different assumptions, interpretations and constructions of people's actions, intentions and suitabilities. This makes it difficult to monitor sex bias or prove discriminatory intent (Migniuolo & De Lyon, 1989:55). This is illustrated in the female PR2's comment: *"I see the work someone does around the place as being much more worthwhile than their own personal ambition. But he (the principal) sees ambition as meaning that someone isn't going to sit back in on their PR or whatever and do the same job for twenty years and retire on the job. He sees ambition as someone who wants to get ahead, and it's going to be better for the school because of that, whereas I see it as a much more selfish thing."*

The applicant field is also an important consideration within the meritocratic discourse. With schools *"more and more responsible for their own financial consideration"*, considerations of costs relating to appointments were beginning to impact on the applicant pool in terms of: *"if that person was from (name of a distant town), and the man was you know from the town down the road."* The choice to shortlist the closest applicant therefore became unequivocal, in the EEO co-ordinator's view. Lack of applicants also predetermined selection choices in

her view: *"we've had to replace a long-term relieving position with a male because no females who applied you know."*

It may also be argued that where there are time pressures *"our focus I s'pose comes down to you know the best person who can we get to do x because y has happened. Sometimes yeah things happen very quickly."* (principal), decisions made quickly may both contribute to and emanate from power stereotypes (Yeakey et al. 1986:140; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991:145).

(d)   Discourses of age

Expressions of employer attitudes towards age constructed within the data a form of ageism as a practice, already seen within the literature (Al-Khalifa, 1989:89; Hearn & Parkin, 1989:153), to constitute and reflect the hegemonic retention of power by men. In School B ageism appeared, in my view, to gender decision-making practices in ways that discriminated against women. A move to appoint younger senior administrative staff was identifiable. The male assistant teacher spoke of *"young almost workaholics that seem to make it to these positions now"* narrowed by the principal to *"early forties late thirties"*, and detailed as an *"optimum"* age band for the selection of AP's and DP's *"starting from thirty-six through to forty-two"* by the PR2 male. The latter, from recent interview experience was told *"the person they appointed was forty years old, and he was right on the limit of the age group. They wrote it back to me!"*[11]

The PR2 male rationalised the fairness of using age as an exclusionary practice on the grounds of an *"aging staff, and there are very few young staff, and I can understand they want to get in more younger people as well,"* hence as a human resource management practice that would benefit the workplace.

The fact that women *"like a man, they've got to pitch their application at the range which is appropriate for the job if you're going up the scale"* (BOT chairman) becomes problematic if age as one of the deciding factors in appointment decisions depended on informal practices (Sampson, 1987:4) *"on the prejudices of the principal and the board ... it's hard to anticipate what exactly they will be looking for"* (PR2 female). Women who have an interrupted career path, hence *"useless or irrelevant experience"* (Paddock, 1981:194) and therefore *"take longer to get that experience, so maybe you need a woman that's older to get the same qualifications"* (female assistant teacher). The PR2 male observed that *"anyone older than forty starts to be looked at suspect, anyone over fifty is not even considered, which of course can work against women too because they may have had time out from teaching."*

This difference in male-female accrued experience is not only not legitimated, it is differently valued, with the male time spans in career paths the norm against which the female career path experience is deemed deficient. Age

[11]   Age has been identified as a form of discrimination in the Human Rights Act, 1994.

therefore was seen to be operating as a strategy in appointment decisions that contributed to gendered discrimination. Those able to succeed would appear to be those who best fit the "full-time continuous service model of employment usually associated with professional men who have the support of a full-time partner at home" (Armstrong, 1994:191).

(e)   Discourse of Equal Educational Opportunities

Within an equal educational opportunities discourse the female assistant teacher focused on gender issues within the classroom "it's usually the boys against the girls, you know, girls can't do it. I get very defensive, and I make sure that if there is any hint of it in the classrooms that it's quickly and clearly disposed of." It appeared to me, however, that a broader teaching discourse emerged through the data to provide a strong focus on the classroom. This discourse not only encompassed a consideration of equal educational opportunities, but was also constructed in opposition to a managerialist discourse premised on a teaching/administration divide (Court, 1994:216).

The PPTA Women's Contact commented that "the classroom is where I make the most impact. I find that if I'm given a lot of responsibility it's my classroom that suffers, and that's not what I want, and it's not because I'm lazy." The EEO co-ordinator singled out as an important quality in her former principal that "he would actually put his name down on the relieving list so he could keep in touch with where the kids were at. And he taught them, he didn't babysit them."

The importance of teaching as a means to "keep in touch and just really know what it's like, rather than the principal moan at teachers on duty not getting the litter picked up, actually try and get kids to pick up litter" (BOT staff rep) was constructed as conflicting with the changing nature of the principalship under the Tomorrow's Schools reforms and that principals "haven't really had much choice." The power that came with senior positions in the hierarchy was construed by the PR2 female as "a very seductive sort of thing", that caused people to "change, and I don't like that very much." The female assistant teacher spoke of herself as "a person that tends to leave bureaucracy out of my life. My job is just being a good teacher, and that really takes a lot of energy."

Merit was constructed within a teaching discourse by the EEO co-ordinator: if "the best person for a particular job happens to be male ... the bottom line always is what's good for the students."

Another element relevant to the construal of the teaching discourse as the major occupational focus was position within the hierarchical structure. The female assistant teacher's positioning distanced her from more comprehensive knowledge of appointment criteria that for her went on "behind closed doors with HOD's and up." She had the impression that eligibility was based on length of service within the organisation, on "who's next in line." The PPTA Women's Contact, also an assistant teacher, perceived bureaucratic procedures as distant and neutral: "when I look at the people in charge they're very very competent, and if I looked at any possible female staff who could be eligible for that

role, I'd say that, what I know of them, these males have done a good job under stress, and I'd say that they were the best people for the job at the time."

The female BOT staff rep absorbed EEO into the equal educational opportunities (EEdO) discourse as *"something you can refer to ... one more bit of supporting evidence when you're trying to get things changed as far as what happens in the classroom goes."* The principal's EEO threefold action plan also picks up the EEdO discourse:

> *"one there's the statistical evidence that's gathered each year you know on senior positions in the schools there's employment ... the profile of it in appointments to the staff and also associated with that is appointments of students to various opportunities within the school ... and the third way I think it's done is by the culture of the school endeavouring to pursue curriculum equal opportunity for students and create an environment that every student feels comfortable."*

This plan sees discourses of human resource management, bureaucratic neutrality and equal educational opportunities in competition for legitimacy. The school culture is construed as premised on student needs, with the implication that in attending to the needs of the students, that is a sufficient goal in itself, pragmatically.

The dual functions of schools as educating and employing organisations (O'Neill, 1992:56) requires closer examination and needs also to take into account the complexity of individuals. It is significant that the teaching discourse is inhabited by women. That it is women's choice to position themselves within the teaching discourse is open to question.

6.4   Power, Practice and Practitioners

(a)   Appointment practices

In attending to the need to gain an understanding of what was meant in practice by the principal's definition of EEO as *"each person is fairly given the opportunity to take the position based on the job description and the requirements of the position and other factors are not considered"* I needed to problematise the selection process to gain an understanding of what was considered "fair" practice in School B. From the data an interesting cameo portrait embodying different perspectives emerged from comments and descriptions relating to a remodelled PR distribution process.

The EEO co-ordinator[12] provided a managerialist perspective on the process of publicising within the school the availability of PR positions, with an open invitation and in some cases a prompt to apply, as opposed to selection and allocation from above, practices constitutive of the hegemonic retention of

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[12]   I remind the reader that the EEO co-ordinator in this school also held the position of assistant principal.

power by men (Edson, 1988 in Glazer, 1991:335). She appeared to dispel an impression of promotion as a reward for loyalty and long service:

> *"with some teachers I find that they just feel well I haven't been here long enough also I don't think anybody'll consider me and they might just need a prod ... and the positions are really considered on merit and on expertise rather than on how long you've been here ... but at least we've encouraged them to have some sort of positive ideas about themselves ... and sometimes it's just the prod they need to push themselves and take on other responsibilities"*

Phrased in terms of human resource development, her concern was *"that interest shown by those in more senior positions, a form of mentoring, may enhance self-confidence in a way that raises the aspiration level, hence the achievement level."*

This *"active policy of approaching people and asking them if they would like to take a leadership role"* was considered by the principal a fair way to perceive and reward merit through its *"openness"* and with the *"best person as the focus"*:

> *"There will be some who will be more pushy than others. Now that doesn't necessarily prove the best person, so an example would be a guidance position and a dean position, right? I will stand up and say this is coming up, volunteers come forward. But a meeting also takes place with the co-ordinator of guidance, and right, let's go and approach some people at the same time, and then it's all put on the table."*

However outcomes, in his view, were not always positive. Unsuccessful applicants, especially if they had been *"chatted to"*, found their lack of success *"hard to handle, heightened awareness led to grieving"* especially when *"people felt they owned something, which they didn't really."* In emphasising *"we're all in this together"*, the principal appeared to be acknowledging the need "to allow society to harness the skills of all its members" (Armstrong, 1994:190). Intervention would assure as wide a skill resource base as possible. The perspective is liberal, yet managed, a feature of the human resource management discourse. A bureaucratic discourse frames the practices as open, transparent, neutral, hence fair.

Yet the outcomes of this same process were described by the BOT staff representative as *"appalling"* and *"not exactly fair."* She drew a gender distinction where

> *"men are much better at some promotions, standing up and saying what they're doing than women. Women tend to not push themselves forward. They get the job done quite efficiently and effectively, but they don't make a lot of noise about it, where quite a few males on our staff do far less, but say how wonderful they're doing. They talk in staff meetings, and they go and tell the principal what they've done and things like that, and that seems to be recognised."*

From her perspective the process appeared to privilege male interests premised on a patterning and a rewarding of competitive and confident

behaviours which she described as typically male (Connell, 1987). As we have already seen (page 117) the hegemonic linking of these behaviours to notions of leadership, ability and authority works to exclude women. A portrait of a newly appointed HOD drawn by the female assistant teacher illustrated this very point. She described him as *"loud, he's very single track, straight down, you know this is what he wants. This new person is just so demanding, he is now making his demands very vocal and what we notice now is that he gets referred to a lot."* She concluded *"it's the loudest who get heard."*

A similar accusation of unfairness was made by the female assistant teacher, who phrased her concerns in terms of inequitable outcomes for some individuals in competition for scarce rewards allocated from above:

> *"this year when positions of responsibilities were issued through the school there were three positions going. What I really am concerned about is that there is a department in the school which has been run single-handedly by a female which has never been recognised and these PR's went to people who had PR's already"*

The increased competitiveness that resulted from assuring greater opportunity was negatively perceived by the PR2 female: *"our boss has a nice little trick of taking the bone and throwing it in amongst the wolves. Rather than saying you deserve a promotion, he says I've got a PR unit, who wants it? And then everybody's sort of falling over themselves fighting."* Although she considered that *"in that way the PR units are more fairly distributed and perhaps in that way women have got a better chance too"* she felt that *"that approach tends to you know get people backbiting a bit too."*

This liberal model of EEO with its focus on "self-interested individuals competing in the public world" (Armstrong, 1994:1900), and its assumption of a level playing field, is framed from a different perspective by the BOT chairman. The *"policy of encouraging various people within the staff to actively put themselves forward"* was, in his view, a strategy specific to EEO to attempt to compensate for the lack of applicants: *"we almost implicitly said that there may well have to be a policy of positive discrimination for a while, until you start to redress the balance. But we also recognised that there weren't enough applicants to make it half and half precisely."* His comment would appear to indicate employer benevolence in setting, and presumably actively intending to meet targets, here set at fifty:fifty! Failure to reach the targets set was expressed as an employee problem, in that women did not apply. Women were cast in the light of underappliers, therefore strategies were required to assist. Implicit in this is a view that it is difficult to be seen to be implementing EEO if women do not play their part.

(b)   Discourses of bureaucratic neutrality and subjectivity

In situating the selection process within EEO, the principal, too, picked up the central notions of experience and qualifications within a discourse of bureaucratic neutrality, a discourse that claimed impartial selection practices

and overt criteria, such as used in job descriptions, a discourse framed in managerialist terms:

> "that each person is fairly given the opportunity to take the position based on the job description and the requirements of the position and other factors are not considered. Secondly, that the best person is the person who gets the position, and the best person relates to that job description, that person specification, that agreed criteria that the employer has before it starts."

Also within the discourse of bureaucratic neutrality, the BOT chairman construed women's lack of movement up the hierarchy as their choice: "those who haven't made it may not have wanted it anyway, so you can't say they miss out", or their lack of skills, a deficit discourse which denies them grounds for complaint:

> "a few occasionally who grizzle, to take a common word, who grizzle that they've been missed over whatever for years. When you look hard at them, it's because they didn't have the skills or the ability to get the job anyway so they missed out to a man. They may well have missed out to another woman."

Assessment of skills and ability forms part of the meritocratic discourses, as already evidenced (page 117), yet captured here within the discourse of bureaucratic neutrality.

The EEO co-ordinator's comments on appointment practices offered an interesting insight into her multiple positioning in different discourses. Although shortlisting, an appointment practice which constrains the applicant field, could in her view be "a bit subjective ... sometimes they make a couple of phone calls and check out there if what they think is correct" she still considered the process to be fair: "because only one shortlist is made, and everybody usually has the same questions. It's not like they all ask different questions."

Yet this bureaucratic discourse which claimed equal treatment in interview for all applicants is contradicted and exposed by the same EEO co-ordinator as contributing to male hegemony. "I have been on a couple of panels and I've heard boards of trustees members say things like, well, how's it going to affect you, you've got a young family, and they don't ask that of men." She felt it must "make a difference" otherwise the questions would not be asked: "because I was asked that when I came to this job, and I resented being asked that. I answered it though because I felt well, you know, I want to get the job too like anybody else, I've applied for it. I don't think they realise that women can make alternative arrangements." This woman did not voice her resentment; she silenced her sense of unfairness. She showed no resistance. She gained the position.

(c)   EEO Practitioners - Issues of Power

In the board chairman's words EEO was a dual management responsibility and a co-operative venture, with policy established to guide administrator action: "first and foremost it is the Board's because if the policy is not there it'll never

work, and the second one is obviously the head or the administration section to implement the policy. So unless those two are in complete harmony then it'll never work"

However the board chairman constructed a different position in stating:
> *"mainly everyone is happy with the way it's going. They appear to be happy with what we've got and the direction in which it's going, even if it's not half and half, and that EEO had gone past the contentious stage in professional fields. I don't think people even think about it at the very low levels of appointment. I think there is still some sort of people are a little bit concerned at the higher levels, mainly because of the numbers"*

The impetus for EEO considerations is constituted within a liberal discourse where the individual or the group has the responsibility to draw the problem to the board's attention, as evidenced in the board minutes and through interview data. However the individual may be constrained within the field of hierarchical power relations, as illustrated by the PPTA Women's Contact:
> *"if the staff want to tell the principal something, how they feel, they want to change something, they don't feel that what he's doing is correct, then it is very delicate how you go about doing it. Sometimes I sort of feel like you're just pushing shit uphill, because if things aren't working for us, they really have to be bad before he'll take notice, and when you feel that ... um ... you're putting yourself on the line just to tell him how you feel, you sort of think well OK, you take it personally ... And you really shouldn't have to do that."*

The subjective constitution of individuals located within a network of power relations "permeated with a culturally produced and contested system of beliefs and practices" (Court, 1992:183) and stereotypic attitudes (Hoyle, 1986:125; Marshall, 1991:139) informed appointing panels in ways which were acknowledged by the principal: *"we're all people ... we're not just machines, we can't just switch off and on. I think everyone has their own agendas and their own thoughts, and I think that there are discriminations in a whole lot of areas."* However he saw effective controls placed on individual discretion through the group decision-making process: *"we're all accountable, and accountable decisions is an outcome of a group decision, and often those sorts of agendas and the person they carry get lost in the group situation because the only variety of focus becomes what the task is."*

The principal thus affirms the validity and presumably impartiality of decisions that are grounded in consensual decision-making practice, a viewpoint disputed by the BOT staff representative. The validity of consensus in decisions of merit, in her view, depended on the composition of the decision-making panel: *"on our board the driving force are male business people, and they come from the background of being men in business. It means they've got definite views, and it's from one particular viewpoint. So I think unwittingly, even though they might think that they are being really open about things, and very conscious of equity, I really don't know that they are necessarily, because they see the*

attributes in a person which are positive, maybe not other areas." The EEO co-ordinator's reference to *"the person ... who makes the final decision"* further renders suspect the appointment process.

Dominant assumptions about what kinds of attributes are needed for promotion into a senior administrative position can, it is argued (Court, 1992:185) work against women "who wish to become educational administrators." In these data the male occupational community at the top of the hierarchy was seen to prescribe a certain kind of femininity, with penalties for con-compliance (Martin, 1987:439). The norm of femininity which contains to prevail is that of compliance with male power.

Within hierarchical power relations the PPTA Women's Contact saw the vulnerability of a *"pushy female"* ... *"like if I wanted to teach a senior class would be nil because I'm a pushy female, and he can't work with me though I'm good at what I do."* The PR2 female considered that *"bad relationships with any people that you work with can certainly work against you, particularly with people in power."* For her the principal was a key figure: *"that's who normally gets phoned or your head of department."* The EEO co-ordinator was of the opinion it was important to tell the principal of your aspirations, and to develop the *"right relationship"* so that *"he won't feel threatened ... what they will do is look out for opportunities for you to be professionally developed. If they're the right sort of principal they will do that."*

The accessibility, interest and agency of PPTA personnel, therefore, made them key resource agents and negotiators, *"the ones that are supposed to look after teachers"* (male assistant teacher). Although the PR2 male envisioned the PPTA Women's Contact as responsible for producing a PR distribution list for discussion, she shaped her role somewhat more diffidently within a discourse of bureaucratic neutrality, which assumed automatic policy implementation: *"that hasn't come through, not this year, you know it could be there sitting around but no-one's sort of brought it to me. I think I'm meant to be pushier and say OK what's going on. I haven't been, because I thought the policy was already ongoing and that they would automatically bring things to me."* However as she talked she reflected on her responsibility to intervene as women's rep *"you've got to be sort of clued up to things, and make sure they do it otherwise I guess things can sort of fall down"*, but admitted her lack of knowledge: *"I think the key PPTA people are up to the play as to who's the co-ordinator, and our assistant principal, and I think it would mean other staff members who were worried would go to them."*

The PPTA Women Contact's position as an assistant teacher may have been a contributing factor to her diffidence, lack of knowledge and lack of assertion. This appeared to be the case for the female assistant teacher who did not have the self-confidence to speak out in front of the whole staff:

> *"We're a very big staff and sometimes they can be very intimidating and there's some very loud staff members, and they've got no hassles about demonstrating their opinion at all, and they are quite overpowering overwhelming ... and because often it's the lower ones*

*down speaking above, speaking out to the ones who have made their
decisions, that's also intimidating."*

From his position, too, *"at the bottom end of the scale"* the male assistant teacher
hoped that there was *"somebody there to protect those people"* since he was *"not in
the powers that'd be able to decide that."* He accorded PPTA and the BOT dual
responsibility, especially since the staff rep was also the PPTA rep *"so they get
it both ways."* Whether the 'protective' role attributed to the latter was
sustainable in practice was open to doubt. The BOT staff representative who
joined mid-term missed the trustee training course: *"so there's basically no
information given to you, like you know, what should you do as staff rep."*

A picture emerges of those at the bottom end of the hierarchical scale
constrained by and excluded from decisions made at the top. The principal
was invested with management authority and power: *"One principal, he's the
sort of the key figure. There's a couple, him and perhaps the DP I think, are the ones
that sort of implement the policy"* (PPTA Women's Contact). The principal was
positioned within the managerialist discourse by others. The PR2 male saw
him as *"the boss, he can make the decisions on what happens. You can go up and
moan as much as you like, but basically in the end, there is that: he's the executor."*
As chairman of the PPTA this PR2 male would lead deputations to the
principal: *"there's been a thing over equity with part-timers at our school and we've
approached (principal's name) about that."* He commented that the board rep was
also approached by staff to negotiate but *"there's no designated person with the
title EEO co-ordinator."* Once again it appears to be the responsibility of the
concerned to bring matters to management attention. EEO becomes a
discourse of resistance, contesting management authority.

The principal, constructed as the ultimate source of authority and power, was
therefore seen as *automatically* in charge of EEO, and the one to be lobbied.
Positioning in the hierarchy was important in terms of accessing information
and directing the behaviour of others. An EEO co-ordinator position was
assumed by the PPTA Women's Contact to have status in the hierarchy, in
order to be influential:

> *"if you're the co-ordinator then doing EEO is going out and and
> talking to everyone within the school to see if they're aware of it and if
> it is actually happening within those areas, because then they would
> make the people below them aware of the fact that they are trying to get
> it going for the school."*

The male assistant teacher cast PPTA in the role of EEO facilitator as *"the ones
that are supposed to look after teachers, both male and female, white and non-white."*
The principal however stated *"one of our staff members here has a focus. It's one of
her tasks just to remind us with a special reminder. The PPTA has a person with that
sort of responsibility and the chairperson does the same thing."* In identifying the
woman on the management team as the watchdog who has the responsibility
for keeping the others up to the mark, the principal formulated EEO concerns
as peripheral to the daily workings of the institution. There is a similar
formulation in identifying two other EEO agents, in terms of their watchdog

status, one for staff generally and one for the BOT. Management responsibility for EEO has been delegated lower down the chain. It may therefore be argued that EEO has been allocated reduced institutional power to effect change (Weedon, 1987:135).

6.5   Discourses of Empowerment and Change

However, from the interview data in School B, and corroborated through the written documentation presented in Chapter Four, there is evidence of "the ways in which struggle is an important part of social relations of inequality" (Court, 1992:192). The processes of advertising of job opportunities and the encouraging applications may be considered to offer more opportunity. The Promotion of Women Review practice historically instituted in the school was seen to have sufficient power to constrain meanings and place limits on the arbitrariness of decision-making on appointments. The practice of resistance, "always a possibility" (Court, 1992:192) was seen here to be working in ways which were having an effect.

Some resistance to the power of the family role socialisation discourse was constituted by the female assistant teacher when she spoke of younger women not regarding children as their first priority, *"they are going to make a name for themselves, and they're the ones that'll go out and push themselves to do that."* Furthermore an economic downturn was seen to be reshaping roles and changing traditional family patterns. The principal referred to *"many families where, suddenly mum is now the breadwinner, not dad. There's a whole thing across the community."* In commenting that even women with children can organise themselves to succeed, the EEO co-ordinator told the story of a principal of hers who had "made it": *"we started at a girls' school on the very same day. She asked me what I'd done with my kids, and she told me what she'd done with hers, and she's made it, she's a principal, and she's perhaps a couple of years younger than me, but I was never interested in that because I had another agenda.* Interestingly, the care of children is still constructed as this woman's responsibility. Further, the EEO co-ordinator revealed the social power of the family role socialisation discourse in constraining women to particular roles accepted as natural: *I think a lot of women are like that. They make that sacrifice and don't consider it until the children are grown up, and by then they've either lost their confidence to go for it, or they feel oh, it's not for me. I think it has a lot to do with the fact that they have children."*

Negative feeling was noted by the PR2 male *"when more women were starting to get appointed to PR positions than men."* The EEO co-ordinator was conscious of *"little pockets of antagonism"* in *"generally men over a certain age, basically boys from the old school, they're over fifty basically."* She felt to *"younger guys it's a joke, or their defence perhaps"* although elsewhere she spoke of younger men in their early and mid-thirties as openly more supportive *"who perhaps are married to professional women, too, whose careers are important."* Males felt threatened in that *"they think that they might not get the promotion because the woman will get it in place of them even though they've got equal qualifications"* (BOT staff rep).

Changing patterns in favour of women as a result of EEO made EEO a sensitive, often contentious, issue in the female PR2's eyes. She compared her own early teaching days, where male colleagues *"got promoted very quickly"* and she didn't, with the current situation: *"there's a young man on the staff who's being groomed up a bit for promotion. But he has not yet been given any promotion because every time a round comes up, I think they look at the numbers. I think in the general scheme of things, had there not been awareness of EEO, then he would have been promoted at least a year ago, but he hasn't been."* And indeed the female assistant teacher cited her own appointment as evidence that HOD's *"were keen to get someone young with good ideas, and a female teacher as well."*

Through a radical discourse, both the BOT staff representative and the PR2 female commented on current job structuring and occupancy, which effectively reduced opportunity for women and perpetuated gender inequity. The PPTA imperative to have one woman in the three senior administrative positions (see page 12) was seen to impact in ways which prescribed interpretations of merit. This is illustrated by the female PR2:

> *"if you've got a female AP, the schools won't tend to think of having a female DP as well, because they say oh no, you've got to have one of each gender, and so that you're never going to break that cycle ... that cuts down the number of positions that women can get into at that top level ... the principal is seen as separate and sort of not necessarily running the school, more sort of administration, so they tend to look at the AP's and DP's role as the ones that actually have the contact with the students."*

The same radical discourse identified permanent tenure positions as also significantly reducing opportunity. The EEO co-ordinator referred to the HOD position as *"basically set in concrete"* and very difficult to remove someone from *"and put somebody else in who you feel would do a better job ... often you have people coming up in the ranks if you like, who I think would make excellent administrators even within a department area, but you have very little to offer them."* The principal, too, felt that the contract system would free up positions and open up opportunities for both women and men, especially for senior PR holders in schools: *"I'm sure you would find there are more men unhappy than women ... they feel trapped."* Their concerns focus on "equality of *effects* or *outcomes*, arguing that to fully include the human diversity within the labour force, the object is to remove barriers to the full participation of all groups" (Armstrong, 1994:193), a radical discourse. In this respect permanent tenure had to be considered as a constraint on EEO: *"you can't just get rid of people because they happen to be male and they have a senior PR unit and you need more women"* (PPTA Women's Contact).

6.6 Summary

In Chapter Six I have presented my analysis of the interview data from School B. I have replicated the format of Chapter Five in identifying from the texts of the interviews a range of discourses. I have been concerned to demonstrate how the data as texts constitute EEO in gender-specific ways, and how

particular social interests are privileged (Weedon, 1987:123) through discourses and social practices in a culturally and historically specific location.

Various discourses have been identified. EEO is seen to be constituted in multiple and conflicting discourses, and change as it moves from one discursive context to another. EEO has therefore "no essential definition" (Jones, 1994:175) and is seen to be constructed in an ongoing manner between competing interests in a network of asymmetrical power relations. It is the recognition of the battle for subjectivity, and the identification of particular versions of meaning, temporarily fixed in this analysis (Weedon, 1987:105) which opens up the possibilities of resistance and change.

My case study research has opened up to inquiry two institutions and their practices. I have already explained that generalising from the case study instance is invalid. However from these detailed, albeit partial accounts reported in Chapters Five and Six, particular issues have emerged as significant to this study. These issues are constituted by and through the identified discourses, and the multiple positioning of the participants, and myself as researcher. I examine these issues in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Defining Discourses - Power, Practices and Practitioners

"EEO initiatives can only be implemented if all concerned have a clear commitment to the policy"

Lees & Scott (1990:343)

7.1   Introduction

In Chapter Four I presented an analysis of school-based documentation, separately reporting on the data from each school. I have maintained the separation by reporting on the interview data from School A in Chapter Five, and the data from School B in Chapter Six.

I needed an elaboration of the characteristics unique to each "micropolitical context" (Marshall, 1991:139) so I have placed participants' "own understandings of their experiences at the centre of the research agenda" (Casey & Apple, 1989:180) and aimed to expose the ways in which they mediate, neglect, or oppose the EEO policy through the particular ways of fixing identity and meaning (Weedon, 1987:173). My concern has also been to identify characteristics and processes operating in the "internal labour market of teaching to manage and control promotional opportunities into the upper sector" (Evetts, 1989:200) in two historically specific contexts. The emphasis on meaning and its construction in contexts has helped me to make sense of how participants responded to current strategies and the "competing definitions and opposing interpretations" (Casey & Apple, 1989:174) which characterised their discourses.

I also needed, however, to tease out the complexity of three interconnected strands: "the peculiar structuring of schools, with its mesh of bureaucratic and professional patterns of organisation" (Wheatley, 1981:259), the concept of opportunity, and the manner in which senior administrative posts are assigned. This would enable me to determine factors which could be seen to impact on the effectiveness of equal employment opportunities legislation. This requires me to draw some tentative conclusions from a perspective of those characteristics shared by the two schools. As a result, I attempt in Chapter Seven to draw out several common themes from the data. The themes identified relate to discursive constructions of EEO; relations of power; women's place within school bureaucracies; the social construction of merit; and opportunities for resistances and change.

Locating these themes within the context of the existing literature is useful in exploring some of the ways in which gender factors and value distinctions construct career opportunities for women teachers (Court, 1994:218).

7.2   Discursive constructions of EEO

The first important theme to be considered is that of EEO and its discursive constructions. Chapters Four, Five and Six evidenced an internal struggle between competing models of EEO. As well EEO is discursively constructed as a unified concept through a discourse which competed for allegiances against other discourses within the power networks. Such expressions, and the sites of their articulation work to "create and sustain particular visions of the social world" (Davies, 1989:xi), which impact on the power of EEO to affect social change.

Within School A the authority of EEO as a redistributive mechanism was seriously challenged through a liberal right voluntarism discourse used by males in top level positions, e.g. the principal and the BOT chairman, yet also articulated by others in different positionings, for example, PR1 female, PR2 female. The voluntarism discourse affirmed choice as the legitimating philosophy, and both the individual and the school as free agents to exercise that choice, "to develop and exercise their abilities" (Jones et al. 1990:88). EEO was bounded and further stigmatised as "unfair" in opposition to the liberal egalitarian discourse through a construction of EEO as providing assistance to the "deserving, the needy." This construction of EEO as a biased practice which discriminated in favour of women was linked with and at times absorbed into, another discourse, revealed to be both organisationally based and socially powerful, a discourse of deficit. The deficit discourse essentialised women as a group, measured them against a norm which was male-based, and found them wanting, as "second-rate employees." Further to this women were constructed as lacking not only in ability and experience, but in confidence. The organisational context remains the same, and women are compelled to adapt to a male pattern to succeed.

A discourse of biculturalism, which surfaced briefly, was similarly shaped within the deficit discourse, constituting Maori competence as below the required standard. This construction may be held to doubly disadvantage Maori women through their gender and race positioning.

EEO was also seen to be a discourse which those with decision-making power on appointments absorbed into a managerialist discourse, that is, promoting a culture that was hierarchical, competitive, individualistic. Allied with a discourse of voluntarism, the managerialist discourse appeared very powerful as a common-sense discourse which provided for subjectivity and intuitive judgement through absence of or loosely written job descriptions, as part of the 'natural' authority of those in power. Within this perspective EEO is seen to be a precept not carried out in practice. Relegated to a moral conscience, EEO was to function as a constraint on authority, to the extent of guiding management practice sufficiently well to preclude any challenge. This construction appeared to me to suppress the legitimacy of monitoring systems. This construction, too, would bound EEO as symbolic, veil "shifting prejudices" (Watson, 1992), and supply the vision without the reality, for it is

argued (Sayers & Tremaine, 1994:12) "there has to be a plan of action, and legitimation of that plan by the organisation" for EEO progress to be made.

However, EEO was also seen to be the basis for the articulation of alternative meanings which did not marginalise and subordinate women. By affirming women's right to equal access, EEO became a discourse of empowerment, used for example by the PPTA Women's Contact (School A). That women did have the confidence to apply was testified to in comments which indicated that men no longer had the competitive advantage. This would correlate with Slyfield's (1993) findings in Chapter One documenting an increase in both applications made for senior administrative positions and in appointment success.

Problematic, however, was the discourse of bureaucratic neutrality which was construed not only as guarantor of equal access but as a distributor of equal outcomes. Within this discourse merit became an impartial distributive mechanism, the principle underpinning "good employer" practice. The problem was pinpointed by the principal in his open acknowledgement of current male employer bias towards selecting males, Thornton's "homosocial reproduction" (1985:36), but which he left unchallenged. The BOT chairman, too, acknowledged everyone's "natural bias."

An emerging discourse of human resource management (HRM), where employers needed to be convinced of the advantages of a more diverse workforce, was being shaped within the voluntarism discourse. The validity of EEO was however seriously challenged through its being reduced to a low resourcing priority. EEO was also challenged in terms of a reduced applicant pool and staff stability within a tighter economic and educational climate "when there are fewer promotion posts and less movement generally within the teaching profession" (Evetts, 1989:200).

In School B, the power of EEO was also severely constrained through lack of organisational commitment to training, targeted development and attendant monitoring. However, despite the dominance of a managerialist discourse, EEO was constituted as a powerful and active "reverse" discourse, couched not only in terms of social justice as a moral force seeking to restrict the opportunity for appointment bias, but as a discourse of actual practice. Historically the PPTA-led Promotion of Women Review annual data base collection was seen to nourish the discourse, with practices minuted and testified to in the interviews. This reverse discourse was shown, however, to be conflicting with other discourses, principally the discourses of voluntarism, equal educational opportunities and human resource management.

Within a liberal right positioning the voluntarism discourse was shaped partially through suppressing resourcing in terms of EEO training and targeted EEO development, partially through accusations of 'social engineering', seen as illicit intervention into the workings of natural market forces. These market forces constituted in part a common-sense discourse against which EEO appeared to be stigmatised as unfair practice, and

incorporated into the woman-as-deficit discourse. This latter discourse devalued women both appointed and not appointed as undeserving, below standard. A further stigmatisation constructed EEO by discursively linking "aggressive" with "feminist", surprisingly by the female EEO co-ordinator as well as by older males, faced with reduced employment opportunities. Watson's (1992) claim of "prejudice against women who have any taint of feminism" appears to be substantiated. The prejudice has shifted to EEO. Faludi (1991:12-13) lays claim to a "backlash" in which she claims that "identifying feminism as women's enemy only furthers the ends of a backlash against women's equality, simultaneously deflecting attention from the backlash's central role and recruiting women to attack their own cause."

Noticeably within School B, the issues of gender in employment within the school as an educational organisation are seen to be further complicated and compounded by those relating to sexism in the curriculum. The equal educational opportunities (EEdO) discourse refocussed the issues in terms of equal outcomes for students. While fitting neatly within the "vision" concept of EEO (Sayers & Tremaine, 1994:12), the discursive construction of EEdO aligned with EEO interests was shown to be voiced predominantly by women. Through the EEdO discourse these women construed teaching and attending to student needs as a valued activity against which administration/ managerialism was negatively perceived. That this discourse may also contribute, politically, to shaping the attitudes of these, and presumably other women, is open to question. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual.

Within both schools the scope for arbitrariness was increased. Despite the compulsory requirement to implement EEO, the response from each of the two schools was consistent with the voluntary approach, identified as acceptable "to most policy-makers and business people" (Briar, 1994:42). Resistances were engendered by any attempt at compulsion, as evidenced in ERO Reporting (Chapter Four), resistance to charges of sexism (School A), and accusations of social engineering (School B). The EEO legislation, constructed in opposition to the voluntarism discourse in its turn linked with state minimalism, the withdrawal of compliance to charter goals and weakening of ERO monitoring, was negatively perceived. Stigmatised through its compulsion, EEO became an illegitimate intervention in local affairs, suggesting "to unconvinced stake-holders that members of target groups are second-rate employers" (Briar, 1994:41). Consistent with expressions of a voluntary approach to EEO there was no evidence of EEO training provision or resourcing, targeted employer-led EEO development plans and monitoring of EEO progress.

I would argue that the issue of training is a key issue. Since training opportunities were taken up only by women trustees in School B, it could be inferred that the notion of "training" is the site of value distinctions which work against women's interests. It could then be argued that 'training' is located within a deficit discourse. This argument is strengthened, in my view, by expressions of 'natural' knowledge on EEO matters accrued through

trustee occupational experience and positioning (page 101). I further argue that expressions of women's deficit in terms of insufficient educational qualifications, lack of confidence and the consequent need for assistance and mentoring contrast with assumptions of leadership qualities as 'natural' and 'inbred' and hegemonically linked to masculine qualities in ways that contribute to a powerful ideology which reinforces a nature:nurture dichotomy. What is 'natural' is male-defined and positively valued, constituted within a liberal left discourse of self-interested individuals competing on an equal basis. What is 'assisted' is negatively perceived as interventionary and running counter to the dominant liberal humanist conception of self-motivated individuals working to realise their own potential.

7.3 Relations of power

Court's (1994:225) contention that "the government's commitment to equity concerns must have influenced boards' prioritising of their efforts within what have been enormous work demands" has been corroborated in the data. Yet what emerged more strongly still was evidence of a struggle between a belief in local autonomy as natural and compliance to outside authority as interventionist, illegitimate, forced, and unnatural. This struggle raises important considerations with regard to how and where decisions are made, and the ways in which control is exercised in the policy implementation process. With responsibility for management decentralised, it is argued (Walsh & Dickson, 1994:52) that "the creation of a greater number of potential veto points enhances the opportunities for successful resistance."

In both schools the voluntarism discourse has already been identified as significant. While there are particular differences in detail in each context, EEO was seen to be captured within the voluntarism discourse in three important ways. Firstly, the BOT chairman and principal cited the appointment of women, in two instances, as evidence of EEO-linked employment practice incorporated into appointment processes, which they thus appeared to confirm as gender neutral (Chase & Bell, 1990:167). Yet their discourse constructed women as appointment risks unless their performance had already been ratified by others. Within the meritocratic discourse, discussed in Chapter Two, these women had earned the position on 'desert', on the basis of past performance. That their performance was, in effect, guaranteed, reinforced value distinctions.

Secondly, the emergence of subjectivity and intuitive judgement as a legitimate part of the "natural" authority of those in power to make rational decisions, increased the amount of local discretion. Factors outside the skill and knowledge requirements for performance in a position were evidenced. In both schools, for example, the discursive linking of masculinity with notions of leadership, authority and control constituted a powerful commonsense discourse that was seen to inform decision-making practices.

Finally, the ideology of free market-monetarist forms of economics, and the advocacy of a reduced role for the state in the provision of education, health and welfare services composed government intervention, even in the form of legislation, as "social engineering" (principal - School B), hence illegitimate. EEO was thus framed as an illicit interventionary practice constructed in opposition to the discourse of bureaucratic neutrality. This raises the question of power and control. It is argued that the liberal model of EEO "fails to take into account the vested interests of power groups" (Lees & Scott, 1990:342), particularly in assuming that change will come about by consensus without conflict.

The situation is complex. Part of its complexity arises from different conceptions of EEO, some positive and some negative. Additionally one's gender and positioning in the hierarchy appeared to affect the degree of commitment to EEO, and the kinds of understanding of its principles. Also there were some who were constituted as active agents, others identified who were supposed to be active agents, and yet others for whom EEO was not a matter of immediate concern.

There are several issues of importance here. The top female position, that of the assistant principal, was identified in each school as a key positioning for EEO influence on administrative decisions. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, it would appear that EEO is perceived as a woman's task. It may be argued that assigning EEO as a woman's responsibility within the organisation associates "femininity with moral authority and leadership", with femininity structured around the "Moral Redemptress" (James & Saville-Smith, 1989:54), the notion of women as a powerful being able to save men from "male anarchic tendencies." It may also be argued that assigning EEO as a woman's responsibility positions EEO within the deficit discourse, thus compounding the power asymmetry.

Secondly, administrative decisions are made in exclusive arenas. Those arenas require someone to be there, in a position of authority, to be a watchdog. Attendant to this is the vulnerability of those in lower levels of hierarchy in appearing to align themselves with something that is not institutionally sanctioned. What this means is that EEO has not been fully accepted at the employer level, despite the training opportunities and targeted information from a number of agencies detailed in Chapter One, and evidenced also in the literature (Briar, 1994:31).

Employer inaction requires EEO agents in other quarters. The PPTA Women's Contacts, both assistant teachers, did not appear through the data to be actively working in the interests of all women on their staff. The PPTA Chairperson in each school had more obvious agency, in their role as negotiators of teacher rights. What emerged most clearly for me in these data was the constitution of PPTA itself as a discourse. Through its networks, information flows and interventions on behalf of teacher interests, the PPTA discourse reaches to ground level and in terms of "conscientization" (Freire, 1973 in Collins, 1982:49) becomes a powerful agent of EEO interests. This was

seen in both schools, though in more concrete form in School B through the PPTA-led activity in gathering Promotion of Women Review statistics, and the struggle over definitions, evidenced in both document and interview data.

However with no state sanctions for non-compliance and a political climate favouring a voluntary approach to legislative requirement, control appeared to be firmly in the hands of each institution with "local level actors" in positions of authority able to do their own separate priority exercises (Moffat, 1992:47).

7.4   Women's place within school bureaucracies

Chapter One documents evidence of historical patterns of inequality in the teaching workforce (pages 6-10). This research study has revealed discursive practices within schools which appear to be perpetuating workplace inequalities. Part of the problem was seen to arise from the hierarchical positioning of staff, the decision-making processes, and the culture of the organisation, and the ways these interconnect.

(a)   The hierarchical positioning of staff

The authority which resides in the top position of the hierarchal structure was seen to be invested in the principal in both schools.   More than that, the discursive linking of leadership, ability and authority to qualities defined as masculine and constituted as the norm in a 'common-sense discourse' was evidenced in both schools, as contributing to a wider mythology about the nature of leadership which could affect appointment decisions. The hierarchal structure of asymmetrical power relations was seen, also, to not only inhibit resistances from individuals positioned at lower levels, but create, as it were, a communication divide, constructed in a number of ways.   The female assistant teacher in School B, for example, commented on appointments as what went on *"behind closed doors with HOD's and up"*, that is, her exclusion.

An "administration" discourse emerged through the data in both schools, constructed, it seemed, in opposition to a "woman-as-teacher" discourse. One aspect of this administration discourse was male generated and constituted in part qualifications in   specialist management/educational administration papers as helpful for promotional consideration.   Since there had also emerged a view of women as "deficient" in qualifications, for example in School A many women were considered struggling to complete a first-level degree the emergence of a requirement for post-entry qualifications on top of continuous service would additionally disadvantage women applicants who possessed neither. Women's double workload of employment and child-care, for example, was seen to be accepted as normal, for example, by the male EEO co-ordinator in School A.   Yet this double workload has already been evidenced in Chapter One as one of the biggest barriers to women's career development. Adding additional qualifications requirements would appear to compound existing inequalities. Female participants construed teaching as an activity valued more highly than administration/bureaucracy, especially in

School B. That "women choose to teach, while men manage" (Strober & Tyack, 1980:494), and that the teaching/administration dichotomy is structured by gender are areas that require further investigation.

The notion of "occupational communities" (Evetts, 1989:198) may be relevant here, in the sense of a "strong sense of shared identity" and "fellow-feeling" which may "trigger sponsorship and (entry into) community networks" (Evetts, ibid.: 195). The principal's power and role in shaping decisions and access to community networks had emerged quite clearly through the data of both schools, coupled with what appeared to be the concept of an occupational community, of a *"buddy group"* according to the PPTA Women's Contact in School A, and similarly constituted by other participants. Membership of this latter group was considered important to promotional opportunity by both males and females, in both schools. It is the practices of inclusion and exclusion into these groups which become problematic, and which require further investigation.

Sponsorship may be interpreted as an organisational intervention to develop perceived potential and enhance abilities that will benefit the organisation in diverse ways, and therefore may be considered a practice of inclusion. There was evidence in the data of mentoring practices informally instituted, notably by males (School B), and sponsorship practices within a human resource management discourse in School B, formally instituted, to widen the appointments base.

However, categories that have their "liberating moment" (Nicholson, 1990:12) may also control. As I have already argued the practice of mentoring constituted within a liberal egalitarian discourse, may be seen as reinforcing a "woman-as-deficit" discourse. Women are seen to be needing assistance to reach the (male-defined) standard. This construction not only denies but renders invisible any possible and existing sponsorship of males. Mentoring may be regarded as a suspect practice to assist women who cannot make it on their own running counter to the dominant liberal humanist discourse, and can therefore itself become gendered and negatively perceived. Mentoring is therefore a site of struggle over meaning. It also needs researching.

(b)   Decision-making processes

In the participants' comments, considerations of age often intersected with sexuality discourses, it seemed, doubly disadvantaging women. While younger women were denied access to positions through their constitution through a "fertility" discourse as potential mothers and childminders, those women who did "interrupt" their careers for this type of service were consequently placed as older than the average male applicant, and positioned as lacking the length and variety of institutional experience that only full-time continuous service renders possible.

As already stated, in both schools a deficit discourse constituted those who did not get promoted as "somehow deficient in important skills, or content to

remain on lower levels" (Court, 1992:186). However reflective comments on male advantage by a female assistant teacher, and a BOT staff representative's account of pressure on the BOT to adapt to EEO policy (School A), would appear to acknowledge the existence of bias in decision-making practices. The recognition by the School B principal of unfair practice as an outcome of individual *"agendas"* brought to the decision-making process was for him resolved through consensual decision-making practice, where consensus would exercise the necessary control.

Practices deemed unfair, however, were not always resisted, as evidenced in particular responses to instances of sexism School A. This raises the question of lay involvement in organisational appointment decisions, in regard to the nature of communities from which the lay trustee members are drawn, and the extent of their representativeness in terms of race, gender, class among others. School A data revealed more comments by participants on the lack of formalised appointment criteria, and concerns expressed regarding board of trustee subjectivity and "insider" knowledge through comments from their own children enrolled at the school. School B appeared to have more formalised criteria, with the principal referring to *"job descriptions."* However, since in both schools the majority of participants affirmed leadership qualities as "inbred" and gauged best by "intuitive judgement", a phenomenon evidenced in the literature (page 16), appointment decisions would appear to be linked to the power of prevailing stereotypes. The stereotype of the woman as underachiever, and the man as achiever is as powerful in School B as in School A, albeit be positioned in multiple discourses.

This research study has opened up to scrutiny some of the practices relating to appointment decisions, and reveals informal practices, and reliance on intuition or 'feel' in ways which are seen to be discriminating against women.

However, Watson's (page 12) surmise of a link between EEO and the PPTA instigated Promotion of Women Review statistics was clearly substantiated in School B and appeared to have had sufficient organisationally based power to constrain policy definitions, influence decisions and impact on position of responsibility allocations, in ways that were seen to be assisting women's full inclusion into the school occupational community.

(c)   The culture of the organisation

Pervasive within the two schools was the conservative agenda I outlined in Chapter Two. The hegemonic linking of the liberal egalitarian discourse to the male-defined career pattern of full and continuing employment productivity for the employer, contributed to a women-as-deficit discourse. The construal of women's domestic and caregiving roles not only as natural, but as their 'choice', is compounded by interpretations of their role acceptance as lack of interest, commitment and experience in the paid working world. This is seen in comments made by both male and female participants in School A and in School B.

In addition, the centrality of sexuality emerged through the data in both schools in a discourse of hetero-relations that reinforced in multiple ways the public/private differential, already evidenced within the literature (O'Neill, 1990, 1992) as perpetuating gender discrimination in employment. It has to do with notions of the family man as breadwinner, and the wife as childbearer and child-minder. Marriage was discursively constructed as the norm, with single and solo women, and older married women with no dependent children, perceived as threats to the established order.

Further evidence supported my original contention that a discourse of hetero-relations operating as a major organising principle within the schools. Practices of sexism that may be included in particular sexual harassment definitions were seen to operate more noticeably in one school within the network of hierarchical power relations, as evidenced in comments by the PR1 female. That these practices were integral to the functioning of the organisation may be deduced from evidence of the range of responses to instances of sexual harassment, and patterns of speech and joking. Such a range was seen to include forms of compliance, resistance, and reflection evidencing the "multiplicity of power relations focused in sexuality" (Weedon, 1987:124).

In both schools, then, there was evidence of a patterning of male-based definitions structuring norms which contributed to the culture of the organisation. Women were measured against these norms, found to be deficient, or construed as choosing not to meet the standard.

7.5   The social construction of merit

The fourth important theme of the case studies is that of merit and its discursive constructions. In Derrida's terms (1973:142 in Weedon, 1987:105), the discursive construction of merit attests to a range of meanings articulated at different sites, in favour of particular interests, within a specific context of power relations. This view is corroborated by the data.

In School A there was a range of factors and positionings which were seen to directly influence the ways in which the meritocratic discourse was taken up by the decision-makers. The liberal egalitarian discourse of individual responsibility to achieve was seen to presume equality of access and repose on male-defined norms which had gained currency through the discursive linking of masculinity and definitions of career patterns, authority, physical capability and leadership. Intervention in school affairs through EEdO was legitimated as an attempt to develop girls' self-esteem and abilities in ways that would help them to achieve. In this way a deficit discourse was validated. In addition against a male-based norm the EEO/EEdO "confusion" noted in the literature in Chapter One was perhaps having a more serious political and social effect. Women on the staff who did not achieve in terms of the male-defined career pattern were construed variously as deficient, or choosing to be different, opting out.

As already evidenced, a discourse of heterorelations worked hegemonically to discriminate against women, through a reticulation of discourses. Women were not only constructed in biological terms of their reproductive function, with heterosexuality and child-bearing and concomitant child-care assumed. But also running counter to the fertility discourse was a stigmatisation of the child-bearing, child-care roles, for example, when the School A BOT chairman spoke of the "interrupted" career pattern as women's lack of commitment and a financial cost to the organisation and the construction of the "interruption" as useless or irrelevant experience. The disruption of children's learning is constituted as contrary to the aims of the organisation, hence presumably a "disloyal" act. In addition, it may be argued that the focus on teaching places women within a teaching discourse, which has the potential to work against women's interests through a teaching/administration dichotomy.

Further to this the heterosexual discourse positioned marriage as the norm, yet married women were further evaluated in terms of their husband's occupation. In School B the principal's discursive linking of a marriage split with career advancement positioned women so described as abnormal, and suffering the consequence of non-compliance. The stereotype of the woman as underachiever, was in this way strengthened. Furthermore women who were ostensibly past childbearing age were seen to be subjected to discrimination in two particular and interconnected ways: firstly through a discourse which constituted fertility as the norm, for a productive working life. Secondly through an ageism discourse seen to be premised on the male-defined uninterrupted career pattern in terms of definitions of what constitutes relevant experience.

Concomitantly, the stereotype of the masculine man as achiever was embedded discursively in similar ways in the organisation. This stereotype was not only reinforced through the EEdO discourse as an interventionist strategy to assist girls to reach the standard (School A) - presumably boys were the standard - but also in discourses where qualities associated with leadership, discipline and physical capability were discursively linked with those identified as masculine, as evidence in the BOT chairman's comments in School A, for example.

This discursive linking is all the more dangerous when criteria for appointment were found to be undefined and decisions relied on subjective and intuitive judgements in the data from both schools. The insistence that leadership qualities were "inbred", and cannot be produced by "training", may perhaps be linked to the non-resourcing of EEO training as seen in Chapter Four, and the assumption of EEO knowledge in boards of trustees. This, as I have already argued, could constitute a nature/nurture dichotomy, where what is "natural" is positive, affirmed and identified with 'masculine' qualities, and where "nurture" considerations contribute to the teaching and training discourses. These latter discourses appeared to be inhabited and positively valued by women. That they are "gendered" is open to question, and requires further investigation.

Within formulations of what constitutes relevant experience for a senior position in administration, two further aspects emerged which I considered significant. Firstly there was frequent mention of holding positions that enabled oversight of a large number of staff as an HOD or in other school-based committee leadership positions. Interestingly, particular subject area positioning was not identified by participants, although significant in the literature (O'Neill, 1992; Court, 1994). Secondly, "dean's work" was routinely cited as an essential ingredient in the recipe for promotion to leadership positions. Court (1994:219), however, mentions the lower value given to the work of nurturing in comparison to more technical and financial aspects, with pastoral care positions such as guidance and counselling a "stuck career route for secondary teachers from which it has been difficult to gain promotion." This is an area that requires further exploration. Is there a shifting perspective on guidance and its constitution as effective apprenticeship for leadership positions?

Within both schools further formulations of requisite experience in considerations of merit identified as significant mobility, community involvement and extra-curricular activities. The constitution of women as marriage partners on a deeply entrenched stereotype of male as breadwinner/female as child-bearer and child-minder, construed as their choice, would seem to preclude much of women's active participation in these areas apart from stepping outside the norm and breaking the "natural" order or bearing a "double workload (Martin, 1987:439). These requirements would appear to add to the complexity of women's positionings within discourses at any given point in time. It is argued (Weedon, 1987:79) that the meaning of experience "is perhaps the most crucial site of political struggle over meaning ... it plays an important part in determining the individual's role as social agent."

A further gender-based distinction of female as emotional/male as rational seen in the BOT chairman's comments in School A reinforced a homosocial discourse (Thornton: 1985:36) where leadership-as-rational was hegemonically linked to qualities identified as male, and female-as-emotional and nurturing, was linked to female and children, and hence teaching. That this discourse contributes to the teaching/administration cleavage already evidenced also needs further research.

As noted above, considerations of age was seen in both schools to be significant in interpreting merit appointment decisions which contributed to gendered practice, with a banding between late 30's-early 40's constituting the pool of suitable applicants. Age has emerged in this study as a major impact factor on appointment decisions. Age requires further research.

Analysis of the data within this section has attended to penetrating and exposing the "subjective veil" (Thornton, 1985:37) which cloaks the concept of merit. This analysis has revealed competing and multiple assumptions and values brought to the interpretations of merit in selection processes. An understanding of how discourses of merit are mobilised in a particular

institution at a particular moment is, in Weedon's words (1987:135) "the first stage in intervening in order to initiate change."

7.6   Opportunities for Change - Discourses of Resistance

Thornton's (1985:37) conception of the merit principle as a "distributive mechanism" preventing wholesale social change appeared to be vindicated in the data through the identification of practices which were seen to be working to sustain "homosocial reproduction". In School A, for example, a harassment discourse was seen to be constraining the actions and opportunities of girls and women. In both schools the interconnectedness of various constructions of women in family role terms was seen to constitute a powerful deficit discourse, within which women were constrained and stigmatised as non-achievers. The picture, however, is far more complex than that, yet not totally pessimistic.   Since multiple discourses were seen to be competing for allegiance at any one time, and the individual emerged as positioned in multiple ways within these often conflicting discourses there were many points of intervention. This "intervention" was characterised in a number of ways.

Firstly, the interview process as part of this research study structured the opportunity for participants not only to discuss EEO-related issues but, significantly, to reflect on them. This is evidenced in School B in comments made by the PPTA Women's Contact about her role and responsibility for EEO and illustrates Lather's (1986:272) notion of *catalytic validity*, "the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses and energises participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Freire (1973) terms "conscientization." Through my participation in the research process and my reflection, I, too have been reoriented, focused and energised. However, when comments made by the principal of School A evidenced his "knowing reality" i.e. that male-dominated BOT's perpetuate 'homosocial' reproduction, his comment "it would be grossly unfair on men to change it" showed his resistance to "transforming" reality. Cameron et al.'s (1992:134) argument that knowledge produced through the research process is "interactionally hazardous" in that it may increase the resistance to change may be justified.

The recognition that the self is always and inevitably situated in multiple and conflicting discourses helps us to "keep questions of ethical communication open" (Jones, 1994:179), since it is argued that each discursive context has its own "ethics." Resistance to the confining of persons to sex-typed jobs by the PR1 female in School A can be conceived of as liberatory in its appeal to fairness, opening up women's access to and participation in, areas of activity traditionally reserved for males. These areas of activity would possibly serve as routine apprenticeship for future leadership positions and thus contribute to useful experience in considerations of merit. A similar appeal to fairness is evidenced in comments on changing patterns in childcare made by two males and the female staff rep in School A, with fathers prepared to accept more responsibility.

The female assistant teacher in School A constituted EEO-centred talk as itself an interventionary practice, in terms of producing a new discourse to have a "social effect", (Weedon, 1987:111). Talking about EEO, therefore, has a material force, a capacity to constrain, shape, coerce, as well as to potentiate individual action" (Davies, 1989:xi).

Crucial also to women's interests were comments made by males working to "deconstruct masculinity" its part in the exercising of patriarchal power" (Weedon, 1987:173). This was evidenced in comments signalled above by males in School A on changing patterns in child-care, as well as in the radical discourse used by two males, one in each school, through which permanent tenure was construed as a constraint on employment opportunity for women. The power of the social construction of the woman as underachiever, was shown to be resisted by the PR1 female in School A. This woman was evidenced as openly confronting practices of harassment meant to keep her in her place, the exercise of patriarchal power. By including "men's voices" (Kramarae, 1988:252) in the sample, I have been able to show some ways in which both men and women are "constituted and reconstituted through a variety of discursive practices" (Leach & Davies, 1990:325).

Despite evidence in this research study of widely held and deeply entrenched stereotyping confining women of child-bearing age to a domestic role, a young woman had, in School A, been promoted to a PR position. Her own construction of her promotion framed EEO as a discourse of empowerment, a discourse having a "social effect" (Weedon, 1987:111) by virtue of its existence, and there for others to pick up. Interesting, however, was to see her feminism change "as we move from one discursive context to another" (Jones, 1994:186). Her consideration of her possible future family role saw her fall back into accepting the above-mentioned dominant family role paradigm. However, what is significant, is the shifting from one discursive position to another in an ongoing construction. This "shifting" offers the opportunity of "intervening in order to initiate change" (Weedon, 1987:135).

The PPTA imperative to have at least one woman in the top three senior administrative positions (page 11) in schools may be constituted as an interventionary practice in order to initiate change. "A social effect" (Weedon, 1987:111) was claimed by Watson (1989b:10-12), hypothesised by Slyfield (1993:5) and substantiated in the data. However, the "liberating moment" (Nicholson, 1990:12) was seen to have shifted to a different form of control, spoken of by the female PR2 in School B. In a senior administrative hierarchy of three, *the principal is seen as separate*", so it appears natural to appoint a male and female in the other positions which *cuts down the number of positions that women can get into at that top level.*" This evidence would appear to substantiate Watson's claim (page 16) of shifting prejudices.

Practices of mentoring and sponsorship, highlighted particularly in School B, were seen to be contributing to the advancement of women to senior positions. A form of mentoring formally instituted and linked to an open application process for appointments, whereby individual teachers were invited to apply

for positions, appeared to be in School B the outcome of a policy which aimed to identify and eliminate barriers to women's employment. The data in Chapters Four and Six corroborated the existence of the practice, which was seen to be contested by some, and accepted by others. Other teachers spoke of being actively mentored. Significant, however, was the constitution of mentoring as mostly a male practice, engaged in by those in higher status positions. This opens up a new field of enquiry.

Evidence has accrued through the data, in both Schools A and B, of the resistances to the discourse of bureaucratic neutrality which were lifting the "subjective veil" (Thornton, 1985:35) of decisions based on interpretations of merit. Position and age emerged as significant variables. Those teachers positioned at a low level, i.e. assistant teachers, were not only younger, but were more distant from the "world" of administration. Assumptions of procedural neutrality and fair competition within the bureaucratic processes were common. The character of the organisation and the number of veto points (Walsh & Dickson, 1994:52) that generate discrimination and exploitation was unquestioned. Interestingly those who had had experience of formal appointment processes substantiated other findings in the literature of intuitive judgement (PR2 male in School A), homosocial reproduction tendencies (principal of School A) and bias in interview questions (female assistant principal of School B), thus opening up to enquiry a range of issues surrounding appointment practices.

In Chapter Four a minuted struggle over policy definitions in School B was evidence of ground level resistances to practices deemed to disadvantage women. Attempts were evidenced to constrain definitions in the written policy documents through processes of negotiation. At stake were the "effective limits on the power" (Davis, 1969:4) of the boards of trustees and personnel to make their own decisions unmonitored at the school site.

In terms of changing beliefs and practices, expressions of EEO have been seen to range from mere policy declarations without substance, for example, the "common-sense" approach to EEO in School A, seen to exist alongside practices of sexism, challenged but undeterred, to women reporting "a more expanded sense of their own possibilities because of EEO legislation" (Edson, 1988:184). Claims by the PPTA Women's Contact in School A of greater confidence among young women teachers, construed the legislation as providing "the backcloth against which the battle to change entrenched privilege can take place" (Lee, 1987:199). More hopeful still was evidence in School B of altered practice, the "social effect" (Weedon, 1987:111), it would appear, of the PPTA affirmative action initiative The Promotion of Women Review (page 5), initiated and being sustained by certain members of staff. Watson's hypothesised link between the Review and the improved statistics for women in promotions detailed in Chapter One (pages 6-10) would appear to be substantiated.

7.7   Summary

In this research study my concern has been to portray two historically specific and contextualised case study instances of the complexity of issues associated with the implementation of EEO policy as a legislative requirement. I have attended to national and regional EEO reporting, and investigated the implementation of EEO within the unique context of two state co-educational secondary schools within Aotearoa-New Zealand. Through its specific, partial and restricted nature, the study provides neither overview nor synthesis, and renders generalisations invalid. Rather it seeks its validity in capturing a historical moment grounded in "the real motion of knowledge" (Lecourt, 1975 in Lather, 1986:272).

Feminist poststructuralist thought, in foregrounding an "interactive complexity, shifting among multiple social positionings" (Leach & Davies, 1990:329) recognises that the discursive and textual construction of gender inscribes our world. My feminist stance has required me to recognise the oppression of women, while poststructuralist thought has directed me to determine ways in which women's oppressions differ "historically, in different societies, social groups and individually" (Leach & Davies, 1990:324). This unquestioned approach privileges feminist poststructuralist theories and associated aspects of social justice as "natural" and "normal" (Capper, 1992:106). Without questioning its merits this approach, however, seeks its acceptance and legitimacy in practice, as one approach to uncovering "the working of power on behalf of specific interests and to analyse the opportunities for resistance to it" (Weedon, 1987:41).

Despite my attention to a critical analysis of the discursive and textual practices of schools in order to open up to enquiry "all that is *natural* or that *goes without saying*, all that is considered universal and eternal, therefore unchangeable in our culture" (Leach & Davies, 1990:323) the progress in EEO is mixed, hard to quantify. The thrusts for EEO appeared to be fragmented, at times marginalised, at times seemingly effective, made by those with "genuine commitment" mostly, but not exclusively, women.

Each school has evidenced different responses, structured within the power relations of a unique organisational setting. The issues are complex, the topic sensitive, and the costs of engagement deemed high, likely "to jeopardise one's progression within the present structure" (Lees & Scott, 1990:340) as evidenced in practices of harassment and bias in decision-making which were acknowledged but at the time not resisted (assistant teacher in School A; assistant principal in School B).
Clearly EEO discourses were in circulation. The extent of their social power has been shown to differ in each particular context. However, in School B, strong staff allegiance and action has been shown to powerfully affect policy statements and appointment practices in ways that make the provision for EEO in this school more of a "reality" (Sayers & Tremaine, 1994:21). The linking of EEO to PPTA action and agency was a powerful alliance. Other evidenced forms of resistance to more powerful discourses also offer hope.

This research study has attempted to explain EEO, to theorise it, and to pay attention to mapping the links between "teachers, gender and careers" (Acker, 1989). Social, structural and procedural inequalities between men and women have been seen to influence the discursive constructions of EEO (consciously and unconsciously) and women's place in administration. Ultimately this research study calls into question particular discursive constructions and uses, and argues the need to recognise and to assume responsibility for each of our own discursive practices and positionings. This necessitates coherence between the discourses of EEO and the discourses of secondary education sector employers' personal and broader professional lives.

Through my picture of society as being continually created through discursive practices as they work to create and sustain particular visions of the social world" (Davies, 19:xi), I believe I have established, at least for myself, an idea of points of intervention and where there is susceptibility to change. I have exposed contradictions within the individual and between individuals. I have attempted to portray "the webs, the textures" (EEO ERO Reviewer) in what has been for me a challenging and experimental approach. True to Lather's (1986:272) intent of praxis-oriented research as "emancipatory", this approach has allowed me "to identify new and shifting openings for changing power relations" (Jones, 1994:186) in the "actual lived reality of teachers in schools" (Weiler, 1988:53).

However, problematising the rules, practices and decisions that operate for recruiting, selecting and training people does not in itself bring about change. The difficulty is that of "providing a sustained challenge to the structure of jobs and opportunities and to hegemonic values in a political and economic environment favouring individualism, self-promotion and personal achievement" (Webb & Liff, 1988:550). The context in which we are now operating in 1995 is vastly different from the one I researched in 1992.

CONCLUSIONS

"The personal is professional"

Glazer (1991:338)

As I complete this research study at the close of 1995, following analysis of data gathered in 1992, I am compelled in this conclusion not only to discuss the implications of the main issues which have arisen from the research. I am also compelled to reflect on EEO and its potential to effect equality of employment outcomes for women teachers in a climate of continuing education sector reform driven by government concerns to align compulsory education to a "New Right" economic rationale, grounded in public choice, agency and human capital theory (Murfitt, 1994).

Despite the legislative requirement for a formal commitment to EEO, women teachers in this research study have been seen to continue to experience particular forms of discrimination and disadvantage, at conscious and unconscious levels, as employees in two secondary sector educational institutions. The shift within feminism to a post-structuralist view of discourse grounded in a critical analysis of particular discursive and textual practices, has been fruitful in uncovering the power of certain practices as they were working to create and sustain particular visions of the social world. Through opening up to enquiry, albeit partially, the discursive and textual practices of society, "strongly entrenched values, norms for interactions and inviolable coalitions" (Marshall, 1991:157) were revealed, together with some of the ways in which difference was being constructed through various representations and practices "that name, legitimate, marginalise, and exclude the cultures and voices of subordinate groups in society" (Leach & Davies, 1990:331). The learnings from this form of enquiry offer a number of implications and challenges for practitioners in the practice of EEO.

In particular this feminist critique of merit and its discursive constructions has highlighted certain forms of patriarchal discourse, and some of their processes and effects. The merit discourse cannot therefore be sustained as a transparent medium of otherwise unproblematic communication, and must not therefore be left as a convention to be taken for granted. Within educational administration this study has revealed that conventions such as training, appointments and promotions can be taken for granted if the ideological location of the decision makers is overlooked.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from the study was the social power of the liberal egalitarian discourse, and the ways in which the use of this discourse was having the effect of reinforcing traditional gender codes. The fixing of identities, and their evaluation in terms of the norms of prevailing gender stereotypes was seen to work against the interests of women teachers in, for example, particular ways in which participants perceived the local labour market, and defended the status quo.

Of particular significance was the use of this discourse by women as well as by men. It cannot therefore be assumed that all women were actively working in their own interests. Through the inclusion of a sample of men's voices, this study has also revealed that not all men were necessarily actively supporting and safeguarding their positions of privilege. I argue that challenges to the patriarchal structure will benefit from making alliances with men who support EEO initiatives. For example, the PPTA provides a structure for such an alliance and has been revealed in this study as an important and active agent of employee interests. The role of the PPTA is sufficiently dispersed within the organisation for the responsibility not to fall on any one person. In sites where PPTA has strong allegiances and strong leadership, its activity has considerable effect on constraining the autonomy of local decision-makers, as evidenced through the data from School B.

However, what this study also reveals is that progress in EEO is mixed and hard to quantify. It is hard to know whether EEO has the ability to create positive change in workplaces, since it is difficult to predict which discourse(s) will gain ascendancy at any one historical moment, given evidence of a different patterning of discourses and forms of resistance in the two institutions.

It can, however, be argued, that despite the uniqueness of each cultural context, the liberal model of EEO, as it has been revealed in this research study, fails to take into account "the vested interests of power groups" (Lees & Scott, 1990:342), and assumes that change will come about by consensus, without conflict. A consensual decision-making practice must, as a result of this study, become problematic. The validity of consensus as an operating principle is questionable if those involved in appointment decisions are themselves not proportionally representative of all interests, and if their ideological location is overlooked, especially in the absence of explicit criteria and formalised procedures. Like Lees & Scott (1990), I argue that the progressive aspect of conflict should be recognised and all viewpoints encouraged in working towards equity objectives.

The diffuseness of power and the complexity of issues surrounding the structuring of opportunity were other important considerations highlighted through this study. To conceive of society as being constantly created through discursive practices has, as I have already argued, made possible a critique of the dynamics of power and control operating within two separate institutions. In our search for additional theoretical understandings and forms of knowledge that will inform our practice the learnings from this study enable us to see how "we can begin to change the world through refusal of certain discourses and the generation of new ones" (Davies, 1989:xi).

In a climate of continuing education sector change and reform there is, however, cause for concern. The power of the voluntarism discourse, and the evidence of the lack of training, resourcing and monitoring of the progressive implementation of EEO, particularly in School A, would attest to EEO being limited to mere policy declarations which have no practical impact. It is clear

that with no sanctions for non-compliance and the competing demands of education sector reform, EEO considerations were being accorded a low priority. This raises questions relating to continuing reforms in the field aligned to an economic rationale grounded in public choice, agency and human capital theory. These reforms see the continuing devolving of responsibility to school site level.

At this point in time there is controversy surrounding the moves towards bulk funding of teachers' salaries, moves strongly contested by PPTA. In the light of evidence from this study of forms of subjectivity underpinning appointment decisions for senior administrative positions, local-based autonomy over the appointments structure is a genuine cause for concern.

Further, the appointments structure itself is undergoing change. There is a detectable trend towards framing senior administrative positions in managerialist terms with the forming of management groups which not only abrogate the power and authority to make decisions but also create through their own composition and structure a powerful expression of the accepted culture. This authority and "essence" is being reinforced, in my perception through a dismantling of vacated level three and four positions of responsibility (PR3's and PR4's) in order to create more level one positions of responsibility (PR1's), ostensibly to "flatten" the management structure and widen the base. That more teachers have been able to gain access to these latter positions is a pattern noted in the Slyfield Report (page 6). Also noted by Slyfield (page 7) is the reduction of the pool of PR3 and PR4 positions, traditionally the access route into senior administration. Even more critical, then, is the existence of forms of control over subjective judgements and informal processes which may create advantage for some teachers and exclude others.

A concomitant trend is the move to individual contracts, and fixed term positions of responsibility. While opinion has been expressed through the data in favour of limited tenure positions as affording more opportunities for promotion, again the processes through which the occupiers of these positions are selected, and the conditions under which their services are contracted, need to be opened up to scrutiny. Attendant to this are considerations of the ways in which vacancies are advertised, the nature and purpose of performance appraisal systems, and overt and covert forms of sponsorship.

Korndörffer's (1990) work in the tertiary education sector led her to conclude that EEO legislation does not address the roots of power relations that create groups that are disadvantaged or disempowered in their access to appointment and promotion. However she acknowledges that EEO methods include activities that challenge the distribution of power, with the potential to create real change at a specific instructional site. This research study corroborates these findings. In School B, EEO activity, nourished by the PPTA-led Promotion of Women Review practices, was evidenced in the incorporation into school processes of more formalised procedures for the advertising and making of appointments, systems for the negotiation of policy

definitions, and the statistical information presented to the board of trustees each year on the position of women teachers. In comparison, School A revealed processes at work that were combining to constrain certain attempts to challenge authority and the current distribution of power.

The position of assistant principal emerged through the study as crucial in enabling a female perspective on and input into administration decisions. Another key position identified was that of the BOT staff representative in representing, promoting and monitoring staff interests in a forum where equity considerations were seen as not being automatically a priority. The commitment of these position holders is therefore held to be critical in advancing the interests of EEO. Without intervention, those who have traditionally occupied the most valued jobs and status positions will continue to do so unless steps are taken to intervene in the operation of the labour market.

Within the hierarchical positioning of teaching staff in the current appointments structure the power of the principal and the asymmetry of power relationships renders vulnerable those about whom promotional decisions are made. Some who spoke in this study in support of EEO initiatives were seen to rethink their allegiances when facing up to their vulnerability, and the consequences of positioning themselves in conflict with those in authority.

In opening up to scrutiny particular discursive constructions in my search to understand the experiences of others, I was seeking to know more about my own. As researcher I am similarly and simultaneously opened up to enquiry, and challenged to rethink my own discursive positionings and commitments. I, too, am vulnerable. Personally, through the research process and my multiple positioning, my interactions and interconnectedness with the data, my reconstitution of self, self-reflexivity and inspiration for action have become important components of and contributions to the study. Through the existence of the study and access to it by others, I will also become publicly vulnerable through what I reveal about myself.

In politicising certain administrative processes, in calling into question authority relationships and assumptions about knowledge and power underpinning particular institutional practices, this research study, in my view, significantly informs the relationships of subjectivity and power in critical inquiry, and contributes to our knowledge on the practice of EEO in the secondary education sector.

The hope is that the reader will connect and interact with the forms of knowledge contained within this research study, and be prompted, at the very least, to self-reflection. When the School B assistant principal, at the close of the data-gathering interview, expressed amazement *"that we actually managed to talk for this long on a topic like that"*, her reflective comment reconstructed her conception of EEO.

If this study can assist participants, readers and researchers towards *conscientization* (Freire, 1973 in Collins, 1982:56), towards a constant revision of our agendas and towards action through an "experiential approach which allows us to identify new and shifting openings for changing power relations" (Jones, 1994:185), then it will have served a purpose. Through resituating EEO as a central issue, the study will have increased the visibility of EEO in education, and will exist as tangible evidence of my personal, political and professional concern to find ways of correcting the underrepresentation of women in educational administration.

The challenge is for each of us, female and male, to accept responsibility for each of our own discursive practices and positionings. This necessitates sustained forms of resistance to hegemonic values in a "political and economic environment favouring individualism, self-promotion and personal achievement" (Webb & Liff, 1988:550).

Increasing the ways we think about "engendering gender" (Leach & Davies, 1990:331) will assist us to gain new understandings of the ways in which the constructs *male* and *female* are established and their difference maintained.

Most importantly we need to direct our energies, resources and research towards a refusal of and resistance to the separation and segregation of the EEO discourses from sociopolitical discourse. This necessitates working towards coherence between the discourses of EEO and the discourses of (secondary) education sector employers' personal and broader professional lives.

The struggles over meaning and resistances to particular discursive constructions do have an effect. I am reminded of and gain inspiration from the old adage:

> **IF ENOUGH PEOPLE KNOCK**
> **THEIR HEADS AGAINST**
> **A BRICK WALL**
> **THE WALL WILL FALL DOWN**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

My area of investigation has created an account which presents and opens up to scrutiny a "range of voices articulating their positions on EEO" (Jones, 1994:173); various discursive constructions of "teachers, gender and careers" (Acker, 1989:7) and acknowledges merit as an ideological construct, "in part, a product of organisational processes, of access to opportunities which develop it, and which allow for its demonstration" (Burton, 1991:46).

Validation of EEO programmes and their criteria for success are therefore not merely a "fruitful line of inquiry" (Yeakey et al., 1986:139). By continuing to examine EEO within the school context and the specific processes whereby certain individuals or categories of individuals are identified, encouraged, or even sponsored for promotion, we may not only help to "develop, expand and refine more general explanations at the structural level of analysis" (Evetts, 1989:201). We may continue to "unmask the political violence" (Foucault in Rabinow, 1984:6) so that we can not only come to understand these processes, but resist them and work to transform them.

The following are suggestions for further research.

1. The greatest need is for a longitudinal research study within these same two schools, at, say, a five year interval. This would enable a comparison to be made which could reveal shifts in discursive practices and detect trends in time.

2. Replication of this form of Case Study research is needed in other secondary schools to create a pool of research studies. This pool would provide a background that will allow us to reappraise the links between teachers, gender and careers (Acker, 1989:7) so that "we can eventually come to a larger understanding of human life in organisations" (Shakeshaft, 1987:12) in the attempt to "integrate an interest in women into a general theory of society and culture" (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974:vi, in Shakeshaft, ibid.:12), and contribute to knowledge on the practice of EEO.

3. The notion of sponsorship in careers in an administrative hierarchy requires further investigation to explore links between sponsorship, "the mobility process in organisations and in understanding access to opportunity" (Gaertner, 1981, 215).

4. The "characteristics of specific positions and people moving through them over some period of time" need to be investigated further (Gaertner, 1981:215). From the basis of my research study research in the area of the principalship would be a particularly fruitful line of enquiry. What is the current nature of the secondary school principalship, and what range of abilities is considered important in selection procedures.

5.   Sexuality in organisations needs to be further probed as "an important site for the analysis of power" (Weedon, 1987:124).

6.   The role played by guidance work/'deaning' in schools in the structuring of opportunity for senior administrative positions needs to be explored. The information on the link between guidance and careers which emerged through this study appears to contradict earlier findings.

7.   Appointment structures and practices in secondary schools require closer investigation through case-study research. While the relative scarcity of entry-level positions is important to note, what is crucial is the manner in which these posts are assigned.

8.   The issues surrounding the concept of 'training' require further investigation.

9.   The role of the PPTA has emerged as very significant, in its politicisation of members and organisational allegiances. This role requires further investigation.

10.   We clearly need to know more about the importance of marriage, proven heterosexuality and motherhood.

11.   Further investigation into promotion as tied to age-related norms is required.

12.   Changing patterns in the availability of positions of responsibility 1-4 need to be investigated, and their link with women teachers' promotional opportunities needs to be determined.

13.   The role of the school in the perpetuation of women's apparent lack of aspiration must be questioned. Research is therefore required into the sociopolitical issues of labelling women "content."

14.   Research with a specific focus on "experience" as an ideological construct in appointment decisions is required.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1.   We hear a lot about Equal Employment Opportunities these days, or EEO as it is usually called. What do you understand by the term EEO? What does EEO mean to you? Have you received any training in EEO? Do you talk about EEO? Often? Who with? Do you hear others talking about it? Who? Do you believe that discrimination does exist? In what ways? Is there a policy in your school? Did you contribute to it? How is it actioned? What resources are there for EEO?

2.   What's your feeling about having legislation in this area? Is it a good thing? Bad thing? Do you think it is necessary to have legislation? Is the current system of promoting fair/unfair? Will EEO help women to be promoted? Is it an open issue? Contentious issue? How much consideration is given to EEO issues in your school? In what ways? Who supports it? What does it mean doing? Has this had a positive/negative effect? Who is responsible for making it work? How? Is it resisted? By whom? How?

3.   Can you describe a principal/deputy principal who has particularly impressed you? What were the qualities that you especially admired? Do you feel that that person has had an influence on you? In what ways?

4.   Do you feel that women can be effective in the position of principal? In what ways? What particular qualities do they need, do you think? How do they acquire them? Who helps? Who should help? Do women need help? Do you think women do enough to help themselves? Help each other? Are there women around with the qualities you suggest? Do they apply for promotion? Why don't they?/Why don't they get promoted? Do you think being married makes a difference? What sort of experience do women need to get promoted to a senior position? Does age matter? What will prevent a woman from being promoted?

5.   How do you think other people would feel about having a woman as principal of your school? BOT? Staff? Community? You? Would there be problems for that person? In what ways?

6.   There's a lot of publicity and talk about sexual harassment these days. Do you think sexual harassment is an important issue? In what ways? Do you think it is an issue in your school? Can you be specific? Is there a policy? Do you think sexual harassment is part of the EEO issue?

7.   What advice would you give to a woman who told you that she was aiming to be a principal? Would that be the same advice that you would give to a man? Why?/Why not?

8.   Is there anything else that you wish to add?

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SHEET
MASSEY UNIVERSITY
M. ED. ADMIN THESIS

"EEO and Women and Equal Employment Opportunities in the Secondary Education Sector - Legislating for Change"

Researcher: (Mrs) Gail P. Spence
Contact Address:

Topic of Study: The effects of mandatory EEO policies on the promotion of women to senior positions in educational administration in secondary schools.

What will you, as a participant, have to do?
You will be asked to respond to questions concerning the implementation of an Equal Employment Opportunities in your school. Your responses will be recorded on tape, provided that you give your consent. The reason for recording the responses is to ensure that I, as researcher, can accurately note what you have said. The interview will be timed to last about an hour.

What can the participants expect from the researcher?
If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

* refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time;

* ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation;

* provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher. All information collected is coded for anonymity, and it will not be possible to identify you in any reports that are prepared for the study;

* verify the accuracy of any statements attributed to you by the researcher in a follow-up interview;

* be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

M. ED. ADMIN. THESIS
"EEO and Women and Equal Employment Opportunities in the Secondary Education Sector - Legislating for Change"

Researcher: (Mrs) Gail P. Spence
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had the details explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is completely confidential.

I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out on the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Sample of Interview Data - beginnings of analysis

the um other two in the top three were also science
graduates then you may be disadvantaged you would have to
show to me that um you and it would also depend on how well
the other two had shown um what that they're not biased
towards one subject or the other but there is a danger if
the principal isn't um balanced in their outlook in his or
her outlook on what she what the school offers in the
overall curriculum then (indistinct)

innate qualities

30 - I believe they've either got them or they they haven't
got them you know that um I I don't .. I don't see that
women should be disadvantaged there's um in any way as far
as being a principal the the only setback I can see in their

interrupted careers?

careers is if they have a family in the meantime and have
breaks in their in their careers (do you think that works
against them?) it only works against them in experience (but
if experience is part of the criterion in the job
description) well it would be um there wouldn't be a
specific number of years as as experience but experiences
you know somebody of 40 um could have a lot more experience

experience

as far as different schools) different ah ah situations
different sizes of schools single or or co-ed schools and if
there's been time out um then the opportunity for an for
gaining all that experience is not necessarily there that's
not you know I'm not ruling it out altogether but um you
know it's .. we're looking at a position where we're we're
trying to balance a 53 year old up against a 24 year old you
know and both of them will be good for the for the position
that we want but one of them would be very good for other
parts of the school and in this case both of them are men
but the same thing would happen if they were two women you
know and ah um age doesn't necessarily equate to experience
and therefore um the time out you can't say well look if
you've been out of the workforce for two years that you're
going to be two years less experienced than somebody else
but they may be they may be five years less experienced
because of two years out you know sort of and that would be

34 - some do some don't it depends on the individual you
know I know um I know some women that accept their position
because of circumstances either because of what their
husband has moved around and they've decided that ah you
know it's not worth them pursuing a career you know those
people could do something about it and you know and and
advance themselves um others have got all the ability in the

women's choice

world and they've they've used it to advantage others have
got all the ability in the world and don't want to use it
well they claim they don't want to they they could improve
themselves but they don't seem to to want to (why don't they
do you think?) well I still believe in this day and age that
there are women who are content to be mothers and they you
know they want to see their family grow up um with that
maternal role being predominant and ah but others are more
career orientated

differences in women