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**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:
VALUING WOMEN'S WORK ?**

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Abstract

This thesis examines Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO). It looks at the capacity of EEO to re-value women's work. It focuses upon some of the achievements, benefits and costs of EEO for a group of women working in the field of EEO. It does this by drawing upon the literature in the field and upon seven in-depth interviews with women working in EEO in the state sector. It explores the potential of EEO to contribute to change.

The research was undertaken in 1990, at a time of relative optimism amongst those working in the field of EEO. The women interviewed had been working as EEO personnel for two years or more, and were instrumental to varying degrees in the remarkable growth of EEO in the state sector in New Zealand. The Employment Equity Act 1990 was passed at the time of the interviews.

The thesis then, provides a picture of that period of time. It also goes further to explore the ways in which women are able to take advantage of possibilities for change and extend these to the benefit of all women.

"We have to keep on reasserting the business of diversity that women as a group are different : Maori women, Pacific Island women, women with disabilities, all have different needs. We have to keep on asking the questions, who is this for, who is going to benefit, who is going to hurt?"

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION : EEO : VALUING WOMEN'S WORK ?

"The myth that people are all treated the same, and are therefore all equal, has existed for a long time. The logic of this theory is that if people do not achieve then it is the sole responsibility of the individual."

Commission for Employment Equity 1991 (p1)

FOCUS OF THESIS

This thesis examines the potential of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)¹ to value women's work. This research was undertaken during 1990. The thesis essentially provides a "slice of history" or a picture of what it was like to be working in EEO at that time. EEO targets a number of disadvantaged groups. These include women, Maori, people with disabilities and other ethnic groups. Personnel working in the field of EEO in New Zealand have focused on this range of target groups. Sayers (1992) says :

"EEO practitioners in New Zealand have been very careful to strive for an equilibrium between women's issues and those of people with disabilities, Maori and ethnic groups. Many of the lessons learnt by EEO have been about 'bridge building' between diverse interest groups - a concern of women and feminism of some time." (p16)

¹. Equal Employment Opportunity is defined in the Wilson Report (1988) as follows :

"a systematic, results-oriented set of actions that are directed towards the identification of and elimination of discriminatory barriers that cause or perpetuate inequality in the employment of any person or group of persons." (p7)

Given the constraints of this research project, and in the interests of detailing one aspect of EEO, I have chosen to focus on "EEO : Valuing Women's Work?" The thesis looks at the potential of EEO to revalue the work of women. One of its main emphases is to document a period of time in the EEO legislative history. This period is 1990-1991.

Some of the achievements of EEO both for women in general and for the women working in EEO, were explored. The successes and gains of EEO were examined. This thesis compares the achievements with the potential for success, and discusses the implications of this while making some recommendations for the future.

EEO : A PERSONAL NOTE

Before beginning a discussion on the background of the research, as a feminist researcher, I feel it is important to introduce my own experiences. These have informed my perspective on EEO and women's work.

Following schooling, tertiary education and four years "overseas experience" I settled in the city in which my husband had obtained his paid work. I was able to find paid work for myself for two years, leaving just weeks before the birth of my daughter. By that stage I had also left my husband. Then began six years of unpaid labour : at home caring for my child:

in the neighbourhood caring for neighbours and family; in the community battling for better services; for other women, providing childcare, housekeeping and gardening services; and for my own development studying at polytechnic and university.

Six years later, I began to re-explore the paid employment market. To my dismay, the six year's acquired skills and hard unpaid labour seemed to be given little or no value by prospective employers. To my fear, the prospect of full time employment meant many more hours than 40 per week with no child care support. To my growing exasperation, part time paid work also offered incomplete solutions such as a lack of job security, training and promotion, and more often than not correspondingly low pay. To my anger, I began to see contradictions in how society used me versus how it valued me.

This background led me to investigate women's worth. My realisation was that women's contribution to society is undervalued. I began to ask why. I asked who contributes to the system and who benefits from it, what is being done and what can be done about it.

Whilst writing up the research for this thesis, I obtained paid employment in the field of EEO in the health sector. This has given me further scope for reflection about the potential of EEO to value the worth of women's work.

THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT OF EEO

During the lead up to the passing (and subsequent repeal) of the Employment Equity Legislation 1990, the ongoing debate on the worth of women's work returned to the spotlight. Many issues were discussed, including why women assume responsibility for unpaid work within the family, home and community; why women are concentrated in the lowest paid and lowest status sections within and across organisations; why women have, in the main, flatter career paths than men; why women's average hourly pay in New Zealand is about four fifths that of men's, despite the 1960 State Sector Equal Pay Act and the 1972 Equal Pay Act.

The Employment Equity Act 1990 sought to redress some of the inequities. The Act addressed two areas of equity in employment: pay equity² for women, and equal employment opportunities. The term "employment equity" encompasses both EEO and pay equity. While recognising the significance of pay equity for women, the main focus of this thesis is on EEO aspects of employment equity.

²Pay equity is defined in the Wilson Report (1988) as : "The concept of equal pay for work of equal value, or comparable worth." (p10)

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

The Employment Equity Act 1990 was passed during the time of the interviews. I interviewed seven women working in the field of EEO for this thesis. The women were working at a time of relative optimism and, in retrospect, were probably at the height of the remarkable growth period for EEO in the state sector in New Zealand.

Despite being aware of the probable impending change of government and the National Party's pledge to repeal the Employment Equity legislation immediately it took office, the women were nevertheless conscious of the crucial parts they had played in the passing of the Employment Equity Act.

The women had understandings of the role of the state, and were able to predict some possible scenarios which have subsequently become reality. The present government has systematically removed pockets of 'social justice policies' and reinforced market-driven policies which emphasise voluntarism and labour market deregulation. This has the potential to increase inequality between social groups, including men and women.

Despite the new climate, and the many changes this has brought with it, it was agreed that I proceed with this thesis both to provide a picture of that period of time and to record the knowledge of the women, some of whom have subsequently moved

out of the field of EEO. Further, the information obtained from the interviews, combined with knowledge of the new era, provides some guidelines for discussion on the future directions of EEO in New Zealand.

Since the time of the interviews the EEO "scene" in New Zealand has changed substantially. The repeal of the Employment Equity Act saw the removal of the legal requirement for EEO in the private sector, and for the provisions for pay equity. Instead the National Government has set up an EEO Trust, with a minimal budget, and has denied the need for legislation despite a plethora of studies (including Human Rights Commission 1987, Sawyer, 1985, Roberts, 1981, National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, 1990:136) culminating in the report by the Commissioner for Employment Equity (1991). This report identifies (again) that a legislative requirement to implement and monitor EEO in the state sector has been critical in ensuring the delivery of EEO.

In 1990, following the passing of the Employment Equity Act, the Commission for Employment Equity was established and the State Services Commission Equal Employment Opportunities Unit (SSC EEOU) began to retrench, as many of the services it provided would be handled by the Commission. Following the repeal of the Employment Equity Act, the Commission has been disbanded and the SSC EEOU has not regained its full quota of personnel. Thus, a major source of support and information for EEO personnel been undermined.

Further, since the time of the interviews several government departments are dismantling or eliminating specialist units dealing with EEO. The reason given by management is that this is in the interests of efficiency and accountability. Many departments are adopting a policy of 'mainstreaming' EEO programmes, which in reality often means that personnel have EEO duties added on their job descriptions.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

In beginning to explore EEO and its achievements I became aware of various viewpoints on the subject. Many powerful groups have expressed the view that the development of EEO in New Zealand is a positive move. The NZ Employers Federation (1985) for example has claimed to wholeheartedly support EEO, provided that it is voluntary and fits within a competitive meritocratic framework. It has been argued that it makes good economic sense to make use of women's talents (Game, 1984:254).

Many women were extremely optimistic about EEO, seeing its potential particularly if the affirmative action³ aspects and redefinitions of merit are included (Wilson, 1988).

³The term 'affirmative action' is generally recognised in New Zealand as meaning the procedures or vehicle by which the goal of EEO is obtained.

My view is that EEO legislation has limitations as it is currently constructed, but that nevertheless contains benefits to women which should be retained. There is a danger that public criticisms of the limitations of EEO might be used to reverse the gains which women have already made. At no stage are the limitations of EEO expressed in this thesis intended to criticise the work of those women who are implementing EEO.

It is hoped that this thesis will be viewed in a constructive way by those working in EEO. The thesis argues that EEO programmes are having, and will have, limited success in their aim to deliver equitable employment practices and outcomes unless there is a radical restructuring of society. It also argues that within these limitations, the progress can be perceived to be significant; and from the liberal beginnings a radical future is possible (Eisenstein, 1986).

ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter One : the Introduction to EEO : Valuing Women's Work? consists of an overview of the central concerns of this thesis.

It briefly explains how I became interested in the subject area of women, value and work. It discusses the setting and time of the research. It identifies changes in the EEO scene since the research was undertaken and suggests that the women's mood of optimism and success would no longer prevail

in 1992. It describes the possible consequences of researching a subject area that provides some answers for women, yet has many pitfalls and limitations.

Chapter Two : Feminist Theory and EEO is divided into two parts. Section One examines theories of the state, and seeks to settle on a theory or combination of theories which explains the existence and form of EEO and contributes to an assessment of its potential. This chapter establishes that it is mainly the feminist tradition which explains the concept of patriarchy. It argues that this concept is an essential tool in the analysis of gender relations and EEO. Section Two examines the concepts of value, work and meritocracy. It discusses some of the ways the state maintains its hegemony and control. Finally, it outlines the development of EEO in New Zealand in terms of policies and legislation, utilising overseas experiences for comparison and illumination.

In Chapter Three : the Methodology used in the research is described. It examines the way in which the research topic was chosen. It provides a background to the relationship between theory and feminist research.

The fieldwork is described and analysed in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four contains the context of the research and the responsibilities of chief executives of government departments. These include a responsibility to be 'good employers' and to promote equal employment opportunities.

It discusses the EEO personnel themselves, as a group and as individuals. It describes the key elements of their jobs, their links with the community and their levels of satisfaction. It includes the women's descriptions of their achievements and the limitations of their work, and concludes with a summary of the future prospects for the women themselves and for EEO in general.

Chapter Five provides an analysis of the structural position of EEO, with the aim of answering the central question about the potential of EEO to revalue the worth of women's work. This chapter focuses on where EEO fits in an organisation, and the value it is accorded. It explores the contradictions facing the women working in the field and outlines some of the strategies they have utilised to cope. It examines some of the gains resulting from EEO, concluding with a discussion on the future directions of EEO.

Chapter Six : EEO : Here Today, Where Tomorrow? draws together the material from the preceding chapters to conclude about the potential of EEO to value women's work. It argues the significance of EEO maintaining strong links with allied causes such as pay equity and equal educational opportunities. It concludes on a positive note : that EEO has radical potential for more fundamental social change because it makes a chink in the armour of patriarchy.

CHAPTER TWO

FEMINIST THEORY AND EEO

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section One examines a number of theoretical viewpoints which assist in the understanding of the potential of EEO to revalue women's work. In order to do so it examines a number of feminist theories. It does this by categorising theories according to the significance ascribed to the concept of patriarchy.

Section Two reviews the principles of EEO. In order to do so it examines the concepts of women's work, both unpaid caring work and paid work. It redefines the concepts of value and of merit. It then provides a summary of EEO legislation relevant to New Zealand in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. Finally, the current climate for EEO in New Zealand is outlined.

SECTION ONE

FEMINIST VIEWS ON THE POTENTIAL OF EEO

This section examines the contribution of feminist theory to an understanding of the potential of EEO in New Zealand. Generally speaking mainstream theories of the state have failed to address EEO directly.

Even indirect use of these theories is limited. Functionalist theory fails to account for policies affecting structural gender divisions in paid and unpaid work. Liberalism, despite its current popularity in policy making circles, assumes that gender divisions are the result of individual choice and is thus unable to explain their pervasiveness. Social democratic theories in social policy contain no analysis of the sexual division of work and resources within the family (Rose, 1981). Critical social policy theory, with its Marxist roots, provides some useful tools for a structural analysis of social inequality and of the state. However, it tends to lack a materialist analysis of patriarchy. That is, it does not account for the material benefits which accrue to all men, not just employers, from the undervaluing of women's work.

Sayers (1992) argues : "it is mainly the feminist tradition which gives EEO any theoretical consideration." (p7)

There is, however, no uniformity of ideas amongst feminists about the potential of EEO for revaluing the worth of women's work. There is a range of feminist theories, and the differences between theories tend to hinge on the seriousness with which patriarchy is regarded. These can be classified firstly as those which minimise the importance of patriarchy; secondly as those which use non-economic theories of patriarchy, and thirdly as those which regard patriarchy as having a materialist base. It is also possible to combine these theories. The reason for choosing this typology is that the more usual separations of strands of

feminism such as liberal, socialist and radical feminist theories tend to overlap in their assessment of the potential of EEO.

Theories Which Minimise the Importance of Patriarchy

The most common feminist theory which minimises patriarchy is liberal feminism. This theory is derived from a belief in the freedom of individuals, both men and women, to compete for wealth and status through hard work; and a belief in the natural equality of men and women (Spender, 1983). These theorists would reject a structural theory which includes patriarchy, as too deterministic. Further, there is no analysis of the benefits to men of the exploitation of women. Instead, theorists such as John Stuart Mill have regarded the enslavement of women as irrational and based purely on tradition (Spender, 1983).

These theories implicitly regard the state as potentially benevolent and reformist or, at the least, gender neutral. The state is not regarded as intrinsically patriarchal. Possibly because of their lack of a deterministic structural analysis, such theorists tend to be optimistic about reform via the state to improve women's economic status. Liberal feminists have been active politically in lobbying government and other employing bodies to implement EEO programmes for women and to remove discriminatory practices against their achievements in the public sphere.

However, this particular feminist perspective can be regarded as under-estimating the historical-material basis of sex 'stereotypes'. Liberal (equal rights) feminists aim to change the distribution of the sexes in current hierarchical institutions, and imply that existing structures are legitimate and valid and that there is no need to alter them.

This perspective has difficulty in explaining why women remain in a secondary position in the labour market despite policies and legislation aimed at EEO and pay equity. The liberal theoretical framework, currently present in policy making circles, actually makes it difficult for EEO practitioners to adopt a theory of structural gender inequality based on the notion of patriarchy. The liberal feminist perspective does not analyse the patriarchal forces of the state, arguing from a functionalist, reform position that the state will reform away the inequality of women in the labour market, with no real explanation offered for its lack of progress. In addition, there has been a tendency for such writers not to mention the state policies which make women responsible for unpaid housework, child care, community care, and thus financially dependent on individual men or on the state as a surrogate husband (Saville-Smith, 1987).

Nevertheless some feminists, including some of the women interviewed, have deliberately chosen to adopt a theoretical framework which minimises the use of the concept of patriarchy, as a strategy to overcome opposition to EEO. The strategy of

accepting the view that the state is not patriarchal may be an indirect means of challenging the state not to be institutionally sexist. Some feminists have chosen to minimise the notion of patriarchy and to accept the view that the state is gender neutral in order to build alliances with groups who would have difficulty viewing the state as patriarchal. A theoretical approach which minimises the notion of patriarchy, such as liberal feminism, may be an acceptable form of feminist theory in EEO policy making circles.

Because some feminists do not have, or choose not to have, a deterministic analysis, it could be argued that they are more active in their pursuit of social justice issues such as EEO, which may lead to more radical potential (Eisenstein, 1986).

Non-economic Theories of Patriarchy

These theories take the concept of patriarchy seriously, as a system of male control and dominance. However, they do not include an analysis of its material base. Theorists in this category include some socialist theorists and some radical theorists. Socialist feminists, such as Barrett (1980), would tend to regard patriarchy as having been left over from a previous economic order of feudalism, and having survived into a period where it is not essential for the economic order but in which capitalists have succeeded in making use of gender inequality.

Radical feminists such as Brownmiller (1975) and Daly (1987) focus on male violence and sexual oppression of women. Daly focuses on for example witch burning, genital mutilation, foot binding, suttee and modern gynaecology. According to these theorists any understanding of patriarchy must include a discussion and analysis of the role of the state, the role of ideology, and the place of male violence in society. The state shapes the rules on many aspects of women's lives such as divorce and marriage, fertility, contraception, wages, sexuality, prostitution and pornography.

Ideology may be seen as including cultural institutions such as major world religions, education, the media and sexuality.

In particular the compulsory nature of heterosexuality strives to orientate women towards marriage as a desirable goal, and in the Twentieth Century, stigmatising women's close friendships (Faderman, 1981, Jefferies, 1989).

Most women significantly alter conduct and patterns of movement as a consequence of fear of male violence. Non-economic theories tend to view developments such as EEO having as little potential to reform away the enormous atrocities committed against women. In fact they may view EEO as part of the state's attempts to maintain women in their current positions by giving only some women privileges. However, these theories require further analysis of what material benefits men gain from the undervalued status of women's work (Finch, 1983, Delphy, 1984).

Materialist Analyses of Patriarchy

Writers from a number of feminist perspectives use a materialist analysis of patriarchy. These include some radical feminists and dual systems theorists. The main argument they have in common is a materialist analysis of how men can benefit from the undervaluing of women's work.

Hartman (1979), for example, gives a materialist feminist definition of patriarchy as :

"a set of social relations between men which have a material base, and which through hierarchical structures establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men and enable them to dominate women." (p11)

The materialist feminists have their major focus on the economic aspects of patriarchy as opposed to politics and ideology. Economy explains patriarchal relations in household labour and waged labour.

Contributions to a materialist analysis of patriarchal relations affecting the valuing of women's work include a pioneering attempt by Millet (1971) and more recently by Waring (1985, 1988). Waring documents the extent to which women's productive activities are undervalued in the United Nations System of National Accounting (UNSNA). Waring argues that both women's paid and unpaid work is currently undervalued as the result of the systems of patriarchy.

This theme is also taken up by Delphy (1984).

Dual systems theorists regard patriarchy as an economic system operating alongside capitalism. For the purposes of analysis these systems are regarded as autonomous. Some theorists, such as Hartmann (1979), see capitalism and patriarchy operating together to make use of women's unpaid and low paid labour. Others, such as Walby (1986) see the two systems as competing for the use of women's services.

Some feminists have focused their attention upon patriarchal forces in employment and have examined the ways in which men have combined to exclude women from the best paid and most prestigious jobs (Hartman, 1979, Cockburn, 1983, 1986). Hartman (1979) further views patriarchy as extending into the home where a man's position as breadwinner normally guarantees him priority treatment over other members of the household, and also a range of services from his wife. She argues that the material basis of patriarchy lies in men's control over women's labour power both in the home and the labour market, and that this control is mutually reinforcing. She claims that patriarchal relations in employment cannot be understood in terms of capitalism alone, because they predate the rise of this system.

Delphy (1984) concentrated on a material analysis of women's unpaid domestic labour. She argued that since women in the home work purely for their keep and because men are the main beneficiaries, that this is a form of slave labour (pp77-78). She claimed that men are able to sell the product of their wife's unpaid labour

(clean shirts, health, emotional stability, time freed from domestic responsibilities) in the paid work force as their own.

In one sense theories that have a materialist analysis of patriarchy could be seen to be the most pessimistic about the potential of developments such as EEO, in that they point to the way in which so much of men's power is derived from undervaluing women's work. This power is unlikely to be relinquished without a struggle, because EEO helps to promote material independence for women and this undermines the material basis of patriarchy. However despite its pessimism, materialist feminist theory highlights the importance of revaluing work as a way of challenging patriarchy. These theories are cautiously optimistic about the potential for change through revaluing women's work.

Understanding EEO : From Theory to Practice

In this section I am reviewing some of the key elements of the three sets of ideas drawing on aspects of all three in order to find an adequate explanation for understanding the way EEO operates in practice. The theories which minimise patriarchy enable us to understand how the women EEO workers interviewed in this piece of research have been able to attain high status, high pay, relative autonomy, good working conditions, reasonable security and fringe benefits. This includes their ability to promote EEO for other women. This optimistic theory, on the basis of this evidence appears to hold a considerable amount of validity. Indeed, some of the

women interviewed specifically mentioned that they found it strategic to operate within this analytical framework.

Non-economic theories enable us to understand how systems of male power operate and how they are maintained. They serve to remind us that women's freedom and equality is not determined purely at the political or even economic level but also is affected by areas such as spirituality, sexuality and violence or the threat of it. This pessimistic theory would argue that economic change for a minority of women is insufficient to transform the lives of all women. Indeed some radical feminists would see the way these EEO workers had moved into a male dominated hierarchy from community work, as a retrograde step.

The materialist view is useful because it explores the complexities of women's lives. It goes beyond the descriptive into a structural analysis of the benefits obtained by men from women's work. Materialist feminism draws upon the sophisticated analytical tools of structural Marxists, and adapts them to an analysis of patriarchy (Delphy, 1984).

Although Gramsci (1971) does not talk directly about feminist concerns of the state in civil society, his theory lends itself to an adaptation that has relevance to a materialist theory of patriarchy. His theory is important because we can use it to address feminist assumptions and it is therefore useful to feminist thinkers. It can have a consciousness-raising role for women because it

provides an understanding of how the system works which is essential if women are to challenge existing power structures.

While his analysis is of class in a capitalist society, the concept of hegemony can be adapted to an analysis of patriarchal society in that it can combine the political, the ideological and the economic and some of the ways in which the power of the dominant groups are maintained.

Gramsci suggests that there are two ways that a group has control over another. The supremacy of a social group manifests itself either by domination or coercion; and by intellectual and moral leadership. Force or coercion is used to bring about conformity and compliance, while intellectual and moral leadership refers to hegemony wherein predominance is achieved by consent (Munford, 1988). The dominant group therefore uses its political, moral and intellectual leadership to establish its view of the world as universal, and thus shapes the interests and needs of the subordinate group. The dominant group must constantly strive to maintain its position, but the continually changing ground does enable the subordinate group to bring about some individual and structural change. In this manner, the potential of change brought about by EEO can be partly explained. That there are fissures in the social body, and that they can be utilised to such advantage by those working in EEO indicates that women are not victims, but rather that they are continually battling the existing order.

The notion of power struggles taking place at a number of sites: political, cultural, ideological, sexual and economic, can present feminists with alternatives.

The structural position of the EEO workers in the hierarchy as described in Chapter Five reflects both the possibilities and the constraints experienced by women working within the male dominated state.

Historians such as Lerner (1986) have argued that patriarchy is the oldest, strongest and most pervasive form of social inequality, although it has taken a variety of forms over time and place. It has been subject to numerous challenges from women (Millet, 1971, Spender 1983).

Most analyses of structural social inequality, however, have focused upon the exploitation of men by men under the economic system of capitalism, even though this system has a much shorter history and is less widespread than patriarchy. This may be because within a patriarchal society the exploitation and oppression of women is so near universal that it is taken for granted and largely invisible (Lerner, 1986).

Nonetheless there is evidence that there is a patriarchal set of power relations which has existed in various forms for at least 3,500 years and which includes forms of exploitation of men by men as well as women by men (Lerner, 1986). Capitalism has developed from a pre-existing patriarchal order in which all men

benefit from the exploitation and oppression of women. It should not, therefore, be surprising that employers and the state adopt discriminatory policies towards women even if these are not always in the interests of capital accumulation (Briar, 1987).

However, while women are operating in a patriarchal society, they are not completely powerless. This is partly because women's work creates much of the material basis of men's power, without which the patriarchy could not continue. Consequently some effort is expended by the state in a patriarchal society towards meeting some of women's demands. EEO may be regarded as one example of this.

At the same time the patriarchal context of capitalism helps to explain the structural constraints which are placed on EEO workers, and which are detailed in Chapter Five. It is argued that reformist moves such as EEO have the potential to be used by women for further transformation of the economic base of patriarchy because they help to create the economic independence for more women from men.

SECTION TWO

PRINCIPLES OF EEO

I shall now move onto examining women's paid and unpaid work in more detail; investigating in greater depth how the state simultaneously harnesses and undervalues women's work. This will entail examining the principles which underpin EEO and the extent

to which these have the potential to redefine the value of women's work. Following this, I shall then outline the legislative background of EEO in New Zealand, utilising overseas experiences for comparison.

WOMEN'S WORK

In this section we examine firstly women's unpaid caring work, and then women's paid work and the value attached to each.

Valuing Women's Unpaid Caring Work

Until the 1970's housework and women's responsibility for unpaid caring was taken for granted by lay people and academics alike, and was almost totally invisible. Writers such as Gavron and Oakley were instrumental in beginning this debate. In 1974 Oakley wrote : "A housewife is a woman : a housewife does housework."(p1)

The domestic labour debate in the 1970's raised the academic profile of housework somewhat and went some way towards assessing whether the household was a productive unit as opposed to a purely consumptive unit (Walby, 1986). However, the main concern was to discover the value of household labour to capitalism and the benefits to men were largely ignored. Delphy (1984) elaborates on the benefits to men of women's unpaid work. However, the academic debates have barely touched social and economic policies of the state which continue to perpetuate the invisibility of women's

unpaid work. The costs of unpaid caring work are carried primarily by women. Women often have little choice other than that of economic dependence or poverty. Pascall (1986) looks closely at women's economic dependency and discusses the way social policies have assumed and promoted the dependency of women within marriage as well as enhancing the difficulties for women to live outside marriage. These relations of dependency are sustained by the practices of social security and other aspects of the welfare state (Saville-Smith, 1987, Pascall, 1986:28). Further, this dependency is sustained by women's caring responsibilities and lowly position in the labour market (Finch and Groves, 1983, Munford, 1987).

The working patterns expected of men render them largely unavailable to take a full share of domestic work and childcare. In addition to this many men's jobs effectively require the backup services of a wife, which not only limits wives' availability for paid work, but increases the difficulties for women when competing with men in the labour force (as most women do not have wives) (Finch, 1982).

There has been a gross undervaluation by policy makers of women's work despite the state's and men's dependence on it. Ironmonger and Sonius (1987) discovered that household labour accounted for just over half of Australia's Gross National Product (GNP). Pigou (1920) in Ironmonger and Sonius (1987) articulated the paradox:

"The services rendered by women enter into the dividend when they are rendered in exchange for wages, whether in the factory or in the home, but do not enter into it when they are rendered by mothers and wives gratuitously to their families. Thus if a man marries his housekeeper or his cook, the national dividend is diminished." (p5)

Unpaid work is not the main focus of this thesis but it obviously influences women's capacity to compete in the workforce with men whose domestic responsibilities are generally much less (Bittman, 1991). Current EEO legislation in New Zealand and most other countries is not sufficiently radical to compensate women for the huge amounts of time spent on unpaid work. However, redefining merit within EEO allows women to be given some credit for the skills gained and responsibilities undertaken in unpaid work, with regard to recruitment and promotion in the labour market.

Valuing Women's Paid Work

Women have always been involved to varying degrees in the paid labour force. However despite the growth of women's involvement in paid work there has not been an equivalent increase in men's unpaid work (Bittman, 1991).

During the last three decades there has been a considerable increase in the participation of women in the New Zealand labour market (Department of Statistics/Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1990). In 1966 about two-fifths of New Zealand women aged between 15 and 64 were in the labour force. By 1976 this figure had risen to half, and by the end of 1987 65% of women were employed or actively looking for employment (ibid:57). Moreover, since the 1980's women's labour force participation has levelled off and in some age groups has actually fallen. Despite the rapid increase in the proportion of women in the New Zealand workforce over the last 25 years, women remain concentrated in a few

industries, for example 80% in service industries (ibid:61,62). Dex (1987) suggests that women's earnings correlate to this occupational distribution.

Occupational or horizontal segregation plays a major role in undervaluing women's work. Women dominated work sites afford comparatively low wages, which can be explained by a number of factors. These include attitudes and practices of employers, trade union resistance to women workers and the historical undervaluing of women and their work, combined with the concept of a family wage for men. Women received about 72% of men's weekly pay in 1990 (Department of Statistics/Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1990).

Vertical segregation also plays a major part in the undervaluing of women. Women are in the main restricted from high level positions. Further, women have consistently higher rates of unemployment than men (Department of Statistics/Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1990).

Because of women's commitment and indeed obligation to unpaid work, they are disadvantaged despite gains in maternity leave, sickness leave, parental leave and superannuation provisions. It is argued that there needs to be provision for greater recognition of unpaid work skills in addition to retraining for adults, mainly women, who have spent time out of the paid work force, plus collective provision of child care facilities and maternity and domestic leave (Waring, 1988, Novitz, 1987).

Hyman (1986) outlines three major factors which together would move a great distance in closing the gap in wages between men and women. Firstly, more equal sharing of the home responsibilities, which would narrow the market experience gap and increase women's availability. Secondly, equal pay for work of equal value, or pay equity, which would make women's occupations higher paying relative to men's occupations. Thirdly, and most relevant to this thesis, is affirmative action and other EEO measures to reduce occupational segregation. Accordingly, EEO needs to be understood as one strategy for improving the valuing of women's work.

DEFINING VALUE

"woman's unpaid work, her productive and reproductive labour for which she receives no remuneration, underpins the world's economy, yet it is peripheral to the world's economy as men define it, therefore it has no value."
(Scott, 1984:10)

Work, like value, is a term with different meanings in the economic and non-economic senses. Roth (1987) defines work as:

"the way in which we respond to our environments' resources as a means of survival for ourselves and succeeding generations" (p185)

Work (both paid and unpaid) is also a major way in which people create their social identity. Waring (1988) argues that work is not leisure, not sleep, may be enjoyable and does not necessarily result in money payment. It includes invisible informal work (such as bartering, 'under the table' employment, voluntary work), home-based activities and deviant work activities.

Delphy (1984) argues:

"it is not the nature of work performed by women which explains their relationship to production, it is their relationship of production which explain why their work is excluded from the realm of value. It is women as economic agents who are excluded from the (exchange) market, not what they produce." (p60)

Waring (1988) explores the theme of value in depth. She argues that the value put upon work and resources depends upon the power and the point of view of the valuer. She has developed a comprehensive international perspective on the value of women's work. She describes an international gender conspiracy administered by political, religious, administrative, legal and cultural hierarchies which ensures women's invisibility and enslavement (p182).

There is international pressure for an extension in the national accounting system. There exists a considerable body of research work by economists and statisticians investigating alternative valuation methods for measuring household productive work. From as early as the 1930's, people such as Kuznets worked on the development of national accounting systems, challenging the UNSNA over the exclusion of unpaid production from definitions of economic activity. In 1973, Galbraith estimated the domestic services of homemakers in the United States in the 1970's to be approximately one quarter of Gross National Product.

Ironmonger (1989) states :

"the economic image of the household is one of a place where consumption and leisure activities occur. 'Production' of goods and services is something that takes place in the 'economy'. The household is where these goods and services are 'consumed'. Unfortunately this image is false, as women have been trying to tell us for the last 20 years or so ... What is perhaps not realised is the great magnitude of the work and production that occurs in the household. The claim of the household to be a '90 billion industry' is quite modest. Collectively the household is a far larger industry than any other sector of the 'market' economy. Australian households actually produce about three times the output of Australia's entire manufacturing industry or 10 times the GDP of Australia's much publicised mining industry. "
(pp 1-2)

Ironmonger (1989) explained the omission of household production from accounts thus :

"there is a tendency for statistics devised for a particular purpose at one point in history to be continued in use long after they are appropriate for that purpose." (p10)

He said national accounts were originally developed by academic economists to help understand the working of the economy. It was not until the Second World War that they were used for public purposes, initially in Britain. Further, he added that the old instruments of measuring and understanding the economy are sexist and unfair, that they are also incapable of doing what they were intended to do. (p18)

Saville-Smith (1987) went further by saying the state benefits directly in having women dependent on men and is thus safeguarded from the potential burden of supplementing the incomes of half the adult population. She argued that the state's active involvement in declaring the nuclear family as the dominant familial

structure in our society can be said to demonstrate that the state is an institution through which male and capitalist elites exercise and impose their rule over women.

In the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted by the United Nations in 1985, it was resolved that :

"The remunerated, and in particular, the unremunerated contributions of women to all aspects and sectors of development should be recognised and appropriate efforts should be made to measure and reflect these contributions in national accounts and economic statistics and in the Gross National Product. Concrete steps should be taken to quantify the unremunerated contribution of women to agriculture, food production, reproduction and household activities."

The Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (1990) recommended that (among other things) national accounts should be extended to include market and non-market sectors; and that the Department of Statistics convene an investigative team to further research the methodological issues arising from such an extension (p12).

The possibilities for extensions to national accounts provide the opportunity to improve the economic information available for policy making and other purposes in that both the level of production contributed by the 'household' sector, and the shifts in production between the market and non-market sectors over time can be identified. It is clear that if women's work as producers and reproducers remains largely invisible and

unaccounted for within the national accounts, women can remain invisible in the distribution of benefits.

THE CONCEPT OF MERIT

The concept of merit is essential in any discussion of EEO and valuing women's work. Merit is often termed the 'touchstone' of EEO in New Zealand. It describes the process by which people are selected to or promoted within organisations. The concept of merit refers to the relationship between a person's qualities and those required for performance in particular positions. Merit has traditionally been presented as a neutral assessment of a person's ability to perform work. The traditional use of merit uses definitions such as length of service, formal qualifications and work experience.

However, Burton (1988) questions many of the assumptions, perceptions and values of people and organisations applying the traditional principles of merit. She argues that merit is not objective, rather it is tied to historical and cultural factors and that too often women's education, skills, experience and commitment are overlooked.

Merit, in its traditional sense, can be seen to be intrinsically part of a patriarchal capitalist system that assists in perpetuating inequality. A very real problem with this view of merit arises when it is linked with the notion of liberal freedom

from constraint, rather than enabling freedom. It means that if women continue to occupy the lower portion of the labour market that fact becomes attributed to the women themselves and their inability, and lack of qualifications, or ambitions; rather than evidence of the continued existence of discrimination by the state and employers (Jewson and Mason, 1986). Further, this view of merit is not concerned with a sense of community responsibility. It does not assist the bulk of women workers in 'dead end' jobs and occupations.

Burton (1988) has claimed that EEO can focus on redefining merit and on challenging stereotypical perceptions. Sayers (1992) agreed, pointing out that :

"qualities and skills developed in areas such as voluntary organisations, in the home, bilingual skills or tribal contacts are emphasised in the skills and abilities needed to do the job." (p14)

The concept of merit can be extended to evaluate the positive and previously unaccounted value brought to jobs by women, ethnic minorities, Maori and people with disabilities.

Even as redefined, merit is a fairly limited guiding principle in terms of redefining the worth of women's work. It cannot totally prevent discrimination or compensate for past discrimination. Further, it does not guarantee equality of outcomes. Additional measures are required such as affirmative action for women in access to training, equal access to non-traditional areas of employment and promotion where women managers are a minority.

EEO POLICY AND LEGISLATION

I shall now briefly outline some major developments of Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Then I shall move on to outline the development of EEO in New Zealand.

Proponents of employment equity in New Zealand have carefully considered lessons from overseas experiences. I shall outline the paths taken in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia, as background to the New Zealand experience.

The United States of America

The United States of America has been a pioneer in affirmative action policies. Sawyer (1985) provided a clear historical overview of legislation in the field and its impact in the country.

In 1941 President Roosevelt inaugurated the modern history of EEO in the United States by issuing Executive Order 8802, which prevented employment discrimination by Federation contractors, on the grounds of race, colour, creed or national origin. The 1964 Civil Rights Act extended the Executive Order to non-government as well as government employers (Robarts, 1981). In 1965 the Executive Order 11246 was issued by President Johnson. This required non-discrimination and affirmative action for the acquisition and maintenance of federal contracts on the grounds of race, colour, religion or national origin. Gender was

added to the non-discrimination and affirmative action requirements with Executive Order 114375 in 1967. Furthermore, contractors were required to develop written affirmative action plans to remedy the effects of past discrimination as well as prevent continuing discrimination.

With the passing of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1972, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was set up to be principally responsible for investigating and conciliating individual and class complaints of job discrimination and enforcing equal opportunity requirements. Financial sanctions were available and utilised for non-compliance and many well publicised court cases in the United States have done much to ensure compliance. Sawyer (1985) said:

"A central truth which has encapsulated the development of Affirmative Action in the US is that 'money speaks louder than words'. Financial sanctions and monetary compensation negotiated by the EEOC or imposed by the Courts have done far more to stimulate reform than any number of appeals for equity in employment practice." (p14)

Critics of United States employment policies have not only questioned the use of executive power to introduce social change, but also accused the government of requiring quotas which violated the principle of employment and promotion on the basis of individual merit.

The United States justifies its use of numerical remedies firstly on the existence of traditional patterns of segregation and exclusion from certain occupations; secondly, a long history

of discrimination by employers; thirdly, no significant change in the employers' policies until the government filed suit and fourthly, the employers' recalcitrance in taking action to correct past discrimination (OECD Report, 1985:80).

As the United States has been a pioneer in affirmative action policies it would be remarkable if no opposition had been aroused. The EEO policies of other countries have reflected the backlash against the United States affirmative action policies. The governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have made it clear they are opposed to the notion of 'quotas or numerical goals' which are argued to have undermined the merit principle.

The United Kingdom

When examining the United Kingdom example it is revealed that, even with the 1986 Amended Sex Discrimination Legislation, Britain lacks a proactive, result-oriented approach.

The United Kingdom has legislated twice to provide legal rights and remedies in relation to EEO. Firstly, in 1975 the Sex Discrimination Act was passed, making it unlawful to discriminate on the ground of sex in the areas of employment, education, goods, services, facilities and the disposal and management of premises. In 1986 the Act was amended following pressure from the European Economic Community (Briar, 1989). 'Positive action' is a term used in Britain to apply to Equal Opportunity Policies. It describes special treatment allowed under

the Sex Discrimination Act for one sex only to remedy past inequalities and enable them to take advantage of equal treatment. These measures include women-only training programmes and the provision of part time jobs in the public sector. These have been utilised only to a limited extent. However, even these small gains have been effectively undermined by the simultaneous introduction of an extra stage in the discrimination complaints procedure, which has reduced the number of cases brought by women.

The United Kingdom EEO legislation has not been successful because of a number of factors, including weaknesses in the laws themselves which make it difficult for women to bring successful claims. Only individuals may take a case, and the success of the case affects only that individual. In the United States, by comparison, the legal system allows class actions. Further, in the United Kingdom, the burden of is on the complainant, who must also pay for her own representation unless she is a member of a union which agrees to provide a representative (Robarts, 1981).

Further, employers in Britain have been allowed to avoid obeying the spirit of the legislation. Robarts (1981) said :

"employers who want to continue to favour men in hiring and promotion have learnt to conduct themselves in a subtler manner." (p13)

Thirdly, trade unions are not always whole-hearted in their efforts to enforce the legislation. Finally, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is inadequately resourced. By contrast, the United States has extensively used enforcement measures by State and Federal Equal Opportunities Agencies with considerable

success. The legislation in the United Kingdom specifically avoids covering private households. This legislation may prohibit the most blatant forms of unequal treatment, however a positive proactive approach to sex equality is needed to combat past discrimination and disadvantage.

Dex and Shaw (1986) studied British and American women at work and identified differences :

"The most notable differences between US and British legislation is US introduced affirmative action provisions in 1965 and 1967 ... The combination of Affirmative Action and the greater frequency of sex discrimination cases make USA a more aggressive pursuer of Equal Opportunities for women than UK".(p4)

Further, Dex and Shaw examined a greater general trend of downward occupational mobility for women in the United Kingdom who return to paid work following a break for childbirth than women in the United States of America. In both countries women who work part time are more likely to move downward in occupational status than full time workers. Women in Britain are more likely to work part time because of greater childcare restraints. In the United States childcare expenses can be offset against tax, more benefits are available most significantly health insurance paid for by employers if women work full time (few employers pay health insurance for part time workers.) Further, there are favourable conditions of employment for British employers who take on part time workers. As currently constructed, part time work in the United Kingdom does not adequately value women's work. Rather, it is low status and low paid, with few prospects of improvement and little security.

Dex and Shaw (1986) have highlighted the benefits of United States legislation as follows :

"The environmental effect from the more aggressive pursuit of equal opportunities for US women appears to have opened up greater opportunities to US women and raised their overall status in the eyes of employers. UK employers view women as marginal disposable workers." (p128)

They listed improvements which could be made to the British legislation which are also of relevance to New Zealand. These include raising the status of part time jobs and the availability of part time jobs in higher grades. They also discuss tax deductions for childcare and better provision of childcare. Further, EEO schemes should be both proactive and mandatory. Briar (1989) said of the UK legislation:

"There is a danger that cosmetic reforms may conceal a lack of genuine commitment to employment equity. This has been transparently the case in the UK where the legislation itself appears designed for maximum ineffectiveness." (p6)

Australia

Australia has been an important influence on New Zealand developments in the field of EEO. It has built on the United States experience, but is careful to emphasise that EEO does not displace the merit system, but enhances it, that it does not impose quotas, but sets reasonable goals and targets with which to measure progress. In this way it has avoided much of the backlash that the target groups in the United States face (Wilson, 1988). This

also makes the legislation less effective, and progress has been relatively slow (Sawer, 1985).

Affirmative action is argued to be distinct from quotas, and is seen as the only effective remedy for the pattern of disadvantage which equal pay and complaint based anti-discrimination legislation cannot reach.

Radford (1985) describes a number of Australia's early initiatives in the 1970's when it was recognised that Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and people whose first language is not English required affirmative action programmes.

During the 1980's Australia introduced a series of EEO measures which embody results oriented affirmative action programmes. Local states, notably New South Wales, introduced affirmative action as early as 1980. Eisenstein (1985) explains that a review of the New South Wales state government was undertaken in 1976, and one of the findings was that the higher levels of state government administration was composed overwhelmingly of able-bodied white males.

Drawing on the experience of United States (and elsewhere) where effective change toward EEO came about after complaints based legislation supplemented with affirmative action, the review recommended an affirmative action programme (Eisenstein, 1985:72,73).

The Public Service Reform Act 1984 introduced compulsory EEO, including the notion of redress for past discrimination in the public sector, and coverage was extended to the private sector with the 1986 Affirmative Action Act. However, as Tremaine (1991) pointed out :

"commitment was lacking. Mechanisms for monitoring progress and requiring compliance were subverted by delays, legislative changes and inadequate resources."
(p345)

Sawer (1985) says that initially affirmative action programmes in both the United States and Australia have been breaking down job segregation and moving more women and minority people into senior positions. But two major areas have as yet remained largely unresolved. These are the fundamental lack of childcare, and the undervaluation of women's work in feminised occupations where the bulk of female employees will remain in the foreseeable future despite affirmative action programmes.

Overseas experience in United States, the United Kingdom and Australia has shown that without adequate legislation (including penalties for non-compliance) there has been no genuine commitment to EEO by employers (including the state).

NEW ZEALAND LEGISLATION

Since 1960, legislation has made direct and indirect discrimination in New Zealand illegal. The legislation most directly relevant to EEO in New Zealand, includes the Human Rights Act 1977 which addressed individual discrimination. With this act it became illegal to discriminate in the areas of employment, provision of goods and services, accommodation, registered clubs, private education and advertising, on the grounds of an individual's race, sex, marital status, religion or ethical belief.

The systematic development of EEO in New Zealand began in 1984 with the State Services Commission (SSC) policy statement. This specifically covered women, Maori, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups. In August 1985 the Employers' Federation also published a policy statement on EEO. This recommended actions by employers.

However, the Commission for Employment Equity (1991:2) argues that despite the best efforts of personnel working in the area, significant progress was not achieved in EEO until legislation was introduced requiring government employers to take action. The legislation attempted to ensure that personnel and monetary resources were both channelled into addressing EEO with organisations on a structural and systematic basis.

The State Owned Enterprises Act 1986 was the first legislation in New Zealand on EEO. It required State Owned Enterprises to

be 'good employers' and to have an EEO programme in place. However, there was no definition of what an EEO programme comprised, nor was there a reporting and monitoring requirement.

The State Sector Act 1988 required employers in the public sector to take positive steps towards promoting EEO for designated groups by having an EEO programme. The designated groups included women, Maori, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The Act also outlined annual reporting requirements with provision for regular monitoring of the results.

Legislation very similar to the State Sector Act with regard to the good employer and EEO requirements was also passed with the 1988 SOE Amendment Act (No 4), the Area Health Board Amendment Act 1988 which outlines requirements for the Health Sector, the State Sector Amendment Act 1989 which outlines requirements for the Education Sector and the 1989 Local Government Amendment Act (No 2).

These Acts have differing reporting and monitoring requirements. There are varying developments and inconsistencies between areas of the public sector in EEO. One result of this has been less commitment to resourcing the development of EEO where there have been fewer requirements. This provides evidence of the need for strong, comprehensive EEO requirements if effective results are to be produced (The Commission for Employment Equity, 1991).

1990 saw the introduction of the Employment Equity Act. This Act had two main thrusts. Firstly, it extended the EEO package into the private sector and largely eliminated inconsistencies in legislation relating to SOEs, Local Government, Education and Health, with regard to the reporting and monitoring provisions. This acknowledged that the State Sector requirements and monitoring provisions are essential to guarantee progress. Secondly, the Act introduced the concept of pay equity; by which women (and other designated groups) could individually or collectively claim equal pay for work of equal value or comparable worth.

EEO : THE CURRENT CLIMATE IN NEW ZEALAND

The dominant viewpoint in policy making circles at present is that EEO in the private sector should be voluntary, not statutory. This view is informed by the liberal notion that the social system functions in the best interests of the majority when individuals, including employers, are given maximum freedom to pursue what they perceive to be their own self interest. There is an assumption that in these circumstances all 'enlightened' employers will hire and promote individuals on the basis of merit, and that employers who discriminate on the basis of gender will realise that to do so is inefficient, because it restricts the pool of talent.

The NZ Employers' Federation (1985) states that it :

"wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunity in employment, education and training. It regards the elimination of discrimination and the provision of equal opportunities as an essential step forward in social progress." (p5)

However, the NZ Employers' Federation argue against legislation, saying EEO programmes should be voluntary.

According to the Human Rights Commission (1987), voluntary EEO has produced few measurable results in the past.

"For nearly ten years there have been clear messages that the private sector is expected to address discrimination in the work place. Lack of commitment and effective measures have caused the Commission to believe that it is likely to be fruitless to continue to look for voluntary compliance, and to suggest that no sufficient action will eventuate unless affirmative action (EEO) is legislated." (p20)

Sayers (1992) concludes that :

"it is highly unlikely that EEO can be promoted or advanced in a climate of voluntarism. It is necessary to work towards legislation that not only promotes EEO, but also grapples with the fundamental under-valuing of 'women's work'." (p14)

In the current political and economic climate, the main direction of employment policy is to promote both deflationary macro-economic policy and labour market flexibility amongst employees.

The effects of these policies have been to reduce the numbers of jobs available and to reduce women's bargaining power still further, for example through the Employment Contracts Act 1991 (Broadsheet, 1991). These effectively constrain women's employment

opportunities to part-time work, which as already outlined, are disadvantageous.

In the public sector there has been a reduction in the number of jobs, and therefore of employment opportunities for women. The restructuring of the state sector and the creation of State Owned Enterprises meant that many EEO conditions which previously existed have been undermined. An example is that public service maternity leave entitlements which were replaced by those under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, which allows no maternity leave entitlement unless people have worked for a full year for that employer. Previously women were able to get six months' maternity leave after having worked for the public service for only six months. Child care, sick leave, flexible work hours and affirmative action programmes were also all undermined to the disadvantage of women.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of feminist theorists can contribute toward a theoretical understanding of EEO policies of the state and their potential. Whilst some are more optimistic about the potential of EEO to revalue women's work than others, there is a considerable degree of overlap among feminists in terms of aims and objectives. Further, EEO personnel themselves utilise different theoretical analyses of the relationship between EEO and the state according to the ways which they find most empowering. These may change with the

organisation they work for and the time in which they are working within EEO. For these reasons, I have chosen not to create water-tight distinctions between different sets of feminist ideas. Rather, I have chosen to emphasise the overlapping contributions of each.

In the second section of the chapter, I discussed the principles underlying the EEO policies of the state in a selection of the major English speaking nations of the world, and the extent to which these principles have the capacity and degree of implementation to successfully revalue the worth of women's work.

In most of these countries, the form taken by EEO has remained consistent with the liberal notion of equality of opportunity to compete and the merit principle. (It is perhaps ironic that the United States, as the most liberal nation, has been the country to depart furthest from liberal meritocratic principles of EEO.)

A number of feminist writers have attempted to advocate the adoption of American EEO practices in other nations (Robarts, 1981). However there has been a backlash against the American interventionist EEO legislation in Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand is currently departing from strong EEO intervention by the state to the extent that it is again voluntary in the private sector and has been undermined in the public sector.

Finally, this chapter has shown that gains made by women in the context of a patriarchal system can easily be threatened and that women cannot afford to take past successes for granted in the ongoing struggle for equal access to the benefits of paid work.

The next chapter details the underlying principles and the research techniques which informed the empirical basis of this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes how the research topic was chosen. It discusses the methods used in the research and some of the reasons for choosing them. It provides a background to the relationship between theory and feminist research. Finally, it explains the process of the research: the selection of those interviewed, the interviews themselves and the analysis of these.

CHOOSING THE RESEARCH TOPIC

As outlined in Chapter One, this research was strongly influenced by my experiences as a woman, solo parent, and pakeha feminist working in both an unpaid and paid capacity in New Zealand.

The awareness of the role of EEO in valuing women's work unfolded with my growing knowledge of the Employment Equity debate and subsequent legislation in 1990. I discovered a growing interest and concern that legislation can and does create a climate for social change.

The Employment Equity Act 1990 heralded possible future developments of EEO requirements in the private sector, so it seemed timely to examine some of the developments and achievements of EEO in

the state sector. It also seemed crucial to examine some of the lessons, limitations and costs of EEO. The research was designed to explore the potential of EEO in valuing (or revaluing) the worth of women's work.

I formulated a research proposal which I circulated to my two supervisors; to key women working in EEO or the broader social policy field; and to women in academic institutions whose work focused on women and work issues. These women took the time to comment on the proposal with constructive ideas and advice. The proposal was modified accordingly. The main alterations involved restricting the focus of the research to a manageable amount.

Following this preliminary investigation I felt more confident that the research topic was useful to women, and not just myself in furthering my academic knowledge and aspirations. It was agreed that the subject matter was topical with regard to the upcoming Employment Equity legislation and the political debates between the two main political parties. The National party were already planning to repeal the legislation should they become the government on 27 October 1990. It appeared to be important that the knowledge and experiences of those who had been actively involved in working in the field of EEO in New Zealand be recorded and analysed, as EEO was likely to be altered with new legislation or a new government.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND FEMINIST RESEARCH

In this section I aim to present an overview of the distinctive features of a feminist approach to research and the differences between its underlying principles and those of mainstream empirical social science, especially that which is derived from the positivist tradition. Much of mainstream empirical social science has been informed by the positivist tradition which assumes that social issues have discernable natural laws which can be uncovered by the impartial scientific observer.

Feminist Challenges to Mainstream Social Science

The development of a feminist approach to research took place as part of second wave feminism, at a time when women's issues and ideas were neglected by social research. Roberts (1981) argues:

"Until the past 15 years the research literature was devoid of issues of concern to women. Men have controlled the research questions asked, thus the research serves to reinforce dominant social values rather than challenge them ... (this control also) affects the dissemination and utilisation of research findings." (p26)

Spender (1983) also discusses the question of who controls information and creates knowledge. She points out that women are not absent from public knowledge making through lack of knowledge, but because men have controlled information in our society and they have an investment in perpetuating their version of reality. From her discussions of three centuries of women's intellectual traditions, it is both stimulating to realise that for centuries women have recognised and challenged the values and

assumptions on which patriarchy is based, and yet sobering to realise that much of this information has been lost.

Grimshaw (1986) states that:

"women were never unimportant or marginal from the perspective of their own lives. They became unimportant only through male historical constructs that ignored or trivialised their world." (p55)

What has become known as feminist research has developed from the strong challenges over the past 20 years that have been made against what Sutherland (1986) describes as the 'positivism of a seemingly inviolate male intellectual tradition'. (p147) It began to be recognised that male world views formed the infrastructure of society, and that such world views also dominated social research. According to Hubbard (1981), men control the production of knowledge by controlling the research process, the questions asked, the methods used and the conclusions drawn.

Smith and Noble-Spruell (1986) have summarised the four main elements of mainstream empirical science by stating that scientific knowledge must be definable, measurable and testable; secondly that there is a basic logical unity between natural and social sciences; thirdly that empirical knowledge must be separated from the pursuit of moral aims; and finally that the observer must be objective or value neutral. (pp134,135)

Feminism joined a challenge on positivism along with other interpretive theorists such as social anthropologists, and symbolic interactionists and its accompanying methodologies. These

methodologies have aimed to understand social reality from the point of view of the people whose lives are being researched. A feminist approach initially aimed to highlight the realities of women's lives and experience and then developed to include new methodologies and principles. Bowles and Duelli Klein (1983) said:

"Feminist social sciences moved on then to develop their own responses to positivist research and have both agreed with and departed from their critical male counterparts."
(p17)

However the feminist approach to research was not content simply to add on an extra dimension to social science, but aimed to transform it. Roberts (1981) described this as part of a strong programme of feminist research which claims to produce better social science.

Stanley and Wise (1983) further urged a more fundamental analysis of existing social science frameworks, questioning what counts as knowledge and who controls it. Further they suggest that the people whose lives are the subject of the research should play a part in the research process. Their concerns include the sharing out of power, the joint ownership of information and the rejection of traditional interpretations of objectivity. It should not compromise the standards of the research or the principles of the researcher.

Thus, positivist research was challenged. Spender (1981b) said:

"we have become increasingly aware of the role played by the subjective, (partly through feminist efforts) in the construction of knowledge." (p193)

The claim that quantitative methodologies were scientific, objective and value-free was strongly questioned.

Smith and Noble-Spruell (1986) said :

"Traditional research has overly relied on these methodologies (usually quantitative) and emphasises rationality, objectivity, control, categorisation, detachment and distance and de-emphasises intuition, subjectivity, feeling, complexity and integration. In reality however, quantitative research techniques often promise more veracity than they can actually offer and are often based upon hierarchical, manipulative and elitist relationships between the researcher and the researched." (p137)

Miller, Mauksh and Sutham (1988) summarised the debate and stated:

"Any research project whether totally number dependent or completely narrative in composition is fundamentally moulded by the assumptions and theory which are basic to the study and by the questions which in their peculiar form and phrasing influence the answers which can be obtained. It is important to acknowledge that there is an inherent value component to every methodology." (p311)

The Distinctive Features of Feminist Research

A feminist approach to research was developed. It not only has exposed and critiqued androcentrism in sociology, it also developed new methodologies, and acknowledged that there is no one correct method, that methods must be suited to the circumstances of the research.

What Goodnow (1985), Oakley (1981a, 1981b), Roberts (1981), Bowles and Duelli Klein (1983), Hancock (1983), Klein (1983), Mies (1983), Reinharz, Bombyk and Wright (1983), Shipley (1983), Spender L (1983), Stanley and Wise (1983), Bell and Roberts (1984), Dex (1985), Ballau and Gabalac (1985), Cook and Fonow (1986), James (1986), Smith and Noble-Spruell (1986), Sutherland (1986), Miller,

Mauksh and Statham (1988), Munford (1988) and others proposed was a feminist approach to research which is an open process, self critical and continuously reflecting upon itself.

A feminist approach to research does not necessarily jettison quantitative methods, rather it seeks to use research techniques in ways that are in keeping with feminist principles. As James (1986) points out :

"(feminist research) has not dispensed with conventional techniques to social research. These are important tools of feminist research, although many have been criticised for their inherent sexism." (p18)

We need to define what is distinctive about feminist research and what guiding principles inform it. Sutherland (1986) argues that:

"feminist research, as distinct from research on women (even that by women) takes the experiences of women's lives as central, as the norm, not as a deviation from, or relation to the masculine (falsely represented as 'universal')." (p148)

Shipley (1983) advanced the view that the basic principles of feminist research need to be the same as the principles of feminism (that is, women's social and political advancement, or the liberation of women from patriarchal social relations). This is fundamentally opposed to the objectives of traditional research which implicitly support the traditional patriarchal system.

The many writers on this topic have discussed the principles of a feminist epistemology. They include the following six main points.

A feminist approach to research is firstly a woman-centred approach. This encompasses research for women (not on women) using methods which do not reflect an androcentric bias. Feminist researchers do not attempt to prove traditional hypotheses (Rowbotham, 1983).

Secondly, it rejects the subjective/objective separation. Rather, it recognises the open presence of the researcher as intrinsic to the process, and maintains that objectivity is a term traditional research has given to its own subjectivity.

It emphasises a non-exploitative relationship between the researcher and researched which is based on collaboration, cooperation and mutual respect. Oakley (1981b) questioned the morality of a 'value free' detached stance. She argues that the researcher has a moral obligation to give back information to the researched. She believed that research should not discount the private, but rather seek to validate the subjective, emotional world.

Fifthly, it has raised the status of qualitative research. This is not necessarily equate qualitative research with feminist research. Any form of research that adheres to feminist principles is acceptable. Nevertheless qualitative research has particular strengths in allowing women to speak fully about their experience.

Finally, feminist research has political implications in that inherent in it is an emphasis on the empowerment of women and the

transformation of patriarchal social institutions through research. It is for women, it seeks to improve women's daily lives and is based on an analysis of the oppression of women and a commitment to changing it. It therefore questions the ownership of the research outcome.

Cook and Fonow (1986) argue :

"Feminist Research is not research about women, but research for women to be used in transforming sexist society. This means that research must be designed to provide a vision of the future as well as a structural picture of the present."
(p13)

Feminist research enables researchers to show what is and has been happening in societies and to suggest an analysis and explanation thus providing a base for feminist action (Hancock, 1983). It is not constructive, however, to assume that because one reveals the workings of a social process, a responsibility to outline, initiate or effect change must follow. Oakley (1981a) cautions against adopting a simplistic attitude towards the 'problem' of women by taking the view that whatever is wrong with women can easily be put right.

In summary then, effective feminist research attempts to investigate the politics of social organisation. It makes connections between power and expertise, and between the dominant sex and the dominant explanations. It rejects the view that subjective is unscientific and therefore unimportant. It promotes more egalitarian relationships between the researcher and the researched. It validates the private as well as the public lives of the researched and it embraces the new knowledge exposed by qualitative methods.

Finally, it acknowledges the pervasive influence of gender. While it recognises that feminists should not be lulled into a false notion of oneness in that women are dispersed through class, age and race, it argues that a woman's place is defined by function, and that function is the service of men and men's interests.

THE RESEARCH

This research is in line with the reasons identified by Shipley (1983) for undertaking feminist research. It is beneficial for women in general in that it may have the potential to challenge existing power structures. Secondly it acknowledges that research enables women to reflect on their lives (Oakley, 1981b) and can have an important consciousness raising effect. Thirdly the importance of documenting women's struggle for change must not be minimised. It is hoped that this thesis has contributed to this process. The methods chosen for this research were of a type commonly utilised by feminists and entailed using qualitative techniques and a woman-centred approach. The women were informed about the uses that would be made of the data. I attempted to minimise the use of their time through efficient organisation. I explained to the women that the research aimed to highlight the nature of women's position within EEO and its potential. It was made clear that I was not using the research to evaluate their performance.

The Selection

In selecting the women for the in-depth interviews, in agreement with my supervisors and in discussion with the women who offered support, we decided that the research should focus on women who were currently working in EEO in the state sector, and had been doing so for two years or longer. The length of service criteria was important in order to obtain views from senior EEO personnel who may have taken the time to reflect on the achievements and limitations of EEO in valuing women's work, and the potential of EEO for the future. Further, the length of service criteria assisted in keeping the research to a manageable size by restricting the sample.

The EEO industry had to that date (April 1990) been a mainly head office development in the state sector. I obtained the names of personnel currently employed in the field of EEO in the state sector in Wellington from the State Services Commission Equal Employment Opportunities Unit (SSC EEOU). From the 39 people currently employed in EEO in Wellington either in a policy or practitioner capacity, I learnt that 9 had been working in the field for more than two years. I interviewed 7 of the women. A comprehensive profile of the women is included in Chapter Four of this thesis.

The Research Process

The women to be interviewed were initially contacted by telephone and invited to participate in the research. All those approached were willing to be interviewed and extremely positive about the research. A letter was then sent to each woman outlining the research objective, ensuring confidentiality for the woman herself and the organisation for which she worked, finalising the interview date and time, outlining the method of interviewing and offering the option of a group meeting with all the women interviewed to discuss the outcomes of the research (Appendix II).

A taped semi-structured interview was used to collect the data. The decision to tape the interviews was made in order to allow in-depth and free flowing discussions. The women researched were given the option of selecting another interview method of recording but they all felt comfortable with the taped interviews.

The interviews took between 45 minutes and 2 hours and were conducted within a seven day period in August 1990. No more than two interviews were undertaken on any day, as I correctly anticipated that the interviews would be quite tiring.

I obtained even more information than I had hoped for as the women were extremely forthcoming. This illustrates the ease with which the feminist researcher can elicit information from women. I felt responsible in that I was the guardian for some important and sensitive information (Munford, 1988). I did not encounter any

major practical problems throughout the interviewing process. Since the interviews were all in Wellington and I lived in Rotorua, I was fortunate to be able to organise them to coincide with one trip to Wellington.

The Interviews

An in-depth, semi-structured interview was conducted with seven women to provide a base of 'case history' data from which to suggest conclusions. Firstly the questions were piloted with two local women knowledgeable on aspects of EEO. This proved invaluable in focusing on the flow of questions and confirming the length of the interviews (1-2 hours).

The revised interview was then sent to another woman experienced in the field of EEO training in the state sector. Her comments, in particular, covered areas of the 'public service speak' utilised by women immersed in working in the state sector but not necessarily understood by those working outside it such as myself. The main questions reflected a desire to not only understand the characteristics of the women themselves, but also the place of EEO in the organisation and in the state sector. This would enable me to obtain an understanding of the effectiveness of EEO and its potential to contribute to change for women. Many of the questions in the interview were deliberately open ended, with the intention of encouraging the women to talk freely and not imposing my own preconceived categories on the women (Appendix I).

Each interview was professional and friendly. I was initially anxious that my research could be exploitative and that the women would not necessarily benefit directly from the research project. I was relieved to be told by several of the women that they valued the opportunity to speak about their work as this assisted them to take the time to evaluate their achievements, progress and the limitations of their work. I was touched by their generosity in terms of their time.

I began all the interviews by thanking the women for agreeing to participate. I assured them the interviews would be confidential, although for most of the women this did not seem to be an issue. I outlined the expected process of my research and thesis so that they had a knowledge of what I intended to do. However this process has taken 12 months longer than I initially anticipated, and a final letter to the women has been sent informing them of the outcomes of the research, and apologising for the delays and for the failure to have a group feedback meeting as originally offered and agreed to by them all (Appendix III).

Some writers discuss research which reflects the power relations in society with the dominance of one group over another (Oakley, 1981b; Munford, 1988; Craig, 1991). It is argued that the researcher can operate from a position of control and dominance. I felt these interviews were conducted in an atmosphere of cooperation and respect. If anything, I was nervous of the women in that the work they had accomplished in the public sector was held in very high regard. At times they put me at ease by reassuring me that they

valued my interest in researching their work. In addition to the in-depth semi-structured interviews, I undertook to complete a review of the current literature on EEO (Bibliography).

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed immediately they took place by Judy, who has undertaken all the typing for this thesis. I had spoken to the women about this to check that they felt comfortable with the arrangement. In fact, some of the women and I made asides to Judy via the tape, which she said made her feel much more part of the project while she was doing the transcribing.

I began by re-reading all the transcriptions and started to draw out the central themes. Following discussions with my supervisors I concluded that the clearest way to organise the data was to separate it into two sections. These were information about the women themselves, and information about the structural position of EEO in the organisation. To do this I went through the interview questionnaire and divided the questions into these two sections. I then extracted the main themes from each section. In order to ensure that I had extracted all the key themes, two other women read the interviews for me. In this way I was able to ensure that my analysis of the interviews was complete. The process I used to order these themes was to cut up a copy of each individual schedule and to organise these into a number of folders.

These folders represented each of the main themes. Chapter Four includes the descriptive component of the themes in that it describes the womens characteristics. Chapter Five provides an analysis of the structural position in the organisation, and it's potential to revalue women's work. The two women who helped me select the key themes also read chapters Four and Five.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF EEO

This chapter describes the personal characteristics of the women interviewed. It explores their perceptions of EEO. These will be further analysed in Chapter Five.

THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

The State Sector Act 1988 detailed the responsibility of Chief Executives of departments to be good employers and to promote equal employment opportunities. Since that time specific persons have been assigned EEO responsibilities in most government departments. These people working in EEO were charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing EEO programmes in consultation with target groups, establishing data bases with relevant EEO information and monitoring EEO progress.

Some government departments also set up EEO units. The State Services Commission Equal Employment Opportunities Unit (SSC EEOU) was formally underway by the end of 1986 with the appointment of a director. The Unit was expanded by appointing four specialist officers as advocates for specific target groups, that is Maori, women, people with disabilities, and members of ethnic minorities. A research officer was appointed to assemble data on members of target groups in the government service, and another officer was appointed to open an office in Auckland.

The Justice Department also set up an EEO Unit in 1988, as did the Health sector with the Health Services Equal Employment Opportunities Development Unit (HSEODU). HSEODU had a three year contract and was charged with facilitating the implementation of EEO in the 14 Area Health Boards within that period.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

This section introduces the women and outlines some of their personal characteristics.

The women's job titles and job descriptions varied but included EEO Coordinator (2), Manager/Director of EEO Units (3), EEO Policy Analyst (1), EEO Researcher (1).

For reasons of confidentiality I have used pseudonyms for the women. For the purposes of this research the EEO Coordinators will be known as Heather and Barbara. The Managers of the EEO Units as Cherie, Jill and Ros; the Policy Analyst as Sally and the EEO Researcher as Dianne.

The women had been working in the field of EEO for two to four years. They had been in the particular job for a range of one to three years. The EEO workers I interviewed were not personally representative of all target groups. Three of the seven women described themselves as lesbian. All the women defined themselves as not having a disability. One woman was Maori, and the rest

were pakeha New Zealanders. All the women were in the 30-40 age bracket. Four of the seven women did not have children. One woman had a child and a parent financially dependent on her. Two women had one or two children plus partners.

Reasons for Working in EEO

The women also proved to be a relatively homogenous group in respect of their motivation for applying for EEO work and the particular job they were in.

All had a personal background in working on social justice and equity issues. All described themselves as feminist, and all viewed paid employment in EEO as an opportunity to work in an area that was harmonious with their personal politics and philosophies.

Jill put it like this :

"When I look back, often my life has seemed like a patchwork quilt and I haven't seen how this patch relates to that one, but when I came into the EEO area I could see how it all related and it all had a really good flow-on effect, each part filled up a particular gap."

Cherie explained that :

"The issues of EEO have always been part of my everyday life."

Heather described how paid employment in EEO was :

"... quite a natural move on, from doing social work to looking at work in the workplace and workforce ... I wanted to be part of the move to address discrimination against women broadly."

Sally added :

"For me there seems some logical pattern following through about areas that I am interested in working in, specialising now in the employer/employee relationship. It fits in with my personal philosophy. I'm a lesbian. I come from a working class background. These are things that steer me into this type of work."

While Dianne said that :

"EEO work was a happy marriage of my skills and my passions."

The women saw paid employment in the field of EEO as an opportunity to put more time and commitment into redressing discrimination and inequities in society. They were determined to be 'successful' in meeting these aims. They utilised the opportunities their positions provided to the maximum.

FORMIDABLE QUALIFICATIONS

The section details the qualifications the women had. It views 'qualifications' in a broad sense as it includes community work, unpaid and paid work experience and formal qualifications such as tertiary qualifications.

Community Work Backgrounds

The skills and experience which the women brought to their jobs, and which made them effective, included in all instances a strong involvement in the community and voluntary work sector and a common attitude to equity.

As Ros explained :

"I have a lot of experience in the voluntary sector, Maori women's groups, legal background, personal unpaid experiences and life experiences."

Dianne talked about networks :

"I've been very involved in the Women's Health Movement for years and those networks of people have been really invaluable in working in the area, keeping me in touch with real life."

Jill added that her skills and experience consisted of :

"About 15 years experience, most of it in the voluntary community sector, working extensively and intensively with a wide range of women's groups. That experience I draw on most fully."

Heather described her experiences of being discriminated against:

"... my whole life not just paid work experience. Essentially these are the skills and experience of growing up in this country as a woman and of identifying as a lesbian woman. If you've grown up as part of a discriminated group then you are very clear what the oppressor is on about and what the rules of the game are."

The women recognised that the unpaid work skills and contacts they had gained from their community work positively influenced their EEO work and analyses.

Formal Qualifications

The women have high formal qualifications. They all had at least one tertiary qualification in Education, Social Work, Law or Sport and Recreation and six of the women had Post-Graduate qualifications, three with Masterates and three with Post-Graduate Diplomas. Some of the women had negotiated paid leave to further their studies. This was a time when the social and economic climate made it possible for selected workers to be paid to study.

Paid Work Histories

Each woman's previous paid work experience was similarly impressive. It included teaching, social and community work, work in the justice area, trade unions, and in voluntary agencies. Three of the seven women had been self employed, either setting up their own businesses or contracting their services to a variety of agencies.

Furthermore their paid work careers were mainly without major breaks apart from study breaks, which are seen as part of legitimate career development.

The women with children had also continued paid work, although two of them had reduced their hours to work part time at critical stages of caring.

Sally, chose to work part time at various stages for reasons other than caring commitments. She said :

"I certainly have worked part time and that's mainly because I wanted more balance in my life and to have involvements outside paid employment.... Paid employment doesn't realise or satisfy me the total person, and I always need a balance in my life. ... Yet I haven't been in the position that other women have, of having taken chunks of time out and then having to fight to get back into paid employment. I've had a real advantage that way."

Another woman had a two year break when she travelled, with leave of absence and so returned to her previous employment when back in New Zealand.

The women all had fast moving careers, changing jobs and organisations or steadily moving up within an organisation. These women as a group, at the time, were privileged, educated and sought after.

EEO : A GOOD CAREER MOVE

The women viewed EEO as a career opportunity for themselves and as a chance to learn new skills. They did not see working for change as being incompatible with advancing a career for themselves. As Jill put it :

"This job had seniority, more clout and appeared to have a lot more scope for influencing change in the organisation, and it was also a personal challenge and another quantum leap."

Most of the women were accountable to directors one or two levels away from the chief executive, while one woman answered directly to the chief executive of her organisation.

The women's salaries ranged from \$42,000 per annum (pa) to \$60,000 pa, with the average being \$51,213 pa. Additional benefits included training, study time, flexible working hours, and one woman also had a carparking place (very important in Wellington) and her phone bills reimbursed.

Without exception the women had gained in financial and career terms and this, combined with their personal commitment to issues of equity and justice, made EEO work an extremely attractive option for them. This had contributed to their high motivation to 'succeed'.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Six of the seven women had permanent positions in their organisations, while one woman was on a five year contract. Six of the women worked full time, while the other woman worked on a part time basis, 25 hours per week. All the women were members of the Public Service Association (PSA) Union, and all except one were members of the New Zealand EEO Practitioners' Association. Of the full time workers, the women estimated their average hours worked per week to be between 42 and 80 with the majority settling around 50 hours per week.

Most of the women did not receive individual supervision. However several were part of informal support groups and they often supported one another. Two of the women received support through regular meetings and retreats resourced by their organisations.

Four of the women discussed the travel requirements of their jobs although most of them had a great deal of control over this and travelled because they felt it was worthwhile to do so. One of the women explained that her travel requirement was high and the

extra hours of work came through travel time. These women mainly did not have to worry about the issues of dependents; thus the EEO principle of 'support for childcare' did not need to be tested out in their cases. The other three women had minimal or no travel requirements in their jobs.

Contrary to the tide of today's economic climate, these women were very well resourced. If one focused on their gains and generalised these, one could obtain a false understanding of how employment status has improved for women. I would suggest an alternative reality; that is, a few women have had very real gains while the majority of women are being squeezed out of paid employment by the present economic and social climate. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE JOB

The work of the women depended on their role in the organisation. The EEO coordinators found their work changed over time, as the policy and practice of EEO became established in their work place. Key elements of the job were general awareness of EEO issues with all staff; facilitating EEO planning and monitoring, including the development of an EEO plan and a data base for the organisation; supporting target group staff with the initiation of networks and projects such as disability scholarships; and advising management.

Whereas key job elements within the EEO managers positions were managing their teams; developing and promoting EEO in their organisation; shaping their organisation to ensure a greater recognition of target groups; advising management; implementing monitoring systems and working toward integrating EEO and personnel training.

By contrast the two women working in policy analysis and research did more developmental work on specific topics, designed to facilitate the work of the unit managers and EEO coordinators. They said the need for their positions increased as the demand for New Zealand information on EEO grew.

Three out of the seven women worked predominantly with men rather than with women. Jill admitted : "That's a big adjustment for me."

One strategy for dealing with this situation was described by Heather:

"(I work) predominantly with men in terms of where the decisions are made and I guess in terms of the content aspect of my work. However it doesn't feel like I work predominantly with men because I work in an office with another woman on a regular basis, and I spend a lot of my social time (cafe, etc) with women."

The other four women said they worked more with women. The reasons given for this included working in a unit that was all women, working with target groups that were predominantly female, working in an organisation in which just over 50% of its staff were female, and being part of networks around town that were mainly female.

I suggest that there are two inter-related factors as to why the women had differing experiences. Firstly, the structural positions of their job in their organisation impacted on this difference. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Secondly, women exercised a personal choice. Some women chose to spend time targeting men to change, while others put more time into working with women.

In terms of the potential of EEO, working mainly with men meant that the women had access to the power apex of the organisation, but meant they sometimes had to work in a less congenial environment in terms of ways of working.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The level of satisfaction had a bearing on the personal effectiveness of the women as EEO workers.

I questioned the women about their levels of work satisfaction. This included job satisfaction, balance in life, (the impact of EEO on their personal life), links with the community (the women on the whole thought it was important to maintain these links) and their perceptions of the gains brought about by their work in EEO for the target groups and women specifically.

Job Satisfaction

Five of the women spoke in very positive terms about their overall job satisfaction. Barbara commented :

"... generally pretty high. There are times when I get frustrated and wonder whether I'm achieving things. The reason it's high is that I believe in what I'm doing and it's been a fairly steep learning curve for me."

Similarly, Dianne and Jill described their levels of job satisfaction as very high, and greater than they had ever had before.

Heather and Cherie were a little less enthusiastic. Heather described the level she experienced as :

"About 75% with the frustration being the nuts and bolts stuff I have to do, and missing working as part of a team."

Cherie added :

"It's probably the wrong time to ask but in the long run it's high ... I think we've done very well and the words are understood now. People like you are doing research on EEO and when I first came in people didn't understand what I was even talking about, and I didn't either."

Both Ros and Sally described an adequate sense of satisfaction. They had hoped it would have been greater.

Structural issues in Sally's job contributed to her lower sense of job satisfaction. She was caught up in the contradiction between her employer's 'hands off' role with of personnel and employment, and its legislative requirement to develop, promote and monitor EEO. She said :

"There's been a level of frustration because the hierarchy has taken so long to get its act together in terms of addressing issues which I've been raising for a while, and I'm isolated and under-resourced and there's a huge job that needs to be done there, there's a crying need."

Generally, however, the women experienced a great deal of job satisfaction. They enjoyed the stimulation of their ground breaking work, and could see gains and progress being made in general, and for themselves.

Balance in Life

The women felt that in order to be effective in their work they had to have a balance between their work and personal commitments.

The women spoke about the impact that their EEO work had on their personal relationships and their leisure time, and how they balanced these.

The women in the main did not feel that their EEO work had unduly affected their personal relationships. One of the common reasons expressed for this was that the concept of EEO fitted in with their personal philosophy anyway, and therefore those they chose to spend time with were usually already compatible with this philosophy.

As Heather explained :

"(I)don't think that my work in EEO has affected my personal relationships in any particular way because the significant thing about EEO for me is about an attitude analysis of the way the world works, and the responsibility individuals have in their own lives to address it in some way."

One factor that several of the women did refer to, however, was the time restrictions that work put on personal relationships. In at least two cases this was not a huge problem as the women's partners also spent long hours at work. Jill elaborated :

"My partner also works very long hours ... Because we're so busy we have far less time being with each other, or being at home or having friends here."

However Ros spoke of the negative impact on her personal relationships of the long hours she spent on her paid employment:

"In terms of personal relationships it has put a lot of strain. Virtually I'm a workaholic."

When talking about the impact of their work on their leisure time, the response was more varied. Some saw work as having a positive effect on their leisure time. For example Cherie pointed out that :

"the work has encouraged involvement with a whole bunch of new people which is exciting."

and Barbara added:

"EEO has focused my interests a lot - the reading I do, discussions and so on. It can become a consuming pattern."

However the amount of time and energy taken by the job could minimise their leisure time. Ros stated:

"My leisure time has been cut."

Heather explained:

"My leisure time is shorter, and when I do have leisure time I'm more tired ...I used to plan my leisure time more, now I feel like I don't want to do that. It becomes a pressure because its another appointment in my day."

The women went on to discuss the level of balance in their lives.

Three of them felt satisfied. Dianne commented :

"This is one of the first times in my life in a job that I've actually felt quite competent. I feel I know what I'm doing and that's lovely. It's due to the nurturing environment in which I work that I feel balanced and competent."

Barbara added :

"Having kids in a family really helps to keep things in balance - away from work I can change my focus to the family."

Ros attributed the balance that she felt in her life to her daughter:

"My daughter probably brings the most balance into my life so I take time out for her, she makes sure I do. I need to get everything else in balance I think."

Three felt their lives were definitely not in balance. Sally put it like this :

"No it isn't - I've worked part time before and my partner and I have talked about me doing that again. This is an option we can take and we are privileged that this is not basic survival, but rather for lifestyle reasons."

However, all women spoke positively and realistically about the impact their work had on their lives. Some acknowledged that their current employment meant they were being paid for a form of social justice work, which they had previously done voluntarily. Heather commented :

"There is an aspect that I've been doing it for years and now being paid for it. For me it hasn't been a new thing at all; it's just legitimated and confirmed a lot of the knowledge women have had for hundreds of years and it makes it easier that it has been recognised. I don't have a huge trust that it will remain forever and a day, but while it's around I will certainly use it to attempt to get what changes I can."

Ros explained :

"In the last five years I've become very assertive, I wasn't before. I've learnt to speak to large groups of people, of mixed genders, mixed races, and it's been quite positive in the personal development area."

Although the time requirement of the work did have negative effects on the balance of their lives, the cost was not viewed as too high in their personal relationships because in the main the women had partners and friends who shared their attitudes and philosophies, and were supported to commit themselves to their jobs. It was interesting to note that the women with children felt their lives were more in balance than those without children. A reason for this could be that the women with children took on work which they kept manageable. However for all of the women the costs impacted more strongly in terms of leisure time activities.

Their high level of commitment made for a high level of personal effectiveness, but there was a danger that some of the women lacked balance in their lives which could reduced the likely time span of their effectiveness.

Links With Community

The women felt that they had gained a lot of the knowledge and experience which made them effective as EEO workers from links with community organisations. They felt that it was important to maintain these links as far as possible. They said the links enabled them to maintain their impetus when working in difficult

situations. It is interesting to note that when these links were in danger of being severed, the women could begin to feel quite isolated.

All of the women spoke of the strong and varied links they had with the community before taking on their current jobs. The groups they were involved in included Women's Refuge, Maori Women's Welfare League, Rape Crisis, Women's Electoral Lobby, Women Against Pornography, Lesbian Line, Lesbian Anti-Racism and Cooking Circle, Sexual Abuse Help Foundation, Disability Resource Centre, Kohanga Reo, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Women Into Management Group, Board of Trustees and Marae Committees. They were also active in the women's health movement, community radio, the abortion lobby, women's studies, childcare centres, lesbian centres and women's groups.

Since beginning their current employment the women had all reduced their direct input into community organisations, although all remained affiliated to some. Very few of the women took on new community work commitments.

Dianne explained that :

"In some ways my job replaced my involvement with these groups. Because I work with women and changing power structures, in some ways that replaced some of the other work. A lot of my political energies come into my job and that's ok."

Jill added :

"Right now I can make the most impact by putting my total energies into my job. I don't feel I've given up anything by not being involved in these groups; I'm just doing it on another place or level."

However, several questions must be raised. How are the gains of the women working in EEO are translated back into the community, and who provides those linkages when the women themselves are unable to. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

The women had much to say about their personal achievements and also the limitations of their job.

Work achievements listed by the women include major legislative developments; setting up target group networks and EEO committees; establishing consultation with a wide range of groups on different issues; having a marked increase in ownership of the EEO plan and programme by senior managers, acceptance of affirmative action in recruitment; organising and conducting a census and establishing a data base; providing training to deal with sexual harassment; having EEO coordinators in most departments; centralising and funding senior management courses for women and Pacific Island workers; publication of EEO resources; the development of sexism policy and the making of a video; and, last but by no means least, survival.

Jill was optimistic about these practical achievements :

"(EEO has) raised the profile of women in the paid workforce and brought in more acknowledgement about the skills that women have to bring as women, like the unique contribution they can make to organisations and also acknowledge more the skills they bring as parents, mothers. In our organisation

it is now taken for granted that every committee, every advisory group, every working party, has to have women's representation and women's voice. This is a major change over the last two to three years."

These women were realistic in their assessment about how far they had come and what further work had to be done. Heather explained that : "(It was) really an achievement in process rather than something finished."

The women felt that it was still early days for major achievements to be finalised as Cherie identified :

"That all it's done really is raise the issue that women are entitled to get a job ... in the long term it will be interesting to see whether the system finds other ways of blocking ..."

She elaborated further on the dilemmas facing women working in EEO :

"One of the things I've tried to do in this job is to say, we can't change the world, lets just work on what we've been given the chance to work on and I've been really hard on some of the staff who want to change the world; it's not our role. In other ways, as I get closer to the politics of it all it's more depressing really because you lose your naivety and the purity of fighting for an issue because you know there's just so much crap to get around and you need to game play - you can't be a purist and get change. Sometimes you have to see if the end justifies the means."

In speaking about limitations, the women discussed issues related to the management of their organisations. Heather felt that the management styles still needed much modification. Cherie described a situation wherein management was not challenged sufficiently. She felt that in order to make significant changes management needed to be more accessible to EEO workers' influence.

Further, the women at times felt that despite their efforts they were expected to work harder just to stay in the same place, and if they could not keep up the pace, management and government could claim EEO had failed.

There was a very real feeling of having to struggle to maintain what they had gained and not to lose it. Further, a lot of the work achieved had to be repeated. They spoke for example, of training management on the philosophy and practices of EEO, only to have a change in management which meant the process of EEO awareness and training would have to start again.

Time constraints were also an issue for the women and often limited their effectiveness. Heather touched on the enormity of her job and the accompanying time constraints which limited her work. She said her greatest failure would be :

"Not being involved enough in policy measures here. With one particular event I did attempt to intervene after the fact - unsuccessfully. Further I did intend to write a paper analysing what had happened, but didn't have time to do it. A failure to be all things to all people."

Overall their personal gains can be viewed as a positive result of EEO and their level of commitment as a sign of the potential of EEO. It should be recognised that they were working at a time of optimism and anticipation. The Employment Equity Act had been strenuously lobbied for and had recently been passed. This meant the legislative requirement for EEO was extended to the private sector.

The women looked forward to planning new strategies and directions for achieving the broad goal of EEO in their organisation.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

This section focuses on the future career prospects for the EEO workers themselves. It also describes the ways in which the workers can remain personally committed and effective in the field of implementing EEO.

The women spoke of a range of career options open to them as a result of their current employment and were, in the main, keen to apply for other management jobs. For example, several women saw Human Resource Management positions not only as good career moves for themselves but as jobs where they could continue to implement the principles of EEO. Barbara stated :

"As well as Human Resource Management, EEO work has given me a good introduction to a lot of planning issues and I could go into that. Also analytical issues which I could go into, and finally this work has reinforced and developed a lot of my training skills and if I wanted to I could do that. These openings could be either within an organisation or I could go out as a full time consultant if I wanted to."

It is interesting to note however that Heather and Cherie believed that their career opportunities in management were tempered by other people's perceptions of them. This was related to their current position in EEO.

Heather explained :

"One of the potential barriers that I anticipate facing in moving from here would be from some people a sense that if you've been involved in EEO then they don't want to touch you because you're too radical."

EEO provided relatively good career opportunities and their current positions gave women some access to decision makers. However there was no evidence that this gave women opportunities to become top decision makers themselves. Strategies for moving from middle management positions to senior executive positions were discussed at their support meetings. This was not purely for personal career advancement, but in order to promote EEO itself throughout the organisation. Cherie supported this :

"I want to have a go at being a senior manager in a government department and see if I can run quite a senior position with EEO principles."

Another factor influencing the women's prospects was the political uncertainty of the time. Dianne elaborated :

"I had a vision about the Commission for Employment Equity, that it was going to be another place for people like me to work. The National Party say they will dismantle it. If the legislation remains there will be opportunities in the private sector, because big companies are going to need people to help them manage this change process. If it doesn't I really don't know what's going to happen. EEO does give you skills for other work."

It is clear then, that the women were thinking about how the skills they had learnt in EEO could be translated to other fields of work. If EEO was to remain effective there had to be a political willingness on the part of the government. Sally stated that:

"We have a legislative requirement in the State Sector Amendment Act that won't be repealed, but what I am concerned about is that with the possible change in government the ability to be effective within EEO may become more difficult as other issues impact, for example labour market forces ... if the client out there is more resistant to central agencies being involved in 'social

engineering' or proactive activities, that will reflect on individual EEO coordinators or policy analysts or others ability to do an effective job ..."

Dianne explained :

"I think there will probably always be something called EEO around; the danger is that they will institutionalise it, depoliticise it so it becomes a bit like welfare work ... The way EEO has been driven from here has been hard hitting, but take away the money and take away the political will and it could just become a sort of sop."

It is clear that the women's future prospects and potential effectiveness are very tied up with government changes and the women's ability to respond to these. The structural factors which set the context for the women's work will be analysed in Chapter Five.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a description of the personal characteristics, experiences and level of commitment of the women EEO workers.

The women in the study were clearly a special group in a particular time and place in history. They were a group of politically aware, well educated women who had relatively few caring responsibilities. They were in personal situations where they had scope to make changes and further their careers. They had strong personal commitments to issues of equity and justice. They were ambitious women, with reasonably clear career directions and goals. However there was no evidence that the relative high status and pay they had obtained had detracted from their vision for change

for all women. For the combined reasons of commitment and ambition, they were determined to be successful.

Working in the field of EEO had brought considerable benefits to the women. It can be argued that this in itself is a step towards revaluing women's work. Yet their salaries still did not reach the same levels as that of male co-workers.

Moreover, the time commitments of the job distanced the women from the community groups from which they drew many skills and in which they had been very active.

The women clearly articulated the tensions inherent in working in EEO. The organisation offered on the one hand incredible resources and benefits to the women, while on the other hand it could isolate them from other women in the organisation and from women in the community. Because of management status and the receipt of comparatively generous resources and benefits, the women were also isolated from the disadvantaged groups whom they wished to represent.

The women's commitment, tenacity, determination and integrity enabled them to maintain their sense of direction and be as successful as it was possible to be. The impact of these women in implementing their EEO responsibilities cannot be denied.

In the next section I am going to provide an analysis of the structural position of EEO.

CHAPTER FIVE

EEO : STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES

This chapter explores and analyses the structural position of the EEO workers. It also examines the potential of EEO to contribute to the revaluing of women's work. While Chapter Four described the women's personal characteristics and personal positions in order to give us an understanding of what EEO incorporates, it is important to now move on and analyse the possibilities and limitations of EEO within the state sector.

I argue that EEO despite certain limitations has the potential to bring about real gains for women. Given this, it is important that the gains made in EEO be safeguarded.

The feminist theoretical ideas outlined in Chapter Two assist in the understanding of the position of women working in EEO and the potential for bringing about structural change, in particular the revaluing of women's work.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE JOB

The possibilities of change in the valuing of women's work depends not only on the energy and commitment of the EEO workers, but also upon the scope and resourcing of the EEO position itself.

The EEO workers were extremely aware of the importance of autonomy and the resourcing of their position in the state hierarchy.

When asked what the key elements of their jobs were, the EEO coordinators were readily able to list the major tasks associated with introducing EEO into their organisation. This included identifying where they were up to in the process.

Heather stated :

"The key elements change over time. The first year has been an establishment phase, or setting up phase."

Barbara added :

"When the job was new, there was much more emphasis on supporting target group staff and that planning process, now there is much more emphasis on advising management and monitoring."

The key elements they listed included advisor to management and EEO training of managers; support of target group staff including networks and career development courses; raising general awareness of EEO issues with all staff; monitoring including setting up a data base and statistical analysis; facilitating the EEO planning process including annual EEO management plans; ongoing research and ongoing relationships with staff, including responding to queries and requests.

Sometimes there was a degree of scope for the women to extend their job descriptions. Heather and Barbara agreed that the key elements of their jobs were the same as their job descriptions, although Heather qualified this by saying :

"I may have extended some of the key elements a little bit, like the EEO training for staff; and I don't get time for much policy analysis and collection of information but would really like to do this."

The Managers of EEO Units differed from the coordinators in that they saw their jobs as having very considerable potential in bringing about change for women (and other target groups). As Jill explained :

"The overall picture is to shape the organisation to ensure a greater responsiveness to, and recognition of, all the groups that previously, historically have not been recognised, that is women of all races, Maori women, Pacific Island women, people with disabilities and we are now moving into the area of other ethnic minorities particularly Asian and Indian. I organise work for other people to do and oversee it and participate in particular projects myself. I think, plan and strategise the most effective way to implement equal opportunities because it's a new policy. Its a change policy so it has all the threats that go with that and all the classical resistance; so what's the best way to persuade, influence and shape the thinking of the key decision makers in this organisation, and then the flow-on effect to actually change the work environment."

This illustrates the way in which women do take advantage of any opportunity to bring about social change which is presented (Munford, 1988), and also the radical potential of liberal reforms (Eisenstein, 1986). It illustrates that women have to be very clear of the social system in order to take advantage of the possibilities that are presented (Munford, 1988). It is in fact these women who have potential to be leaders and it clearly indicates that they are not passive victims but rather are continually battling to change the existing social order.

Like the EEO Coordinators, the Unit Managers were very clear about what their work involved, and the processes they would utilise to introduce EEO into their workplace. This included

an analysis of the ways in which they could modify existing practices. This also meant finding alternative ways of operating, such as developing new ways for managing teams and strategising how to involve all staff in the implementation of EEO in the organisation. Cherie explained some of these tasks :

"The components of the job are to manage the team, to find a way of evaluating how departments are doing in the development of their plans, to try and work with the rest of the organisation to ensure they don't develop new policies that are opposed to EEO; to initiate processes and projects that will help departments come to terms with some EEO issues like job evaluation; and finally the promotion of affirmative action either by running programmes ourselves or encouraging other departments or the government to give money to run programmes."

An important task of all the EEO workers was to keep chief executives informed of their EEO obligations within the organisation.

Ros therefore placed particular emphasis on her role in educating management :

"To provide good quality advice to the assistant director general. To ensure all operational plans from the districts and head office have an EEO component. To set up monitoring systems. My main function is managing a team of specialists."

A key element in the women's jobs and in particular those involved in policy and research was to ensure that adequate information was obtained and disseminated.

Dianne saw this as an important role :

"I have worked alongside government departments assisting them to develop their database. Also, developmental work and research on EEO issues like job evaluation, and selection testing. It's my job to keep abreast of what's being published and just keep my ears open."

Sally had a similar view :

"I see my role as a Policy Analyst to try and elicit clear frameworks and direction of management about where the ministry is going in relation to the statutory role."

The women used their job descriptions to select key elements that would determine the direction of their work and organised their own priorities within these guidelines. This meant that they had a fair degree of control over the direction of their work.

This is very significant, especially when the pervasive role the state and the potential it has to constrain women's work is taken into account. The women, despite this, were able to take some autonomy and have a reasonable amount of influence over where they put their energies. They made the most of the gaps presenting in the system and pushed the boundaries of the state's hegemonic structures.

THE HIERARCHICAL PLACE OF EEO IN THE ORGANISATION

Now that we have discussed the way the women interpreted their job descriptions and extended these to have the maximum influence on the organisation, it is important to analyse where EEO fits

into the organisational hierarchy. This position is significant because it, to a large degree, determines the potential of EEO to revalue the women's work.

Formal Status Given to the Job

As noted by Waring (1988), the value given to women's work can be related to the status given to the job. Linked to this is the institutional power that these women have to contribute to the revaluing of other women's work. Much of their work entails educating top managers. It is important then, that EEO workers have direct contact with the chief executives.

In all situations the positions held by the women had relatively high formal status in the organisation. Heather stated :

"I report directly to the chief executive and am accountable to him."

Cherie explained :

"I'm on a Level III position. There's the chief executive then the assistant commissioner, then me (I'm called a director). The middle person up until recently has had nothing whatsoever to do with my job. I've mostly reported directly to the chief executive in the last two years."

While Jill described her position as :

"... a third level position. There's one person between me and the chief executive, and he is the group manager for all the Human Resources area. I'm accountable to this person and he does my performance appraisal."

Although the positions had relatively high status the financial remuneration did not reflect this. Their salaries in terms of

the average wage were high and especially so in terms of the average wage for women. However, compared to other people who report to 'the top' they were still quite low.

Heather argued that :

"The money that I receive is nothing like the money other people receive who work directly to the chief executive. So the status is there in terms of who I report to, but it's not there in terms of money."

Ros supported this view when she explained that her job :

"... has been set up so I work alongside training personnel as part of the Human Resource management group, but EEO has been isolated in that this position has been graded at least \$20,000 less than other positions."

On the one hand the women interviewed are paid a lot more than most other women, but at the same time they are still receiving women's wages compared to male executives. The women's work was obviously not seen as being as valuable as that of their male colleagues. This under-valuation persisted despite the long hours and high level of commitment of the women. Although these women might appear to have high pay, status and a fair degree of autonomy within the organisation, the reality is they have a primarily educational and advisory role as opposed to decision making power. This clearly illustrates the structural limitations which are placed upon attempts to reform away the systematic exploitation of women within a patriarchal capitalist society (Briar, 1987).

Additional Benefits

The ambiguous position of women is again present in the ways in which they are granted benefits and privileges. These benefits can be easily eroded. This means that the women may have to work hard to maintain these benefits and they may not be generalised to other women in the organisation. Differential packages can create competition amongst women and discourage women from forming alliances with one another. This could mean that some staff could gain very considerable benefits while at the same time other staff are being restructured out of their jobs. Barbara described the outcome of restructuring in her organisation :

"On the surface the greatest failure would be the number of target group staff, particularly Maori, Pacific Island, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities who the organisation lost during restructuring."

Although this may be viewed as an extreme example it does illustrate the difficult position women can be placed in. It must be pointed out however that the benefits women do obtain may have radical potential because they can allow women to develop new skills and innovative ideas with which to challenge the system.

In general the women did exercise a great deal of control over the way they could organise their jobs. For example, the women took full advantage of any benefits available.

Dianne described how she was able to take advantage of training opportunities :

"I have very good access to training if I want it. I'm given a lot of responsibility to decide what I need."

It was clear that the additional benefits did contribute towards job satisfaction which kept the women's motivation high. Jill explained :

"The level of job satisfaction is very high and more than I expected because there are other side effects from it that I never expected, for example all the perks - I didn't know you could have taxis paid for."

To conclude, although there was a danger that fringe benefits might undermine the women's ability to challenge organisational practices in fact the interviews showed no evidence of this. Rather the women EEO workers appeared to use any additional benefits to increase their own ability to make changes. This illustrates the way in which women will and can use any opportunity to extend the valuation of women's work.

Budget and Other Resources

The allocation of budget and other resources as with the provision of fringe benefits affords the women the opportunity to extend the influence they have within the organisational structure. The women had substantial amounts of money and resources to utilise and control.

Four of the seven women had budgets they negotiated at the beginning of each financial year, or at the time of signing their contracts. They had total control over these budgets ranged up to \$600,000 per annum (this figure included resources for

staffing). At times the EEO workers could negotiate further money over and above their budgets if they needed it. Heather stated that :

"If there are additional EEO initiatives that may need to be taken, then it would be possible for me to get some additional funding from general managers."

Other workers did not have annual budgets but had substantial sums of money approved for specific projects, and once approved they then had total control over how the money was spent. Barbara explained :

"I basically have access to the whole corporate training budget, but if I was spending more than \$5000 I would check with somebody."

In addition the women described other resources available to their EEO positions. These included specialist staff for the Units, for EEO training, for administration, plus physical resources such as computers, travel budgets, books and training aids.

The amounts of money and control the women had over them, is very significant in explaining how much the women managed to achieve. It gives one grounds for cautious optimism about the potential of EEO in that these resources were used by the women to develop innovative ideas and programmes. The challenge for EEO workers is to ensure that these developments continue to have potential for long term change and are not merely reformist in nature. This is why it is important to have an analysis that takes account of the material nature of power (Delphy, 1984).

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

One must be realistic about the sources of structural constraint and conflict which act upon EEO and minimise its potential for radical change in the valuing of women's work.

Divided Loyalties

One feature which can weaken the potential effectiveness of EEO is accountability to two separate groups whose interests do not necessarily coincide. One group is management whose consent is required in order for EEO workers to initiate projects and the other is the client group who ostensibly at least might be expected to have input into EEO policy.

On the one hand there is pressure to extend the priority given to target groups by widening definitions. Barbara explained:

"My job entails work with the groups designated in the legislation so that's women, Maori, Pacific Island and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The process I'm trying aims to extend the target group definitions to also include lesbians, gay men and older workers."

However at the same time there is also pressure to give priority to educating managers as Heather elaborated :

"I initially targeted managers for EEO training then moved through the rest of the organisation ... managers need to do the role modelling... in terms of career development, we've been targeting groups like the support staff. Within this organisation it's a bit like academic staff and general staff and there's a reasonable level of training available for people who are the so-called academic staff, policy staff or the desk officers, but for about a quarter of the organisation, who don't fit into this category, there's very limited training, so we've done some research into that and will be doing some career development courses."

This creates a dilemma because prioritising management training may result in EEO programmes on behalf of the target groups which do not necessarily reflect the wishes of those people. Jill spoke of compromising :

"I adopt a two pronged approach as I see that we have two sets of equal clients. I basically try and engage the co-operation of senior managers (consult is not quite the right word) and the secretary on the one hand, and consult with the target groups on the other, while holding both groups in balance."

Therefore despite the conflicting demands on the women, their ability to balance these demands should not be under-estimated and again gives rise to cautious optimism.

Isolation Versus Integration?

The ability of the women to move and associate with others within the organisation was a significant factor in how successfully they carried out their roles as EEO workers. Jill described:

"... incredible freedom of movement and that increases as the working relationships I have with the other managers improves."

This freedom of movement was not typical for women workers, as many are desk bound and have to explain themselves whenever they move.

However all the women except one felt that their position isolated them to some extent in their respective organisations. Cherie aptly expresses this :

"I would consider us an isolated cell ... A wasp on the bum of the Public Service really, a nuisance, a little group that's being a pain in the bum."

Heather supported this view:

"... not integrated, because I don't fit within the hierarchy of the organisation ... though I feel we are a bulge because we are considered to be part of the organisation but people don't know how to deal with us very much."

Isolation was clearly an issue for most of the women. Sally expressed it as follows :

"I think that isolation is one of my real issues with the job in addition to the sense of tokenism about EEO in the organisation."

It is arguable that the EEO positions were structurally set up not to be successful. The women's role was to implement EEO in the organisations, yet there usually was a mis-match between these and the expectations of the organisation.

The interviews showed that initially the work of the EEO practitioners was with the target groups, but as their role developed they became separated from them, but yet did not really become part of management either. Therefore it became increasingly important for the women to discover strategies to ensure they were more integrated into the organisation and received the support they needed.

Heather, through the vehicle of EEO training, began to make this happen :

"I think because of the EEO training that's been done we are seen as part of the culture of the organisation and we fit in to that extent."

Barbara spoke of the relationships she developed with others at work which assisted in keeping her informed :

"The position has become more integrated in the sense that I now have reasonable access to information on what is happening and people will involve me."

Jill put a great deal of effort into developing her relationships with the other women in the organisation. She was able to incorporate time for networking into her job description. She pointed out both the advantages and disadvantages of being able to set ones own job responsibilities and tasks.

We can conclude that one of the central dilemmas for EEO workers is that they have to maintain a precarious balance between wanting and needing integration and acceptance within the organisation, and yet needing to remain autonomous enough to be able to develop innovative ideas and programmes at the risk of isolation. Maintaining a degree of autonomy enables the women to avoid becoming caught up in the daily running of the organisation. At the same time however, once they have created new ideas, they need to have a knowledge of the running of the organisation and be accepted within it in order to implement their new programmes.

Chapter Four discussed the ways in which the women could organise their own times and schedules. One of the costs of the 'balancing act' is that there is a danger that these women will overextend themselves and burn out.

One of the themes emerging from the interviews was the conflicting pressures inherent in their positions which could make it difficult for the women to work at maximum effectiveness. However the women were aware of this and worked to establish sources of support.

By working tremendously hard, some of the women were able to overcome the problem of isolation by making use of their freedom of movement. Again this illustrates how women can make use of autonomy to maximise the potential of reforms such as EEO. Nevertheless one must remain aware of the possibility that the women require support networks to enable them to continue working within an environment which can sap their energy in the long term.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

In order to avoid isolation and the setting up of unrealistic demands on themselves and other women, the EEO workers spent considerable time setting up support networks. This is an extremely significant area of action because in order to bring about change women must form alliances with other women and other groups. It is in this way that women can begin to reflect upon both the limitations and potential of EEO. They used these networks to share information in order to formulate realistic strategies to bring about change.

Within the Organisation

Three of the women said they received support from their chief executives. However Heather qualified this :

"I would go to the chief executive for some sources of support but I would need to think strategically first."

Three of the women said they received support from their senior managers, while three said they did not get this support.

Cherie explained :

"The senior managers technically support me, but not very much actually."

Those who worked in organisations and sectors that had EEO units received major support from the units and the infrastructures established. Jill speculated :

"The key to support is building up a critical mass and infiltrating the whole system."

Jill was emphasising the importance of permeating each level of the organisation.

All the women had identified individuals within their organisations from whom they received support. Cherie said :

"We also have people throughout the organisation who are on side, and we know them well and they are our support too, people like B."

Interestingly some of the women did not receive support from the formal structures such as management that had been set up for this purpose, but rather went elsewhere for it. Instead they used other women within the organisation who had a commitment to implementing EEO principles.

The women had an important reason for operating in this way. The informal networks were used by the women to develop strategies for change. This is where the radical potential of EEO can begin to be realised. The women quite systematically decided that it was more appropriate and beneficial to put energy into support groups that were going to be part of this process rather than use valuable time trying to form alliances with those that did not have the commitment to EEO. They would not present their ideas to formal structures in the organisation until they had tested them out on their support networks.

The women not only used people for support but they had other mechanisms for 'recharging their batteries' and developing and reflecting on ideas. I was struck by the amount of time these women took to read about EEO and other related programmes, and also the time they took to reflect on their work. They were very clear that this was essential if they were to be effective in their jobs.

One of the ways that the women ensured EEO maintained its impetus, was to keep current with new literature on EEO and changes in the EEO scene. They did this in work time. This is relatively unusual in terms of women's work and allowed greater scope for creative thinking than is usual. The women took full advantage of this. Jill stated :

"I'm now structuring more time in my work day to do that reading so that I don't get tied up with the details of running the unit so much, and so I can keep the vision clear and up to date with the articles."

They all had access to excellent library services and the current literature being produced on EEO both within New Zealand and internationally.

Barbara was very clear and listed three ways she kept up with current changes and formulated strategies and plans to influence the directions of change. She did this by :

"Firstly reading: This organisation has a really great library and periodical service which gets sent up to me and information from SSC EEOU.
 Secondly training sessions. These are even more important than the reading - looking at some of the issues, for example strategic planning, writing EEO plans.
 Thirdly talking: A lot of the issues are new and although the reading gives a good base we are actually having to find out what's right for New Zealand now and our situation is different from the United States, Australia, United Kingdom etc. We need to find our own answers. One of the best things about EEO is sharing information and ideas."

As well as keeping up to date with the literature, the women spoke of the importance of being able to take time out from their work to reflect on what they were doing. One of the ways the women did this was through their networks and EEO meetings, which they had in work time and which aimed to keep them in touch with anything new in each other's work.

One organisation reinforced the concept of time out for reflection, as well as forward planning. Cherie explained :

"We try and make it (time out), we organise for example a retreat and go away for two days, just the whole team ..."

Dianne described the flexible arrangement she has with her organisation :

"I can do it if I need it. There's no formalised space but if I told the Unit I was working at home for half a day, or going to climb a mountain or whatever, that's fine. There's room for self repair."

Others were keen to implement a system to ensure this reflection could happen. Heather commented :

"There hasn't been, but it's something I think about and I'm hoping to do it. I haven't had the opportunity to sit back and really think through where I want to go. Part of the reason is the fact that this is a new job - it's been a setting-up position."

Ros added :

"I want to sit down and work out where we've come from and where we're going to."

However, for some the pressure of work seemed to be such that it was difficult for time out to be a possibility at all. Jill described her situation :

"Not much room - we have very limited holidays. The main time is when I take time in lieu, so if I've worked all weekend, theoretically I'm entitled to two days during the week but I can't actually do that. To have a week off I have to plan quite intensively for the time I'm away."

Sally also said :

"Sometimes the pressure of work makes you just go."

The women found it tempting to keep working harder and longer; although they all said they were aware that this was not necessarily productive. Cherie commented:

"One of the things I try and encourage, is to go home, or have time off or whatever, because I think working smarter is better than working harder."

Barbara, who was employed on a part time basis, explained :

"I could work 40 hours per week on this job quite easily, and there will be some weeks when I could do even more. I try to keep the hours down for my own sanity."

Heather discussed the impact of the long hours on the quality of her work and life :

"I feel the hours I work does affect my ability to do this job as well as I'd like particularly when I'm exhausted and I feel my productivity is limited by the fact that I'm tired. It's also an issue of balance - I feel if I'm not maintaining things like physical fitness, that probably makes me less productive and positive about my job than I would otherwise be. Because of the hours its harder to become motivated to do any physical activity ..."

Nevertheless, the women were still in positions which enabled them to take the time to read and reflect. Time out was not just for personal survival, but rather was an essential and planned strategy to retain their integrity, their creativity and their ability to remain effective change agents. This was informed by their strong belief that they had a responsibility to look after themselves to enable them to remain strong advocates for other women. In order to do this they had to resist the temptation to work longer hours.

However the women showed a remarkable ability for survival. They recognise the dangers of working within the state and of being co-opted to do work that was not directly relevant to the implementation of EEO principles. They resisted these dangers and supported each other to do as well.

Within the State Sector

One of the most effective sources of support from within the state sector cited by all the women was the State Services Commission Equal Employment Opportunities Unit (SSC EEOU).

Sally was typical in saying :

"The EEO Unit of the SSC has been critical."

Jill added :

"The most enormous source of support has been the EEOU of the SSC."

The SSC EEOU produced New Zealand resources on many topics relevant to EEO. It sent out copies of relevant overseas and New Zealand journal articles to EEO personnel. It also coordinated many training seminars and network meetings for them. The staff in the unit appeared to take on a role of nurturing the EEO practitioners who were 'out in the field'. They worked hard at keeping the practitioners together as a group and at providing them with ongoing information, training and feedback. Without the support offered by the unit, the practitioners would have felt their isolation in their workplaces much more strongly.

Another key area of support cited by the women was the support they derived from each other. Dianne talked about the :

"... other EEO coordinators - we have formalised that to a small extent where five of us meet once a month to throw around concepts and ideas, just to push us all on a bit."

Some of the women discussed the EEO Practitioners' Association and explained why they felt it was not operating as a form of support as yet, although it was intended to be and still hoped to be. Barbara summed it up :

"Technically the EEO Practitioners' Association should be a source of support but as it's only developing and it's still new it does not feel supportive at the moment."

As the women in this study were the majority of the most experienced EEO personnel, they had major roles in the initiation of the EEO Practitioners' Association and probably were giving more support to those newer to the EEO scene than they were receiving.

The reason for setting up the EEO Practitioners' Association was to seek out like minded women and to set up regular meeting times to discuss issues, challenge their own thinking and get support for the ways and directions in which they were working.

In many ways the support these women got from each other is atypical. To begin with, the women had the freedom to go and get the support they knew they needed. Secondly, they had the skills of networking brought from other work situations. They implemented systems of working collectively and rallying around each other which led to them becoming a formidable force.

Moreover, it appears that there were one or two women who were the leaders in ensuring that the support networks functioned as effectively as they did. The success of this strategy of

working collectively needs to be translated into reality for other women.

The women were able to utilise support from additional sources.

For example Ros said :

"My family ... my father is my best mentor at the moment ... I've also built up a personal relationship with one of the human rights commissioners in Christchurch."

Also Jill stated that :

"Tall Poppies has been a major source of support for me ... its been a mutual thing."

A key element of the women's effectiveness was their ability to identify and utilise sources of on-going support. This included maintaining their community networks.

From the Community

The women were aware of the importance of maintaining links with the community. Chapter Four discussed the reduction in the unpaid work commitments of the women following taking on paid employment in EEO. In this section I will examine some of the structural factors which made this necessary.

Since taking on their current EEO employment all of the women had reduced their input into community organisations whilst remaining affiliated to some. By and large the women had not taken on new unpaid community work commitments. Reasons varied and included time limitations and different personal priorities.

This presented a dilemma for the women, as they could no longer be active in community work even though they recognised it as advantageous to their EEO work.

Heather described the advantages of community work in this way:

"It's one place where you look more specifically at particular issues, discrimination, disadvantages faced by women and attempt to be clear about the issues and think about what we could do about things."

Dianne enlarged on the theme saying :

"One has to be realistic about EEO. Having external contacts keeps you in touch that EEO can be in a way a very middle class occupation even though the groups we work for are not part of mainstream New Zealand, but in that it is mainly driven by middle class white feminists."

Sally also supported this view :

"I feel networking is critical to the job because of the sense of isolation and the sense of very much being removed in a central agency from what is going on out there, so I try and liaise as much as possible."

Cherie expressed a similar view :

"The women into management group and the informal contacts have advantages because they help me understand the political scene a bit more ... and my other (unpaid) work keeps me in touch with the regions a bit and that's good."

Ros supported this :

"Yes it's important because it gives you a wider perspective in terms of what you believe you are achieving."

as did Sally :

"I think my involvement with Lesbian Anti Racism and Cooking Circle, by raising my personal awareness about my own racism, helps me to more clearly understand the issues of Maori, Pacific Islanders and ethnic groups ... I think what I bring in from outside is critical to the balance of doing this job."

However, they were not so unanimous when discussing whether their EEO work was beneficial their involvement in community work.

Sally commented that :

"I don't think it does at this stage. I think the other way round really."

While Heather pointed out that she no longer had time for involvement in community work. Others saw more definite benefits.

Cherie explained :

"Because I'm quite knowledgeable on what's happening in Government, I am able to pass on that information, for example funding trends."

Dianne added :

"Operationalising EEO is about trying to implement structural change and most of the women's community groups are about trying to change things, so the experience of understanding organisations, of trying to come to grips with how you change structures I think is quite useful for looking at the work of other groups because that is what EEO is trying to do."

Barbara spoke of more specific benefits from her EEO work to community groups :

"... the planning skills it has taught me; written communication skills; understanding of structures and systems and how they work; how to influence people."

Most of the women had negotiated contracts to contain at least limited space for community work and networking, although two women did not count that time as their working hours and made up the hours elsewhere. Dianne explained :

"In EEO there's a blur about what is and isn't work. If I am having lunch with people I am learning heaps too."

To conclude, one cannot minimise the dilemma that these women faced. They were well aware that their sense of direction and vision was informed by their links with the community, and yet

the structural constraints of the job made it impossible for them to keep these links as strong as they would wish. Nevertheless they knew they could not be all things to all women and had made a deliberate choice to put their energy into working effectively in EEO in the state hierarchy.

They gave as much time as they realistically could to community organisations and they found alternative ways to provide knowledge and support to these groups. For example they shared literature about EEO, and remained in touch with women working in the community.

One of my concerns as a researcher is how the women can maintain these informal links in order to maximise the potential of EEO for all women.

CONCLUSIONS : EEO : WHO BENEFITS?

The issues of merit as discussed in Chapter Two, is central to understanding EEO (Burton, 1988). EEO in New Zealand is based on the principle of the best person for the job. Women working in EEO have made considerable efforts to broaden the definition of merit.

The first part of this section focuses on looking at merit and the ways in which unpaid work skills can be valued in relation to paid work skills (Sayers, 1992). The women spoke eloquently

on this subject and used their own experience of attempting to have their unpaid work skills valued by their employers as an example. The interviews demonstrated the range of experiences of the women. Three of the women felt that their formal qualifications were the main consideration. When asked if her unpaid skills were recognised in her present job, Ros stated:

"I doubt it, certainly not in regard to pay!"

Heather added :

"I would be very surprised if I had actually been offered the position, if I hadn't had a tertiary qualification ... I don't think there would be any real recognition of where my feminist perspective and analysis comes from."

Sally had a similar experience :

"I think I was employed because of my formal qualifications and my past work experience. I also know that in terms of involvement in voluntary organisations that has given me skills that I bring in, but I don't know whether they have necessarily been recognised or measured in any way."

One woman thought both her paid and unpaid work skills were considered. However she credited this to her formal position on a philanthropic trust which had recognised status within the job market.

The other three women said they felt their unpaid skills were recognised to the extent that it was these skills that were the major influence in obtaining them their current positions. However the unpaid skills they were talking about are indisputably relevant to EEO, especially in its early stages when they were more likely to be working with the client groups. Barbara explained :

"I think these skills got me this job. Probably having a degree was useful because this environment tends to put quite a stress on academic qualifications, but certainly the things that I talked about in my interview were much more the unpaid work."

Dianne added :

"My unpaid skills were recognised. It is a strong principle of EEO that you look at skills rather than the mediums to which people are supposed to have masked skills."

Further, several of the women pointed out that their unpaid skills were valued because of how they presented them to their prospective employer. Jill felt obliged to really emphasise the relevance of her unpaid work :

"I think my unpaid work skills were recognised in this job partly because of the way I chose to sell them, for example I had no management experience in the public sector but I presented that managing a team in an informal situation is actually a lot more difficult than managing it in a formal one ... I sold myself by arguing that I'm clearly a self starter, who can make something out of nothing, who can motivate and inspire people around me, as opposed to someone who is more traditionally proven in the system."

Heather was worried that her previous unpaid work could have been seen as too radical and potentially threatening, so like Jill she thought carefully about how she presented these factors to her potential employer in the selection process. Heather said :

"My unpaid work could have counted against me, so I did some strategic planning as to how I presented it."

Dianne detailed some of the issues still to be considered :

"In terms of women's worth we still have to deal with the issue of women still being the primary carers of children which has to be part of making the work environment non-hostile for women - a place where you can be a parent and a worker. We talk about issues around leave provisions, provision of creche as special. They're not special, they're just different from the things that men get, that we consider normal. Until we really come to grips with the issues of children and being parents and the fact that the whole working structure is designed as if there is somebody else out there taking care of business while you are at work, then we won't get very far... further we need whole new processes now to sort out remuneration, job evaluation, performance appraisal and we have to make sure those processes are non discriminatory because the things that are getting rewarded are not the things that women most often do ..."

These women were in a relatively privileged position and one should not under-estimate the difficulties of extending the redefinition of merit in general. Nevertheless these women were highlighting the possibilities.

Arguably EEO has so far made progress in valuing the work of a relatively privileged minority of women. Barbara states :

"Women who work in cleaning jobs it's done bugger all for. I have a concern that EEO still at the moment is largely benefitting white middle class women with some education ... I still think it's quite narrow yet and has a long way to go. The benefits I do see include that it's opened up access for people from community organisations into paid careers and I think there is more recognition of their experience and skills... I think that it has also helped recognise the partnership that needs to develop particularly between the Public Service, government organisations and community organisations ..."

Jill amplified this by saying :

"One of the major benefits is to ensure that women with community experience give that knowledge when they come into the organisation. We've now got it in our personnel

systems. People are invited to describe at length any work they've done in the community, voluntary, unpaid workforce and people who interview applicants are advised to take that into account."

Further Sally added that :

"It creates visibility of women as employees and helps create visibility about issues like childcare."

Dianne commented on the principles of EEO having a place in all organisations including the public and private sector and community groups. She said :

"Apart from structural changes I think that EEO has a place in all organisations. Like Trade Unions are incredibly conservative from an EEO perspective in terms of who has the power to win, lose, etc, through to issues like Maori representation in community groups - an EEO analysis goes through the whole range of organisations."

Nevertheless the women recognised that EEO is only one change strategy for revaluing the work of all women. Dianne spoke about the relationship between EEO and pay equity :

"It's really important that they go together. EEO is about creating a non-hostile working environment for all women. For some women they will get on, and it's about removing barriers for women to get to the top. Pay equity is for low paid women, much more than EEO. It's fundamental stuff. In a way it's also dismantling the discrimination that has been embedded in pay practices and negotiating practices through unions and employers."

Sally added :

"I think EEO and pay equity are complementary and I am really pleased that legislation has encompassed both. The whole issue of pay equity is to ensure for women workers that the occupations that they are primarily involved in are reassessed in line with comparable skills of a job in another area and I think that it is critical to valuing and recognising the work that women do."

These women were touching on the immediate impact pay equity could have on relatively low paid women in women dominated professions, in increasing the value of their skills and the status of their work.

In attempting to evaluate the benefits to date of EEO for women, the stresses faced by those working in the field must be reiterated. The women have to spend most of their time sustaining EEO, but one could argue that only small differences if any have been made to structures. Even though the women were in powerful positions and were well resourced, the nature of their jobs and the time to do them meant the amount of effort they could put into consistently challenging the state and their organisation was limited.

Further, the struggles for those working in EEO have grown larger since the research, due to the changing political climate and economic policies of individualism.

Without major structural changes, EEO cannot impact widely on women in general. From a pessimistic perspective, EEO to date could be viewed as little more than a management tool. However, this thesis has argued that women are not totally powerless. The research has shown that the EEO personnel themselves were at times optimistic about their achievements and the future of EEO. There is a high degree of unity among the women about the importance of revaluing the worth of women's work.

This chapter has examined the structural position of EEO workers and the strategies that the women utilised to maximise their impact given the constraints imposed by state organisations. The women had a very clear vision of their goals and the obstacles which had to be overcome. The women's challenging

of the diverse forms of power and the development of alternative structures began a process where women's work could begin to be revalued.

The women have used what autonomy they had to considerable effect despite the structural limitations and the lack of decision making power. This meant that the women were able to extend their work to include other disadvantaged groups rather than only those listed in the current legislation, often including sexual preference and age categories.

In addition to working within the constraints imposed by the state the women were instrumental in the development and progress of EEO in New Zealand and since, the passing of the State Sector Amendment Act 1988, had all been involved to some degree with the work preliminary to the Employment Equity Act. They had worked together, shared resources, supported and challenged each other, and together were a formidable force on the head office EEO scene. This was despite the fact that social justice issues were a very poor second compared to economic matters in the policies of the government at that time.

The women actively worked to support and promote other change strategies that were complementary to EEO, including pay equity, equal educational opportunities and industrial relations education. Cherie explained :

"Compared to the rest of the world, we are high in occupational segregation and pay equity will help that little bit ... I think that equal educational opportunity

and EEO will generally start to move that along and they cannot use 'the toilet' excuse any more. We are lucky that we are being pushed from overseas. In the negotiations when Telecom was being bought the first thing the Americans said was 'this company has 125 managers and only one woman ... what's wrong with it?'"

Dianne referred to the potential conflict between EEO and industrial relations :

"EEO must become part of the industrial process ... as yet it's not into the heart of industrial relations. One day we will turn around and they will have traded something they don't think our members want, but it will impact differently on women."

In the policy climate of the time the women had clearly set themselves a huge task. The industrial relations provisions in the state sector have been under threat (Bunkle and Lynch, 1992). EEO itself (especially if it is compulsory) is contrary to economic policies in that it constitutes a form of intervention in the bargaining process between the employer and employee in the state. The Employment Contracts Act has resulted in greater flexibility for employers and potentially leads to very unstable work conditions for employees. The women were aware that the gains EEO has made in valuing women's worth could easily be undermined by the industrial process and current economic policies.

They supported each other to remain realistic about their positions within the state, and what they could achieve. They spoke of being only one part of a movement for change only. They discussed the conflicts relating to working within a patriarchal system. They recognised this was a conscious choice.

Being employed by the state may preclude the overt working use of a radical analysis of the state because of this threat to the employer. Some of the women felt that there may be an assumption that in working for the state sector one has to adopt a liberal methodology. However the EEO workers believed that constant pressure on the structures of the organisation could lead to gradual change. They strongly believed that change could come about from within the system. Jill articulated this point:

"It's an amazing time for a lot of women like me who have worked very hard in the voluntary work area in the community sector. What's now happening is organisations, as they are moving into the 21st Century, recognise that they need our skills because we have a perception that comes from being on the margins, and we have a kind of energy and commitment to work that comes from taking total responsibility; women with kids etc who get used to doing all the stuff including all the shit work. Now there are little gaps in the system for us to come in and the unique contribution we have to make is seen as vital if organisations are going to be able to carry on and live and thrive and change enough to respond to the growing environment which is going to be so much more pressured and different."

The women working in EEO were continuing to systematically monitor the principles and implementation of EEO.

This chapter has outlined the gains and potential future benefits of EEO. The conclusions of the interviews reflect partly the relative optimism of the times. Nevertheless there appears to be grounds for cautious optimism about the potential of EEO even within the limits imposed by a patriarchal system. EEO does represent a gain for many women, including those working in the field themselves, and has the potential to benefit many more women. As such it is worth defending.

CHAPTER SIX

EEO : HERE TODAY WHERE TOMORROW?

"EEO is based on a moral conviction that only relevant differences between people should affect their work opportunities. Differences irrelevant to a person's ability to carry out the tasks involved in the job should not be a barrier to opportunities at work." (Tremaine, 1991:344)

In this chapter I draw on the ideas from the theoretical discussion and the fieldwork to address the question of the potential of EEO to revalue women's work.

The thesis contains a range of findings, some of which are more optimistic than others. The aim of this conclusion is to attempt to balance these varied findings and present an overall picture. It is understood that the future of EEO depends to a large degree upon whether current individualistic and non-interventionist social policies are maintained, and this makes exact predictions impossible.

In examining the potential of EEO the thesis explores the abilities of women to utilise the organisational opportunities to the maximum in order to implement the principles of EEO. It also explores the structural limitations both imposed by the state and by organisations, and the way in which women overcame these.

The theory argued that women are not totally powerless. Even utilising materialistic analyses of patriarchy, it is argued that women can make changes, partly because men are dependent

upon women's work and are therefore prepared to make compromises. From this perspective, it can be explained that a policy on EEO exists because the state believes it is in its own best interests not to compromise but to listen to the needs of women (and other groups) and people supportive of their cause.

It is clear that the women saw EEO as having potential for radical change in the revaluing of women's work. In order to realise this there were various obstacles and changes that had to be negotiated. These included the possibility of co-option of women's work by organisations and the state; the isolation which could result from both the severing of links with the community and the lack of integration of EEO work into the organisation; the divided accountability of EEO workers between management and the target groups; and the expectation that they should be all things to all women despite finite physical resources such as time.

A materialist theory would argue that EEO is at least partially representative of patriarchy attempting to accommodate and deflect women's demands, and that therefore the women working in EEO were part of a patriarchal system. They had formulated strategies to maintain a sense of direction for EEO in ways that would benefit other women. They were realistic about what they could achieve through the state. They had chosen to use their energies in a number of significant ways.

The women formed alliances with other women in the organisation and where possible women in the community. They used these support networks as mechanisms for reflecting upon ways in which they could utilise the principles of EEO to revalue women's work. The thesis emphasises that the strength of the women's feminist visions and commitments should not be underestimated. Although the interviews were done at a time when the women were most optimistic about the potential of EEO to revalue women's work, one must not undermine these women's contributions.

They adapted many feminist principles to their workplace and these operated as survival strategies against the structural constraints which were real and ongoing. The women worked together, giving tremendous support to one another and maintaining their level of commitment to change for all women.

These feminist women have a high degree of unity with respect to the importance of valuing the worth of women's work. They are unlikely to accept erosion of EEO principles without strong resistance.

There are grounds for optimism based on both the strength and determination of women themselves and also on the strength of potential legislative measures.

At the time the interviews took place the state was extending compulsory EEO to the private sector and this gave rise to optimism amongst the EEO workers. The social and economic policy climate

has changed considerably as exemplified by the repeal of the Employment Equity Act 1990.

While current policies continue promoting individual liberty, giving maximum freedom to employers, and reducing spending in the state sector, the future of EEO (except as a cosmetic measure designed for maximum ineffectiveness as in the United Kingdom example) seems bleak. The future of EEO workers is similarly uncertain.

The reduction of state intervention in the field of EEO does not detract from the argument that EEO itself has potential, particularly when combined with other policy measures. Future research must continue to examine the changes in the role of the state with respect to programmes such as EEO. What this thesis shows is, that given the opportunity and the resources women display tremendous energy, creativity and determination so that even within the structural constraints of a patriarchal state hierarchy they are able to make significant changes.

In conclusion, EEO appears to have potential in revaluing women's work, and as such is worth fighting for. It does represent a gain for many women and has the potential to benefit many more women. Although EEO alone would not remove patriarchy, policies such as this working in conjunction have the ability to undermine it seriously, and in the process to make many more women's lives manageable.

The likelihood of these strategies being implemented by the state is not great at present, given the climate of individualism and meritocracy. However, the political climate may change. More importantly feminists will not give up. The women had a degree of power within the patriarchal system and undermined patriarchy for themselves and for women in general. The battle will not be over until it is won.

PPENDIX I

THE INTERVIEW

PART 1 : DEMOGRAPHIC DATA/PERSONAL PROFILE

Race/Ethnicity:.....

Age:.....

Family Status:.....

Dependants:.....

Disability:.....

What is your job title:.....

How long have you been :

(a) working in EEO?

(b) in this job?

What was your motivation in applying for :

(a) EEO work?

(b) this job?

What skills and experience do you consider you brought to this job that make you effective?

What is your previous paid work experience?

What formal qualifications did you bring to the job?

Have your unpaid work skills been recognised in your present job?

If yes, how were/are these measured?

If no, did your unpaid work skills count against you.

Politically, how would you describe yourself;

(Feminist or non feminist; what does that mean to you)

(Sexual Preference.)

PART 2 : STRUCTURAL POSITION

What is your occupational class and grade?.

How would you describe your position in the hierarchy of the organisation (ie what is the formal status given to the position)?

What is your yearly salary and additional bonuses?

What work related benefits do you have (eg assistance with travel, company car, child care subsidy, child care facilities, training, study leave, flexitime)?

Who are you accountable to/directly responsible to?

Who supervises you and does your performance appraisal?

Does your job entail working with all underrepresented groups or women only?

Briefly describe the key elements of your job please.

Is this the same as your job description?

What budget do you work with?

What control do you have over your budget (to whom are you accountable)?

What other EEO resources do you have, eg staff positions, budgets for conferences, equipment, administration staff?

Do you target any particular occupational grade or class (eg management or clerical) for : (a) training (b) consultation (c) organisational links.

Do you work predominantly with men or women?

Do you regard your position as isolated within the organisation or integrated? Please describe.

Are you able to move freely in the department (eg can you attend other unit staff meetings)?

What are the parameters of your position?.

Who do you regard as your structural sources of support within the organisation (eg Women's Liaison Officers, Employer Assistance Programmes, Industrial Chaplains)?

What about structural sources of support outside the organisation (eg Human Rights, Union, Race Relations)?

Do you feel safe about EEO being a permanent position?

PART 3 : WORKING CONDITIONS

Could you describe your position permanent/contract; full time/part time/job share?

Are you a member of a union?.

What professional associations do you belong to? (eg WSA)

How many hours per week would you put into the job? *

Does this affect your ability to do the job as well as you would like? Please describe.

Is there a requirement to travel in your job? If yes, what is this?

What would you say your level of job satisfaction is?

Is this greater or less than you would expect?

What input do you have into your job description?

Do you have a support group/supervision? Is this resourced by your department?

What career opportunities are associated with your current position?

PART 4 : LINKS WITH COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL LIFE

What community based organisations and/or women's interest groups were you involved with before taking on this job?

Have you continued your affiliation with these groups since being in the job?

Have you joined any new groups since being in this job?

If No - Why?

What have you given up by not being involved in these groups?

If Yes - Is this community involvement advantageous to your EEO job?

Please describe (personal support, increased personal awareness, politicising views of women's issues, information).

Does your EEO work benefit your involvement in community work?

Please describe.

Does your EEO work contract contain space for community involvement?

In what way do you feel the work of EEO in general benefits women and community organisations in general.

In what way has your EEO work affected : (a) your personal relationships, and (b) your leisure time?

Is your life in balance?.

What impact has EEO had on you yourself?

Is there room for taking time out to reflect on your job?

SUMMARY

What would you feel is your greatest achievement?

What else have you achieved?

What is the impact EEO has had on your organisation?

What would you feel is your greatest failure?

Why do you think this happened?

Ideally, how would you envisage the future development of EEO.

What will you be working towards?

How adequate do you feel the current legislation is (eg you have to have a plan, but you don't have to succeed)?

(Just to broaden out from your job to EEO philosophy in general.)

How do you keep up to date with current changes and literature about EEO?

What are your views about the relationship between EEO and Pay Equity?

In your opinion, what have been the achievements of EEO in bettering employment opportunities for women? How would you measure this?

What are some central issues still to be addressed by EEO before women's worth is recognised.

Would you like to add anything else? -

GROUP FEEDBACK MEETING;

Are you interested Yes/No



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DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL POLICY
AND SOCIAL WORK

APPENDIX II

4 Clyde Street
ROTORUA
Ph: 073 482-874

Dear

Thankyou for agreeing to participate in the research. I am undertaking as part of my Masterate in Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University. Your interview date and time is confirmed as

The interview should take approximately 1 1/2 hours. I plan to tape the interview to facilitate a free flowing conversation, but am open to discuss an alternative method of recording the interview should this not suit you.

I will discuss the issues of confidentiality with you at your interview. These will concern safeguards for both you as a respondent, and your organisation.

The objective of the research is to investigate the role of EEO in the State Sector. I shall be exploring what is happening for women working in the field, aiming to get an overall view rather than a comparison between departments. From this I hope to discover general themes with implications and recommendations for the future development of EEO in the State and Private sectors.

I would like to offer you and the other six women interviewed, the option of a group meeting to discuss with you all the outcomes of this research. This meeting could be held later this year.

Please contact me at home (073 482-874) should you wish to further discuss anything related to the research. Thankyou again for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Sonya Hunt



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APPENDIX III

████████████████████
████████████████████
████████████████████

24 January 1992

Tena koe _____

You may remember that in August 1990 you participated in some research I was undertaking toward a Masterate in Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University. I interviewed you with the aim of exploring the theme of EEO : Valuing Womens Work?

At the stage of the interviews I had set the goal of completing the study by the end of 1990. To this end I offered you, and the other six women interviewed, the option of a group meeting to discuss with you the outcomes of the research.

Please accept my apology for not formally contacting you sooner to inform you that my original completion date was not attained. In reality the completion of this project has taken me a further 12 months.

The reasons for this, include finding the thesis to be more work than I anticipated, obtaining paid work in the field of EEO in the Health sector in the Bay of Plenty, and the usual family and community commitments.

However I am very pleased to be able to say that I have now completed this thesis, and a bound copy of it will be available in the Massey University library shortly, following its grading.

I have enclosed for your information copies of Chapters Four

and Five, the Fieldwork and Chapter Six The Conclusions. Should you wish to have copies of Chapter One Introduction, Chapter Two Theory and Chapter Three Methodology, please let me know, and I will also send them to you.

At this stage I feel the option of a group meeting to discuss the outcomes of the research may no longer be particularly significant to you. However should you wish to meet with me and the other women interviewed please contact me and I will arrange a meeting time and venue for all interested.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you again for your participation in this research and your enthusiasm and support of me, a nervous researcher and student. I very much enjoyed talking to you, and over the past year "re-reading" and "analysing" the interviews.

Yours sincerely
Sonya Hunt

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